

more than 80 years old Scott Brothers is one of Dundee's longest-established butchers and still run by the founding family, as **Jack McKeown** discovers

# Brothers still top of the chops



wise from above:  
and George Jarron  
of their stores; the  
mark sign; and a  
of meat on offer in  
ore. Pictures: Steven  
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It's one of Dundee's longest standing family food firms. The fact that Scott Brothers is actually run by the Jarron brothers? That's just one of those quirks of business. "Our grandfather moved to Dundee to set up a butchers shop," explains younger brother Scott Jarron. "He bought a shop called Scott Brothers and at that time there was a feeling that you lost customers if you changed the name of a business. We've remained Scott Brothers since then."

The firm now has three butchers' shops: the "mothership" on Strathmartine Road, a city centre outlet in the Nethergate and a branch in Broughty Ferry.

Scott, 50, and big brother George, 51, worked weekends in the butchers from childhood and both joined the family firm full time in their early 20s.

Over the 30 years they've spent behind the counter the brothers have seen major changes in the industry and in the way we consume food.

"When we were kids we'd have mince Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and maybe even Thursday as well," Scott smiles. "The way people eat has changed. People want something different every day."

"The main thing we've done is make more stuff seasoned and oven ready," George adds. "Twenty six years ago I brought our first stir-fry into the shop. Now we do a lot more products that are easy for people to cook but still really good quality food."

"One thing that's faded a bit is the Sunday roast," Scott laments. "It used to be that people would buy a roast and use every bit of it. They'd get three meals out of it and then a soup as well."

So what sets a butchers' shop apart from a supermarket? "With supermarkets the meat comes from all over the place," Scott explains. "You'll have different breeds from different farms at different geographical locations all over the world and it goes to the same big processor."

"There's no consistency. I daresay you might get a nice bit of fillet steak from a supermarket one day but the next day it'll be from different cattle from a different place."

Here, all the beef is bought locally, mostly from Ian Sim at Kincaig Farm, Brechin, and is hung for 21-28 days. Air drying meat is known to reduce the moisture content and bring out the flavour much more than other methods.

"Supermarkets don't tend to have the resources or time to hang meat properly. It doesn't taste as good and it also has a higher moisture content – you're paying for water," Scott says.

"We know where all our meat comes from. We go to Ian's farm three or four times a year to look at his cattle and we trust him to raise good, healthy animals."

It's the same for lamb, which is bought at the live auction market in Forfar every Wednesday, while the pork comes from Friockheim.

"The horsemeat scandal a few years ago gave us a boost. It reminded people that it's important to know where meat comes from," adds Scott.

"I also think people decided it's good to spend money locally, instead of with huge corporations based in London that maybe don't pay their taxes."

Scott Brothers employs 73 staff and all the money their customers spend stays in the local area.

It may cost a little more to get your meat from a butcher but Scott reckons it's worth it, even if it's no longer a daily occurrence.

"There are some customers we only see at Christmas," he says. "At the moment we're sorting out our BBQ range for the summer."

"Instead of having steak one or twice a week and getting it cheap people should have it once a fortnight and get a really good steak that they'll savour."

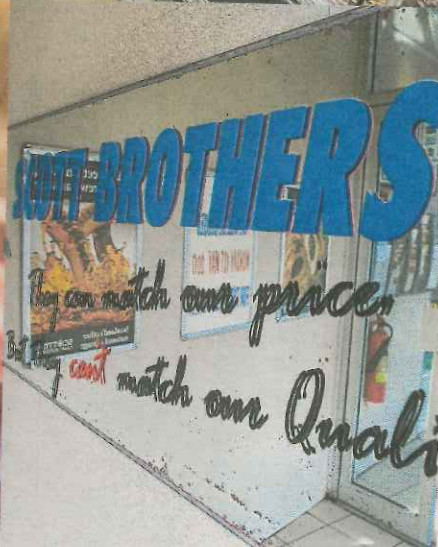


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