

Fire forces couple to postpone wedding plans

# 'We will re-open pub' pledges blaze landlord

A DETERMINED landlord of a Willoughby pub which was part-gutted when its thatched roof caught fire has vowed to re-open the venue.

Andy Kelly was serving customers in the bar of The Rose Inn on December 22 when one of them told him that the roof of the 400-year-old building was ablaze.

He then watched in horror with scores of evacuated customers - including Lydia Thomas who took the picture, right, before fire crews arrived.

They were able to control the blaze but Mr. Kelly's upstairs living quarters and attic - which contained all of his and his partner Pippa Allsop's possessions were gutted.

The 37-year-old father-of-one, who has had to move into Miss Allsop's parents' home in Solihull, said: "It's still a bit of a shock and it's still sinking in. You never expect these sort of things to happen to you.

"Right now it's financially

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killing us - I have no income whatsoever. The place was our livelihood for 18 months so to see it go up in smoke is just soul-destroying.

"Pippa and I were due to get married in five months but we've had to put that off now which just tops things off.

"The insurance company are still inspecting the building and they don't know what caused the fire yet."

Andy, who had run the Main Street pub since September 2006, still hopes to re-open the venue later this year.

"We have loved every minute of running that pub and we'll do everything possible to get it going again hopefully within six months," he added.

"Everyone in the village has made us feel so welcome and I would like to thank them for their support since the fire."



From the Willoughby Society Archives