

Rhubarb

Autumn 2014

LOCAL TO LUDLOW
MARKET QUARTERLY

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drink diary.

Welcome

Here we are with our very first edition of Rhubarb, a quarterly instalment of insight into Ludlow's local food and drink scene with the Ludlow Local Produce Market as its cornerstone.

There's lots to talk about, as our market is different from most - everything you buy is produced locally, made with fresh, seasonal and where possible local ingredients and the best thing about it all is that you actually buy from the people that make, grow or rear it themselves. It's simply a farmers' market.


Slow Food®
Ludlow
Marches


LOCAL TO
LUDLOW



G&R Tudge: A family tale

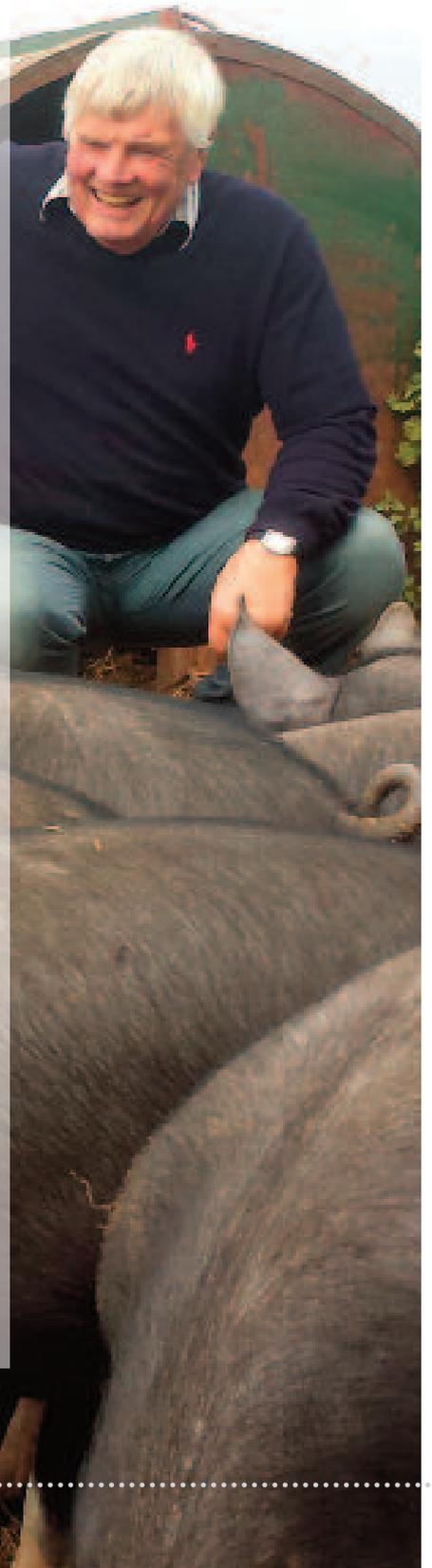
The day Tish Dockerty managed to capture three members of the Tudge family, namely Gordon and his two sons Guy and Chris, all in one place at the same time was a truly jolly experience.

G&R Tudge have been selling free range pork products at the Ludlow Local Produce Market ever since it started in the year 2000 and like most farmers there is a tale to be told. For the Tudge family it is one which takes the form of the small curly tail belonging to a rare breed Berkshire pig that, as people say, 'saved their bacon'.

Back in the 1950's if you lived in Ludlow you would have had your milk delivered by Gordon or possibly his father Vincent, up until, that was, the government banned unpasteurised milk being delivered to doorsteps. A forced return to mixed farming brought with it one of the woes that haunt modern day agriculture, namely BSE, and with the outbreak in the early 90s it was time to think on their feet, or in this case their trotters. A modest investment in some rare breed pigs and a complete change of tack that involved processing the meat themselves into hams, sausages and bacons then selling it direct to the consumer, fast became the Tudge family's bread and butter.

Gordon accompanied by his wife Rosie and son Guy, who had returned recently to the farming family fold, became regular faces behind the stalls at Ludlow's Local Produce Market and many other farmers markets in the area. The other clinching point in the story was a phone call to the chef Shaun Hill, who had recently been awarded his first Michelin star for his wizardry in the kitchen, at the Merchant House in Ludlow. This cold call turned out to be the very beginning of a fruitful relationship between chef and producer which continues to this day, with Shaun Hill being a firm family friend and staunch supporter of the Tudge pork which still appears regularly on his daily menus at the Walnut Tree in Abergavenny.

The bold venture succeeded and has enabled both their sons, Guy and Chris, to return to work full time on the farm, where they live with partners and children as part of a whole family



enterprise. They raise around 100 to 150 rare breed Berkshires annually, 'We chose Berkshires as they are highly active and feed themselves quite happily and, most importantly, the meat has great flavour' says Gordon. They oak smoke their bacon which chef Bill Sewell calls 'incomparable and makes you want to have bacon and eggs for breakfast every morning'. People look forward to a sticky Tudge sausage in a roll at the market, made with proper cuts of meat 'not just the leftovers' states Guy, with Chris adding 'They are traditional Tudge flavour i.e. just plain pork, why add flavours when they taste great already?'

The animals are free from artificial growth enhancers and free from routine medication, so their greatest threat is illness which can come on quickly with pigs and can be fatal if not spotted

early on. Therefore they keep a keen eye on their herds, keeping them in small groups in natural surroundings, very free to roam - which they all certainly did the day I visited.

The highlights for these extremely hardworking folk were pleasing to hear, each having their own: Guy loves a busy market where he sells out of everything; Chris enjoys the constant changes of the seasons saying that each day is different and Gordon cites customers' glowing feedback as his great joy. All in all the Tudge family are a jolly lot with a smile and cheer that helps them continue to rear and produce some of the most delicious tasting sausages and smoky bacon for acres around.

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Recipe: Bill Sewell's Bacon, Cheddar and Potato Gratin

Tudge bacon is all about simple perfection. This dish aims at those qualities too. Great bacon, tasty cheese, garlic and potatoes: you have to end up with something good with that lot. Serve with summer cabbage cooked very briefly and tossed in a little olive oil, salt and pepper. Serves 4-6

Ingredients

400g smoked Tudge bacon sliced into thin strips
900g waxy potatoes, par-boiled and thinly sliced
350g onions sliced
2 cloves of garlic crushed
150ml double cream mixed
150g crème fraiche
280g Cheddar/Lincolnshire
Poacher/gruyere grated
160ml white wine

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180C (fan 170C).
2. Fry the bacon until very crispy in a couple of batches so that the bacon is not overcrowded, removing with a slotted spoon to leave the fat in the pan.
3. Slowly cook the onions and garlic in the bacon fat, until the liquid is gone and it's almost a jam texture, then remove.

4. De-glaze the pans with the wine and reduce to about 10% of its original volume (strange but true!) then stir in the crème fraiche and cream whilst still cooking. Simmer to thicken slightly and season to taste (remembering that bacon and cheese is still to come).
5. You can either layer it all carefully bit by bit or take the robust and scruffy approach which I favour: Mix everything (apart from half of the grated cheese) very gently together. Spread in a baking dish and sprinkle the remaining cheese on top. Bake in the pre-heated oven for about 35 minutes until piping hot and beginning to brown on top.
6. Optionally garnish with chopped parsley after cooking (especially important if some of the oil has separated)

About Bill Sewell

Bill Sewell is a restaurateur and chef from Cafe @ All Saints, Hereford and will be presenting a Taste Workshop at the Ludlow Food festival on Saturday at 1.30pm featuring Tudge Smoked Bacon – see slowfoodludlow.org.uk



Season-in'

The Shropshire Prune Damson is a particular variety of damson that is commonly found in local hedgerows and orchards. This small, unassuming fruit is gradually becoming more popular as it packs great flavour and colour when used in the kitchen. Adopted by a small group of enthusiasts associated with the Ludlow Slow Food group back in 2010 the damson is becoming a desirable addition to the seasonal menus of many restaurants and pubs.

Its heritage reveals that it was an important cash crop for farmers who would sell them to pay their yearly rent or even annual holiday in bumper years. The damsons were transported to the Lancashire cotton mills where many were used to colour military uniforms.

This year there will be a fortnight of events and tastings in and around Ludlow from September 25th to October 9th, focussed primarily at the Ludlow Local Produce Market but also in many participating shops, cafes and restaurants that have chosen to participate. There will be chef demos at the market on September 25th and competitions for best tasting damson products on the 9th October which will round off the fortnight.





10 Good Questions

Mike Wilkes from Malthouse Produce answers our questions this issue...

So what do you produce to sell at farmers markets? Award winning vegetable, herb and flower grower.

What gets you out of bed in the morning? Knowing I have great produce to sell to help me earn a living.

How many markets do you do in an average month? Between my brother and I, 22 markets on an average month.

Average number of hours in the day? Between 10 and 12 hours average.

On those very cold market days how do you keep warm? Usually I am too busy to get cold on the markets.

What one message would you like all your customers to take home with them? This has been so good, I must come next time!

What one thing would improve your business? More customers at every market.

Work wise what's been your proudest moment? Winning the FARMA award for best Farmers Market stall holders nationally. It is not a competition you enter, you are nominated and inspected by judges secretly posing as shoppers, the first we knew was a phone call to say we had won. Praise indeed for our 15 years of trading at Farmers Markets

Who would be your dream customer? All my customers are dream customers (especially in Ludlow)

And lastly which is your favourite market? My favourite market has the most enjoyable scenic journey and the nicest customers, Ludlow, where else?

Calendar: Our Essential Dates

Ludlow Food Festival

Sept 12th – 14th

Over 160 stalls of local food and drink, lots of activities, talks and demos. For more see foodfestival.co.uk

Slow Food Ludlow Taste Workshops at the Ludlow Food Festival

Sept 12th – 14th

Carefully planned and put together workshops that involve tasting many different food and drink items. For more information and booking please go to www.slowfoodludlow.org.uk

Ludlow Local Produce Market

Sept 25th

Damson Days starts with demos from chefs Andy Link (Riverside Inn) and Chef Nathan Eades (Epi Restaurant) with the launch of a speciality Damson bread made by local baker Robert Swift.

Damson Days

Sept 25th through to Oct 9th

Tastings available in participating shops and damson dishes available on participating restaurant and cafe menus. Look out for leaflets that list participating venues.

Ludlow Local Produce Market

Oct 9th

Judging of damson products for professional and amateur cooks. If you would like some damsons get in touch with us by email at: enquiries@slowfoodludlow.org.uk

Ludlow Local Produce Market

Oct 23rd Apple Day

Bring washed apples and bottle type containers and they will be made into juice by local apple juice company Appleteme. For information see: www.localtoludlow.org.uk

The Ludlow Brewery

Since the Ludlow Brewing Co opened its doors in the railway shed back in 2010 it has managed to carve itself quite comfortably a niche in Ludlow's food and drink offer for both visitors and locals alike. Time spent in the impressive converted space, taking a seat on the monumental solid wood tables and benches make all manner of occasions, whether a quiet drink with friends, a live performance or a large group meeting, a fun social experience. Accompanied by a great range of their own ales brewed on site and other bar drinks including coffee, again it has something for everyone at different times of the day. And that's not all, you can also pick up a tasty scotch egg or pork pie made by local butcher Andrew Francis and slap some chutney or mustard on, again made locally using the Ludlow Brewery's ales.

BREWERY VISITOR CENTRE, BAR & VENUE

Opening Times:
10am – 5pm Monday to Thursday
10am – 6pm Friday
10am – 4pm Saturday

Find us 50 metres north of Ludlow
Railway Station (off Station Drive)

theludlowbrewingcompany.co.uk

GREAT BEER, NATURALLY