

## Love Your Local Butcher

You have got to believe that when locals start featuring you on their Christmas cards and Calendars that your butchers shop was firmly established itself at the heart of the community.

That is the accolade bestowed on Iain and Pamela Hunter who took over an empty butchers shop just four years ago. Not only had the shop closed, it had done so with a poor reputation having been completely run down by the previous owner.

The Hunters were up for a challenge though. Both had been involved in food retailing since the mid 80's and Iain had a wealth of experience in butchers shops. He started out age 16 at Charles Wilson's in Inverleith Row in Edinburgh, then worked for eight years at Dalziel & McIntosh in Stockbridge before emigrating to Australia in 1993. In Melbourne he was reunited with Harry Black who he had worked under at Dalziel & McIntosh but although the work and life down under were great, family pulls brought him back to Edinburgh.



Iain found himself back with Charles Wilson at their Cameron Toll shop before he opened his own shop in Dalry Road. He made such a great success of re-opening this butchers that he took on Charles F Stanley's shop in Gorgie Road but when a property developer offered to buy him out, the offer was too attractive to turn down.







The thought of what one might do if you were not a butcher no doubt crosses the mind of many as they unlocked their shop door in the early hours on many a frosty morning. For Iain there had always been a yearning to develop his part time singing career.

Iain had previously been a guest act at Bellagio's in Las Vegas but was forced to turn down the offer of a three month contract because he had a butchers business in Gorgie Road to return to.



He had also had to pass on the opportunity of a fast track audition for the X-Factor because his staff did not show up and he had to stay and man the shop. So with no ties, Iain embarked on a singing career, entertaining corporate events with his swing style act.

Strangely Iain missed the routine of early starts and serving the public and after only six weeks he accepted the challenge of a recently closed butchers shop in Kinross High Street. The shop had failed and the record of three owners in four years was hardly the mostly likely confidence building history.



His wife, Pamela, who had previously worked as an Area Manager for Crawfords the bakers, was willing to give up her newly assumed role as his entertainment agent to manage the demands of the Kinross public. They moved quick enough to inherit devoted former employees at the shop, David Winton and Dean Miller (below).







The route to re-building the business included special offers, helium balloons, sweets for kids, Santa Claus, Carol singers – virtually anything that would generate awareness.

After six months of trading they felt that they had turned the corner. With beef and lamb supplied by John Scott Meats, chicken and geese from Gartmorn Farm, pork from Robertsons, Christmas turkeys from Copas, and local venison and game birds the approval of their customers was easily confirmed.

An array of freshly produced pastry products and fresh displays of local fruit and vegetables makes the shopping at Hunters a very satisfying experience.

But the Kinross business faces the same problems that many will identify with - vacant shop premises nearby and a derelict town hall next door - but Iain and Pamela worked hard supporting school fairs, village fetes, rugby club and football clubs events. The shop gained catering and wholesale custom and flow through their front door continued to grow.

Free delivery and special attention for sheltered housing residents all assisted the pair as, the very aware "incomers" worked hard to be part of the local community.







It was supplying the breakfast food for a local B & B that re-discovered Iain's talent. Real Radio's Cat Harvey was staying at the farm B & B run by Jim and Mary Paterson during T in the Park and complemented her hosts on the quality of the brunch served up to her after both a late night and late morning. She returned to Real HQ with the information ringing in her ears that the fare had been supplied by "The Singing Butcher."



Who was this "Singing Butcher" she asked her morning audience?

Well the phone lines went into meltdown and Iain Hunter had no hiding place. STV covered Iain singing to a crowd of 400 at the Bistro on Loch Leven one wet August day in 2011 and then the Daybreak programme followed up a month later with another local audience of 400 turning up.

The fame generated many more special appearances and a carousel of corporate, family and community charity events that ranged from village halls to Gleneagles Hotel and even on the QMS stand at the Royal Highland Show!

On arriving in Kinross Iain had started off advertising in the very impressive Kinross Community newsletter but last year such a level had his fame ascended that he became the very first individual ever to have their photograph on its front cover.

You only need to be in their company a matter of minutes to realise that Iain and Pamela are extremely motivated. They both travel 100 miles every working day to the shop is testimony to their devotion. The displays are well stocked every day of the week, their products have started to pick up awards and their very welcoming staff are a joy to meet. Possibly now much more famous with the mike in his hands, Iain is still the star of the show in Hunters butchers shop in Kinross. Pamela is an equally successful supporting act but all the cast dressed in white coats and striped aprons play their part in ensuring that this butchers shop is always in full swing.

