



Making it in Lancashire



Browns made a business out of selling black pudding. Their Chorley shop is in the heart of Lancashire and they stick as closely as possible to an original 1940s recipe for their black pudding but also make a speciality out of smoked black pudding. Both are baked in loafs that have been roasted.

While black pudding is synonymous with the Red Rose county but their other pudding success was more unlikely. John Brown began making the Lancashire haggis for which the shop is famous, and his son Tim, even insists that Lancashire rather than Scotland has a big claim to being home of the delicacy.



Browns the Butchers, 7 Market Place, Chorley



"The first written recipe for haggis was in the early 1400's in a book written in the Lancashire dialect," he says. "When we were asked for haggis, we obtained advice from a maker in Scotland and started making small batches but these were not really profitable."

When Tim started he branded it the Lancashire Haggis Company and they have grown until they are producing large amounts and needing to bigger purpose built premises.

The Haggis attracts customers wanting the taste of Scotland and believe it or not Browns also make Lorne Sausages.

They make it from 4oz puddings to any size Ball Haggis and a stick that they call 'cabers'. The wholesale trade for Lancashire haggis is strong and local hotels and caterers including a Michelin star restaurant feature the locally produced haggis.

Like their Scottish counterparts Browns have introduced meat products with Haggis fillings. Typically it has an English twist with Haggis in Pork Loin being the favourite.

Haggis means a lot to Browns and it is that connection that led them to become members of the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders. Fortunately they discovered that the services offered provided many more reasons to pay the annual subscription.

There is more to this business than just puddings however. Innovation extends to dry cured bacon coated with Chorizo seasoning. Dry cured for ten days, removed from cure, coated in Chorizo seasoning then vacuum packed again for 5-6 days.

They have also developed a market for a dry cured bacon with MRC's pepper steak seasoning using the same method. Cranberry, Cumberland and Maple are other ideas that are successful but Tim warns to make sure that there is no preservative that will conflict with that in the dry cure."



Lancashire
Haggis

The business was started in 1932 by Arthur Brown, then continued by Richard (Dickie), John was the third generation, Chris continued it until Tim returned from being a chef and now Tim's son Sam has started working in the business.

The business sells locally sourced beef and specialise in ribs of beef that can be matured to twelve weeks (pictured right). Recognised as discerning buyers Browns attract connoisseurs.

In the 1930's and 40s, they brought live cattle on the train from farms and auctions, unloaded them at the railway station, and walked them through the main street in Chorley," said John Brown, whose family started Brown's the Butchers in 1932.

"This particular young bull had gone a bit mad and lost its blindfold. I said to my dad: "We'll never get it through town", but he went into the parcel office, got some strong twine and tied it round the ring in its nose and then around its testicles. It walked along as quiet as a lamb."

There have been some radical changes since John began at the business aged 11, sorting ration book tickets after school. Today, the fourth generation – John's sons Tim and Chris – man the decks, but Tim says his father "steers the ship". Dad is 77 and Tim claimed:-

"We're very fortunate to have his knowledge around us. He's still working six days a week."





Making it in Lancashire: Fifth, Fourth and Third Generation at Browns in Chorley

Chris left school to start in the shop at the age of sixteen and has been brought up under the watchful eye of his father who is known to all the customers as Gentleman John. "He has a unique way of dealing with staff and customers.

The majority of Brown's lamb and pork is sourced locally and beef is supplied direct from farms in the Lake District. Brown's also has its own drying room, producing continental style Charcuterie.

"When you know where it comes from and how it was reared, you can stand behind it 100 per cent," says Tim. "We sell tailored meats, for individual needs, not plastic packets. We see customers as friends not just a number."

Last year one particular number did matter to Tom. 60 was the number of sausages linked in a minute by Tom Brown in Devro's world record setting challenge held at their Moodiesburn production centre.

Guinness verified Tim's world record for making the most number of sausages in a minute. He said: "Making sausages is one of the parts of being a butcher I enjoy most. So becoming the world record holder is quite incredible. It just started as a bit of fun when the guys at Devro were challenging customers to see who could make the most sausages in a minute."

Tim used Hand link Select and recommends challengers to practice allowing just ten seconds to run off and use the rest of the time to link.

