



Bonchurch Inn



A small party of visitors take refreshment at the newly refurbished Bonchurch Inn around 1930. Once a busy nineteenth-century coaching inn, incorporating extensive stables, it was virtually rebuilt shortly after the 1914-1918 War, re-opening in 1923 with Frank Martin as the licensee. The Inn courtyard that had once been host to stage-coaches, station omnibuses and other horse-drawn vehicles on a daily basis was now a point of rest for new-fangled bull-nosed motors of the type seen in the picture. Frank Martin remained licensee for 25 years, with Frank Stacey taking over from him in 1949, and then Allan Roake following in the later 1950s. Allan was an accomplished pianist and music arranger, with the result that late night musical evenings became a favourite among visitors and locals.

BONCHURCH INN, BONCHURCH, I.W.
BOARD RESIDENCE. Terms from 2 gns. according to
Season. Or BED AND BREAKFAST.
 Within easy distance of Ventnor and Shanklin. Few minutes from Sea
 and Famous Landslip. LUNCHEONS and in or outdoor TEAS.
 Electric Light. Baths (H. & C.).
 Parties Catered for. Cars Garaged. Phone: Ventnor 7.
 Proprietor: FRANK MARTIN.

The adjacent advert from a Ventnor Guide of 1938 reveals that board residence was from 2 guineas (two pound two shillings in pre-decimal money) according to season. This would have been for a week's stay and 'board' in this instance meant bed, breakfast and evening meal. Garaging for cars was a clear attraction for what was becoming a private motor age. And you

could make telephone bookings, the Inn rejoicing in the telephone number *Ventnor 7*, indicating that it must have been among the very first properties to be connected in the area.

For nearly all of its nineteenth-century existence, the Inn was owned by the Ribbands family and it eventually became known as Ribbands Hotel. The family also owned the Ventnor hotel that was later known as the Metropole. By the early 1900s, the Bonchurch Hotel or Inn was managed by Colonel and Mrs Joliffe and it became much frequented by American and German visitors to the Undercliff. A coach plied to and from the railway station to link up with arriving or departing trains. The Great War inevitably killed off this trade and the business appears to have been closed down entirely. That was the prelude to the re-building of the very early 1920s, described at the start.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.

The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

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