



## Shotts butcher tuned in for quality

Jim Moffat is only 33 but he has been his own boss now for six years. In 2006 he took over the butchers' business run by John Clayton in the centre of Shotts in North Lanarkshire. By that time he had already served the business for nine years after giving up ambitions to join the armed forces in favour of working at the local butchers.

Jim was recommended by one of his pals, starting as a Saturday boy, so when he left school for good it was straight into the butchers. He was enrolled in a Scottish Meat Training scheme and encouraged to enter skills competitions. This led him to represent Scotland at the Five Nations National Skills Festival at the NEC in Birmingham in 2000. Weeks of preparation under coach Gary Conacher at Simon Howie's in Perth proved very beneficial with Jim and his team mate Barry Green from Grantown winning the boning and display competition.





The benefit of training is recognised by Jim Moffat. Four of his staff are currently on SVQ's Level 2 in Butchery Retail Skills. He has a staff of seven including his partner Lesley, son Jordan, Lesley's mum Jacqueline, Marie Claire, Margaret Rose, Marion and his cousin Daniel. Family is a strong asset and even Jim's niece comes in to help when not in school.

Thousands of people pass Shotts everyday, most at speeds of around 70mph as they travel along the M8 corridor between Glasgow and Edinburgh. Most of us will have heard of the Shotts and Dykehead Pipe Band who have won the World Championships on 15 occasions. Some might know that the Kirk o' Shotts transmitter, visible with its high red light from all over Central Scotland – it is now main national FM transmitting station and three DAB multiplexes are broadcast from the site.





Shotts grew up around an Iron Works using locally mined ironstone. Coal was subsequently discovered attracting a large influx of Irish workers in the late nineteenth century and Shotts used its natural resources to the fullest. Those industries have long gone but the town of just under 9000 inhabitants remains. High speed rail connections direct to Edinburgh and Glasgow have increased the attraction of the town to commuters.



Like most businesses in the current economic climate Moffats' are challenged by rising prices and demand that can only be described as flat. Jim has moved towards quality in his efforts to retain and attract customers. He has competition from a local Co-op and supermarkets only a short drive away but his winning formula includes buying his beef and lamb direct from the farm.



Cattle are sourced from Tom Clark, Wellhead Farm West Calder and lambs from Andrew Waddell of Dewshill Farm, Shotts. Using the local Shotts abattoir means food miles are minimal and Jim is able to use the abattoir's hanging facility to mature his beef. Steaks are a minimum of 21 days aged before they are sliced for sale.



Pork also comes from Lanarkshire with Ramsays of Carluke providing the quality that Jim's customers seek. Black pudding, sausages and pastries are all made on the premises. Young customers are encouraged with schoolchildren piling in at lunchtime for freshly baked sausage rolls and filled rolls. The shop cooks its own Honey Roast Gammon, Smoked Gammon, Meat Loaf, Roast Beef, Pork and Lamb. Italian sliced sausage is popular and Pork, Cheese and Leek bake one of several interesting pastry products.

Jim Moffat has worked hard in his butchers' business in premises he leases the shop from James Chapman Butchers in Wishaw. It is spacious shop with plenty of room for everything to be done just right. Both front shop and back shop are kept meticulously clean. There are dedicated areas for sausage production, cooking pies and even extra refrigeration for exceptionally busy periods.



Alongside quality, Jim Moffat identifies personal service as a major advantage that his friendly shop has always championed. Open 6.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Saturday. Every customer is greeted by their first name and their requests are constantly monitored.

It was customers following Slimming World diets that encouraged Moffat's range of low fat products. Stir fries, curries, steak burgers, beef olives and chicken kebabs are all favourites on a Wednesday when a local class ends.

Sponsorship of local youth football, junior side Shotts Bon Accord, the Shotts Highland Games and the local Gala Day keep James Moffat butchers to the forefront. They are very much part of the community and the community are very much part of the shop. World champion pipers may make all the noise but this international butcher can also call the Shotts!

More pictures at <https://picasaweb.google.com/SFMTA3/MOFFATSHOTTS#>