

Adams & Remers



A&R a brief history of Trinity House

Trinity House in Lewes was originally the site of the Church of the Holy Trinity which was owned by the Priory of Lewes, but after being ruined by storms and gales was given up by the Priory in the 14th Century and the land sold. The house was thereafter known as “Church House” for some time.

Renamed Trinity House, the building was in the occupation of the Trayton Family from the mid 15th Century to the mid 17th Century. Walter Budgen, an historian of the period, describes the Traytons as “a well known family of Lewes lawyers”. During the Civil War, Thomas Trayton and his son Ambrose were Officers in the Parliamentary Forces of Sussex. In 1642 the House of Commons authorised Captain Ambrose Trayton to raise a force of 200 men for the defence of Lewes. He lived in Trinity House which, despite “Georgianisation”, is the same property we occupy today. The gable room in the west bay still contains the Armoury with racks for the pikes, hooks for the equipment and roots of ceiling rails for the uniforms which he purchased for his men and preferred to keep safely in his own house.

There is, at the back of the building a curious narrow single-storey building, strongly built of flint with ashlar quoins, too small to be habitable and presumably built by Ambrose Trayton as the town magazine to house his powder and shot. Today, this serves us just as well as our strongroom for storage of clients wills and deeds! Trinity House remained the mustering point for the Lewes Volunteers until at least 1882 (which explains why the Public House opposite the Coach Gates is named “The Volunteer”).

Captain Ambrose Trayton died in 1679 aged 86, leaving a grandson Ambrose (1633-1686) who purchased the Manor of Southover, which on his death passed to his brother Nathaniel, and thence to Nathaniel’s son Edward, the then owner of the Lewes Priory ruins.

Trinity House continued in the ownership of the Trayton family until sold by John Trayton Fuller to David Bayford, Doctor of Law, about 1770. John Hoper Senior was Articled in 1774 for six years, he was an Attorney in his own right by 1780, and living and practising in this house in 1790 when, presumably, he purchased it. It was not until 1947 that the Hoper family sold the house to Lt.Col. Charles Harold Noel Adams, the then Senior Partner of the firm.

During the whole of this period the house has been the locus of a Practice in Law, the occupiers being variously known as Attorneys, Proctors, then once again Attorneys, Notaries and, more recently, Solicitors. Until 1914 it was also the family home of the senior practising lawyer of the firm. The whole of what is now Lewes Bus Station and a substantial part of what is now the adjoining corner shop, was included in the curtilage. In addition to the house, there was a Brew House, Laundry, Grooms Cottage, Stables, Coach House, outbuildings, walled kitchen garden, orchard, tennis court, rose garden and lawns.

Today passers-by often ask about the flowering tree at the front of the building - this is a Pomegranate tree, which Lewes District Council are putting forward to the National Tree Register as a ‘Champion Tree’ – as its likely to be one of the largest of its kind in the country.

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