

## **Popular Recreation in pre-industrial times:**

### **the importance of the PUB**

The pub, or 'drinking house' was a focal point of village life in pre-industrial Britain. People socialised, discussed business opportunities, found work, perhaps met up to arrange payments and discuss financial matters, and had meetings.

Pubs were located on main travel routes: people stayed at pubs (Inns) when making journeys across the country : stables existed there so that horses (because transport was by horse-pulled carriage) could be rested, fed and watered. Pubs were therefore important places for travellers.

Pubs were also a focus for leisure activities and local entertainment: bear and badger baiting would be organised there and perhaps hosted by the publican/landlord. Dog fighting, prize fighting and gentle pursuits of darts, quoits, billiards, skittles might be played in an area of the pub (many country pubs nowadays still offer these activities to attract custom.

Landlords would seek to attract customers by advertising these activities, and would be involved directly in promoting and organising sports such as prize-fighting, knowing that they could profit: they would also organise betting (wagering).

The game of cricket was very much pub-based to start with – the BAT AND BALL INN at Hambledon in Hampshire is known as the 'cradle of cricket'. The game was developed there in its early days.