



The Norham Butcher is as well known in fishing circles as it is in the meat trade. This is because David Foreman's interest in salmon fly fishing led him to develop a sideline of the butchers' business that extended into selling supplies not just filled rolls and coffee but also to fishing rods and salmon flies. David has always been a keen angler, hardly surprising given he lives on the bank of one of the most famous salmon fishing rivers in the world. One of his best selling flies is one called "The Norham Butcher".

He has a constant stream of fisherman in the early trading hours who call into the shop for sandwiches, bacon rolls, hot drinks. As a consequence David decided to start selling salmon flies and fishing rods. Flies average at a price of £2.75 and rods can range from £500 to £750. Quite a lucrative sideline but not one that many butchers could replicate.





Scottish Federation member, R G Foreman is located in a small Northumberland village of Norham on the south bank of the River Tweed and is actually in England. It is actually further north than Kilmarnock and is just over 50 miles from Edinburgh.

The business was founded in 1840 by the existing owners – brothers David and John Foremans father’s great great uncle. They are the eighth generation to drive the business which has flourished through the decades, taking on challenges and now consolidated into two smart retail butchery outlets.

David is in charge at the main hub and production facility in Norham but there is a fairly unique cross border presence with a second shop in the Scottish borders village of Eyemouth run by John. A leading question in most parts of Scotland is to ask which football team you support, but here the question of which international rugby team you support reveals answers of England from John and Scotland from David.

Despite the fact that this part of Northumberland bore the brunt of Scotland-England feuds with that famous cannon at Edinburgh Castle – Mons Meg – actually seeing its only use in combat when the Scots used it at the battle of Norham Castle in 1497.

Norham is such a tranquil place, the epitome of an English village. It has a population of 600 that sustains the butchers, a baker, a Mace store, two pubs and a gunsmith. Totally self contained with its own school and represented by all trades apparently as a legacy of the one time large farming population in the nearby area.

Approached from the north and single track fortified stone bridge takes you over the Tweed to be welcomed by the red cross of St George but to Foremans there is no Border.



More Pictures at  
<https://picasaweb.google.com/SFMTA3/RGFOREMANNORHAM#>

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Jim, Cain, Sean, George and David in Norham

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From David's office above the Norham shop you can see the farm at Ladykirk Estate where most of the lamb is reared for the business. That is Scottish Lamb whose nationality is confused by the time it returns from the abattoir at Whitley Bay. Beef comes from Galagate Farm which is just 100 yards away. Farmer Ian Martin finishes mainly Aberdeen Angus cross cattle sourced through Stirling market. Pigs are sourced privately from several finishers within a 15 mile radius.



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Wholesale cuts are balanced with purchases of Jewitt's of Spennymoor in County Durham.

Just as important as the sourcing is the maturation with all sirloins aged for at least a month. This attracts customers from as far a field as Edinburgh and Newcastle. Since the shop was refitted in 2000 it has had the space to develop a trade in cheese and wine. Nowhere in the locality can you find as many speciality British cheeses. There is an impressive range of 80 with wine into the hundreds.



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David left Berwick High School at the age of 16 and worked his way from back shop to front and worked a travelling shop for a few years too. In those days his round took in Holy Isle causeway. David's father's great great uncle Thomas Foreman was caught out by the tide as he and his horse drawn butchers cart came off the island one November night in 1916 and was never seen again.

Hotels and restaurants make up 20% of the turnover. Two full time bakers produce a range of pies. Most popular is a cold eating counter game pie that includes pheasant, venison, stuffing pork and ham. Scotch pies are the best seller as a hot pie and are another reason for customers to travel north to pick up.



Pork Sausages are the best seller but Foreman's Northumberland Sausage – Pork with chestnut and butter, Cumberland, Pork and Leek and Venison Sausage are good sellers. Lorne Sausage sells in Eyemouth but not in Norham. White puddings likewise are only for their Scottish market but the Eyemouth shop struggles to sell the Northumberland favourite, Pease pudding which is made from split peas, bacon and onion.



Foreman makes their own haggis, black pudding, corned beef, dry cured and smoked hams. With beef sourced in Scotland, finished and slaughtered in England, Foreman have certification under Beef Labelling Regulations for Scottish Reared Beef, and Northumbrian Beef. All this is certified by Northumberland Council's Trading Standards officers.



David believes that he should play his part in helping the local community who support him. He is chair of a voluntary group that manages Norham Castle for English Heritage and local tree planting group that is committed to improving the environment in and around the village. RG Foreman's have played a major role in the life of this village and whether its for pies or flies they are well set up to be there for some time yet!