

## Frasers – Tourist Attraction in itself



Situated as it is in the centre of The Cairngorms National Park, and at the head of the Speyside Way, easily accessible by rail, bus and car, is a village "for all seasons" firmly set in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This area is a major tourist destination and this brings with it a significant increase in population due to visitors. The main arterial road, the A9, runs through the area and acts as the gateway to Northern Scotland.

While Badenoch and Strathspey is an area of exceptional beauty and one that is rich in cultural heritage, environmental splendour and community safety, Aviemore is a village that has given birth to the gradual and exciting growth of outdoor activities and pursuits evident today.



Recognised by all initially, for its famous ski slopes, Aviemore is now a force to be reckoned with and plays a vital part in the Scottish Tourist Industry. This is due, in part, to its unique setting in some of the most imposing and awesome surroundings in the Highlands of Scotland but the Railway and Queen Victoria's passionate love of the Highlands have also helped to put it on the map.



Aviemore has undergone a rejuvenation over the last few years and is returning to the hey days of the 1970s. There is a real buzz and excitement that does justice to the wonderful area and talent of local people.



Grampian Road, the main street has had a makeover too that combines the traditional with the new.

The latest transformation has taken place at Fraser's the Butchers where Fraser McKinnon has more than doubled the shop frontage and selling floorspace.

Fraser closed on 6<sup>th</sup> February and re-opened on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February with a shiny new expanded unit.

This was the culmination of nine months of planning after the initial concept had been formed in Fraser's mind in his 2006 visit to Germany's Saffa Trade Fair and shops in the Stuttgart area.

Fraser pulled together all the strands with counters coming from Baillie and Smith, the use of joiners from Glasgow, local plumbers and local electricians using Baro lighting.





On re-opening customer reaction was overwhelming. They left raving about what had happened to their butcher's shop, claiming that it was 'just what the village needed'. There was plenty for them to enthuse about. To the existing range of meats, the new multi tiered state of the art counters contained deli goods like cheese, olives, pies and cooked meats. The range of condiments, sauces, chutneys, jams etc had soared, there was fresh fish, a selection of wines and even a chocolate counter.

The shiny new butcher's shop in Aviemore now has a feature window that looks straight into his chill room. Here passers by can see hindquarters of beef hanging and Fraser uses this to highlight the maturation that is observed in a traditional butchers and the point of difference from what he views as competitors.

"You have got to be different and promote that aspect of it. Show that you are specialists."

Fraser with his staff of two full time and one part timer, tackles all sorts of work including hog roasts and outside catering. He describes the opportunities as "phenomenal".





Since the refit in February 2008, Fraser claims the uplift in sales has been around 40% and attributes a sizeable chunk of that to the increased shop frontage that faces customers leaving Aviemore's Tesco store and car park.



More passers by are noticing the butchers shop and if sales can show this kind of increase now, Fraser describes the potential in the busy summer season as "scary".

Fraser McKinnon initially worked for Fraser Sharp in the butcher's shop that was across the street from his current premises. Although he had left and was working in security for Tesco, when the Sharp business came up for sale in 1999, Fraser was given first option. Without a backer and the

capital required to buy the business, a deal was struck to 'pay as you go' and with a punitive reversal clause that meant any default in payment even up to the final one, the business reverted to Sharp. Fraser paid off the seller within three years.

In 2003 Fraser took on the main street shop directly across the road from Tesco. He admits it took long hard hours but sales grew 20% year on year until he felt that he had outgrown the premises. It remains to be seen what growth can be achieved after the recent expansion and refit.

The only disappointment for Fraser is that having come this far he finds that the shop is consuming too much of his attentions and is unable to find enough time to spend with his seriously ill wife. Reluctantly he has placed the business on the market but with shop trade now booming it would seem that the payback for any future owner could be quick.

