



Pints & Passion: Communities Reviving Britain's Historic Pubs

Cheryl Markosky talks to intrepid individuals who've injected new life into neglected public houses

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chips. Perhaps somewhat a vanity project, but you could argue he's also saving the pub for locals who'd be bereft if they lost it.

However, it's not just celebrities buying up pubs in order to preserve them. Businessmen wanting to pivot in a new direction and young families keen to move to the countryside are also purchasing tired hostelries and bringing them back to life.

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IV Pub (known as "The Willy") in the village of Albury.

After living in the Surrey Hills area for 33 years, Lubbock says that "in a fit of madness", the couple acquired the pub that had been shut for nine months. The deal coincided with last year's sale of David's petrochemical business.

"The pub was fairly rundown, so we carried out a full renovation, redoing all the interiors, drainage and drive," he explains.

Lubbock points out that it was important to maintain the integrity of the historic, 16th century building, while at the same time

THE TICHBORNE ARMS, TICHBORNE, HAMPSHIRE



keeping everybody happy. "There are two crowds that frequent The Willy – those that come for a drink in a boozier and others who come to eat. The ambience had to be right for both groups."

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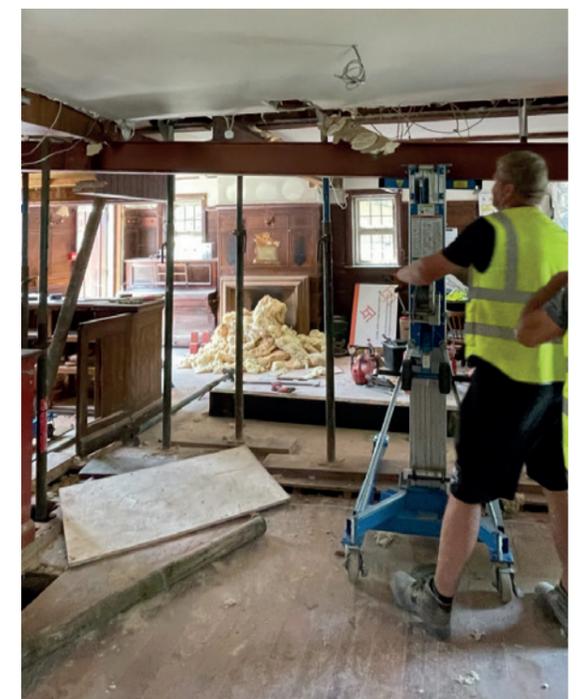
Those wanting to pop in for a pint undisturbed can still do so. And foodies will not be disappointed, with two Michelin-starred chefs, in-house dry-ageing fridge, state-of-the-art Jospo grill for open charcoal cooking, wood-fired pizza oven and The Pheasant Room that seats 12 for private dining.

According to Lubbock, the team source ingredients from local farmers and independent suppliers so it can offer high-quality pub food with a Mediterranean twist. Menu highlights include chalk stream trout, fallow deer, cured monkfish, and Blancs de Blancs and Sparkling Rosé from nearby Albury Organic Vineyard.

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The couple transformed rundown pubs in London, including The Grafton in Kentish Town, before deciding to swap the city for Hampshire where they could start a family. A friend spotted a To Let sign over the door of The Tichborne Arms near Alresford. The Czopors contacted the landlord immediately, took on the lease in 2021 and spent nine months carrying out a monumental refurbishment.

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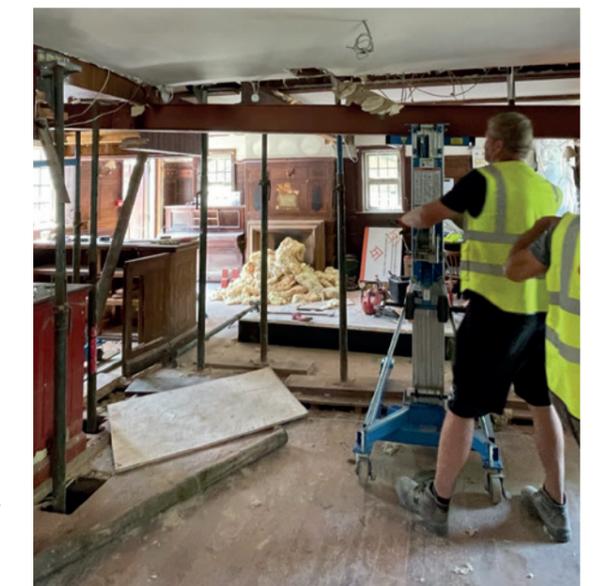
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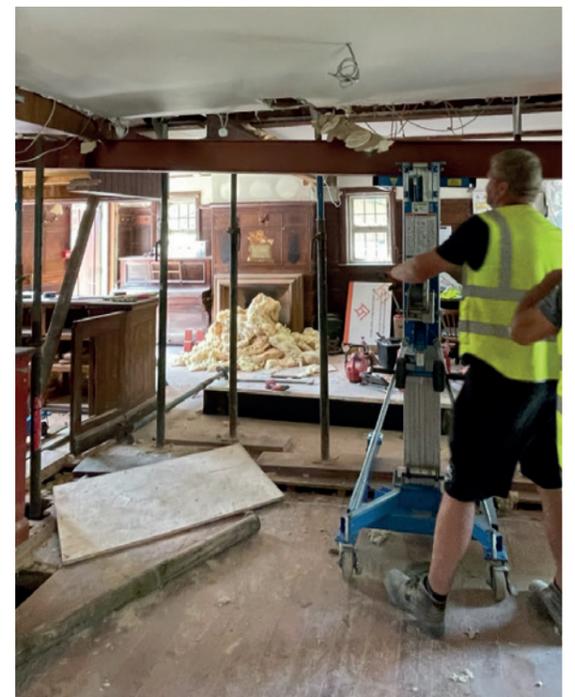
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WILLIAM IV PUB "THE WILLY", ALBURY, SURREY



"The Tichborne was very charming in a picturesque location, but in need of a bit of love," says Czopor. "We had to bring it into the modern era." This involved boldly knocking two bars into one – "upsetting some people, but they keep coming in" – and building an extension with a dining room to join up the pub and a barn.

Pubs are a big part of Britain's history, believes Czopor, therefore the plan was to create a traditional country pub feeling, with a mix of green banquette seating, wooden tables, cosy open fires and soft furnishings.

"We also massively relandscaped the gardens and removed a hedge to open up views of the water meadows where Hereford cattle graze. Our summers, when people can enjoy sitting outside, are incredibly busy now," adds Czopor.

When it comes to food Joel's at the helm, with his intense focus on fire cooking. Entire lambs hang from an Asado fire pit and highly trained chefs concoct interesting comestibles in a Big Green Egg charcoal smoker.

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David Lubbock, William IV

Dishes range from house smoked chalk stream trout pate with Alresford watercress, signature lamb asado with flatbread, pickles and salad; to venison, juniper and gin sausages, and apple crumble tart with custard. The aim is to use as many fresh items as possible – like eggs, watercress and beer – from within a 30-mile radius,



Tips on how to breathe new life into a faded pub

- Make everything as excellent as you can. Quality matters.
- Try to stay within your budget as much as is humanly possible. It's easy to get carried away.
- It's all about the staff. Employ a good manager and top creative chefs.
- Differentiate your pub and approach from others close by.
- Sympathetically marry old and new, while maintaining the building's character.
- The devil's in the detail. It's quite intangible, but you know when those details aren't right.
- Create different reasons why people should come to the pub, from family events and themed evenings to fun pop-ups and supper clubs with local wine and beer pairings.

and work closely with Hampshire Fare's purveyors of local produce.

Of course, you must provide comforting classics like burgers, and fish and chips, says Czopor, but people are more health conscious now and watch what they eat and drink. The couple have open conversations with customers and listen to feedback.

As a young family – the Czopors have two children: Cleo, now 2, born five days after

the pub re-opened, and Oran, 5 – they are savvy about how to attract families to the premises. The Tichborne hosts child role-playing sessions for babies and toddlers together with Little Bears from Winchester, pizza nights on Mondays and Wednesdays, and marshmallow toasting over the weekends.

Living near an active, family-friendly country pub is highly coveted as the focal point of a rural community, reports Charlie Chute, house. Partnership's Regional Partner

for Hampshire. He notes that "village pubs are still very high on buyers' wish lists, along with good views and schools".

And despite some recent closures, it's heartening to know that, with a bit of care and ingenuity, flagging pubs can be resurrected – melding the old with new to bring joy to all.

www.thewilliamivpub.com
www.tichbornearms.com

