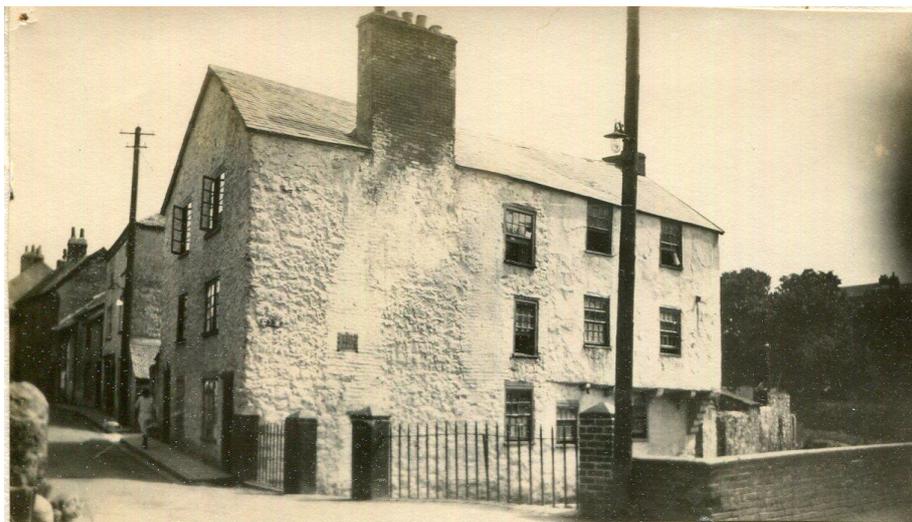


## 20-21 Coombe Street, Lyme Regis

Graham Davies, July 2020



20-21 Coombe Street, Lyme Regis is situated alongside the River Lim next to Gosling Bridge.

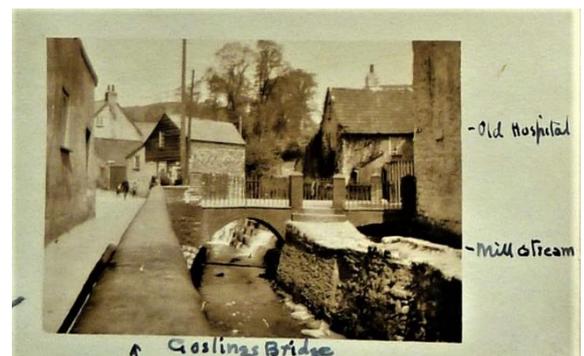
The building<sup>(1)</sup> (see left) was demolished after WWII, because of its poor condition, and rebuilt as it is today.

This former building survived the fire of 1803 and may have had its origins in Elizabethan times. Dr Wyatt Wingrave, the Museum's first curator in the 1920s, believed that it was used as the Town Hall in the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>(1)</sup>.

There is no confirmatory evidence for this in the Museum archives, but recent research by local historian Peter Lacey<sup>(2)</sup> indicates the presence of a first town hall close to Gosling Bridge during the period circa 1550 to the Siege of Lyme in 1644. In Elizabethan times the bridge would have been the entrance to the town for those coming from inland using the pack horse trail alongside the River Lim.

In her scrapbook<sup>(3)</sup> Gulielma Lister describes the building as the 'Old Hospital', and indeed, there is in the 1861 census reference to a property named *Hospital* in Horse Street<sup>(4)</sup>, in the vicinity of Gosling Bridge, in which three families are living.

Photo from the Lister scrapbook

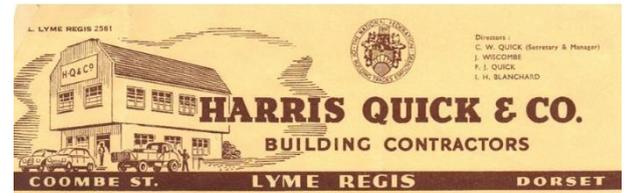


Buildings in Lyme Regis did not have street numbers until 1900, when the building was designated Nos 20 & 21, the former being adjacent to Coombe Street, the latter to the rear. The 1911 census records Robert Hodder, retired mariner, living at No 20 with his daughter Margaret who had her own laundry business which she ran from home. They took in lodgers between 1925 and 1935. Robert Hodder died in 1932, but Margaret continued to live there into the War years. It was empty after 1945. Between 1911 and 1934, three different families lived at No 21, namely the Brooms, Warrens and Jeffords. There is no record of occupation after that, which indicates the poor state of the building at that time<sup>(5)(6)</sup>.

After the war, Cecil Quick took over the property for his building firm, and re-built it.



Harris, Quick & Co, Coombe Street, c1958



1975

Cecil Quick retired from the building business in 1977, after 30 years, but retained the building in Coombe Street for a new venture, Freezerland.

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- (1) Photograph from the Wanklyn Bequest 1943, Lyme Regis Museum. On the back of the print Dr Wyatt Wyngrave has written 'House on Lynch at Mill Green from Bridge, used as Town Hall in 17<sup>th</sup> century.'
  - (2) Personal communication
  - (3) Gulielma Lister's scrapbook has become known as the Lister Thesaurus, and was given to the Lyme Regis Museum. It was compiled, with her friend Abba Blanche Palmer, from about 1906 to the 1920s. Gulielma Lister (1860-1949) was the daughter of Arthur Lister FRS and niece of Lord Joseph Lister, pioneer of antiseptic surgery.
  - (4) Before 1900, that section of today's Coombe Street, from the Ship Inn to Gosling Bridge, was called 'Horse Street' reflecting the passage of pack horses from the The Old George Inn along the street to Gosling Bridge and thence on the pack horse trail northwards alongside the River Lim.
  - (5) Lyme Regis Census Records, Ancestry.co.uk
  - (6) Lyme Regis Electoral Registers, Dorset History Centre