



On the evening of 18th March 1286 Alexander III left Edinburgh Castle on horseback to return to his pregnant wife at Kinghorn Castle because it was her birthday the next day. He was advised not to make the journey to Fife because of the weather conditions but he travelled anyway.

Alexander became separated from his guides and it is assumed that his horse lost its footing. The 44 year old king was found dead on the shore near Kinghorn the following morning with a broken neck. Some say he went off a cliff but there was no cliff but enough of a steep rocky embankment to provide a fatal accident in the dark.

The king's unborn child was stillborn and his only other successor his granddaughter the Maid of Norway tragically died on her way to Scotland. There followed competition for the Scottish crown with a John Balliol and Robert Bruce among the 13 claimants to the Scottish Throne.

That as they say is history. Travellers no longer arrive on horseback but The Butchers Shop in Kinghorn is another place where an important woman awaits your visit. Lisa George has transformed this traditional butchers into her own 'castle' loaded



A shining modern shop welcomes customers, there is a fresh feel and the ambiance is inviting. Lisa, Craig and Katrina make sure that you are greeted and treated royally.

Customers, many of whom are on first name terms, flow in and out with regularity and leave confident that they have made wise purchases that will satisfy when they get home.

Lisa started a career in nursing and was a full time mother until she found herself running the butchers shop vacated by Harry Devlin. Now better known as an ever present at meat industry product evaluation events, Harry would be the first to agree that the shop was a very traditional one when he retired in May 2002.





Lisa continued trading in the style she inherited but as time past she noticed that things were changing. Stir fries were the first new products to be introduced and ideas have been developed in response to popularity of international tastes when eating out. She explained:-

"Things have evolved, things have changed and we are marketing products for younger people. Now I have 19 and 20 year olds coming in the door and you would never have seen that ten years ago. People that age would never have walked in this shop back then.

"What also puts a lot of people off when they are younger is that they don't understand a butchers' shop. They think that they have to go in for something and wait.

"We are quite relaxed with our customers. They should just ask for what they want and it makes it less scary for them. They know that they can come in and so they come back.

"You can have a bit of a laugh with them when they ask for six slices of mince. I remember when I was younger how I could never have walked into a butcher's."

To further assist younger customers, as Lisa changes her counter tickets she is adding brief cooking hints to them and feels that makes a difference.

"I did it first with my haggis parcels. I felt that I was constantly repeating myself explaining all day how to cook them. I got the ticket made up with temperature and cooking time. That generated a lot of good comments."

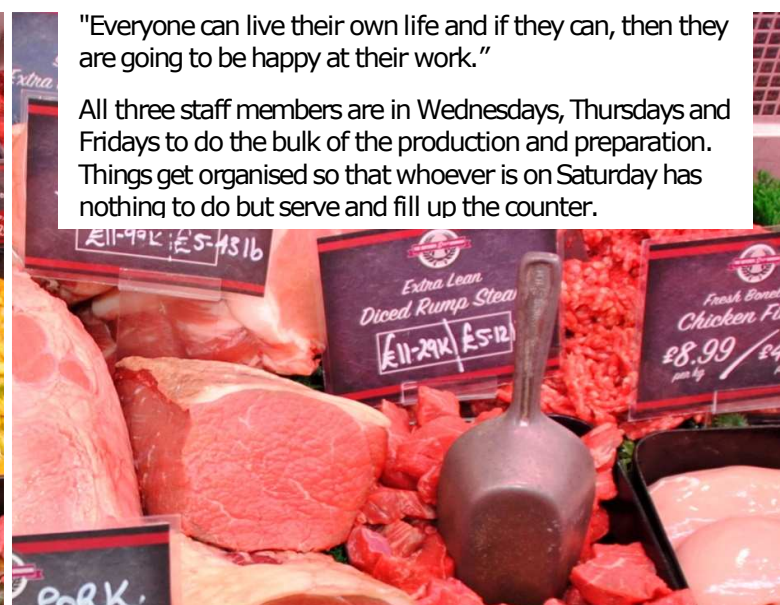
A large blackboard has been positioned on the wall behind the counter and that is used to highlight new products and explain how to cook it. A butcher's block has been re-introduced to the front shop so that customers can have their meat cut in front of them.

Her husband Gary is a joiner so Lisa has had a lot of work done to the front shop systematically replacing ceiling to floor. Fortunately for Lisa, Gary shares her passion for the butcher's shop.

Time off is important so Lisa does four and a half days in the shop and half a day doing paperwork. She takes alternate Saturdays off to enable her butcher Craig the same quality time with his family. She explained:-

"Everyone can live their own life and if they can, then they are going to be happy at their work."

All three staff members are in Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays to do the bulk of the production and preparation. Things get organised so that whoever is on Saturday has nothing to do but serve and fill up the counter.





Over the summer when there are tourists around it could be three staff but other than that the workplan works well. The nearby Pettycur Caravan Park is an important provider of custom but the shop continually attracts new faces, something Lisa attributes to word of mouth and good customer experiences.

Trade was boosted when Lisa's Steak Pies were judged Scottish Champion in 2015. The response was fantastic with record sales for Steak Pies that new year and ever since customers travel great distances just to purchase the famous pies.

The Butchers Shop, Kinghorn regularly win prizes for their products including Mince Rounds and Steak & Black Pudding pies in 2017. In this year's Scottish Craft Butchers Savoury Pastry awards Lisa won gold for her Chicken, Leek & Cheese Sauce pies, silver for Cottage pies and silver for her hand held Steak Pies. She commented on the importance of such recognition:-

"I was really shocked by the amount of people who read about our awards in the local paper. They were shouting in saying that they had seen it and customers were coming in saying 'brilliant, well done'.

Mini pies provide good fun for staff and customers alike. Steak & Black Pudding and Steak & Haggis, Steak & Horseradish, Steak & Chilli attract interest from young and old.

"One of the first things that customers ask is 'what have you new this week'? They are up for trying everything that we are doing which is good. They always come back with their feedback."

Craig has worked hard on developing haggis and black pudding recipes and that has also proved successful. He is also responsible for such bizarre ideas as cooked ham in toffee, gammon in apple cider and brown sugar, the feedback has been reassuringly positive. Lisa spelt out her policy:-

"Keeping things fresh and introducing new products while still keeping on the ones that are staples. You don't want to be changing things too often because if they enjoy something one week, they want to be able to come back in three weeks' time and buy it again."





The meat and meat products are kept affordable for customers. The shop buys good quality Scottish beef and sells at a price to prevent customers going to the supermarket.

"They always automatically assume that a butcher's shop is going to be too expensive. It is not too expensive when you are not picking up ready meals. You are getting good quality food to eat and enjoy."

An appealing range of own recipe sausages includes Pork, Chilli & Cheese, Pork & Leek, Pork & Cracked Black and Steak & Guinness. Burgers are as interesting with Spring Onion & Cheese Burgers best sellers followed by fresh Chilli Burgers and fresh Turkey Burger with cumin and paprika.



Kinghorn has a population of around 3000 and the High Street is full of independent shops all of which feed off each other so Lisa's success has been welcomed all round. She admitted:-

"I never had an ambition to be a butcher. It wasn't something I ever thought about. I had other ideas for my life but I love food. There is not a better feeling than giving someone something for their dinner and they sit and enjoy it. I live for my food."

King Alexander's fall was fatal and Lisa fell into being a butcher by accident but all the signs are that Lisa is quite good at it!

