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Fun, Food and Drink, the British Way

BY PATRICIA TALORICO

COATESVILLE, Pa. — While it wasn't exactly K.C. Kulp's intention, The Whip Tavern has very quietly become a gathering spot for homesick British expatriates. "They come out of the woodwork. I never knew there were so many around here," says Kulp, who opened the snug, 42-seat West Marlborough Township tavern in June 2005.

If you create a cozy and inviting English-style pub in Pennsylvania horse country, don't be surprised by a British invasion.

Look around The Whip on almost any night (except Tuesdays, when the tavern is closed) and you'll see tables of Wellie-wearing customers quaffing pints of Tetley's English Ale, canoodling near the fireplace or chowing on bangers and mash, mushy peas, Guinness lamb stew and roast beef with Yorkshire pudding.

Pubs are a central part of British life. More than three-quarters of the adult

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population go to pubs, and more than a third regularly rest elbows at the bar at least once a week, according to "Passport to the Pub: A Guide to British Pub Etiquette."

Kulp has brought that same sort of convivial, neighborhood pub atmosphere to The Whip Tavern.

In April 2004, he bought the tiny cottage-like building, or what he calls "a greasy-spoon beer joint that got rowdy on weekends," and began major renovations. He stripped the

interior down to the cinderblocks, added a fireplace, new bar, tables and bench seating.

Kulp decided on an English-style pub theme because of the area's rich "equestrian tradition." Horse farms dot the rolling countryside. One of the oldest fox hunts in the United States is just "up the road" in Unionville, and nearby is the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine's New Bolton Center. That's the hospital that treated the late Kentucky Derby winner Barbaro.

Television sets around the bar of The Whip are almost always showing rugby or soccer matches. The tavern opens early for the Six Nations Rugby Championships, which are shown live. (The next big matches are March 10: Ireland versus Scotland at 8:30 a.m. and Wales versus Italy at 10:30 a.m. Breakfast is served that day until 11 a.m.)

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Here are some quick facts about The Whip Tavern and a few other eateries with British influences:

The Whip Tavern

*1383 N. Chatham Road,
near Coatesville, Pa.
(610) 383-0600 or
www.thewhiptavern.com.*

*Open 11 a.m. - midnight every
day but Tuesday.*

What you need to know: While beer is served at the pub, The Whip is actually a BYOB restaurant. You can bring your own wine, but a \$2.50 corkage fee will be charged. Cigarette smoking is permitted after 9 p.m. (This is a Pennsylvania tavern.) This is a small place, and Friday and Saturday nights are extremely busy –

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get there after 6:30 p.m and don't be surprised to wait an hour, most likely longer, for a table. An a la carte Sunday brunch is served from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

What to try: Welsh rarebit, a warm blend of melted English cheddar and Stilton cheeses swirled with Smithwick's Irish Ale and served with crostini for dipping. The mushroom soup is made with locally grown mushroom in a porcini broth. Kulp says the kitchen turns out Shepherd's pie with ground lamb, regulars love the Guinness lamb stew, and the toad-in-the-hole – or sausage

baked in Yorkshire pudding – is now offered as an entree instead of an appetizer. Kulp, a Buffalo, N.Y., native, also plays homage to his hometown on the menu by offering its famed sandwich Beef on Weck, layers of roast beef served on a pretzel salt and caraway seed-encrusted “Kummelweck” roll.

“It pains me when I see people trying to turn this into a cheesesteak,” he says.

What to wash it down with: The Whip offers 40 different beers. For an authentic

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British taste, Kulp suggest Tetley's, a light ale with a creamy head that pours similar to Guinness. He has Strongbow Cider, brews from Black Sheep Brewery and St. Peter's Old-Style Porter.

