

LOCH ARTHUR CREAMERY & FARM SHOP

Camphill Village Trust Ltd

Beeswing, Dumfries, DG2 8JQ

Tel & Fax: 01387 760296

e-mail : creamery@locharthur.org.uk

VAT Reg. No. 258 6934 1

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Dear Friends

We live in a world in which we have access to so much and, through that, can so easily slip into a sense of what we must have - what we can't do without.

At the same time, we live in a world in which industrialisation, mass manufacturing and marketing have led to an abundance of cheap, low quality products which distort the true cost of products made with care and integrity. Particularly, the true price of the manufacture of food has become very distorted. Although there is an acute awareness of enormous recent rises in the cost of food (which, I agree, is very worrying), I learnt, just recently, that a report has revealed that the average percentage of income in the UK spent on food has dropped over the past decade from 23% to just 9%. A shocking fact which reveals the extent to which people's level of disposable income, and priorities for spending it, have changed!

I'm always most aware of all of this as we come towards Christmas and I ask myself what is needed and what is excessive. How do we balance the joy and pleasure of giving and receiving - expressing our love and friendship - against the temptation to consume in excess. But we always have to remember that consuming is also a wonderful thing, a gift and an opportunity to support the efforts of those who contribute to society and the economy through their work. It is also an opportunity to choose quality against quantity, to support products of integrity which are, fairly traded, organically produced or locally procured. We feel and hope that we are in a position to offer such products through our shop and to enrich your experience of buying and giving at this special time of year.

We should also take this opportunity to boast about the fact that **we have been nominated as one of only four entries in the 'Food Category' of the 'Glenfiddich Spirit of Scotland Awards'**. The purpose of the awards is to "**recognise the achievements and mark on Scottish culture made by individuals over the course of a year**". This certainly does feel to be something of an honour, whatever the outcome of the vote might be at the awards ceremony on the 29th November. (To be televised on STV on Friday 30th November).

It is always uplifting to receive objective and unsolicited praise of our efforts to produce and sell food in an honest and conscious manner and, as always, this could never happen without your on-going and fervent support for which we are ever grateful!!

❖ **The Autumn Fair**

Another amazing year in fact an even more amazing year!! So many traders, so much remarkable, good quality food, so many visitors, so much support and so much good will and friendship. Yes, it feels that our Autumn Fair has really come of age and become the event on the Dumfries and Galloway calendar that it was always destined to be. Thank you for your support and for the enormous amount of positive feedback that we have received.

And, congratulations to Cara Barlow who won the Cheese Basket from the car parking raffle!!

❖ **The Shop**

As mentioned in my preamble above, we always try to strike a balance with what we stock in our shop in the run up to Christmas. So we try and chose a range of products that are delicious, interesting, useful and worthwhile.

So, what will we have of interest this year??

- **Our delicious, hand-made Christmas Puddings, Fruit Mincemeat and Mince Pies alongside our usual cakes and pies.**
- **An extended range of bought-in cheeses from select cheesemakers to offer you a variety of blue cheese, goats & sheep's milk cheese, smoked cheese, brie and others alongside our classic Loch Arthur range.**
- **All nature of jams, home-made chutneys, local honeys and organic juices.**
- **Sliced cold meats - beef and ham - which proved enormously popular at the Autumn Fair. If you want to be sure of these for Christmas, you should order! And, hopefully (by very popular demand!) that incredible Organic Salami produced on a Camphill Farm in Northern Ireland.**
- **And, of course, crafts and gifts - candles, pottery, cards, wooden boards and toys, all beautifully hand-crafted.**
- **And I should mention, we are getting a real following for our colourful 'Eco-Silk' bags - strong, lightweight shopping bags made from 'parachute silk' - incredibly compact and very elegant, they make an excellent gift and are proving very popular. They are still for sale at just £3.50 each.**
- **We also now have a select range of Weleda cosmetic and body-care products and gift packs.**
- **And, if you're still 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.**

❖ **Vegetables & Fruit.** As always our racks are brimming at the entrance to the shop giving more people the opportunity to browse, select and enjoy real quality Organic Fruit & Vegetables. Remember that there is always a big rush on fruit and veg in the run up to Christmas so, if there are particular things you want, please contact us in advance so that we can set aside for your requirements. However we should be well stocked right up to the 24th.

- ❖ **Our Christmas Gift Leaflet** is enclosed, offering a range of selected gifts and hampers, which can be collected from the Creamery or sent away on your behalf. And remember, we can make up personalised hampers of all shapes and sizes to suit your needs and send them all over the country. This year we have an extended range of baskets, jute bags and wooden platters to make these all the more interesting. Our cheeses are looking and tasting superb. Our Truckles are in perfect condition for Christmas and will once again be available (if required) with the 'Girolle' - that delightful gift for cheese-loving friends or perfect centrepiece for your table.
- ❖ **Fresh-Meat Days.** We will, once again, be having fresh meat available over an extended period in the build-up to Christmas. This will relieve pressure on the one week and make it easier for you to collect fresh meat at your convenience in this busy time.

We will have fresh meat available throughout the period from Thursday 13th to Monday 24th December! There should be a good supply of Beef, Lamb, Chicken, Pork & Bacon available. There will also be Gammons available, although they are in short supply and must be ordered - and Turkeys of course (see below). We have a very limited supply of geese available. Please order early.

I have enclosed an order form. It would be very helpful if you could return it with an order by Friday 7th December if you want to be assured of getting particular cuts, especially larger joints. 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 7th, Friday 8th & Saturday 9th February 2007**

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

- ❖ **Fresh Turkeys** will be supplied again this year by our friends at 'Garvald Farm' in Lanarkshire. Their turkeys are organically reared and are extremely tasty and succulent. **They will be available fresh for collection on Friday 21st (from 2pm) Saturday 22nd (all day) & Monday 24th (till 1pm).** The price is, unfortunately up on last year to £8.20/kg ... but this is still below the price of any comparable Organic Turkey that I could track down. They range in size from 4.5kg (10lb) to 10kg (22lb). Please place your orders soon and specify what size you are looking for. We will do our best to meet your requirements.

Remember that the shop is now open
Monday to Friday 9am - 5.30pm (open through lunch),
Saturdays from 10am - 3pm

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

- Saturday 22nd December: OPEN 9am - 5pm
- Sunday 23rd December: CLOSED
- Monday 24th December: OPEN 9am - 1pm
- 25th, 26th, 27th December: CLOSED
- Fri 28th & Sat 29th December: OPEN 10am - 3pm
- **We will then be taking our annual break and the shop will be closed until Monday 7th January**

We hope to be seeing many of you over the coming weeks and from all of us here at Loch Arthur, we send you greetings and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

With best wishes

Barry Graham