

## Patricks: Where everybody knows your name



Robert and Jim Patrick make an impressive business out of this shop in Main Street, Camelon and while many things may strike you when you visit Patricks of Camelon but two are impossible to forget - size and screens!

The retail area of Patricks shop may be small but it's packed with punch. The front shop staff have an air of confident calmness but behind this tranquil compact appearance is a veritable tardis packed full of production capability whose wheels are well oiled and well deployed.

Crammed full of product, the back wall cabinet and the refrigerated counter are very smartly presented. Lots of innovation and mixed amongst strong selling traditional lines. Colour and uniformity give customers' eyes a feast and temptation to treat is irresistible.



CCTV allows an eye to be kept on ensuring customers' needs being fully met. They have a wide screen showing cookery tips to entertain them why being served but there is also a screen showing Sky News.

The customers however are not the only ones kept up to date with the outside world. The screens that raise eyebrows most though, are those in the production area showing Sky Sports News.

More pictures at  
<https://picasaweb.google.com/SFMTA3/PATRICKS071113#>





There are no armchairs here though and no likelihood of couch potatoes either. Patricks' staff can work away while being told what's happening on the football field and pick up sporting gems with occasional glances at rotating news strips. "We spend a large part of our life at work and none of us want to feel that we are missing out" said Robert Patrick.

This is no ordinary butchers shop, this is Patricks of Camelon. James Patrick founded the business in June 1961 when he purchased an existing butchers across the road from the current shop. James Patrick Senior had for many years worked in various meat businesses in Lanarkshire, but when the chance of his own shop came up he took it with both hands. When 334 Main Street became available Patricks moved over the road and since then the business has modernised and expanded as much as it possibly can given the restraints imposed by its site.

The new shop allowed bakery goods to be produced a properly kitted our bakery above the shop but the big break came in 1987 when as first time entrants Patricks lifted the Scottish Beef Sausage Championship. Like many winning such a title business flourished with 30% being added to sales. Patricks added the Scottish Pork Sausage title in 1989 and then won the UK Champion of Champions final the next. The heightened profile and recognition for the quality of their products propelled the Patricks business to a new level.

As well as Jim senior, Robert and Jim who had joined straight from school and Derek Monteith in the bakery, two new members of staff were taken on.

Joe Miller and Willie Fisher joined and some twenty years later are still key employees in a staff of 18, 10 of which are full time.





Winning the Scottish Haggis Championship in 2003 and numerous other awards including the Best Scottish Beef product at the 2012 Smithfield Awards for their Barbecued Short Ribs has continued to promote excellence in their products.

This endorsement has been proudly shared by Patricks' many customers. They give their feedback on the products and enjoy being part of the subsequent success.

Getting basic meat products right creates new and repeat business. Other products sell on the back of this and that is all backed up by discerning sourcing. Beef comes from farmer Jim Brown at Gaindykehead in North Lanarkshire and is supplemented by wholesale purchases from John Scott Meats, PRDuff and Michael Malone. Scotch Lamb too comes from these suppliers and Specially Selected Scottish Pork from Robertsons of Ardrossan.

Free Range Poultry is supplied by Gartmorn in Clackmannan, Turkeys from specialist suppliers Copas and chicken fillets from Dalziel. Serving ready to eat products is addressed by pre packing all these in a separate dedicated production area and some of this is even wholesale since Patrick are approved premises with the UKFA 009 stamp on its labels.

The cooked meat is not all that is labelled. All kitchen ready products are overwrapped for the customer to take home and cooking instructions are applied to the packs.

There is a full range of steak pies and small pastry goods including their latest gold award winner - the Barbecued Pulled Pork and Black Pudding Pie. Balmoral balls and Boudon Noir balls - haggis and black pudding truffles - are just a couple of the tempting products that Patricks produce.







Just as product is important, so too is the people and place. All Patricks staff have either completed or are working towards a Modern Apprenticeship. Jim and Robert see a benefit from having professional staff recognised at for a national qualification. They can see the confidence that brings and the efficiency both to the business and the customer.

Optimum site is always a tricky thing to identify and in most cases it occurs through chance. Patricks are fortunate that 30 minutes of free parking is available at their door. The road is one of the busiest in Central Scotland and the parking provision allows local shops to benefit from this. Consequently customers travel to shop there from Cumbernauld, the Hillfoots and the likes of Linlithgow. At Patricks it's like the tagline of the American Sitcom *Cheers*, attracting custom with good service and the popularity of the products – it is a place where everybody knows your name.

**Sometimes you want to go,  
Where everybody knows your name  
And they're always glad you came;  
From the theme song from *Cheers*.**

Space is a challenge but one that has been addressed and conquered. The working practices are smart and investment has gone into labour saving devices like a mechanical Lorne Sausage press. The business is confident about its future and that has attracted Jim's two sons James and Jon and Robert's son Scott to follow in their fathers' footsteps.

Most of the business is over the counter trade where freshly baked rolls also make a sizeable contribution to sales. No hotels or restaurants are serviced but there is a good wholesale trade of sausages and pies to 25 to 30 neighbourhood retail outlets.

For almost as long as he can remember Robert has been a strong supporter of the Guild of Q Butchers. The quality assured group that recognises the best of Britain's butchers. Although Robert conceded that Q Guild possibly means more to him than to his customers, the business feels that it benefits from membership through the continuous contact and interaction with like-minded progressive businesses:-

"Through the Guild I meet the top people in the butchery business. Sandy Crombie, John Davidson and Andrew Ramsay are very good friends and you find that everyone has the same problems. We enter the Smithfield Awards and visit other butchers. It allows me to identify good ideas and keeps me ahead of the game."

Whether it's through Q Guild or Sky television Patricks of Camelon are always going to be well informed and if there are repeats of that 1980's American sitcom maybe it could have a screen of its own.