

# Entertainment Today

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**TASTY TREAT:** Neil Turner MP presents Raj chef Shamim Kabil with his Tilda Tiffen Cup prize.



## Raj cook up a treat

A WIGAN Indian restaurant has won a top award after being nominated by local MP, Neil Turner.

MPs from across the country were invited to nominate a restaurant for a secret visit by a flying team of undercover judges as part of the Tilda Tiffen Cup festival of curry.

Mr Turner, a regular visitor to the Raj in Woodhouse Lane, put forward their name and this week it was awarded a special trophy for Highly Commended.

The competition was established three years ago by the Palace of Westminster's 'Tiffin Club' which encourages the participation of as many constituencies as possible to celebrate the growing diversity of British culture and food.

Tiffin is the name of the containers that still habitually transport light meals in the subcontinent, usually made up of three porcelain or metallic round trays with handles and lids in which lunches are delivered to workers.

Manager of the Raj, Sadrul Alam, said that all the staff were "extremely proud and delighted" to have been given the award.

He said: "This clearly recognises the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment being shown on a daily basis by all the team at the Raj."

MP Turner isn't a Parliamentary hot head when it comes to curry.

His favourite meal at The Raj, which earned them his nomination, is their Chef's Special Chicken Sashlick ("chicken cooked with chopped onions, garlic, tomatoes, and coriander to a medium strength.")

He said: "South Asian restaurants continue to make a fantastic contribution to the British food industry and I'm delighted The Raj has been Highly Commended."

"Wigan has many hidden treasures like The Raj and I'm very pleased it has been highly commended by judges."

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## Best of British from Paul

A WIGAN pub is returning to its roots - and its former name.

In recent years the former The Hinds Head on Mossy Lea Road, Wrightington, twice been a tapas bar and once an Italian restaurant.

But when enthusiastic new owner Paul Rogers (pictured above) takes over this week he will restore the name and - he hopes - the pub's status as "the" village local.

The businessman plans to transform The Hinds Head into a gastro pub, offering classic British dishes made with locally sourced, seasonal ingredients plus a choice of wines by the glass and real ales, all delivered by a restaurant-style table serv-

ice. Mr Rogers has already turned around the fortunes of The Railway at Euxton, converting it from a men's drinking pub into a popular gastro pub that attracts almost 800 diners a week at a time when the pub industry as a whole is in crisis.

It has earned him a place as a finalist in Lancashire Life magazine's forthcoming food and drink awards as Newcomer of the Year and he hopes to mirror that success at The Hinds Head.

Mr Rogers takes charge of the pub this week, but it will remain closed for kitchen refurbishment and minor front of house work and will officially open at the end of the month.

## It's Simply over at hotel

A POPULAR Wigan restaurant is to close.

The lease at Simply Heathcotes at Wrightington Country Club, Moss Lane, will soon be running out and its owner has not been given the option to re-new, so the business will shut in October.

Paul Heathcote (pictured) said: "It is unfortunate that our lease ends in October and the hotel has chosen to take it back.

"Wrightington has been a huge success for us with a fabulous and loyal clientele. "We entered into a five-



year arrangement and no option was offered for the lease to be renewed."

All the staff at Wrightington will be employed at other restaurants within Paul's portfolio, including Winckley Square Chop House in Preston and his flagship

Longridge Restaurant.

No one from Wrightington Country Club was available to comment on why the offer of a renewed lease had not been made.

Several events will be taking place at Simply Heathcotes celebrating its five years at Wrightington.