

Sir Henry went to Eton and on to Cambridge. He was a brilliant engineer and invented the land yacht. A commander of a troop of Yeomanry and an innovative agriculturist, he died in 1837.

The Duke of Wellington was one of his ten coffin bearers. The Oxendens reigned supreme at Broome until 1911 when Sir Percy Oxenden sold Broome Park to perhaps its most illustrious owner: the famous and much decorated Lord Kitchener of Khartoum. Colonel Herbert Horatio Kitchener, having been on tour in Egypt returned to England to command the troops attending the coronation of King George V. He purchased Broome Park for £14,000. Although in need of many repairs, Kitchener acquired the Carolean Mansion as an ideal repository for his collection of antiquities, which he had amassed from his many expeditions throughout the world.

Lord Kitchener's favorite niece, Nora personally supervised an extensive program of restoration and improvements when Kitchener was away and much of their detailed correspondence still exists. The building was strengthened by the addition of steel columns and much timber was removed from the roof and replaced by metal trusses, the wood was reworked and now forms a feature paneling in the entrance hall. The addition of two fireplaces and the ornate ceilings in that room shows symbols which reflect his life as a soldier and the campaigns in which he had been involved.

The intention was not only to house his collection of treasures but also to enjoy his retirement. Sadly, this was not to be. Shortly after embarking for Russia on the cruiser "Hampshire" in 1916 he was drowned when the vessel struck a stray mine and sank off the Orkneys. Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener, Field Marshall & Earl of Khartoum (1850-1916) never married and ownership passed to his nephew Toby, Viscount Broome, who retained it until its sale in 1928 was visited by celebrities of the day.

He promoted many World title boxing bouts, owned a number of theatres and sponsored a travelling vaudeville troupe. McIntosh enjoyed great wealth but suffered extreme reversals of fortunes, leaving huge debts on several Continents. He died in 1941 having just established the Black and White Milk Bar chain.

Viscount Broome had died previously in 1927 and his widow eventually reclaimed the estate from lessee McIntosh upon his bankruptcy. No money had been spent on the fabric of the mansion house during its rental period and Viscountess Broome had no wish to live in what she described as a "veritable sewer of resources".

Between the wars great social upheavals ensued. Many great households had suffered losses: many had died in the First World War and as a result many of the aristocracy were impoverished by repeated death duties. Servants were also hard to find and consequently a rapid decline in the great houses of Britain followed. This did not go unnoticed and many people recorded such concerns in letters to the journals of the day. "Country Life" magazine reflected upon the dereliction of these houses and the sad loss of National Heritage and in an article which particularly mentioned Broome Park, appealed to its readers for a solution to the problem of dilapidation. Mr G C Jell read the article, visited Broome then purchased and opened it for business as a country house hotel.

Again the fortunes of war intervened. Europe was plunged into World War II. The Ministry of Defence requisitioned the house and estate for military purposes and several Scottish regiments were billeted here. Later the Fusiliers Mont Royal a Canadian Tank Regiment mustered at Broome and was responsible for the concrete roads that abound. German propaganda broadcaster Lord Haw Haw identified the house as a military base and it was subsequently the target of enemy gunfire on several occasions. Fortunately no direct hits were ever scored.

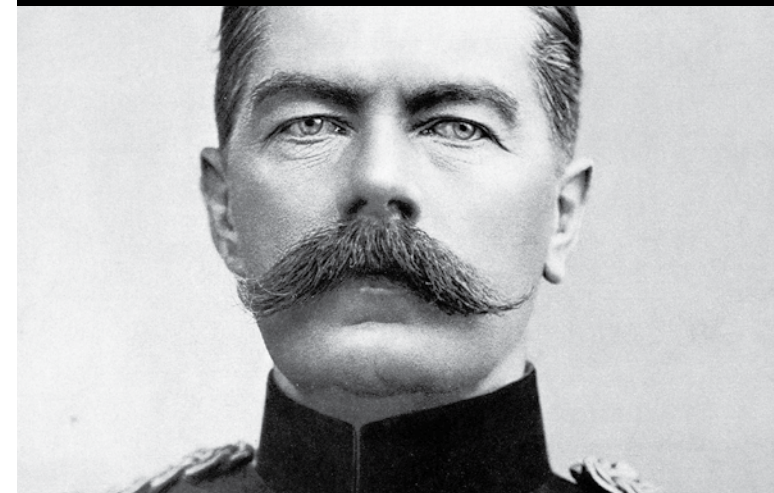
After the War Broome resumed its role as a residence and the Jell family conducted a country house business until their retirement in 1979. Mr Jell sold the mansion following the deaths of his son in a swimming accident in Australia and of Mrs Jell who never recovered from a fall down the stairs at Broome.

Gulf Leisure Developments part of an international shipping and property group purchased Broome and commenced construction of a golf course, which being 6,610 yards long and at Par 72 presents a challenge for even the best golfers. Eighteen studio apartments were refurbished and marketed as time-share with a thirty five-year lease. Such was the success of the operation that a further twenty-six units (known as Regency Villas) were constructed in 1982 / 83 within the walled garden. After several reversals of fortune the villa owners extracted themselves from the estate in 1991.

During the 1990's Broome Park hosted varied functions, and even became a registered civil wedding venue. However little was invested in the fabric of the mansion house which once again had become unstable, much to the concern of English Heritage and Kent County Council, Broome Park was yet again on the market and looking for a saviour.



BROOME PARK
GOLF CLUB



A BRIEF HISTORY OF BROOME PARK & LORD KITCHENER



FIELD MARSHALL LORD HERBERT KITCHENER 1ST EARL OF KHARTOUM

Lord Kitchener purchased Broome from Sir Percy Oxenden in 1911, during a spell of leave from Egypt. General Herbert Horatio Kitchener was one of England's most distinguished soldier, Map maker, engineer and campaigner, he had earned a reputation throughout the Empire. Sirdar of the Egyptian Army and fierce Boer fighter he is remembered for his stirring appeal for volunteers upon the outbreak of the First World War. "KK" (as he was often known) was born in 1850 and as a much decorated professional soldier became one of England's most significant Empire builders during the reign of Queen Victoria.

Aged 61, he was recalled from Cairo to England to attend the coronation of George V. For some time he had been searching for a house of character, not simply as a dwelling suitable for his retirement, but as a repository for the artefacts collected over the years as a serving soldier. He had been in receipt of considerable sums and had amassed much "booty" and objects d'art during the previous forty years of foreign campaigns. Whilst on leave he inspected a number of properties, eventually selecting the small East Kent estate of Broome.

Upon securing Broome Park from Sir Percy for the sum of £14,000 he set about its major restoration. Sir Percy had extensively altered the house by the installation of "modern" conveniences and replaced the original stone mullion windows with sash windows, popular in Georgian and Victorian times. Kitchener removed the sash windows in favor of those which are present today.

Increasing the prominence of the eighteenth century gable above the bowed addition to the saloon and building a porch at the front door was only part of his great scheme. It was inside that Kitchener's engineering skills were shown most effectively in the creation of a longer, wider and taller entrance hall with a raised ceiling. This ceiling was then subjected to pediculate plasterwork, featuring panels relating to his campaigns. A similar ceiling is to be found in Gilling Castle. This elevation raised the floors above, now clearly seen due to the windows of the upper rooms being bisected by those raised floors.

The heavy roof timbers were replaced with angle iron trusses supported by steel columns, from cellar to attic. These roof timbers were then reused and reworked to be featured as the panelling of the great hall and used in the reconstruction of the staircase. This had previously been sited in what is now known as the Chinese room. The stairs are almost identical to a flight to be found at Hatfield House in Hertfordshire. The huge fireplaces in the great entrance hall were added in 1913 and are similar to those in the gallery also at Hatfield house. In the dining room (Jacobean) is a fine marble fireplace with a great panel over, depicting the arms of James I and the date 1621, curiously fourteen years prior to the building of Broome.

Kitchener had no hand in altering any of the first floor rooms and on the ground floor of west wing was left incomplete for many years. The whole scheme came to an abrupt halt upon his premature death. General Kitchener never actually lived in the mansion house. When visiting Broome he occupied the Steward's house known as "Flint Cottage" near the walled garden. This unusual dwelling also Grade I listed now awaits restoration. Lord Kitchener's nephew Viscount Broome inherited the house in 1916 and subsequently leased it to boxing promoter/ impresario and entrepreneur. The colorful Australian Hugh D McIntosh (who when declared bankrupt surrendered the lease to Viscountess Broome upon the death of Toby in 1927).

The Broome park estate (by then in a sorry state of dereliction) featured in an article in "Country Life" Magazine, which recorded the sad decline of important houses in Britain. Following this report Broome was purchased in 1928 and turned into a country house hotel by its new owner Wing Commander G.C.Jell.

THE CONCISE HISTORY OF BROOME PARK

Broome was a manorial holding in the parish of Barham owned by the Digges family and in Henry VIII's time was farmland. John Digges, son of Sir Dudley Digges of Chilham Castle, lived at nearby Digges Court and upon the death of his father inherited a substantial part of his estate. However, the younger son, Leonard, took as his share, a much smaller area known as Broome. The Digges family were influential landowners and owned an engineering company, which did much work constructing Dover Harbour for the Admiralty.

Basil Dixwell, the creator of Broome Park, came to Kent from Warwickshire, having inherited several minor estates in the area. He became a member of Parliament for Hythe in 1626, Sheriff of the county in 1627 and was made Baron in 1628. His inherited estates were not much to his liking and he sought a suitable site upon which to construct a fine mansion. After much research he selected the sheltered valley in close proximity to the Dover/ Canterbury road known as Broome and purchased the site from Leonard Digges in 1634 for an undisclosed sum. Thus in 1635 the building of the first house began upon this site.

By 1639 the house was completed using 270,000 bricks, made with clay dug from marl pits on the estate. In addition to the main house, stables and a brew house were built and gardens laid out at a cost of £8,000. No architect was employed as that was not the fashion of the period, but "surveyors" drew plans and provided models. Masons and other specialist artisans then contributed their own influence to the building.

Sir Basil Dixwell died in Folkestone in 1642 and is buried in Barham Cemetery. He never married, therefore with no direct heirs, he left his estates to his nephew Mark. He died in a skirmish at Arundel in West Sussex, leaving all of his estate to his three-year-old son Basil. His Uncle, Col. John Dixwell, was appointed guardian and managed the estate on his behalf. During his stewardship additions to the estate were the dovecote and walled garden.

Colonel Dixwell held extreme Parliamentary views: he was a signatory to the death warrant of King Charles I, a member of the council of state and was in charge of the defence of South East England. Following the restoration of the monarchy by 1660, those who had previously held high office and had not fled England were imprisoned or executed.

Col. John Dixwell eventually turned up in America having travelled via Germany. He changed his name to John David and traded as a silver smith, dying aged 82 in 1689. The Dixwell Silver Mark is still known in US assaying houses.

Meanwhile, nephew Basil had come of age and was recreated Baronby Charles II, but died in 1668, bequeathing everything as his father had done before to a child of three, also called Basil. This Dixwell lived for a further 82 years and passed away in 1750, leaving as sole heir his sister's granddaughter Elizabeth, who married George Oxenden of Dene and Wingham. Sir George had to take the name of Dixwell as a condition of the inheritance. George "Dixwell" Oxenden died in 1753 leaving Broome to his father, who gave it to his surviving son Henry (who then not only owned Broome, but also upon his father's death, the estate of Dene). Sir Henry Oxenden born 1756 decided that Broome would be the family's principal seat, and embarked upon many modernizing improvements.