

Shining a light on Arbroath Butcher



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Arbroath will always have its place in the history of Scotland. Back in 1320 a Declaration signed by nearly 50 Scottish earls and nobles made the point that Scotland had always been independent. It claimed that the independence of Scotland was the prerogative of the Scots people, rather than the King of Scots. In fact it stated that the nobility would choose someone else to be king if the current one did anything to threaten Scotland's independence.



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Nearly 700 years on the good folk of Arbroath, Angus' largest town support their independence from the major multiples by retaining three independent butchers.

Tucked in hidden from sight as you take the main road north is DH Robertson. It is not until you make the return trip that your attention is drawn to this award winning butcher in Fisheracre.



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Anyone discovering DH Robertson's for the first time will be taken aback by the industry and range of products in this butchers' shop. The business will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2012 but it is only four years since Steven Bennett took over. Doug Robertson founded the business in 1962 and Ken Smith continued it until he retired in 2007.



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Steven was born and brought up in Arbroath so entered the meat trade as an apprentice in Alex Munro's shop in the town before moving on to local butcher Falconers in the town's High Street. After some 18 years there Steven was able to take over DH Robertson's.

He inherited a staff of three and in the ensuing four years that number has risen to 12. Counter Assistant Janet, was one of those retained by the new management and what an asset she proved to be. Her 20 years of meeting and greeting the public in this Arbroath butchers means that she knows 90% of her customers by name and can identify what they are looking for and how much they will need.

As you walk through the front door Janet and XXXXXX are behind the counter ready to serve. And what a choice they have to offer their customers. The smart 'Summer' display case, supplied by Watco in April 2011 is crammed full of all sorts of enticing fresh meat, meat products and pastries.

Over 80 different items are available from the refrigerated cabinet and the dairy case at the far end offers even more. Choice is colossal and decisions can be difficult. Not only is the extensive range a problem, the presentation is first class. Beautifully filled trays paint the perfect artistry of a meat tableau. Almost too good to disturb but as these trays face decimation the back shop staff step forward to replenish. Clear and concise ticketing is under the charge of Steven's wife Pamela and offers are subtly presented. Everything is in place to entice the customer but there's more.





The business has always made its own pastry and from their back of house bakery this is made into all sorts of pies, bridies and tarts. There Morag and June make pastry from scratch and bake fresh produce daily in their Double D Revair oven. Six different sizes of steak pie, Mince and Steak Rounds, Mince and Onion Bridies and even a Steak and Black Pudding Pie.

Robertsons' Japanese Rolls, an idea inspired by Dalziel Ltd. is an Escalope of Beef filled with a medley of spring onion, onions, peppers, carrots and mushrooms coated with Japanese Flower Sauce from Verstegen.

Steven has only recently started to enter his products into competitions but he has been delighted with the success. Robertson's bridies won bronze in both the 2010 and 2011 World Scotch Pie Club evaluation. Their Meat Loaf won silver in the 2011 Meat To Go, and their Haggis is this year's East of Scotland champion. Add to that a Gold in the recent 2011 Steak Pie Evaluation, there's a fair degree of external confirmation that Robertsons are making things right.



Competitions have been a real boost for Steven and his staff. Steven said: "We have a good team here and we couldn't do all this without them. The staff put a lot of care and hard work into our products and it's good to see them get recognition. The awards highlight the shop and builds interest all round so we will continue to enter."



Most of the business is over the counter but there is a delivery service and pies are supplied to Arbroath FC as well as many other local sports clubs. Battered products are wholesaled as well as being available in the shop.

Residents of Arbroath often refer to themselves as *Red Lichties* after the flame that burned to aid shipping, from the still remaining, *Roond O* tower of Arbroath Abbey. A modern day Red Lichtie would certainly help to find this gem of a shop.