

Gary Walker forges ahead

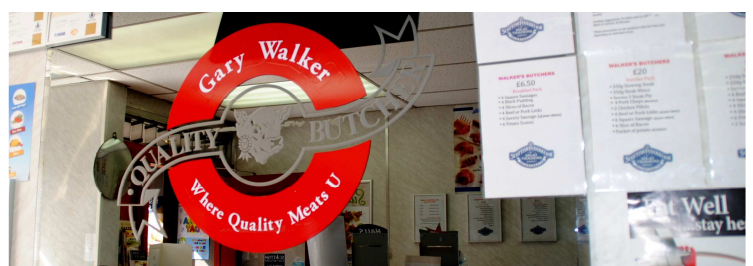


Possilpark is a district of Glasgow on the north side of the Clyde. Originally a leafy estate gifted to the Bishop of Glasgow by King Alexander II of Scotland in the thirteenth century, the land was subsequently acquired by Walter McFarlane & Company's Saracen Foundry.

The Saracen Foundry was originally in Saracen Lane behind the famous Saracen Head Inn in the Gallowgate but moved to Possilpark in the mid 1860s. There it built both a foundry and a village-style infrastructure on which to house its workforce. Possilpark's population grew from 10 in 1872 to 10,000 in less than two decades.

Some of the finest decorative iron works were produced in Possilpark, from railings, drinking fountains, bandstands and street lamps to architectural features for many railway stations and buildings like Selfridges in London. Post war the company moved into standard foundry work including being one of five foundries casting the classic British telephone box.

The foundry closed in 1967 and despite the negative impact on the local economy the street named after it remains a busy thoroughfare. It is here that Gary Walker runs a very successful butchers business supported by a very loyal customer base.







John Scott Meats in Paisley are the main suppliers of beef and lamb to Gary. Pork comes from Robertsons in Ardrossan and Dalziel Meats augment supplies. Eggs come from a local supplier, Bet Aitken in Fintry.

The shop like many in the West of Scotland has a fantastic Lorne Sausage trade with nine different varieties of sliced available. Bars of Lorne are stacked in the chill like ingots and Italian spice is the favourite local variation. Walkers are moving forward using social media. They use Facebook and Twitter to reach out to customers, broadcasting recent shop news in addition to special user offers.

On the ready to eat counter customers can choose from traditional tastes, roasts of beef, lamb and pork. Around the shop there are various offers for a selection of 'Butcher packs'. There are offers to suit all purses ranging from £8.50 to £20 and £30. These packs are extremely popular since they also offer great value.

Open 8.30am until 5.00 Monday to Saturday with a full display maintained right up until 15 minutes before closing. If customers were seeking early morning purchases Gary would open earlier but going by demand the 8.30am start is the right call. Saturdays are still the busiest day of the week but Fridays and Wednesdays can also be strong.

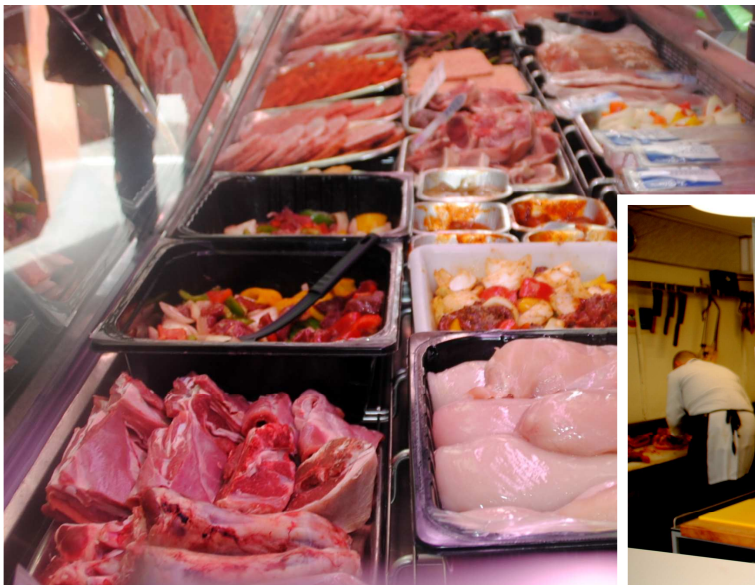
All the sales are over the counter sales and accepting cards has been a big boost. Gary is assisted by four staff Paul, Marcus, his daughter Nicole and a Saturday / after school helper. Staff are encouraged to pursue formal vocational qualifications through Scottish Meat Training.



There is clearly great community spirit in and around this popular Possilpark butchers. Gary was not concerned about being photographed in the street for this feature but he had to put up with plenty of craic and several photo bombers. It all underlined what an important part Gary Walker Butchers plays in the life of the local community.

That works both ways. With their customers help, the business has raised in excess of £17,000 over the last five years for the Teenage Cancer Trust. This followed Nicole Walker being diagnosed with ovarian cancer and her successful course of treatment at the Beatson Centre in Glasgow.

Nicole, her mum and dad and brother Garry raised sponsorship taking part in events such as the Great Scottish Run over 10 kilometres and collecting cans on the counter.



In July 2016 Gary Walker Butchers was awarded an Eat Safe Award from City of Glasgow Council as part of a Food Standards Scotland scheme to recognise excellence in food hygiene standards as assessed by the local Environmental Health Services as part of an ongoing inspection programme. Customers saw the funny side of Gary's certificate being signed by the local authority's Science and Regulation Manager who was also called Gary Walker!

Such recognition does not come without a high degree of commitment. Gary has HACCP in place and meticulously maintained. A very impressive standalone hands free wash hand basin sits behind the cooked meat counter. The unit made by Burco holds a self contained kettle and drainage system.

So with hygiene assured, award winning quality products and a cheerful warm welcome Gary Walker Butchers has a cast iron case to keep on steeling their knives and pouring their ingots of Lorne.