

## BROCKLEBY'S SUMMER '05 NEWSLETTER

So what happened to the spring edition? Sorry, but we've been so busy with lambs, pigs and the shop we couldn't find an odd hour (that's all it would have taken!) to have written it.

May was our busiest month ever, the shop opened on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the sheep started lambing shortly afterwards. Net and Max handled all of the mid-wifery on their own and they did an excellent job, I was too busy with my latest retail venture. Max's all-terrain buggy was converted into a paramedic off-roader and most days during the month he could be seen travelling at high speed across home field loaded with various rubber things and lots of purple spray pushed by nurse Net. We had a successful lambing averaging 1.5 lambs per ewe, so look out for Jacobean lamb (Hebridean cross Jacob) on our menu in 2006.

We kept the shop opening fairly quiet and then had a big launch on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June. This allowed us to iron out all potential problems before we got really busy. Obviously it didn't work like that as we were busy straight away and we are still dealing with problems, I mean challenges! The Grand Opening was a great success; Suzy cooked the world's biggest lamb pie, Sean Hope (local top chef) cut it, the Mayor did a speech and ate some and Net and Max turned up late and missed it all including my long boring speech - apparently the pigs were to blame.

Ever heard of Middle White pigs? Probably not, as they're very rare. Anthony Worrall Thompson loves them but not as much as the Emperor of Japan who has his own herd and will eat no other pork! On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March we took delivery of nine of these wonderful piglets from Gorse Hill City Farm in Leicester, after some initial difficulty with the dogs (the terriers thought they were giant rats!) they settled in happily at our farm. We feed them on leftovers from the shop such as bread, organic milk (their favourite) and vegetables. We thought that was a great idea until Little Pig (the imaginatively named smallest pig) took ill, it was hit and miss for about a week but eventually after much TLC he made a full recovery. I have since found out the cause of the illness, having consulted a proper pig farmer, and sacks of old onions are now off the menu!

All our sheep have now been sheared just in time for all this hot weather we're finally having! We had assistance from Georgie, who works in the shop making our meals and pies, and turned out to be an excellent hand at wrapping the wool (similar to kneading dough?) Our shearer was a local farmer from Sproxton whose wife makes the Melton Mowbray Sloe Gin that we sell in the shop, a good example of the multitude of skills to be found in the villages of Leicestershire.

Some of you may remember Puzzle, son of Charlie, (our founder Ram and company logo). He had been living in Stratford-on-Avon at Welford Boat Station until he was mature enough to take up his duties as a ram. Unfortunately, having been hand reared as a lamb, he tends to be rather over friendly, which is cute in a lamb, but rather daunting as a fully grown ram, as some of the poor boaters discovered when he escaped from his field and climbed on their picnic table looking for food! He is now keeping our second ram, the stately Howard (from Charlecote Park, a National Trust House in Warwickshire) company. They can be seen grazing in the paddock next to the drive leading to the shop. Howard is the slightly larger one, and has a black spot on the tip of his nose. Please feel free to stop and offer them a carrot or two!

Now that the shop is open, and the team has grown from 3 (plus Max) we are going to do a short staff profile in each edition of the newsletter starting with Ben the Butcher. Ben was made redundant from Kwik-Save in Melton Mowbray as they moved away from traditional butchery to selling everything shrink wrapped and pre-packed! (something we're not at all keen on). Ben was still training as a butcher but since starting with us from the very day we opened, he has been thrown in at the deep end; learning how to dry cure ham, bacon and beef, how to make sausages, how to butcher a whole cow rather than vacuum packed primals and how to manage the butchery department. And if we hadn't asked enough of him his wife Emma had their first baby, a girl (Charlotte), on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, (she's already been warned about Max!) Well done Ben, and congratulations to you and your wife.

For the benefit of those who missed our children's colouring competition, held at our Grand Opening, we have decided to extend our deadline to the end of August. If your children would like a copy of the competition entry form please either enquire at the farm shop or send us an email. Don't forget, the lucky winners will have their picture published on our website and they'll also receive some yummy goodies.

So that Brockleby's Farm Shop is more than just a shopping experience we have put together a program of events for the remainder of the year starting next month in August with a Farm Walk and BBQ. In October we're having a local cheese and wine party, in November there will be a Game evening and finally in December we'll have another Christmas farmers' market. For more details please consult our website.

In our next issue, unless I forget to publish, we'll be bringing you details on how to order your free-range Norfolk Black Turkey (slow maturing, tasty and very happy) for Christmas. Our farming friend Andrew Sutcliffe from Nottinghamshire has just hatched the chicks and I've reserved a number of them for our shop. If you can't wait that long just drop us a line and we'll put your name on one.

Best wishes from the team at Brocklebys.