

LEATHERINGSETT

King's Head crowned as top pub for county dining

ALEX HURRELL

A New Zealander has scooped the prestigious Good Pub Guide's Norfolk dining pub of the year award for the second year running - but this time with a north Norfolk business.

The King's Head, at Letheringsett, part of celebrity chef Chris Coubrough's Flying Kiwi group, now boasts a hat-trick of titles, as it was also voted East Anglia's best freehouse and top turnaround pub in last month's Great British Pub Awards. Last year The Crown Inn, East Rudham, took the dining title; another in the still-expanding Flying Kiwi nest of Norfolk pubs.

Master chef Mr Coubrough, 39, believes he's beating the British at their own game because he follows a simple recipe: "Good food, good drink, good service - it's not rocket science," he said.

The King's Head, which Flying Kiwi took over and re-launched in April last year, attracted 60,000 customers in its first year, drawn by a menu based on seasonal, local produce. It includes beef from the chain's own Dexter cattle which can be seen grazing within yards of the pub, game brought in by customers in return for a pint, and wild mushrooms gathered by 'Little John' the forager



HAT TRICK: From left; King's Head manager Jono Jorge, Flying Kiwi owner Chris Coubrough and head chef Emma Wedderburn celebrate the pub winning the Good Pub Guide's Norfolk dining pub of the year.

who finds his bounty "anywhere where he thinks no-one's looking," according to Mr Coubrough, who starred in ITV's Coastal Kitchen TV series and who is now filming another, called A Taste of Greenland.

Another local supplier is Wells farmer Teddy Maufe who grows

barley which Mr Coubrough's wife Jo turns into the Norfolk Kiwi Ale, sold in all the chain's pubs.

In charge of the cooking at the King's Head is head chef, Blakeney-born Emma Wedderburn, 32, who has worked in a number of top Norfolk kitchens, including those of Galton

Blackiston's Morston Hall. She has served up 10,000 meals this August alone.

Mr Coubrough praised her efforts, and those of King's Head manager Jono Jorge, 26.

"They are really skilled at managing their teams and keeping them enthusiastic when everyone's tired and it's sunny outside," he said.

He was especially pleased to win the dining award for a second time because eligibility was based on the recommendations of "happy customers" whose tip-offs were then verified by undercover Good Pub Guide inspectors.

Next week Mr Coubrough will add a fifth pub, the White Hart Hotel, Hingham, to his chain, which also includes The Crown at Wells and The Ship at Brancaster.

He believes the recession is a good time to buy and that people will always put aside money to treat themselves on special occasions.

And he laments what he thinks is a trend to turn traditional pubs into "nice English wine bars and nice English night clubs".

"I love proper English pubs," he said. "They're about real fires, dogs, hearty meals and someone behind the bar who smiles and can keep up their half of the conversation."

LEVERINGTON

Riding instructor injured after teaching accident

A riding instructor suffered head and chest injuries yesterday morning after she was thrown from her horse during a demonstration to a student in a Fenland town.

An air ambulance was called to Knights End Farm Equestrian Centre, in March, at around 10.30am to treat Diana Fisher, 41, who has been training horses at Woolcroft Saddlery in Leverington, near Wisbech, for ten years.

Mrs Fisher, from Leverington, was thrown into a wall when the six year-old horse bucked during a teaching demonstration.

The Magpas Helimedix team treated her at the centre before she was taken to Peterborough District Hospital by ambulance.

The extent of her injuries are not yet known but her condition is stable.

Eve Little, owner of the centre, said the instructor was taken to hospital on a backboard with suspected injuries to her ribs.

She said: "It's a dangerous sport and the whole reason we enjoy it is because horses do have a mind of their own,

"Di is very aware of the dangers. She is a very experienced rider and it does just show you that it can happen to the best of us.

"We are very thankful to the emergency services.

"They attended within minutes of our call."

NORWICH CITY



VS



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