

## Young Butcher Of The Year

BBC3 Tuesday

I'm not a brilliant singer or a talented dancer — I'm a butcher. I never dreamt that what I do for a living would get me into a competition on national TV. And I certainly don't want to be a celebrity. But I love my job and take pride in being good at it. Plus, it's how I met my girlfriend Odile!

I was brought up on a farm, and as far back as I can remember I used to help my parents out with their livestock, from calving to feeding. You don't get attached to the animals. You just want them to have a good healthy life, even though they're going to end up on someone's plate. I think I was always quite interested in why animals on their way to the slab had to be bred in a certain way, be a certain weight and have a particular body-shape.

When I decided I wanted to be a butcher, I wrote to every butcher in Lincolnshire, and was accepted as an apprentice by Eric, who is still my mentor. Working for him was like stepping back in time. He even had his own little abattoir at his shop.

A lot of butchers buy stuff in, but everything we did was made by us, right down to curing bacon and rendering the lard for the pork pie pastry. An animal would come in walking on its own feet, and leave ready for the oven.

That might seem old-fashioned



Who will be crowned best young butcher?

# Chop stars!

Butcher **Jim Sutcliffe**, 24, has high hopes as BBC3 celebrates youngsters with unsung talents

when you can just pop into a supermarket and buy meat off the shelf. But I think Eric's philosophy is more relevant than ever. People are concerned about what they're eating and where it comes from.

It might cost a bit more, but it's worth it in terms of taste and conscience. Eric told me what his own father always used to say — "Anything's dear if it's no good." If you buy a joint

for £2 and it's horrible, then that's expensive. You might as well spend £10 and enjoy it.

I opened my own shop in February 2008. It was a huge risk, but I had the backing of my parents, who agreed to supply the livestock. The vast majority of the meat I sell is from my family farm. I know where and when each animal was born and what it's been fed.

My customers appreciate

what I do and the business is thriving, despite the current hard times. I'm constantly trying to introduce new things, like producing our own sausages.

In fact, it was my sausages that won my girlfriend Odile's heart! She runs a salon across the road, and came over shortly after we opened for a pound of sausages. She'd been searching for a sausage she liked, and

Jim hopes to take the title



Presenter George Lamb

mine met her expectations.

We've been together ever since, and she encouraged me to enter BBC3's *Young Butcher Of The Year*. It's amazing to think that my humble profession should be recognised like this, and I hope that it makes people think about what they eat, how it got onto their plate — and who put it there.