

Feature

celebrity and his call of 'Hot dogs, burgers, bacon rolls a pound' resonated throughout the square. He now works for Norman Prior, on the Bargain Burger stand. As I was there over the lunch period, there was a constant stream of customers from office workers to students and the large seating area they provided was full. Norman explained that although they have obvious breakfast and lunch trades, they have a steady stream throughout the day.

For those who like their food with a bit of zing, Thai Knight has a large selection of freshly cooked South East Asian

wholesale meat retailer. He has been in the business five years having bought the business from a friend that he was working for. He trades in Basingstoke on both days and has a steady, regular customer base. He offers a selection of different, bulk buy, meat products, specialising more in joints of meat on Saturdays.

Another of Basingstoke Market's success stories is Emily Broun from Manor Farm Eggs. She started her market retail business in 2009 at Basingstoke and now sells at four other markets. As well as eggs, Emily sells a range

and at Basingstoke on Wednesdays.

Completing the Wednesday line-up and also a newbie is Dhillon who runs the ladies fashion stall. He started his business from Basingstoke three months ago and just trades on a Wednesday. For someone new to the trade, he has the right approach and engages well with customers. Although he has had some quiet periods, he commented that the people of Basingstoke were very friendly and were starting to know where he was.

There is a very positive relationship between all of the town retailers, the council, and everybody involved in the market, who are all working to the same entity. Lew explained how he had achieved this and his plans going forward.

'We identified from the outset that this could be a long haul over at least three years or phases and we are just over halfway through the first.'

'Phase one was to introduce the new trading area without disrupting or affecting existing businesses in an adverse way, taking in to consideration both shops and existing market traders of long standing. This has been achieved, but to finalise the first phase we need to expand the areas, which we are working on at the moment.'

'During the second phase we will need to establish a regular specialist market on a monthly basis or alternatively, create specialist sections of the existing Wednesday and Saturday markets. The third is an optional phase which would all be about aesthetics but first you have to create the demand and make Basingstoke a sought after destination for market traders. To do this, the profile needs to be lifted, which our regular trade advertising, the excellent Council back up and hopefully this feature, might help to alert traders that Basingstoke Top of the Town market has potential for them too. Prospective new traders are welcome.'

'We are seeking to expand our consultancy work in the future and have been operating markets since 1972 in Ireland, Wales and all over England. We have a wealth of knowledge and expertise which we can put to good use for both local Councils and private site owners.'

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This stall selling Egyptian goods shows how the market has been sensitive to existing retail outlets. Inset: Hisham Badir.

dishes available. Darren Knight and his wife Suphattra started on the market in December after she left her job as chef at the Lime Leaf, a local restaurant, to set up on her own. As well as main course dishes, they also sell snack items and the menu is ever evolving. I had the Thai chicken with basil (extra spicy) and I have to say that it was as good as any I have eaten and as there was a bit of a nip in the air, it gave a comforting inner glow! They also cater for events, dinner parties and participated in a recent food fayre. Darren was very positive about the market saying that trade on both days has been very good and they now have several regular customers. He added 'The market guys have been very supportive, they have helped us out with any problems and they are offering good rates.'

Phillip Howe of Meat in Place is a

of chutneys and preserves under the Manor Farm brand, along with honey, pies cheese and butter. By the time I got to her around one o'clock, she had sold out of a number of lines. This is the norm for her and she was very happy with trade and footfall at the market.

Round the corner from Emily and on one of the largest stalls is Karamjit Singh-Athwall. He is a long-standing Wednesday and Saturday trader of 16 years. He specialises in mobile phone sales, accessories and repairs.

Like Karamjit, Suni also trades both days at Basingstoke as well as at Southampton's Sunday market. He started five years ago selling watches and batteries and has since expanded to leather goods and smoking accessories.

New to the market and in fact new to market trading is James Hurn. His parents used to sell toiletries and cosmetics and so markets are in his blood. He sells ladies and gents hosiery in Newbury and Thatcham