



JOE LAWRENCE, SIMON KAY, DAVID PARSONS AND JOE CASANOVA TAKE A BREAK FROM THE RENOVATIONS.

From top to bottom

The old butcher shop, recently the Country Workbox, has been rebuilt to last another 175 years

Joe Casanova tells the story

We'd been looking for a building for a year prior to this, and we came close to buying other buildings, but this one came up on the market and basically the day that it came on the market we bought it, because there are not that many buildings for sale in town. We liked this one because it had a lot of potential. It was very derelict, but I could see if you stripped it back to its original form it would come out okay. So that's what we did.

The original building is simple enough and it's well built. But all the additions tacked on over the decades — they've been just awful. When we got into it, we could see the layers of floors and ceilings and the rest. Wall finishes had been added over and over again. Fixing that has taken quite a while,

especially the outside with all the concrete slabs and so on. But anyway, the original, as we hoped, is quite good.

I wasn't expecting this to be an easy task, because it's a very old building and nothing is straight. But it has good points; like the foundations which are excellent, they're all granite — they're really solid so that's a good start. A good foundation is essential and although the roof framing wasn't quite straight, it was salvageable.

There's been a lot of good tradesmen in here, like the renderer — he basically saved the building. We stripped a lot of it back, gave it a new coat of render and that sort of waterproofs the building and gives it a fair bit of strength. So that was good. And the bricklayers were excellent. We basi-

cally took the walls out of all this back section here, kept the roof framing, and then rebuilt the walls saving the framing above. You've got to have people that are willing to do a job that is not as easy as building a modern building, and if you can find them I think you're way ahead.

I think there are a lot of buildings in Braidwood that could be refurbished quite substantially.

You can't just keep patching, because if you do you just add to the layers of stuff that's been built over and over.

You have to go back to its original form. I think it's good to reveal that history and show the original simplicity of the building. That's what gives this place its character. They weren't very complicated buildings.

For example, just the trims in this building. There were so many trims that it cluttered the whole thing. When we take all that out and reveal things

back the way it was, most people will be surprised I think.

The changes over time were all done by different owners. To cover up the older stuff they just added another layer. Rather than say, "let's go back to there" they just keep adding. You can see it. Masonite was very popular in the seventies, so there was a lot of Masonite here. Timber cladding was added too that was too modern for the building and it just detracts really.

In the back area we'll have a restaurant — an open plan restaurant. My son-in-law and my daughter will be running it. We're very excited about this because I think it's got great potential as a space.

The kitchen is open to where people are sitting and there will be a direct link to the outside courtyard. Hopefully we'll get the winter sun in that area. In the summer you'll be able to sit outside and have a beer. We're very excited about the pavement that's going on now and the landscaping to make it a comfortable space. We need to make it a comfortable space where people can have a meal and relax.

And hopefully too, you'll see the structure the way it was. We're not trying to hide too much of it, so people can see how the timber pins rather than nails are holding things together. We kept most of the original framing. That's something that adds interest to the building, to be able to see its structure. We're going to leave the ceiling open. This was the original warehouse. I think it was mainly a cool room for the butchers but it must have been a warehouse-type section of the building.

As well as the restaurant, we'll have the two shops at the front as before and two small apartments above. One's for my daughter and son-in-law and the other one we'll have for occasional rental or if family comes over they can stay here.

The restaurant will be mainly Mediterranean food and perhaps a little bit of English food because the other side of the family are English. But mainly Spanish, Italian or Portuguese food. They've been preparing all the dishes and menus over the past year and practising on us, so I've gained a bit of weight. It's going to be good, simple food.

We're aiming to open before Christmas, so perhaps in a couple more months we'll be fairly close. We need to build the original awning back over the footpath so that will take a while. I think once that's finished, the building will be back to looking the way it was. ■

MAINTAINING OUR HISTORY



Hec Kane

A regular visitor to the building site, this is his story as told to Margaret Tuckwell

Heckling Joseph Kane is the only surviving child of Patrick and Sabina Kain. Hec's father, Patrick George, served in WWI and like many diggers met a sweet Irish girl from Dublin and they married on 26th April 1919 in Brompton, London.

Returning to Braidwood to set up home and family, they lived above the butcher's shop in Wallace St (the building currently being renovated). Hec was the second youngest of ten children and was born 27th June 1931 at the Lister Private Hospital in Braidwood (according to his birth certificate). Along with all his siblings he attended St Bede's school and has

fond memories of playing in the backyards of the Wallace Street with the Cook and Nomchong families.

The Kain Brothers Butchers were an icon in Braidwood for many decades and had two shops. The main being a butcher with their home above it and the second in the middle of Wallace Street (now Pay Dirt) with the original Kain Bros sign removed only recently. Hec worked as a butcher initially under his father, then with the guidance of his two older brothers George and Ernie and then continued to work for three subsequent owners. Hec says he loved working as a butcher with the traditional blue and white striped apron and the knife and sharpener on a hip holster. This reminded him of the cowboy films he had seen — even though they wore guns.

Hec enjoyed the slaughtering and in particular cooking and smoking bacon and hams for Christmas. His favourite meat is a T-bone. He did not enjoy so much the cleaning up during and at the end of the day, but his father insisted that everyone had to pitch in to do this job and this tradition stayed within the business.

The business was sold to the Elsmore family but still retained the name Kain Brothers Butchers. Two other owners followed Jim Cruise and Steve Royds whom Hec also worked for. Our current butcher Mick Clarke worked under Hec for two years.

A gentle quiet man Hec walks along Wallace Street to do his shopping and often calls into the old building just to keep an eye on what they're up to. ■

