

LOCH ARTHUR CREAMERY & FARM SHOP

Camphill Village Trust Ltd

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Dear Friends,

This has undoubtedly been, and still is, an exceptional year ... a year of change (and some degree of concern and anxiety) for many people on many levels. For us, it has certainly been dominated by the building of our new Farm Shop and Cafe. As many of you will now have seen, this is a large project. It is a bold statement, it changes the landscape, and it will undoubtedly reach out to a whole new sector of both the local population and visitors to the area.

On a personal level, to be honest, this development has not been easy for me, but then I am the pioneer so that's probably to be expected. Loch Arthur Creamery and Farm Shop has been my baby that I have nurtured and cared for from infancy... and I am sure we have all experienced the feeling of how difficult it is to help the things that we are closest to, to move forward so that they can become what they are destined to be - never easy but always important! So, we are undoubtedly entering a period of change..... but then, so is the whole world I suppose, as so many people are being faced with having to let go of the past and embrace an ever-changing future.

There is much talk at the moment of local and ethical food, provenance, traceability, connection to suppliers - issues that I, and many others, have been talking about for years and that, hopefully, our work at Loch Arthur has helped to bring into reality.

To 'Walk the Talk' - a lovely phrase that should be shouted from the rooftops. We live in a time that is predominated and overwhelmed by 'policies', 'catchphrases', 'niche markets', 'tick boxes', 'trends'! But how many actually 'Walk the Talk'? Actually - quite a lot, I'm glad to say. Certainly an increasing number of people who, despite all the 'fluff', are genuinely making the effort to do the good, to connect, to produce food with integrity and sell it (or buy it) with care. But... (and this is a big but!), at the same time, there is a massive proliferation of mega-supermarkets and the provision of cheap, well ostensibly cheap, and often unethically produced, food.

How many supermarkets have sprung up (and continue to spring up) around the outskirts of our towns in Dumfries and Galloway over the past decade? We have all been quoted the figures of what percentage of the overall retail food spend is captured by these 'behemoths' of the retail world - it is staggering!

Our new Farm Shop is a bold step into the future. Yes, it is big and it makes a statement! But it is a building of immense ecological standards; it is a building of beauty that sits comfortably within the landscape; it is a building constructed of living materials, chosen with care; it is a building that has been a long time in gestation and has grown out of the efforts, care and generosity of many, many people; but, most importantly, it is a building with a purpose, a building that can welcome, that can offer possibilities, and that can enable many people to connect and to realise that they too can 'Walk the Talk'.

❖ **Shop News** .. Stepping into Rene's store room (portacabin) at the moment is akin to doing 'extreme sports'. It is an obstacle course, a cornucopia of a burgeoning range of quality groceries. It is also a source of great amusement to us because, when we started building up the shop about 10 years ago, selling a small amount of bread, cheese, meat and the odd vegetable,... Rene was allocated one small shelf on which to display her few groceries. She always commented that she would only consider this to be a 'real shop' when she had to fill that shelf weekly,... or maybe even consider a second shelf! Well.... the rest, as they say, is history!

I often comment on Rene's pedigree as a buyer. She is brave, innovative, knowledgeable, principled and extremely responsive to the needs of her customers. For this reason, our shop has an amazing amount to offer in an incredibly small space... and, if you don't find, please ask! We always try to respond.

But a few special things I should maybe just point out:

- **We still have beautiful, organically tanned sheepskin fleeces from our own Loch Arthur lambs. Have to be seen (and touched) to be appreciated !!**
- **Our classic, hand-made Christmas Puddings, Fruit Mincemeat, and Mince Pies and for the first time our own Christmas Biscuits!!**
- **Our delicious range of genuine, continental-style salamis and cured meats, all produced here in the UK... Go on, treat yourself this Christmas!**
- **A select range of natural cosmetic and body-care products and gift packs.**
- **And, of courseour renowned range of quality cheeses from select cheese-makers to offer you a variety of blue cheese, goats & sheep's milk cheeses, brie and smoked cheese, alongside our classic Loch Arthur range.**
- **And, just arrived is a new, organic Gouda-style cheese produced by our friends at the Camphill Community at Botton Village in Yorkshire.**
- **If you're just not sure what to buy ... why not pick up a Loch Arthur Gift Voucher - redeemable for goods in our shop for up to one year. Or let us help you make up a personalised hamper ... always appreciated!**

❖ **Fruit & Vegetables.** Always available; always fresh; amazingly good range and value....and I'm constantly astounded and touched by the effort people make to ensure that they stay stocked up!! Please remember that **if you want to be assured of particular vegetables for the Christmas week, you might be well advised to place an order.** However we should be well stocked right up to the 24th. **Seville oranges should be in stock within the next few weeks.**

❖ **Our Christmas Gift Leaflet** is enclosed, offering our usual range of selected gifts and hampers, which can be collected from the Creamery or sent away for you. **A new addition to our range is the 'Taster Cheese Box'**. This is simplicity at its simplest. Replacing our Cheese Jute Bags (because we can't get those bags any more) it is a taster selection of our four different cheeses in a simple waxed cardboard box at a very moderate price. And remember, we can make up, and send, personalised hampers of all sizes to suit your needs..... and, our **Baby Farmhouse Cheese Truckles** just grow and grow in popularity. Matured perfectly for Christmas...a cheese-lover's delight! **Please place orders by 16th Dec for guaranteed Christmas delivery.**

❖ **Fresh Turkeys** Unfortunately, 'Garvald Farm' in Lanarkshire could not offer us turkeys this year but we are very happy to be supplied with top quality turkeys by Whitmuir Organics near West Linton. Their turkeys are organically reared and are much sought after in the Edinburgh area. **The price this year will be £10.60/kg.** This is still below the price of any comparable Organic Turkey that we've found (and many non-organic). **They weigh from 4kg (9lb) - 9kg (20lb).** **Please place your orders soon and specify what size you are looking for. We will do our best to meet your requirements.**

❖ **Fresh Geese and Ducks!!** Due to popular demand, we have sourced a limited supply of Free Range Geese and Ducks from our chicken producers at Gartmorn Farm in Lanarkshire. **Geese range in size between 4 & 5kg and will sell at £12.50/kg.** **Ducks will be about 3kg each and are very economically priced at only £8.75/kg** **If you're at all interested, please order very soon to avoid disappointment!**

Turkeys, Ducks and Geese will be available fresh for collection on Thursday 22nd, Friday 23rd & Saturday 24th (till 1pm).

❖ **Fresh Meat Days.**

Fresh meat will be available constantly from Thursday 15th to Saturday 24th December!

There will be a good supply of Beef, Lamb, Mutton, Chicken, Pork & Bacon available. There will also be **Gammons** available, although they are limited in supply and must be ordered. Please try and order early.

If you want to be assured of getting particular cuts of meat for Christmas, especially larger joints, we would advise that you send or email an order form or phone in your order by Friday 9th December. (Our meat price list can be accessed on our website or give us a ring) Please remember to specify your collection date. If you don't wish to place an order, feel free to stop by any time as we should be well stocked with meat throughout the period.

**Our first 'Fresh Meat Days' in the New Year will be on:
Thursday 9th to Wednesday 15th February 2012**

(Please make a note of this in your diaries as we're not likely to be in touch again before then.)

Our opening hours over the festive period will be as follows:

Saturday 17th December:	OPEN 10am - 3pm
Sunday 18th December:	CLOSED
Mon 19th - Fri 23rd Dec:	OPEN 9am - 5.30pm
Sat 24th December:	OPEN 9am - 1pm
25th, 26th, 27th, 28th Dec:	CLOSED
Thurs 29th & Fri 30th Dec:	OPEN 9am - 2pm

**We will then be taking our annual break but
please note that the shop will only re-open on
Monday 16th January 2012**

(This is because we are taking a week to plan and brain-storm for the move to our new shop....so, any ideas or thoughts, now's the time to let us know!!)

The final word..... I started by talking about what a year it's been and our developments. That year might just end with a real 'bang' as **we have been nominated, judged and selected as one of three finalists in the 'Best Producer' category of the 2011 BBC Food and Farming awards.** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/ffa/2011/finalists/> Just being selected is an honour but reaching the top three is fairly mind-numbingand we might never find out what winning feels like but hey.... so what!! Let's see what fate deals us at the Awards Ceremony next week! As always, none of this would be possible without all the wonderful folk out there who support us in what we do. So, whatever the outcome ... let's share it!!

As always, we thank you all for your on-going support, custom and friendship and look forward to seeing many of you over the coming weeks.
And, from all of us here at Loch Arthur, our best wishes for Christmas & the New Year.

With best wishes

Barry Graham