

Looking out for online business

Galloway
Quality Meats



Robert Burns famously spent the last five years of his life living in Dumfries. His ill health led to an early death at the age of just 37 but his memory is perpetuated throughout the South of Scotland town.

Ever present, surveilling all from his statue at the end of the High Street, the National Bard has watched the golden age of bustling high street retailing transformed, as a consequence of supermarkets and other out of town developments, into a quieter pedestrianised form.

Announcements of shop closures by famous high street chains indicate troubled times in retailing nationwide but Galloway Quality Meats is a great example of a business that has moved quickly to meet the changing demands of their customers and potential customers. So much so they were named Best Butchers in the 2018 Dumfries & Galloway Retail Business Awards.

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In 2004, the Houlston family had transformed a former bakers' shop in Dumfries town centre into a smart, clean and fresh butchers' shop. The walls were tiled with a burgundy tile that still gives a classy look. However, their English Street shop cabinets were replaced in 2017 and the effect has been to create a welcoming, airy and contemporary shop.

They have embraced the opportunity of selling online generating sales and attracting a new customer base using social media and an extremely user friendly website. Facebook has brought in younger customers buying from the range of oven ready products.



A new six metre run of refrigerated cabinets was fitted with under storage and externally sited condensers. This was supplied through Colin Hewitson as were the Avery XT400 scales.

More customer space has resulted with better access and bigger displays that treat both the eyes and the palate.

More products can now be showcased and it is easier to demonstrate everything that they do. The customer reaction has been positive with a very clear boost to sales.

Galloway Quality Meats trades on the promise of extremely competitively priced meat. The shop is the retail arm of Galloway Foodservice, servicing hotels and restaurants throughout the South of Scotland and North of England.

Twenty people are employed at their unit on the Lochside Industrial Estate and the volume generated by their sales creates fantastic purchasing power from which the retail shop greatly benefits.

Pies and their gold award winning mince rounds are made at the factory, the meat is prepared there as well and fresh product is delivered to the shop daily.





Having spotted an opportunity as he travelled around selling frozen gateaux, chips and other frozen foods, Keith Houliston established the food service business over 30 years ago. The former Queen of the South footballer set up his first premises in Kingholm Quay near Dumfries and after further developing trade as a concessionary within Kwik Save, moved into English Street.

Keith was a successful local businessman and a director at Queen of the South FC before Motor Neuron Disease sadly claimed him in 2008. Melissa, the founders' daughter is now a partner in the business alongside her mum Joan and continues to grow the business.

Open from 8.00am to 5pm six days per week, choice of meal ideas is endless in English Street, good value is unquestionable but the service is yet another attribute, its super friendly and obliging staff include Tracy, Tori, Cammy, McKenzie and head butcher Ian Higgins.

All the meat is sourced from the UK, local lamb is supplied through Border Meats at Lockerbie and venison from Barony at Parkgate just north of the town. Lorne Sausage have been made into a speciality on the back of being crowned South West Scotland Sliced Sausage Champions in 2014 with squares of Pork and Leek, Beef and Sweet Chilli, Beef and Spring Onion and Beef and Haggis to choose from.

Chicken fillets are made into Chicken Kievs, Highland Chicken and Italian Chicken when a cheese filling is wrapped with smoked bacon in a tomato marinade.

At Galloway Quality Meats there's a gluten free range, a variety of burgers, home made lasagne and even Sweet Chilli Beef Olives. Cumberland Sausages sell well but Pork Sausages are the overall favourite.



Galloway Quality Meats went online five years ago and Melissa said the impact "has been really amazing. Having a Facebook page has really powered it."

Social media draws customers from the local area doing click and collect. The whole range is available online and Lorne sausage, haggis, and even fruit pudding particularly attracts orders from south of the border. Not only is the product range extensive, the service is fast. Next day delivery UK wide is done through Parcelforce and by their own vehicles locally.

Some might feel that creates pressure on despatch but Melissa claimed:- "It has worked because it has built up gradually so we are used to it now. It has become second nature."

The business purchased the Blackface Meat Company in 2016 giving the company a second online business, this time focusing entirely on locally farmed meats such as Galloway Beef, Rose Veal, Salt Marsh and Blackface Lamb and Mutton, as well as locally sourced wild game. All of which are also available through the wholesale business to the catering trade.



Melissa has put lots of thought and test marketing into adding the range of packs available. With the help of her friends and staff, she has compiled a vast array of over two dozen meat packs. After selling them for around four years now, Melissa claims that the Skinny Pack is the most popular. She continued:-

"Everybody's mind set these days is to try and eat healthier. They are amazed at everything they get for just £20 and we have packs for all tastes, for those wanting low fat healthy options to those not watching their waistlines.

Popular because total cost is spelt out upfront and there is no need to understand price per kilo. To the obvious Steak Pack, BBQ Pack, Breakfast Pack and Beef Selection Pack, she has introduced a Pay Day Meat Pack, a Couples Pack and a Kids Meal Pack that others have followed."

