

NEW SHOP IN NORTH WALES  
SOON PROVES DEMAND FOR FISH

Exotics popular at  
"Tim's For Fish"

Exotic tastes in fish may not be expected from the inhabitants of the quiet North Wales market town of Mold, but fishmonger Tim Wooldridge knows to his profit that such a demand is there, and is increasing.

His shop "Tim's For Fish" opened last November and the new business is already flourishing.

"It was great, right from the start," says Tim who, at 29 is not at all daunted by the task of running his own business. "The people of Mold have proved to be very adventurous when it comes to fish. In the first week my stock of octopus sold out every single day!"

*Encouraging!* Customers are actively encouraged to be adventurous, with neither Tim nor his staff averse to giving nudges in the right direction by handing out recipe ideas. For their part, he says customers are pleased to give him 'feed-back', telling him how they enjoyed their fish fare. \*

"Tim's For Fish" is a very far cry from Tim Wooldridge's first job of running a cocktail bar. Fed up after a year mixing Tequila Sunrises and Manhattens he decided to try selling cod and haddock instead. He took his first step in the trade by managing a fish shop in Birkenhead, and held the job for nine years.

"That experience stood me in good stead now I'm going it alone," he says.

Preparing the Mold premises for opening was a job in itself, and Tim tackled much of the work himself. Previously a florist shop, it needed a complete re-furbishment. The windows had to be taken out to get the counters inside. He did all the tiling himself. Tim opened for business by hanging the wooden, fish-shaped sign over the counter. "Tim's For Fish" was ready for business.

One of the very first things he did was to apply to be assessed for the Seafish Quality Award. No stranger to the Authority, one of Tim's less onerous duties as manager of the Birkenhead shop was to attend the original launch of the Quality Award at London's Cafe Royal.

"Tim's For Fish" qualified for the Quality Award in the first week of trading.

While he has built up a substantial number of 'regular' customers from Mold and the surrounding area, Tim has a monthly influx when farmers come to the local market from mid-Wales and the coast. They use the trip to stock up for their freezers from his extensive range of fish and shellfish as well as game.

Tim buys most of his fresh fish from Liverpool Market though the more exotic species like swordfish, pomprano and shark are air freighted from the Far East. He also sells special packs of four oysters, and potted herring, as well as stocking sauces and condiments to serve with fish.

One popular line is salt cod which, Tim says, is the basis of the traditional Liverpoolian breakfast. It's prepared by soaking the cod overnight and cooking it in bacon fat: delicious say the Scousers !

Tim would like to develop the delivery and catering side of his business and he already supplies a small number of local pubs and restaurants, plus the local Court and judge's chambers ! Still being trained, the staff have already developed a friendly, efficient service.

"Enjoy your supper," calls an assistant, as another satisfied customer leaves the shop.

In today's world of fast food and one-stop shopping, personal service is a vital ingredient.