

## Historic step as butcher boldly expands



Scotland's newest butchers shop was opened in Linlithgow in October 2011. The birthplace of King James V and Mary Queen of Scots, the historic Royal Burgh's High Street is now the site of butchers, Wm Holleran and Sons.

The shop concentrates on selling quality meat and meat products and judging by the trade since opening it looks like a very good move. Billy Holleran and his sons, Iain and Allan, have taken the former chocolate shop and transformed it into a very smart, clean and well presented butchers.



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Linlithgow's rich history and central location makes it a popular tourist destination, while a significant proportion of the local population make the daily commute to Glasgow, Edinburgh or Stirling made relatively easy by the town's railway station and proximity to both the M8 & M9 motorways.



The town which was the childhood home of First Minister Alex Salmond, is served by three supermarkets and a retail park situated in Linlithgow Bridge. However, the town continues to support a diverse range of local retailers in the High Street with Holleran's now providing an important addition.



Billy has been in the meat business for close on 40 years but it is good to meet a butcher with confidence to invest and with such immense enthusiasm for his trade.



A native of Falkirk, he started work in his local Alex Munro's straight from St Mungos High School. With experience drawn from Munros, Wm Low, Malcolm Allan and Tesco Billy progressed to become Butchery Manager in Tesco at Corstorphine before he was given the move by them to Campbelltown.

That proved to be a stepping stone to Ireland where he spent 13 years in County Cork working with two high profile IQ butchers, Ó'Crualaoí's in Ballincollig and Martin Carey in Bandon.

Billy's first venture into business on his own was in Ballincollig but after a 13 year period in County Cork he returned to Scotland and started up his own shops here.



The Hollerans first Scottish shop was in Laurieston on the edge of Falkirk but they saw an opportunity in Linlithgow that they couldn't ignore. For Billy it was the completion of a circle because his new shop had at one time been a Malcolm Allan shop and he had worked there before as a relief butcher.

The chocolate shop was transformed in just ten days with KJ Kitchens doing the wall cladding and installing the furnishings. 22 LED downlighters were added to the 28 spots left by the previous owner and so the lighting creates a very pleasant and subtle ambiance with focus still very much on the meat in the cabinets. There are three cabinets, two 2 metre ones and a 1.5 metre run for ready to eat products.

In addition there's a multi deck just inside the door to attract attention to the steak pies and ready meals. All the meticulous planning paid off with Capital Cooling in Broxburn installing the refrigeration. The result a very modern and hygienic look that you cannot help but admire and one that is a credit to Hollerans.

Fitting out a shop is one thing but making it work is another.



Billy returned to Scotland with much more than just a wider retail experience. His two sons, Iain (31) and Allan (29) had picked up some essential skills in Ireland. Iain obtained a Certificate in Food Retailing from the University of Cork and Allan substantial experience in different meat businesses. Their father explained:- "I saw an opportunity in Laurieston for not just me but for my two lads. We gave that business a new life and we have now extended that same formula to Linlithgow."

Assisted by winning the East of Scotland Beef Sausage Championship in 2010 their sausages, steak pies and ready meals have proved great success in both shops. Gluten free products are a big hit too. Their beef is sourced by local wholesalers Malone in Edinburgh, lamb from John McKerrow at nearby Grougfoot Farm and pork and bacon comes from Robertsons of Ardrossan. Local game from Hopetoun Estate has also proved popular with the West Lothian public.

Most of the manufacturing is undertaken in Laurieston leaving those in the Linlithgow shop totally focussed on customers and their needs. Those customers have been piling through the door and Billy admits there have been a few Saturdays when they have been struggling to cope with the level of demand. "Customers have said that this is just what this end of the town was needing and they have certainly proved that so far."

Between the two shops the business has a staff of 14 including Billy, Iain and Allan. Other family members get involved too with Iain's Slovakian wife, Stanka, who he met in Ireland, now in charge of making the ready meal and Billy's sister Elaine looks after the steak pie production.

Open 8.00am until 5.00pm every day Monday to Saturday, everything is geared towards serving the local community with the very best products. Linlithgow has to be pleased by the way Hollerans seem to have been beamed down into this historic High Street. Far too late for the queen who was to be beheaded but Hollerans have stuck their necks out without reservation. Their future here has to be successful after all in 2007, a plaque and exhibition commemorated the fictional Star Trek character Scotty, the Enterprise's chief engineer, who will be born in Linlithgow in 2222!

