

# Meat the Hopeman Butcher



BBC presenter Fiona Bruce traced her family back to the Bruces of Hopeman during an episode of *Who Do You Think You Are?* in February 2009. Only a little less well known, Philip Robertson is the butcher in Hopeman but even those who recognise him as the North of Scotland Steak Pie Champion enquire "where is Hopeman?"



Hopeman is a seaside village in Moray, on the coast of the Moray Firth, founded in 1805 to house and re-employ people displaced during the Highland clearances. The population is around 1,700 people in approximately 670 households.

The village was founded at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a fishing port by William Young of Inverugie. It expanded when the new harbour was built in 1838 for the export of stone from the nearby quarries.

The old part of Hopeman has a grid-iron street layout. The main part of the village is set back from the beach and there is a village green with playing fields, a playground and a skate park.

The main street is Harbour Street. There you find most of the shops and commercial establishments including a Costcutters, a general store; Seahorse, a gift shop; a hairdresser and beauty salon; the Primrose Cafe; the Station Hotel; a chemist; the post office; a fish and chip shop and a Chinese carryout.

Down at the harbour are Footprints, a gallery and shop and Harbour blooms, a flower shop. Right in the centre of things at 16 Harbour Street is W Reid the butchers.





While Philip Robertson was a pupil at Lossiemouth High School he would work after school and as a Saturday boy for Malcolm Reid at W Reid. When he left school he was offered an apprenticeship there and so now decades later Philip is celebrating thirty years as a butcher.

Philip learned his trade and was always a hard working individual who was friendly and charming to customers. He seemed the logical successor when Malcolm sold the business, so Philip became his own boss in 2004.

He upgraded the shop with new fittings and refreshed the product range to cater for modern tastes. Gradually the range of pastries, sausages and ready meals were expanded. Tattie and bean pies, sausage rolls, scotch pies, mince rounds, pasties - you can buy them all at W Reid butchers.

Kitchen ready meals included such delights as Burger Bites, Bombay Chicken, Popcorn Chicken, Chicken stuffed with their own haggis. The customer side of the counter has an attractive and popular range of Nevis Bakery cakes, local oatcakes, free range eggs and fresh vegetables.







Philip joined the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders and he is not alone in finding that winning a prize for his products at the first attempt launched his business on to a higher level.

First success was in the 2008 Potted Meat evaluation where he won a Gold award. Flushed with this immediate success he followed that up with Gold in the following year's Steak Pie evaluation and Gold in the Scotch Pie Club awards as well that year. In 2010 it was burgers that won three gold for him and then last year he was crowned the North of Scotland Steak Pie champion.

Philip was delighted to pick up his latest title at the SFMTA Regional meeting in Inverness in September and it can be fair to say that all those who enter were very pleased for Philip when they heard that he had won. The popular winner described the impact of his win:-

"The effect was huge. Once the Northern Scot carried the story, the steak pies drew folk from far and wide. It has been a real boost to business and pie sales have doubled at the least. It has been a great endorsement for the business. Customers don't just buy steak pies and many comment when they are on, 'oh I didn't know you did this or that.'"







Philip sources his beef, lamb and pork from local wholesalers Munros in Dingwall and Millers of Speyside. This keeps his customers very happy and he gets considerable support from the local community. Caravaners and golfers augment the summer trade with barbecue products being a big hit.



Like most businesses W Reid has an element of supply to the foodservice sector - hotels, local school and supplies for hospitality at Elgin FC. Trade with fishing boats has dropped off from fifteen to two but RAF Lossiemouth is just a flight path away and that too creates business for the Hopeman businesses.

Assisting full time in the shop is Nathan Hubbard who has five years service behind him now despite his 21 years. Nathan completed a Modern Apprenticeship in Meat and Poultry Processing with Scottish Meat Training and he was responsible for the burgers that won gold in the Speciality Burger evaluation in 2012 - Pork and Sweet Chilli, Pork, Cheese and Onion.

The business pitches its support behind the local Gala and local schools. W Reid sponsor local Bowls competitions, a hole at the local golf club and a board at Burghead Thistle.

Award winning products and good quality meat keep the customers coming back but above all it has to be the welcome that makes shopping at Reid's that bit special. Philip and Nathan seem to know the whole population of Moray and the chat is compulsory. Customers are made to feel so much part of everything that's going on, so when you know where Hopeman is then it's hard to shop anywhere else!