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SCIATICA?
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RHEUMATISM?

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ARCH SUPPORTS

WHEN PARSONS WERE PUBLICANS

A Hint For Invercargill?

"YOU do not need to be a heavy drinker to admire, or even frequent, our inns," says Norman Wymer in a recent issue of "London Calling." You can even be a strict teetotaler and still enjoy their warm comforts and rich hospitality. To the Englishman, his inn, above all places, has long been a home from home. It will be interesting to see whether something like this will now appear in Invercargill.

ONE of the most remarkable facts about the English inn is that during its stormy passage of 800 years or so it has gradually developed from something dirty and uncared for—and sometimes even evil—into a place with a great world-wide tradition, he continues.

It is a place where duke and dust-man feel equally at home; where young and old delight to "drown their sorrows" or celebrate their good fortune over a tankard of beer; or where travellers still prefer to break their journeys. It is, moreover, a place where many a business man meets to bring off a deal, for the social atmosphere of the old English inn still prompts sound business.

English inns are to-day showing that same warm welcome to the thousands of sailors, soldiers and airmen from the Dominions and Colonies, the U.S.A. and Europe, whom war has brought together in our small, homely island. Only the other day I played darts with an American soldier in the bar parlour of an old Devon inn. There were several Americans in the bar at the time, and I am sure they all felt just as at home as I did.

Inns of a kind have been in existence in England at least since the twelfth century—and they probably existed well before that.

At first the Church was "mine host" of England. The clergy saw to all the catering and entertaining that really mattered, but there were also ale-houses in many villages, and here the cottagers could drink, dance, and make merry in the evening after a heavy day's work on the land. The beer was home-brewed, and of high quality, but these ale-houses achieved an evil reputation as being dirty and the scenes of drunken brawls.

The inns—or guest houses as they were called—started by the Church were very different. They were set up mainly in parishes frequented by pilgrims, and were clean and comfortable, if few and far between. In the early Middle Ages there were few travellers and comparatively little demand for accommodation. But when travel increased, so did the number of hostleries. The inn and the road grew up together. The inns were built at strategic points along the highways. Sometimes they were placed at the junction of four roads, so that travellers on each could benefit, but often they were built along some lonely track, as a safeguard against any wayfarers being left stranded at night.



In many cases, whole towns have since sprung up around these isolated hostleries, but you will still find many of our oldest inns standing desolate, miles from the nearest house. In peacetime they serve the needs of modern motorists as efficiently as they did those of the horse wayfarers of earlier times.

But there were two other factors that caused the growth of the inn—the decline of the power of the Church and the development of our wool trade, for which we soon became world famous.

Public Entertainer No. 1

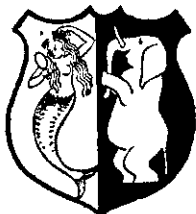
When the Church lost its power—especially after Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries—the inn became England's public entertainer number one. The sixteenth century saw inns springing up all over England, and the architecture that the Tudors put into them was magnificent. . . beautiful heavy oak beaming, both inside and out, low-pitched ceilings, superb galleried courtyards, and ample stabling facilities. Although, unhappily, few of the galleries remain intact to-day—an interesting example is *The George* in Borough High Street, just over London Bridge from the City—you can still find many Tudor inns dotted over the country.

It was in these courtyards that English drama was born. It was here that Shakespeare, Marlowe and many others were first acted, and it was on the basis of the inn yard that the theatre we know to-day was first designed.

While drama proper was being started in the larger hostleries of the towns, "light entertainment" and "music-hall" were finding their birth in the little country ale-houses, itinerant bands of players travelling from one to another, carrying their props in hand-carts.

Fascinating Signs

Not the least fascinating feature of the inn is its sign. At first it comprised merely a pole with a bundle of hay on the end. Then came the custom for an itinerant knight to have a shield bearing his coat of arms displayed on any house where he spent a night, provided that he had found it comfortable



—thus giving a friendly tip to any further knights later seeking hospitality on the same road. This practice led to inn-keepers spending large sums on having the most elaborate signs painted. Great artists like Hogarth, Millais, and George Morland were sometimes commissioned to paint them, while Jean Tijou, who

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