

Builders have uncovered a 16th century fireplace during renovations at a village pub. The discovery promises to be the showpiece of the facelift at The Swan in Wheathampstead High Street, which has also unearthed four more fireplaces, ancient cupboards, clay pipes and centuries-old bricks, beams and walls. The fireplace was revealed when workmen removed some Victorian wall-covering. Landlord Ted Williams, who took over the pub 17 weeks ago with his wife Paula said: "We found a thick oak beam about 12 - 15 inches across. They are ship's beams, and on one we found a picture of a ship which was obviously done when the fireplace was built".

The pub was built in 1520 and renovations have revealed much of the cow dung, lime and horse hair used to build the walls.

Mr Williams came to The Swan from the Cowper Arms in Digswell, Welwyn Garden City.

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