

## A prominent Grave for a prominent Lenham resident

*By Richard Thomas*



Possibly the grandest monument in the churchyard is a listed monument, in a prominent place, right by the entrance to the church so everyone could see it on entering and leaving the church.

On one side the inscription reads

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS HARRISON OF THIS PARISH CHURCH WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE DEC<sup>r</sup> 6th 1826 IN THE 81<sup>st</sup> YEAR OF HIS AGE AND OF MARY HIS WIFE WHO DIED SEP<sup>r</sup> 12th 1775 AGED 22 YEARS. Leaving issue one daughter viz Mary Withers Also of John Harrison their son who died in infancy and on the opposite side it is to GEORGE POWELL ESQ LATE OF THIS PARISH WHO died 6th NOV<sup>r</sup> 1853 AGED 46 YEARS.

Thomas Harrison had stipulated in his will that the tomb should be erected.<sup>1</sup>

Judging by his will, he was a very wealthy man owning several 'messuages' (houses), much land and a slaughterhouse in the parishes of Lenham, Charing and Smarden. He was a churchwarden which explains the prominent location of his grave and that of his wider family nearby. He was the great grandfather of George Powel who was a named beneficiary in his will.

*'... and that a vault be built within the Parish Church Yard of Lenham as near as can be to the remains of my late dear wife and that my body be interred therein and that the remains of my wife be all to deposited therein and that a Tombstone be erected over the Vault and Iron Rails be put round the same and I nominate and appoint my grandson Thomas Powell the Eldest Son of my daughter Mary Withers the wife of James Powell and my Nephew George Harrison of Lenham aforesaid Gentleman joint executor of this my will. ....'*

George Powell in the 1841 Census is described as being of independent means and living in The Square in Lenham and in 1851 he is a Yeoman living in Lime Row in The Square. He appeared to be living alone. However, a Sarah Powell, described as widow of George Powell, Lenham receives mortgage payments from a property in Folkestone in 1859<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The will is kept in the National Archives. Members of Lenham Heritage Society work on the transcript.

<sup>2</sup> Kent Archives, Document F1975/30/T51

