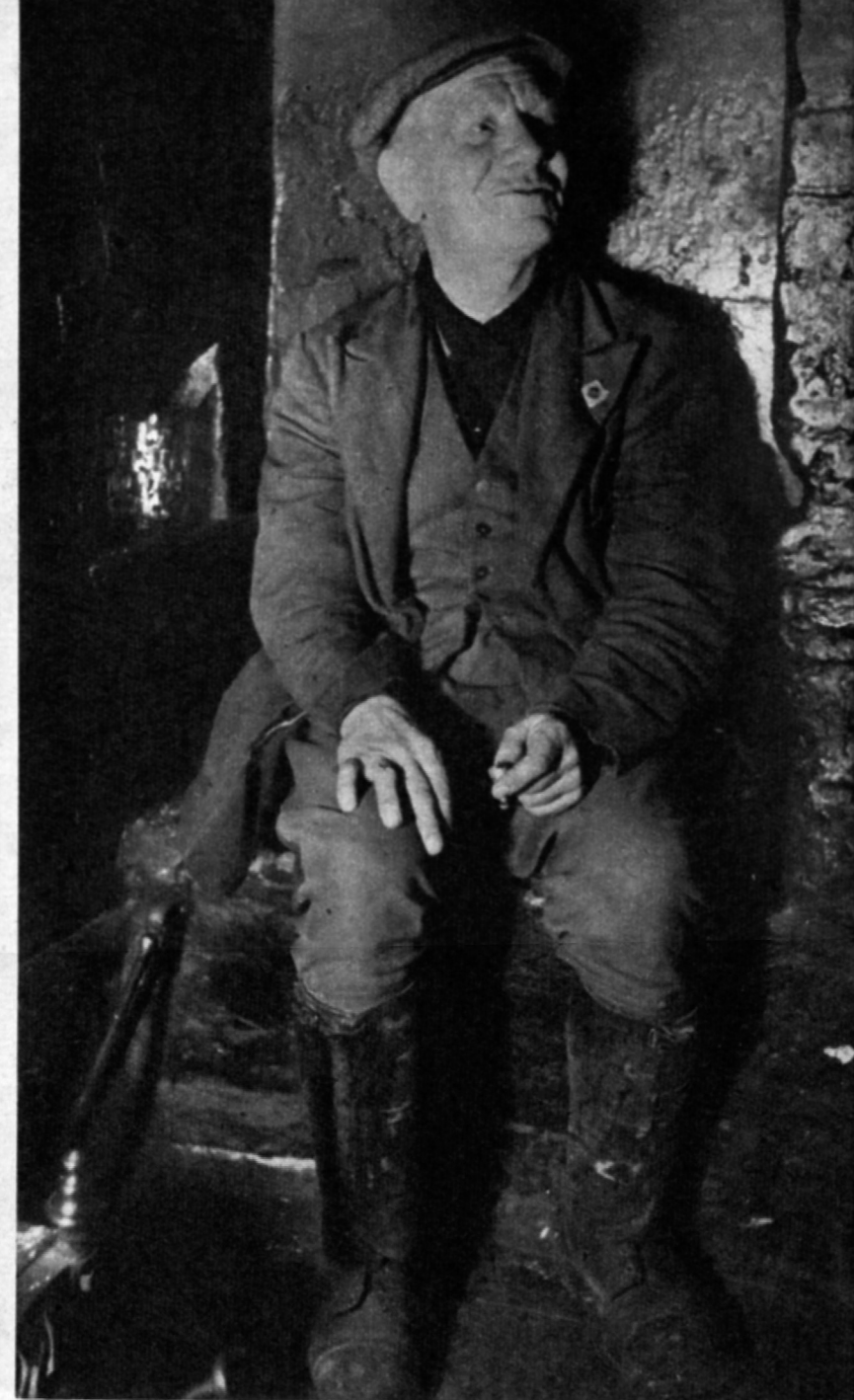


"What Have They Fixed Up for To-night?" says Wack

They call him Wack because his Christian name is Charles. He's been working all day in the woods, cutting the logs he'll take round to the cottages with his pony and cart next Saturday. Pipe in mouth, he chats with Jack Howard, who works at the gasworks.



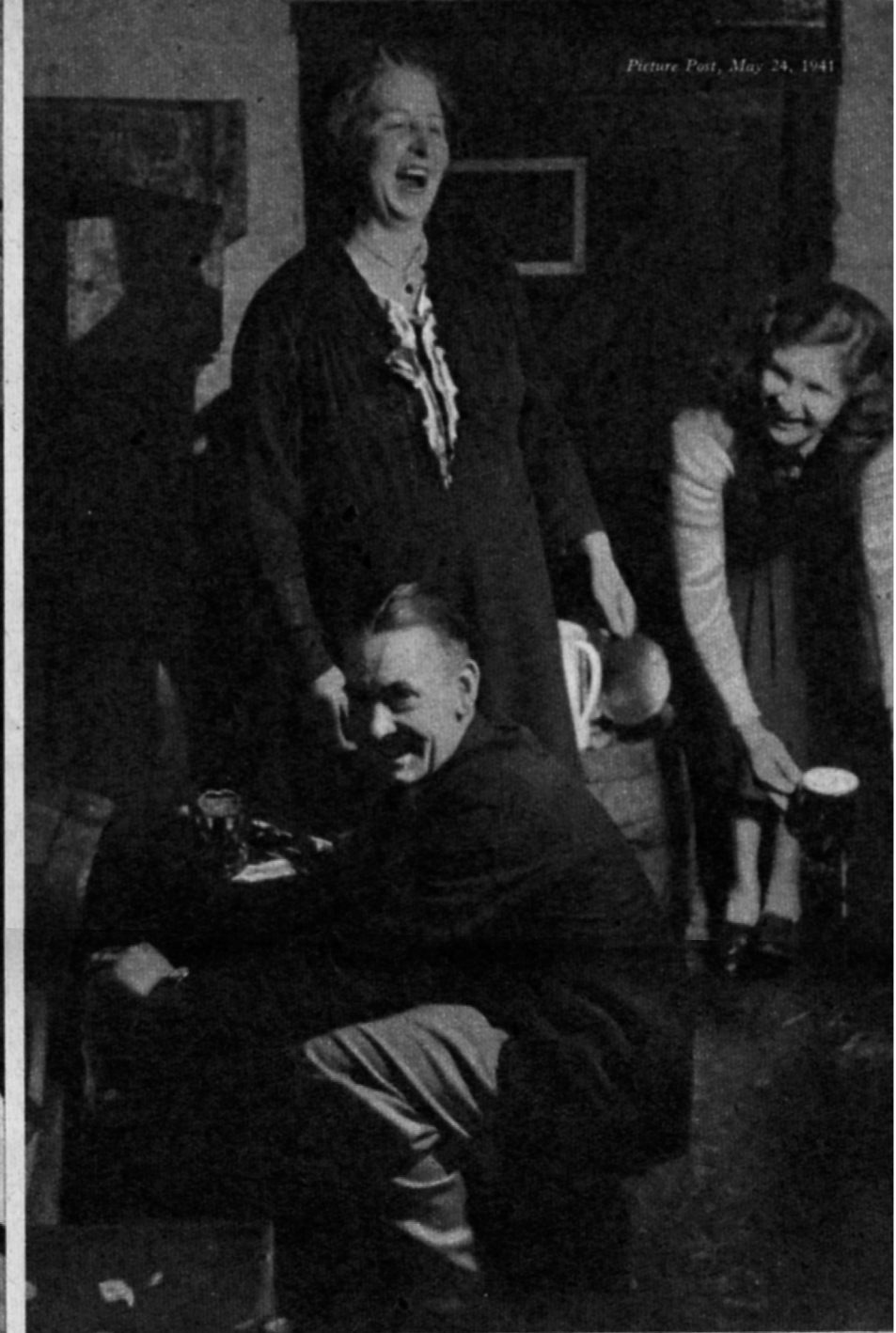
"Is There Anybody Serving?" says Fred Miller

He's been working on the roads all day for the County Council. He sits in the chimney corner, rolls a cigarette, warms his boots by the wood fire that blazes up to the open sky.



"Can I Give You Any Help?" Says Rose

She has cycled from her home two miles away. Somebody makes her drink a lemonade, but it wasn't for that she came. She comes to help with the work at the Yew Tree whenever she can.



"We Don't Want More Help! We Want More Beer!"

So this is where Mrs. Keep, the landlady, has got to! Down in the cellar, drawing pint after pint with the help of her son-in-law, Ernest Ing. Her only fear is that soon she won't have enough beer to sell.



"I Warn You, Mrs. Keep, Don't Let Them Lead You Into Trouble"

Two members of the military, Joe and Jack, arrive at the Yew Tree. Mrs. Keep serves them, sits down to have a word or two. "You boys are always pulling my leg," she says.

## Whatever is going on at the YEW TREE ?

By a steep village street in Buckinghamshire stands a Yew Tree. Behind it an inn of the same name.

NOWHERE in the Chiltern country is darts played with more zest than in the Yew Tree, a red-brick house fitting comfortably into the single village street of Frieth, that runs down the steep, flinty hill from Lord Parmoor's estate to the horse-pond on the road to Marlow. Taking your first look at the board behind the tap-room door, you are awed by the record scores written up there at the side, where anybody achieves immortality who scores three sixties with three darts. "J. Keep, 3-60; E. Ing, 3-60; S. Busby, 3-60; P. Featherstone, 3-60; J. Shaw, 3-60; W. Keep, 3-60." And the date is inscribed after every one. It is the kind of memorial which best commemorates English life.

In this welcoming tap-room, one wall is altogether taken up by a blackened fireplace that runs straight up to the sky, with a couple of serrated hangers for the kettle dropping down to the box-grate and an iron cone on the wall for heating your beer if you happen to like it that way. At

each side is a low seat, rounded and smooth from the use of many generations and with a niche for the beer mugs at each hand.

But everybody is easy and agreeable in this room not just because it is warm and comfortable. Woodmen, gardeners, chair-makers, building workers—some of them travelling 25 miles a day to their work, digging huge gardens after a nine-hour day, and growing vast quantities of potatoes in a season—come here not just to buy a pint of beer or an ounce of shag out of wages that remain startlingly small. They come because they are friends of the landlady, Mrs. Keep, whose Yew Tree is less a public-house than a private house with a beer licence.

How does she come to be landlady of the Yew Tree? Forty-five years ago her father took the licence—"it was just going!" she explains—and the family moved from the cottage at the top of the hill. Thirty years ago, she married and, a week after the wedding, went to Canada where her

Continued overleaf



"And What Do You Think, Mr. Lamley?"

Many of Mrs. Keep's customers are woodmen. In war-time, some of them miss their cheese most, but they can still get their beer at the Yew Tree. Bill Lamley is one of them.



*This Is What Was Happening : Mrs. Keep Was Playing a Darts Match  
She challenged the Home Guard, and the Yew Tree won by eight games to six. Whenever she can  
leave the Yew Tree she goes with the team when it plays away matches in neighbouring villages.*

husband was on building work in Ontario. "I used to think out there," she says, "however could I do all I used to do at the old Yew Tree!" But war broke out, Mr. Keep began to agitate in favour of coming home to join up, and at last he had his way. Back to England they came, and back to the Yew Tree she went to help her father until the day came for her to take the licence. "Yes," she says, "We've been here forty-five years—without a conviction! And, when I went before the magistrates, I didn't have to say a word!"

What is her greatest fear? The approach of the last week in July—when the yew tree itself has to be clipped. It is about thirty feet high, with a gigantic base, a ridge above, and then a tapering column to the bird on the top. Sometimes at the Yew Tree, if you are lucky, you will meet old Owen, with a bay leaf in his mouth and grinning eyes in his brown face—Owen who has always clipped the tree, kept it back from overhanging the road and designed the shapes that embellish its magnificence. But when he reaches the top of the ladder and stands there clipping, with nothing except the strength of his ankle to save him from falling down 30 feet on to the flinty earth of Buckinghamshire, then Mrs. Keep's heart fails her. "Last year I couldn't stand it, she says. "I had to go up to my room and shut the door and stop my ears up." After this year she threatens to let



*Mrs. Keep's Opponent  
Sid Busby once scored three 60's with three darts.  
He plays for the Home Guard.*

the yew tree grow a natural life, but we may doubt whether Owen will allow it while he can still climb a ladder. All he needs, he will say, is a better supply of cheese, for that is his chief war aim. "I hope your son comes home safe from the war," he said to Mrs. Keep when her son joined the R.A.F. "Hah! And I hope he brings me a lump of cheese."

The best evenings here are the evenings of dart matches, and the more lively they are the more Mrs. Keep laughs and jokes and glows with the joy of her life. Afterwards, she rests in her own chimney corner, with a cup of tea in her hand, and she stares into the great bough that burns in the grate until her cheekbones are two scarlet reflections. She thinks of those who came for the darts match. "They're nice people," she says "I mean, they're none of them blackguards nor anything."

From her, it is a tribute anybody should be proud to receive.



*The Reward of Victory  
The twelve-quart bottle is filled by the losing team. The last drop is poured out. And then  
everybody files out past the great Yew Tree that was planted by the road-side before Mrs. Keep  
can remember. "Good-night all!" "Good-night, Mrs. Keep!"*