

Village cheer as historic pub makes a £600,000 comeback

Publican's vision will create 25 jobs and bring smiles to the faces of diners and drinkers

BY ROBIN JOHNSON

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A PUB in a Derbyshire village which has been closed for more than two years re-opens later this month after a £600,000 facelift.

The Bull's Head in the High Street, Repton, was closed and boarded up in 2005 as its owner, Burton-based Punch Taverns, was unable to find a new licensee.

The 18th-century building soon fell into a state of disrepair. Rainwater leaks damaged the interior, there was an infestation of deathwatch beetles and the pub became a target for vandals.

Now the Bull's Head is set to reopen, thanks to publican Richard Pope.

He took on the lease last year and unveiled plans to restore the building to its former glory and make the business better than before.

With £400,000 of investment funding from Punch and £200,000 of his own money, he launched a rescue operation.

"I'd been in the pub trade for a number of years and had been waiting for the right opportunity to run my own business the way I wanted to," said Mr Pope, who lives in Wirksworth but will soon be moving into the pub with his family.

"The Bull's Head is the perfect opportunity for me to fulfil that vision.

"When I first saw the building it was in a derelict state, but I could see the potential."

The building has had an extensive refit but, wherever possible, existing features have been retained.

The ground floor will feature the original bar, a glass wine wall and four fireplaces.

The original stone floor which dates back to 1781, will form part of the dining area - Mr Pope wants to put the pub on the map for its food.

He has employed David Humphreys as head chef, who will be cooking traditional dishes using quality local produce.

"The food will be outstanding," said Mr Pope. "I want to create a place that people will travel to from far and wide - not just the local area - to taste our food."

Mr Pope, who will be creating about 25 full-time and part-time jobs, said the reaction in the village to the reopening had been overwhelmingly positive.

"The feedback I've received from the local community has been incredible," he said.

To mark such an important landmark in the pub's history, a time capsule will be buried within the grounds.

The new publican is inviting suggestions as to what should go into the capsule.

The official opening will be at 7pm on Thursday, May 24, when villager Anne Faulkner, who was born in the pub, will pull the first pint.

At noon the following day, the MP for South Derbyshire, Mark Todd, will help to bury the time capsule.

The best suggestion for a time-capsule item will win a meal for two at the pub.

If you have an idea, log on to the website at www.thebullshheadrepton.co.uk.



WORTHY EFFORT: Publican Richard Pope inspects work in progress on his dream establishment, the Bull's Head at Repton. He hopes to put the old pub back on the map with a total refurb, fine food and good service.

Pictures: Mike Inman M1030578-1 (Above) and M1030578-6

COURTS

Recent cases dealt with by Southern Derbyshire magistrates

Identity failure

Jonathan Charles HINCHER, ER, 40, of Thoresway Road, Long Eaton, (first), ordered to pay £25 costs and licence endorsed with three penalty points for being the keeper of a vehicle failing to give information as to the identity of the driver who was alleged to have been guilty of an offence between October 3, 2006, and February 1, 2007.

Licence fault

Martin John HEARNE, ROBINSON 25, of Newfield Road, Sandiacre, fined £150 for driving a vehicle without a correct licence and fined £540, ordered to pay £40 costs and licence endorsed with eight penalty points for using a vehicle without insurance on December 19, 2006.

No insurance

Shane Robert HENSON, 45, of Allstree Street, Derby, fined £100 for driving without a correct licence and fined £350, ordered to pay £20 costs and licence endorsed with six penalty points for using a vehicle without insurance on October 24, 2006.

Penalty points

Szymon KRET, 22, of Beech Way, Somercotes, fined £300, ordered to pay £35 costs and licence endorsed with six penalty points for using a vehicle without insurance on December 11, 2006.

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"The response we get from the Evening Telegraph is good, quality candidates

