

CHEQUERS ESTATE

NEAR PRINCES RISBOROUGH



Best known as the Prime Minister's country residence, but did a first century king fight a battle against the Romans here?

Chequers is the Prime Minister's country residence, situated between Princes Risborough and Wendover. In April 1927, King George V and Queen Mary visited Stanley Baldwin at Chequers to discuss the marriage of their youngest son, Prince George (later Duke of Kent).

During the First World War, Queen Mary, accompanied by the Princess Royal, Prince Henry and Princess Alice, visited Chequers, which at the time housed a convalescent hospital for wounded officers. After taking tea in the parlour, she donned rubber boots from the cupboard under the stairs to take a walk in the garden. In her diary, Queen Mary described Chequers as "a lovely old Tudor and Jacobean house.... A delightful place, very well restored and in perfect taste."

King George VI, when Duke of York, had lunch with both Stanley Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald and during the Second World War visited Churchill at Chequers, who

was recovering from pneumonia and unable to attend his weekly audience with the King at Buckingham Palace.

In October 1970, Queen Elizabeth II broke her holiday in Balmoral to have lunch at Chequers with President Nixon and Edward Heath.



The Queen with the Prime Minister (Edward Heath) and President and Mrs Nixon

Within the parkland of Chequers, the distinctive grassy hill of Cymbeline's Mount (or Castle) is claimed to have been the stronghold of the first century British King Cunobeline (also



Cymbelines Mount



Chequers

known as Cunobelinus, Kymbelinus or Cymbeline), from whom the nearby Great and Little Kimble may derive their names, although cyne belle as the name first appears in Angle Saxon times, may refer to 'Royal bell-shaped hill'.

A gold coin depicting Cunobelinus was found here, and local legend and folk tales tell of a great battle fought on the slopes of the hill by the King and his sons, Adminius, Togodumnus and Caratacus, against the oncoming Roman hordes.

Whether or not the connection with Cunobelinus is true, other relics certainly indicate that there was a Romano British village, a Roman villa and a Neolithic hill camp in Kimble hills.



Cunobelinus

Further information

References: Chequers - the Prime Minister's country house and its history (Norma Major)