

TASTY TRADITIONS

Here we meet another one of the museum's local suppliers, the makers of Beamish's Traditional Piccalilli. Don't forget, as well as products made by local businesses, we also sell a range of Beamish-produced items at the museum and on our online shop, visit www.beamish.org.uk.

"I guess Beamish, like our piccalilli, is a great way to keep memories alive and a reminder about our heritage and family values."

Tradition is at the heart of Calder's Kitchen. The company creates award-winning condiments and was set up by husband and wife team Andrew and Anne-Marie Calder in 2015 after they found an original family recipe.

Andrew, 44, from Darlington, said: "We started making piccalilli in our family kitchen after discovering my late granddad Charlie's favourite family recipe and decided to 'give it a go'.

"After initially giving our first batch to family and friends to try, and receiving great feedback, we made up Christmas hampers, which included the piccalilli, to raise money for a school in Tanzania, East Africa.

"We later developed two variations of the traditional recipe, Chillililli which has a delicious medium-strength sweet chilli glow and later, the Indian-spiced Sillylilli."

Beamish sells jars of Traditional Piccalilli on The 1900s Town Market Stalls, and we also sell jars of Calder's Kitchen's piccalillis in the Museum Shop at the Entrance.

The traditional recipe continues to be popular with museum visitors and Andrew says the company, based in Darlington, is "extremely proud to work with Beamish".



He added: "We take a lot of pride in telling customers they can buy our products while on a family day out at Beamish. It really is an honour and pleasure to work with everyone at the museum.

"Beamish is such a North East institution, it's great to have that association and something we see as a real positive. Earlier this year, Beamish launched their own label Traditional Piccalilli with our help, which looks fantastic next to all the other locally-produced cheeses, jams and preserves on the stall.

"It's wonderful for our brand to be associated with Beamish as everyone holds the museum in such high esteem."

Andrew is responsible for the day-to-day running of the business, overseeing everything from production of stock and sales to marketing and events. He believes there are many crossovers between Beamish and Calder's Kitchen.

"We are very much focused on our heritage and the importance of shining the spotlight on the North East and great North East traditions," Andrew said. He added: "In our sector we work with other artisan food producers and are involved with Food and Drink North East who are extremely passionate about showcasing the region, championing everything from established North East household names like Greggs, Dickson's and Fentimans, to smaller businesses such as ourselves.

"I don't think it gets much more North East than a saveloy dip or a ham and pease pudding stottie with piccalilli, and we've definitely found with our products, people do reminisce about childhood memories, grandparents or great grandparents who used to make their own piccalilli and serve it with afternoon tea or sandwiches for school."

A love of North East traditions clearly runs through generations of the Calder family, and Andrew says the man who was the inspiration behind Calder's Kitchen was also a fan of Beamish.

"I have memories of being brought to Beamish by my grandparents as a young child, seeing the trams and the horses and them telling us this is how life was for them in their earlier days. Now we tell our children that this is how life was for our grandparents.

"My granddad Charlie was a milkman in South Shields for most of his working life and, back in the day, delivered the milk by horse and cart. He had a huge affinity with horses and this is a part of



the museum we've always been really drawn to as a result. We've brought our children to see the Beamish working horses and told the kids about grandad and his milk round. In this day and age, with the technology they are used to, it blows their minds to see how people used to operate relatively recently!"

Calder's Kitchen had very humble beginnings, with Andrew and Anne-Marie making their first jars of piccalilli from their own kitchen. Since then, the business has gone from strength to strength.

Andrew said: "When we started out on this journey we used to make, bottle, label and pack everything from our own kitchen. This included a trip to the local fruit and vegetable wholesaler in Sunderland, where we used to be based, chopping and raw pickling the vegetables in large buckets, then cooking, bottling and sticking on the labels by hand.

"These days we have a warehouse, an office and we work with another fantastic family business who have been making pickles and chutney for three generations, and have entrusted them with our recipes to pack our products for us. Since doing so we have been able to launch the new chutney range and have won and been finalists in numerous

awards including Great Taste and Great British Food & Drink Awards in 2021."

Despite Calder's Kitchen's growth, the business remains true to its roots and continues to uphold the values established in those early days, and Andrew and his team, including business partner and sales manager Andy, are continually looking at ways to be more sustainable.

Andrew said: "We have kept our current range in line with our family ethos and memory of grandad Charlie – obviously with the piccalilli recipe but also in that grandad always grew his own tomatoes and used to grow and pickle his own beetroot. We like to add a bit of extra infusion and our spicy flavours – Sillylilli and latterly Beetroot and Habanero and Spicy Tomato chutneys – have been a huge hit since we launched them last spring.

"We try to source locally as much as possible, from ingredients to packaging materials and distribution. The beetroot that goes into two of our chutneys for example is grown in a field a stone's throw away from the factory and you can really pick out the fresh taste."

He added: "We speak to other local businesses regularly, sharing good practice, and we receive support through Food and Drink North East.

"Last year we started working with a local distributor, which is more cost effective and helps reduce our carbon footprint, and we are currently working on plastic-free packaging as we are very conscious about the importance of being eco-friendly."

Andrew still believes in the importance of an in-person approach and visited the museum when the Traditional Piccalilli went on sale at the museum. He donned Beamish Edwardian costume and shared his family's story and how the business came to be, and staff, volunteers and visitors were also able to try the piccalilli.



Andrew said: "I think it's so important to meet and get to know the people who are informing customers about our products so we always like to visit shops, meet the teams and give demonstrations. We've been to Beamish a couple of times to meet staff and to hand out samples, re-introducing visitors to a proper North East piccalilli from yesteryear, and it's been brilliant. We've had a fantastic response, dressing up was great fun and it's something we are really looking forward to doing more of. Seeing first hand the enjoyment our pickles and chutneys create cannot be beaten!"

Andrew said about the future of the business: "Hopefully onwards and upwards! 2021 was a very good year for us, our most successful to date and we are very excited to now offer our products in catering size packs – something we have been working on for a while. If we can see similar growth in 2022 we'll be very happy!"

Andrew says the Traditional Piccalilli is great on sandwiches, wraps, cheeseboards, and makes a great cooking ingredient for curries, chilli, burgers and even pizza toppings.

Be sure to pop along to The 1900s Town Market Stalls to pick up the delicious grandad Charlie-inspired piccalilli soon!