

Just like her mother used to make it

Natalia Banks' mother-in-law-to-be was delighted by real chips cooked in dripping at The Clog and Billycock, Pleasington

CELEBRATING the very best of traditional Lancashire with a modern twist, there is only one word to describe the Clog and Billycock, in Pleasington, and that is exquisite.

Set in a picturesque position with the rolling countryside framing the gastropub, this Ribble Valley Inn offers the same award-winning concept as its sisters The Three Fishes at Mitton and The Highwayman at Nether Burrow. Built with the high standards associated with the acclaimed Northcote Manor and the reputation of co-proprietor chef Nigel Haworth, the Clog and Billycock easily lives up to all expectations and would impress even the toughest of critics.

The £1.3m refurbishment of the traditional pub has transformed the eatery into a modern, spacious and welcoming place, retaining all the charm of a successful traditional establishment. A real feature of the interior design flows through the menu and the philosophy of The Clog and that is the celebration of Lancashire heroes.

Images

Black and white images of the farmers and businesses who supply the key ingredients of the menu from across the county adorn the walls of the restaurant and are even a feature on the place mats.

The menu, inspired by Nigel Haworth, who made it to the finals of BBC2's Great British Menu this

year, is laced with all the traditional favourites that you would associate with any Lancashire household.

My mother-in-law-to-be Christine couldn't hide her delight at the inclusion of real chips cooked in dripping on the menu (£1.95) and her main course of Sandham's creamy, curd cheese and onion pie, short crust pastry, sour cream jackets and plum tomato salad (£10.50) was even served in the same style of dish her mum used when she was a child.

To begin, my fiance Rob opted for Gloucester old spot pork ribs slow cooked with English mustard and spices with devilled black peas

(£5.75) and the meat literally fell away from the bone as he tucked in.

My father-in-law-to-be, Mark chose Farnworth's chipolatas to start and with three varieties served with English mustard mayonnaise (£3.50) he was well suited.

For main course, the breast of cornfield Goosnargh chicken with chunky chips and garlic and herb sauce (£10.95) was my choice and was cooked to perfection.

The Lancashire hot pot with Bowland heather fed lonk lamb and pickled red cabbage (£10.50) was served to my fiance Rob and was just as good as it had sounded on the menu.

For desserts, Christine and I, tempted by the traditional English pancakes (£3.50), decided to

share so as to not let the opportunity to sample the full menu pass

- even though we were more than full from our generous-sized main courses.

Our meal was quite literally the best I have sampled for a long time and is reflected in the high star rating that I have awarded. Having said that, our visit to the Clog and Billycock didn't go with-

out a slight hiccup as at one point our main meals were left scattered on the floor after the waiter's tray collapsed.

However, within the blink of an eye we were served fresh dishes without the commotion you might expect at other places and it was as if it had never happened. We had chosen to dine at the busiest time on a Saturday night at 8pm and had had to wait, as you cannot book a table for less than six people, but the wait in the bar area was as much a part of the experience as that of the food.

The other key thing that I must mention is the price. I must admit that before I had set out I was worried about just how high the bill would be at the end of the night, but for less than £80 four adults dined out and enjoyed two rounds of drinks - very good value for money in my book.

The Clog and Billycock celebrates everything that is good about Lancashire, including good quality service, and as a true Lancashire lass I was left very im-