



Where else would provide such an idyllic destination on a sunny day in early summer? Just a 33 minute train ride from Edinburgh Waverley takes you to the royal burgh of North Berwick. The tranquility of seaside destination seems a world away from that left behind courtesy of ScotRail. The journey long enough to ponder if this is going to be North Berwick where is South Berwick?

The oracle that is Wikipedia explains the name Berwick means "barley farmstead" (*bere* in Old English means "barley" and *wic* means "farmstead"). The word North was applied to distinguish this Berwick from Berwick-upon-Tweed which throughout the Middle Ages, Scots called South Berwick.

Despite the railway arriving in 1850, the Industrial Revolution bypassed the town. The late-nineteenth century saw North Berwick develop golfing and holiday facilities. The town soon became popular as a home for Edinburgh commuters and retirees and now boasts a population of 6600.

While the population might not have truly "exploded", house prices have. North Berwick consistently appears at the top of national house price surveys.



Anderson's Quality Butchers have long been revered as one of the country's top butchers. A *Scotsman* review named the North Berwick butcher in their 'Best of the Best Butchers' and confirmation of excellence was underlined last year by lifting the Scottish Black Pudding Championship and a Diamond Award for Smoked Panchetta.

Anderson's is a traditional shop, following their well established formula of top quality, superlative service and impressive presentation to generate repeated customer satisfaction. That has sustained them since being founded by John Anderson some thirty years ago and now under the stewardship of John's son Ryan, with a full time staff of 12 there are no signs of that changing.



Ryan played rugby for Scotland at under 18 level and had it been possible then, he would have followed his love of rugby and become a professional. But when he left Knox Academy he became an apprentice in his father's shop to become one of the first to complete a vocational qualification through the Scottish Federation's training programme, he doesn't have any regrets.

The continuity of the staff and their unreserved friendliness play a major part in the shop's success. Several have over 25 years service, and working alongside Ryan's wife Moyà and his cousins Andrew and Martin Ramsay there is strong family support within the business.

Customers flow in and out boosted by a business and shopper friendly parking policy that allows the High Street to be accessible to all. For those requiring their orders delivered two vans provide free delivery within East Lothian.



In January next year the business will celebrate 30 years since founded by John Anderson. He was one of the busiest travelling shop salesmen for East Lothian Coop but in the mid eighties he was brought in to manage their North Berwick shop to try and boost it. The shops' sales increased sales six fold.

When Eales the butcher trading further down the town's High Street closed and became available, John risked everything to buy the shop and set up in business on his own. Success continued to follow him and soon that shop and was too busy. Saturdays were virtually unworkable so they opened on a Sunday as well. After a slow start that alleviated the pressure on the Saturday.

Trade at the Co-op butcher shop went flat and closed creating an opening for John Anderson to take it over. That was in 1993 and when the sealed up cellar was opened up and fitted out it provided a production area the same size as the ground floor.

The business expanded with shops in East Linton and Gullane, and concessions in Kwiksaves in Dunbar, Haddington and Tranent. Everything was manageable but staffing was the challenge. The business got too big and when Ryan's brothers decided not to pursue their futures in the family business it was trimmed back to the one successful unit in its current location. Sunday opening ceased and all the business was done over six days.

Two years ago when they relinquished their interest in the Gullane shop Ryan's cousins Andrew and Martin joined the team in North Berwick.







John Anderson was a highly respected judge of livestock and had the ability to be able to visualise what a dressed carcass would look like. Ryan summarised the businesses sourcing strategy:-

"Quality is paramount and we still buy our beef and lamb live at St Boswell's Market. We specifically look for Aberdeen Angus and native breed heifers. When sourcing lamb the preference is for Suffolks, some Tamworth pigs are reared by me, Linda Dick chickens are popular and turkeys come from Gartmorn."

Anderson's have had a stunning success since deciding to start competing in Craft Butcher awards. Ryan said that his father believed that you were only as good as your last sale:-

"But it got to the stage with so many butchers taking part in competitions and evaluations, if you sit on your laurels you will watch everyone else say how good they are. We decided that it was time to get ourselves out there and take part."

Winning the Scottish Black Pudding Championship in 2018 came as a 'major shock' claimed Ryan. "Even to be told that we had won the South East of Scotland title was unexpected. We knew that our Black Pudding was good but to be the best was a great achievement.

"We always work on the ethos that all our products are good quality but to have it validated by others means that the whole thing has been a very rewarding experience.

"I have changed my idea of what they are. They are not about saying 'look how good I am'. It is just about confirmation of good products and of the standard that they should be."

The Smoked Pancetta success came with the help of the Belhaven Smokehouse and when Anderson's won the award it gave a big boost to their home cured bacon.

"It took ages to get our customers trying our new products but by now it is by far one of our best selling products. The Diamond Award gave it the prestige that it deserved" added Ryan.



Thai Turkey Burgers are one of their biggest sellers and really popular for barbecues and there is a range of speciality sausages. Six different varieties around promoted around the Six Nations. Then there is the likes of Lamb & Mint, Steak, Haggis and Whisky, Garlic and Chilli Chicken Sausage, Game, Venison and their own invention - North Berwick Sausage.

The North Berwick Sausage was invented many years ago to celebrate the local rugby club making it through to a Murrayfield final. To support the club colours - red and black - Ryan started with beef and black pudding and added several things that were known to compliment beef - Tomato, Horseradish, Garlic, and Chilli.

"We made them up until the final but the following week we had people coming in asking for them. As a specialty sausage it is still one that sells very very well.

"When we had success in an evaluation we could not call them what they are (because it removes the anonymity). We entered them as Beef and Black Chortogaho Sausage - it was just the initials of every product that is."

John Anderson was instrumental in raising funds for the local Riding For The Disabled, supporting barn dances, buffets and concerts with burgers. Currently Anderson's are participating in the Butcher At The Heart of The Community collecting for a defibrillator.



### Limiting plastic and packaging usage

Being on the seaside, North Berwick is leading the way to becoming a plastic free town. Anderson's have reacted to their customers and Ryan explained:-

"We are continually looking for, changing and trying out new products. Eventually we will get to the stage where all our packaging is degradable.



"We use compostable cardboard boxes for the hot chicken wings that we sell at lunchtime. We have re-useable cardboard boxes for steak pies and if customers come back with some that are getting a bit tired we replace them.

"There has to be an element of sensibility. If someone is buying ten one pounds of mince to put in their freezer we use plastic bags. There is no point in us wrapping them up in paper for them to take home and put in a plastic bag. So we still have plastic bags for certain uses."

Picking up on local initiatives Anderson's are a vital part of North Berwick's fabric. From 614 feet on top of Berwick Law the view of the town, the Bass Rock and the Firth of Forth is impressive but at 36 High Street, Anderson's is a local attraction not to be missed.

