

Both hands cut it in Dunfermline



According to the Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens, the King sits in Dunfermline town drinking the blude red wine. The prose refers to the town's position as the ancient capital of Scotland. As a result, Dunfermline is the birthplace of eight kings and two queens and, as a great surprise to most Americans, the birthplace of Andrew Carnegie the industrialist and philanthropist, who sold his US Steel company in 1901 to become the richest man in the world.

Rich history and heritage apart Dunfermline has a town centre that has been affected by retail trends with doubts over the future of key shops and declining footfall in traditional shopping areas. The only butchers shop in the town centre of this Fife's largest town, is run by Bryan Beveridge but he is working hard to make his shop a specialist meat shop and a destination shop. Just as well then that he has unique skills to match his service and products.

Bryan is ambidextrous and can use a knife in either hand. Now that is a distinct advantage to a butcher, as long as he remembers which hand the knife is in, otherwise it might be more than the wine that's blood red.

"I just thought it was natural, I thought everybody could do that. I was none the wiser but it has its benefits" says Bryan.





In April last year Bryan was proud to place his name above the door when he took over the sole running of the business from Thomas Johnston. Bryan has been the shop manager there for seventeen years and the move to becoming his own boss was helped by the team ongoing support of his Falkirk based former employer supplying sausages, steak pies and puddings.

"I had never been my own boss before and had always had someone to fall back on. Fortunately the staff all came on board with me. I am more comfortable now dealing with refuse, packaging, HMRC and PAYE."

The shop is well fitted out with self service units down the left facing a ready to eat serve over counter that extends to the rear of the shop, where a separate raw meat counter stretches across the shop.

Open 7.00am until 5.00pm daily, the shop now sustains a staff of eight, two of whom are part time counter assistants. Busiest days are Saturdays followed by Fridays.

The ready to eat counter goes really well with pastry products doing a tremendous trade despite the competition with three very functional bakers nor far away.

Racks of pork ribs and all the roasts for slicing are cooked in the area behind the counter. Their Lorne Sausage won a Silver Award in last year's Craft Butcher evaluations confirming its already established popularity with local burger vans.

The shop creates its own unique meat products making beef olives with a sage and onion filling a speciality. A further Silver Award for Hot and Spicy Beefburgers has also rewarded Bryan's innovation. Despite all this Bryan keeps a level head and a sound base claiming "we do the basics right and everything else takes care of itself."

Ensuring the quality on offer, beef is bought both live and sourced from John Scott Meats, lamb comes from them as well, pork and bacon from Robertsons in Ardrossan. Fresh rabbits, guinea fowl, venison and game come from Hubertus in Pitlochry.





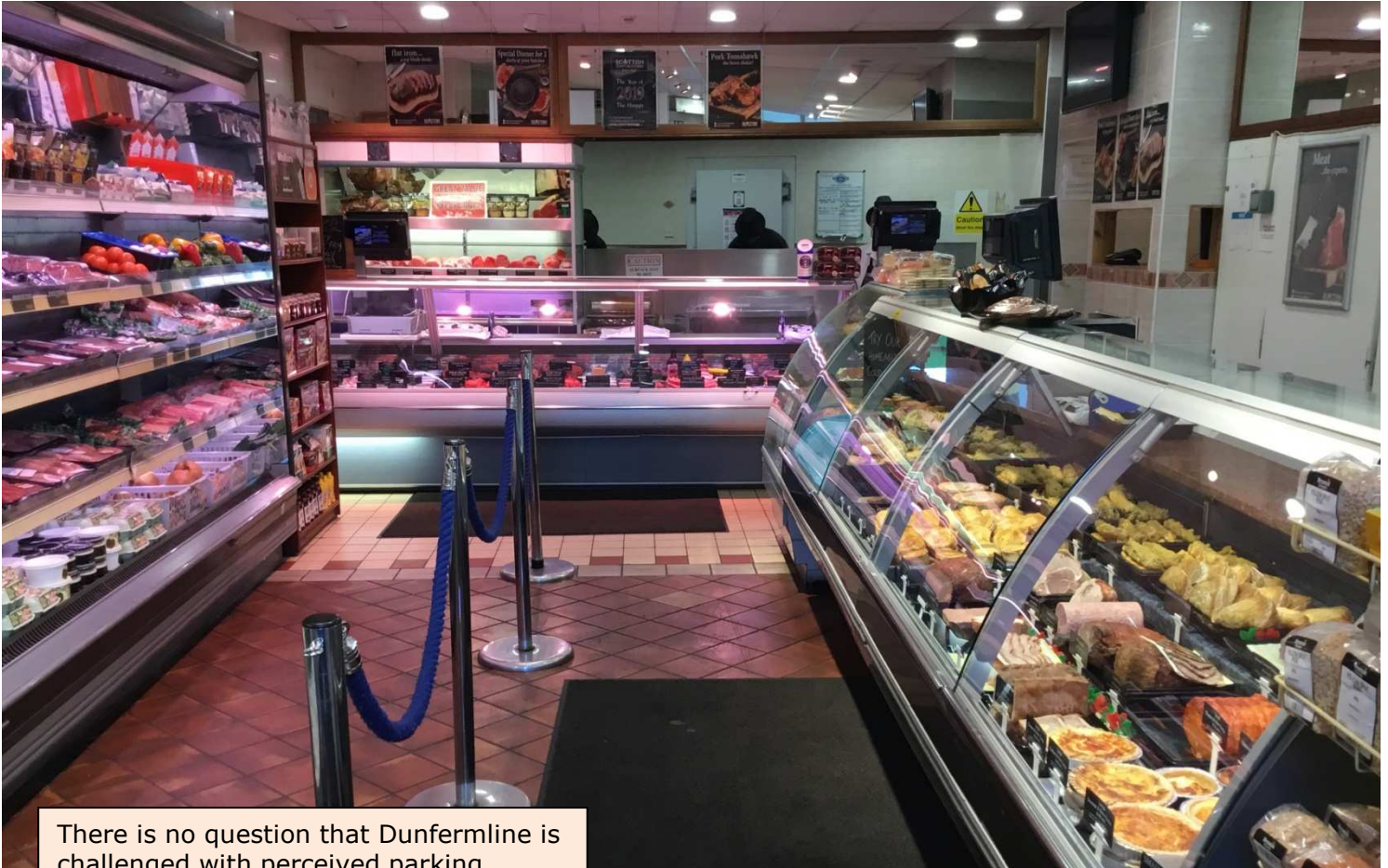
At your service: Mark, Willie, Bryan, Kerry and Blair

When Bryan Beveridge left school in 1981 he went to work with his uncle Willie Pettigrew who was shop manager at Alex Munro in Abbeyview, Dunfermline. He learned his trade there to the company's legendary cutting standards, doing block releases in Cumbernauld and winning their Apprentice of the Year.

Bryan progressed to being Munro's relief manager in Fife and worked for Alexander the butcher in Abbeyview before Thomas Johnston bought the business in 1989. Bryan was at Johnston's for the next 19 years, 17 of them as manager of 25 High Street, the shop that he now runs in Dunfermline. He takes part in BIDS events like the local Food and Craft Fair and is constantly thinking about how to be busier.

Most of his trade is retail with a few local caterers supplied. To attract customers Protein packs are put on offer. Bryan plans to use Facebook and Instagram more and help him introduce an afternoon delivery service to the 300 shops, offices and businesses in the town centre. Meal deals to attract more lunchtime trade are also in the pipeline.





There is no question that Dunfermline is challenged with perceived parking difficulties and declining footfall that has affected traditional shopping areas. Bryan has countered that by good quality meat and good customer care. He continued:-

"That is the only things that I can really take control of in the shop. The whole ambiance of the shop has to be correct. The smell, the friendliness of the staff, just getting everything correct for when the customers come in.

"We make sure that we talk to our customers, we greet them as soon as they come through the door asking them if there is anything we can help you with? A minute is a long time without talking to somebody so we make sure that we step up the customer care and service."

This is a butcher's business with a boss that has a hunger for success. He wants only the best for his customers and at the end of the day it won't matter which hand he is using, Bryan Beveridge will be trying hard to get every slice of the action.

