

Vicar to the rescue when pub couple's wedding hits a snag

A BLESSING in disguise took the new owners of the Journey's End Inn, Ringmore, by surprise when the vicar and the entire village arranged for the couple's 'intention to be blessed' in the village church.

Paul Riva, who is the grandson of screen goddess Marlene Dietrich, was due to marry his fiancée Juliet Kane at the Totnes register office on Monday.

However, due to a 'technical hitch' involving Mr Riva's residential status as an American living in England, the couple were unable to go through with the ceremony, but had already

organised celebratory drinks back at the Journey's End.

The entire village crammed into the pub lounge to commiserate with the couple, and one resident managed to bake a cake with the word's Almost Married iced on top within an hour of the couple returning to Ringmore.

However, it was the Rev John Elliott who said that the couple's day out would not be in vain, and suggested he bless their 'intention to be married' in All Hallows Church.

He emphasised that the blessing was not an official one, and that the couple would not be married after the

ceremony, but it was just a nominal service to celebrate the couple's intentions.

Mr Riva said that he and his fiancée were completely overwhelmed by the goodwill and grace shown by the vicar and the villagers, who brought flowers with them as they made their way to the church to bless the couple.

He said: 'We feel so honoured. It was such

a wonderful thing for everyone to do, just overwhelming. We have only been in the village since July 21 but already it feels like home, everyone has been so kind and welcoming.'

Mike Wynne-Powell is a resident in the village and watched the ceremony on Monday.

He said: 'Ringmore is a rather unusual place and there are very few places where you

would see things like this happen. It was all so impromptu and off the cuff.

'It was a wonderful thing for the vicar to do.'

The couple are now booked into the Plymouth register office to get married on September 25, and are planning an official blessing next Easter or summer.

Mr Elliott said: 'Paul and Jules have made a

wonderful start in the village and were disappointed that they had not celebrated their union as intended, so as church minister I blurted out "well we could sort that out at the church right now".

'I explained to Paul and Jules that we could not perform a full marriage service, but we could pray for them, their intended marriage and their future life in the village community.'



Villagers join the couple for the impromptu blessing

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