

Minutes of Q Guild Midlands Region meeting held
on Tuesday, 20 January 2015
at The White Lion, Brinsley (courtesy of Scott Barlow)

Present:

Robert Jones (Joint Chairman)
Stephen Robinson (Joint Chairman)
Nigel Rose (Vice Chairman)
Sandy Boyd
Gaynor Richards (Minute Secretary)
Allan Bennett
Arthur Wright
Scott Barlow
Hannah Gilchrist & George Parker
Nick McAndrews
Tony Yorath, Martin Landers,
Stephen Hewitt, Mark Healey

Walter Smith Fine Foods
Robinson Butchers & Deli
Walter Smith Fine Foods
(General Manager) Q Guild
Walter Smith Fine Foods
Allan Bennett Ltd
C N Wright Butchers
Barlow Butchers
Frank Parker Butchers
Chase Farm Shop

Walter Smith Fine Foods



Q Guild
8 Needless Road
Perth PH2 0JW
Tel: 0844 800 6560

1 Introduction & Welcome

Scott Barlow welcomed members to the meeting and to The White Lion.

2 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Jim Sutcliffe (Meridean Meats), Nigel Poxon (Poxon Butchers), Lee Gould (Owen Taylor) Gary Simpson (G Simpson Butchers) and Simon Kelly (Aubrey Allen).

3 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes dated 6 October 2015

Frank Parker Butchers had been omitted from the Apology list in error.

Smithfield Awards: SB had received excellent feedback for the Guild's Diamond Award Winning Recipes brochure but pointed out one error in the Home cured Smoked Black Treacle Bacon recipe - there are **no allergens** in the cure.

4 Election of Officers for 2015

a) Joint Chairman

Rob Jones and Stephen Robinson confirmed their willingness to stand for a further year and there being no one else prepared to take on the positions they were both proposed by Arthur Wright and seconded by Scott Barlow to continue as Joint Chair.

b) Treasurer

Deemed not applicable.

5 Exec & TAC Report

Executive Report: SB stated that the need to recruit more Corporate members had become evident. Members should advise SB of any suitable companies who could possibly come on board.

SB advised of forthcoming international visits available to members - all as published in The Guildsman Winter 2014/15 edition. Any member interested should contact Douglas Scott but the Verstegen trip to Holland scheduled for 8 March had been cancelled due to lack of interest.

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Q Guild TAC Report: RJ advised that he has stepped down from the TAC committee and had been replaced by Kathryn Nicolson.

Hygiene Audit Systems: A report on audits undertaken has been produced and most notable comments referred to cooked/chilled times on ready meals, lack of temperature recording graphs and food management safety paperwork not being kept up to date.

RJ raised the matter of HACCP cooling to 8°C. Members should produce cooling curve graphs and bear in mind that the 4 hour cooling period starts from 63°C and not 90°C.

AW concurred that there remains contentious points regarding HACCP cooling which require clarification.

SBa explained the benefits of his new fridge and counter temperature control system (installed by Data Angels) using Blue Tooth technology and requiring Wi fi connection to run the apparatus. The equipment enabled all fridges and counters to be monitored 24/7 with information received via mobile phone email which could be printed out for record purposes. SBa leases the whole package system (including 8 no. probes) which works out economically. The system avoids any discrepancies and makes recording information manageable. (Scott Barlow is willing to discuss his new system with any interested members).

Mystery Shopper Reports: SB reported the consistent criticism of shop staff not wearing name badges and outlined the reasons why it was good practice for badges to be worn.

6 Correspondence - Nothing to report

7 Overview of Christmas from Members

RJ reported a very good Christmas with a desirable tight finish. Feels the necessity to push the sale of traditional whole turkeys as opposed to turkey butts. Good pie sales. Production of Christmas Information Brochure helped as customers now demand more details.

HG - overall good. No geese left. They take £10 deposits. No orders are put up - work off pro forma sheets and give copy to customers. Majority of customers on 23 December finished by late morning on 24 December.

SR - down slightly on turnover compared with previous year but made more money due in part to cattle costing less. Achieved correct stock level. Staffing not quite right and needs to address this - helpful suggestions made by other members.

SR advised that the production of Pastry had been made easier by melting the lard and adding boiling water after. Lard was melted by placing in a ham cooker (78°C) and then pastry made up in usual manner. Six batches had been produced in half an hour using this method.

SR also cooks hams in vac bags to eliminate the necessity for further packing. Takes £10 deposits on poultry orders. SR had noted change in trading pattern with 2/3rd of customers being served on 23rd Dec and 1/3rd on 24 December.

AB reported figures about the same as last year. They do not take orders. Start Xmas Club in October. Use a printed card ordering system which speeds up serving. Struggles with lack of space because of their intensive product making.



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SB slightly up on last year. Entertained customers with Santa Claus on sleigh. Sold more turkey butts - packed in smooth foiled containers with pop up timer and vacked. Beef sales up. Tends to turn away from selling geese.

AW - initially asks if customers have had geese before and if not always explains the scant amount of meat on a goose. Sold 5 sides of beef more. Same no. of traditional turkeys sold. Turkey butt sales increasing along with PIBs and sausagemeat balls. 23rd Dec busy. Xmas Club started again for coming Xmas.

Closed Xmas Eve until Monday and this worked. All in all went well.

SH reported a good Xmas, better planned than last year with Turkey and Turkey butt sales increased. Hamper sales down possibly due to lack of brochure leaflet household distribution this year.

TY - needs to make an earlier start on all-embracing Xmas brochure with improved photography which includes an order form tool to boost New Year Eve trade. Also pushing specialist party packs.

SR reported Pie sales up for New Year's Eve - made extra large hot eating pies.

NR also produced extra large hot eating pies for New Year that went well.

NMA - 15% up. Sold more poultry and beef. A new extension at Chase Farm had helped. Overall very good.

ML - Xmas Eve trade finished early - just a pick up day. Necessity to promote whole turkeys as turkey butt prep. has become an arduous task. Believes it only needs the supermarkets to produce a cheap butt version and that would have an impact on butchers' shop butt sales.

MH - Better organised this year, more space to operate, takings the same as last Xmas. Huge increase in pork sales the last week in November and first week in December. Offered discount on sirloins in November. 5/6 days prior to Xmas did not overload counters with Xmas products keeping to every day requirements. Sold a lot of oven ready foil tray products. After Xmas sold a lot of pie products and stew for customers making their own. Increase in chine and sirloin sales.

A general discussion took place regarding the beef trade and increase in ribs of beef and rib eye steak trade in recent years. Smooth walled foil oven ready QUALITY products in demand.

8 2015 Events and Programme

- a) **Midland Region BBQ competition** to be held on Monday 16 March 2015 at the White Lion, Hall Lane, Brinsley, Notts (courtesy of Scott Barlow). Start time: 10.30am for 11.00am. Further details to be provided in due course.
- b) **National BBQ competition** to be held on Wednesday 15 April 2015. Further details to be provided in due course.
- c) **Midlands Region Trip to Best Butchers' shops in Northern Ireland** proposed to run a trip to visit butchers' shops in N Ireland **Monday 1st, Tuesday 2nd & Wednesday 3 June 2015**. Itinerary together with details of the trip are attached. Expressions of interest should be made now to Douglas Scott at the Perth office on 01738 633160.



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- d) The possibility of a future Midlands Region visit to **NW butchers' shops** to be considered. SB to look into this.
- e) **Possibility of a visit to Arvo, Germany during September** - SB to progress matters further.
- f) **Christmas Meeting** discussed and agreed to be held at The George PH in Lichfield on Monday 12 October 2015.

9 Corporate Members - Product Presentation - not applicable

10 Any Other Matters

AW queried an article recently published regarding sausage labelling and it not being necessary for an ingredients listing to be included. RJ recommended that AW should seek advice from Trading Standards regarding this matter.

AB informed members of the great deal of interest received from customers regarding their Pork Pie Wedding Cakes. Members can take a look at Allan Bennetts Pork Pie Wedding Cake on Facebook.

Earlier in the meeting SBa had made members aware of his new Dry-Aging Beef Maturing Refrigerator. If any members are interested then please contact Scott Barlow for further information.

-Meeting concluded-

RJ thanked Scott Barlow for hosting the meeting at his superb new restaurant and also thanked the Chef and staff for their efforts in providing a delicious lunch for members which was greatly appreciated by all.

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