



**Left: Dhillon stocks a wide range of ladies clothing, from leggings to dresses, jumpers to coats, which he sources from several different countries**



**Right: Phillip Howe of Meat in Place in his butchery unit, specialising in volume meat sales**

Next to him was David Bowyer whose large pitch displayed an array of soft furnishings, including bedding and towels. He's only been trading there for just over a month, having previously sold at Bognor Regis and car boot sales. He has noticed trade is picking up and thinks the footfall is good. He was very positive about Hughmark saying that they had some encouraging start up rates and competitive rents to help new businesses.

An interesting addition to the market was Hisham Badir of K'nooz, selling Egyptian art, handmade jewellery, papyrus prints and hand stitched crafts. From Camberley in London, they were 'trying the market out' and this was their second week. Hisham commented, 'we have had some very positive responses to our

products and there are some really nice people here.' In fact, whilst I was with him a lady was trying on some of his jewellery.

Lew introduced me to one of the shopkeepers on Wote Street to find out how the market team had worked together with the existing retailers. Alan Knight has been running Stones Fine Jewellery for five years and has fully embraced the concept of extending the market, to the point that they have even had a pop up stall outside of their shop. He said, 'Lew has been very careful not to block the shops and to integrate with us. The market creates a bit of theatre in an area that has bookmakers and charity shops in the street and has given it a much more industrious feel. It's good for the town and has definitely made a difference to our business.'

One of the long standing faces of the market is Keith Eaton who has been selling his fresh produce on Wednesdays and Saturdays to the people of Basingstoke for 44 years. He used to also trade from Cirencester but has since given that up. The array of produce on his stall was impressive for a midweek market and he

was continually replenishing stock; much of it comes from Millets, a local farm. Keith has many regulars and some are second generation customers which he has built a good relationship with and this was apparent in the banter that I witnessed between them.

Another chatty man was Nick Mitchell who has been looking after McCarthy's Artisan bread stall for a couple of weeks. He may be new to the job but he certainly has the patter and was rarely without a customer. McCarthy's are a well established bakery, from Hutton, Nr Brentwood who specialise in retailing artisan breads, cakes and pastries across the South of England, covering as far north as Newark.

Undoubtedly the loudest and biggest character on the market is Mark, who has worked on various stalls, including Keith's for over 35 years. He is a bit of a local

**Left: Emily Broun of Manor Farm Eggs had another good selling day during my visit**

**Right: Regular customers stocking up on e-cigarette products**

