

MYSTERY CLOSURE: Owner who spent £150,000 on refit refuses to comment

Club shuts its doors just weeks after re-opening

■ A nightclub which reopened just weeks ago has suddenly and unexpectedly closed

by Bill Day

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THE future of Bridge Place Country Club was shrouded in mystery this week.

The club at Bridge has not re-opened for business since closing its doors to customers on Saturday.

Owner Peter Malkin and his partner Kate relaunched the club last month as a quality restaurant after spending more than £150,000 on a major facelift of the 17th century property.

But a building that once attracted late night revellers and throbbed to the live

sound of Manfred Mann and the Moody Blues has fallen silent.

For many years Bridge Place was the only nightclub in the district.

But business waned as tastes changed and Mr Malkin, 66, drew on his vast experience of restoring historic buildings to bring his talents to bear the club.

At the re-opening last month, Mr Malkin said it would be a "really fine restaurant" and he was planning to refurbish the dance floor later this year.

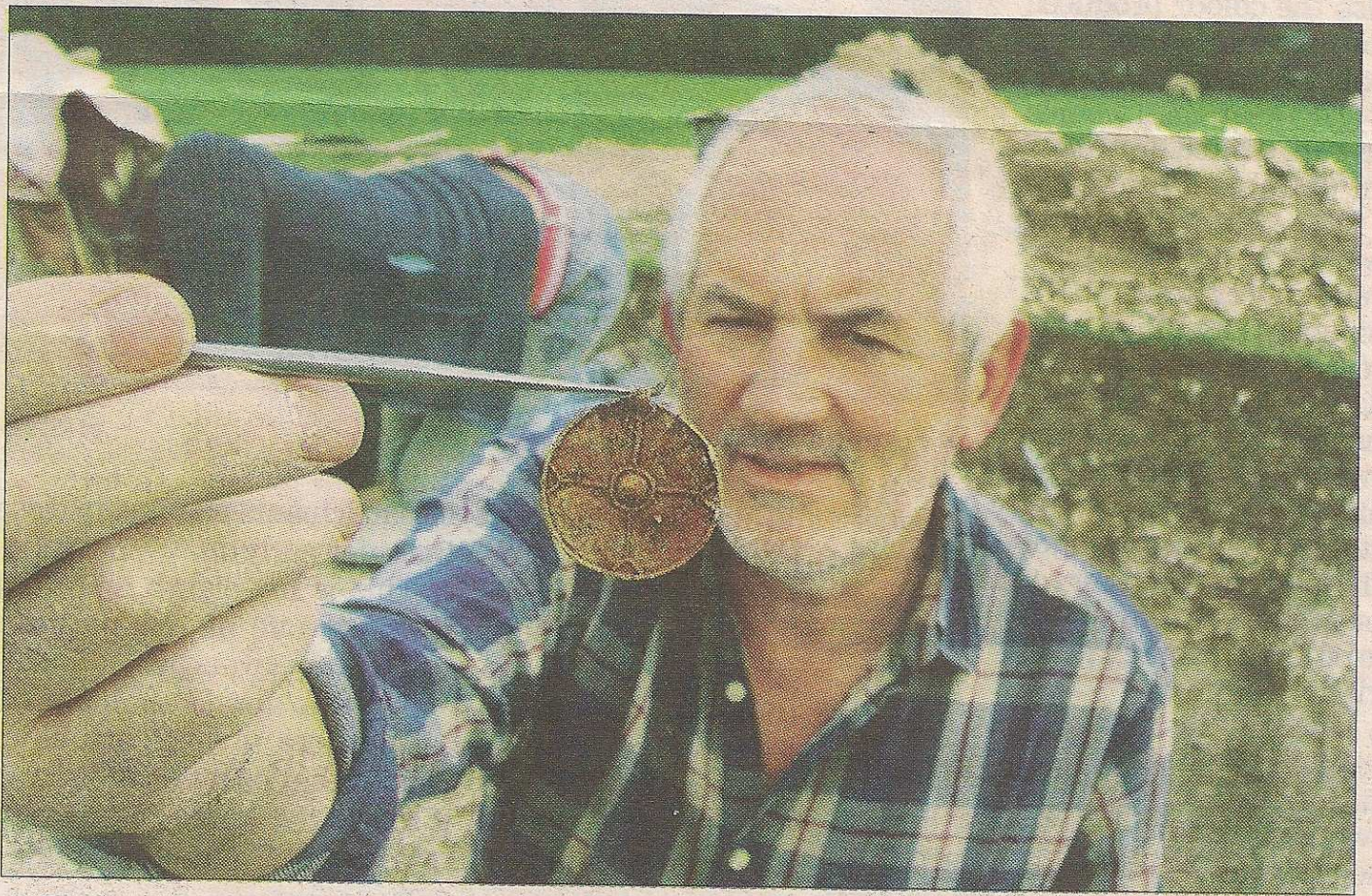
"Although it will be top quality, it won't be a snooty sort of atmosphere but for people who appreciate good food," he said.

Mr Malkin hired top chef Nick Holt but he has not fired-up his kitchen since the weekend.

This week Mr Malkin said he had no comment to make over the closure.



■ Owner Peter Malkin and partner Kate pictured prior to the re-opening of Bridge Place Country



■ Dr Paul Wilkinson with a valuable Anglo-Saxon gold pendant found at the dig in Bridge

Saxon haul at old burial ground

A TREASURE trove believed to be worth thousands of pounds has been found.

A cloth bag containing silver coins dating back to Anglo-Saxon times was one of several finds at Bridge.

Dr Paul Wilkinson's team of archaeologists first found an Anglo-Saxon spear at the prehistoric Star Hill site. Within a week, an Aladdin's Cave of treasures had been found at the seventh century chalk burial ground on land belonging to Vanessa McDonald, of Broxhill House, Upper Hardres.

This week British Museum specialists were examining the product of one of the

most significant digs ever carried out in east Kent.

The artefacts collected included gold pendants, glass and amber beads, buckles, knives, spears, scissors, cowrie shells and decorated pottery.

An item of glasswear no larger than a man's hand, called a palm cup, is believed to be one of only three such cups in the world. A gold pendant found on site is believed to be significantly valuable, according to Dr Wilkinson, director of the Kent Archaeological Field School from Faversham.

The collection of silver coins, found beneath the skeleton of a woman,

is being valued by a committee of the British Museum. The site contained 11 graves, some of the dead female.

Mrs McDonald, whose late father was farmer Richard Neame, said: "When they picked up the silver coins, found underneath a woman's skeleton, the cloth bag disintegrated.

"The whole exercise has been fascinating, all of the discoveries found fairly close to the surface despite the age of the artefacts."

Dr Wilkinson's team went to Bridge to investigate the site that had always appeared as a hexagon-shape on aerial photographs.