

# PSST! ANYBODY WANT TO BUY A CEILING?

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ONCE again the fate of the beautiful Adam ceiling taken from the Square House, High Street, Christchurch, in 1954, is in the balance. When the house was destroyed to make way for the present-day shops and arcade, the ceiling was "rescued" and found its way across the border to Bournemouth in whose possession it still is. Over the years it has had a precarious existence. Lying in storage in crates, it has been moved from one place to another without finding a real home anywhere.

Nobody, it seems, wants a genuine Adam ceiling. And keeping it in storage costs money. Once it was actually sold but the purchaser had to return it because he was unable to get planning permission for an extension to his house. The ceiling was to have been used in the extension.

On another occasion this fine example of the famous architect's work was damaged when a basement in which it was stored was flooded.

Now the future of the ceiling, still stored in crates at the Civil Defence premises in Corhampton Road, is once again being considered by Bournemouth Libraries and Museums Sub-

Committee whose property it is.

The present storage premises are shortly to be demolished—which means yet another move for the ceiling. However, if a purchaser could be found the sub-committee would be prepared to sell it.

The ceiling formed part of the interior decoration of the Square House designed by the Adam brothers who stayed, at Christchurch while building the first, Highcliffe Castle in the latter part of the 18th century. The house also contained a fine Adam fire-place.

There are few examples of the Adam brothers' work in provincial towns. It is mostly found in London and in country houses.

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THE famous Adam ceiling which has been homeless for some years since it was taken from an old house near the Priory may soon be given pride of place in a big farmhouse now being built for his family at Marsh Lane, Fairmile, by politician-farmer, Mr. Maxwell Goode.

"By virtue of having five children to accommodate, I think my farm house will be the biggest house built locally for many years and there is a chance the Adam ceiling will fit nicely into the lounge, which is to have traditional touches, like a huge open fireplace," says Mr. Goode. He has made an unspecified offer to Christchurch Corporation for the ceiling and is now waiting for news as to whether he can inspect the ceiling which is packed in 13 crates, complete with plaster and lattice, at the



Shortwood House Hotel, Magdalene Road.

The ceiling, which came from a house which stood where the small arcade leads to the post office, was given to Bournemouth Corporation to be restored. But they packed it away and eventually decided to auction it. When Christchurch heard this, they asked for it back and got it.

The borough had hoped it would be put up in a restaurant on Mudeford Quay, but this idea did not materialise. And of course there is some doubt as to whether it is a genuine Adam. Says Mr. J. H. Lavender, curator of the Red House Museum: "When the brothers Adam were around here working at Highcliffe (later called Highcliffe Castle), they did a little work in Christchurch, but much of the work attributed to them is really by imitators. But this ceiling is generally considered to be good enough to have been a genuine Adam." Meanwhile, Max Goode and his school-teacher wife Sheila, wait with their family for their house to be completed.

"It is our dream home and I am building it to induce my family to come back to the farm," says Max, who keeps 200 head of cattle and runs a trekking centre and riding school.

The family has been living in Poole, where Max once stood as a Parliamentary candidate for the Liberal Party and represents a Poole ward on Dorset County Council.