

THE HISTORY OF BECKETTS FARM THROUGH THE YEARS

1937

Albert Edward Beckett moves to Wythall from Shropshire in 1937 to take up the tenancy of a small farm at Forhill. He is a traditional tenant dairy farmer, hand milking his cows, working the land with horses and keeping a few pigs and hens. He takes an active part in the community as well as being a farmer and is later elected to the Parish Council.



1937 - Albert Edward Beckett

1957

By now Albert had grown his milking herd to 60 cows and was renting a total of 250 acres of land. Albert records a red letter day in his diary - a double cause for celebration in the family - Simon is born and Alan achieves his goal - a Nuffield Farming Scholarship.



Congratulations Alan!

1961

Following his Scholarship experiences in the States Alan persuades his father and brother to sell the dairy herd and pigs and move to intensive egg production. The first unit is set up at Heath Farm using ex-RAF buildings moved from Hednesford.



The Beckett family in 1963

1945



becomes one of the first trustees of the Community Association. Meanwhile his children, Alan, Ken and Wendy are growing up.

By now Albert has moved to a larger farm in Wythall. The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food honours him for his contribution to the war effort by keeping agricultural production levels high. Albert as Secretary of the Wythall Horse Show persuades his committee to buy a field in Shawhurst Lane.

This is later sold for housing and, with the money, the committee purchases the 37-acre farm which is now known as Wythall Community Park. Albert

1952

Albert, Alan and Ken continue to grow the business and tenancies are taken on at Chapel Green Farm and Barn Hill Farm. For the first time Becketts become landowners by purchasing Heath Farm which they had formerly rented.

Farming methods are improving world wide and, with a desire to see this first hand, Alan set himself the goal of obtaining one of the coveted Nuffield Farming Scholarships.



Albert with his two sons, Alan and Ken

During the 60's



Becketts becomes a limited company with Alan as managing director. During the '60s he buys a small farm every other year, erecting new buildings and turning them into one-man laying and rearing units.

Becketts is now the 5th largest egg producer in the country. Their product is being sold to supermarkets nationally and also retailed from the garage at Heath Farm - **Farm Shop Mark 1**.

1970

The A435 is upgraded to a dual carriageway connecting Redditch New Town with Birmingham. The original farm house is demolished and a replacement is constructed with a purpose built area for the **Farm Shop Mark 2**. The A435 will become the busiest arterial road into Birmingham over the next 40 years.



1961 - Egg production at Becketts Farm pre A435 Dual Carriageway



1980

Farm Shop Mark 3 starts to take shape as the bakery has its grand opening officiated by Shoey McPhee of TV's 'Crossroads' fame. Word spreads that you can watch the bakers as they work making bread in the first open plan bakery in the Midlands. Speciality bread, freshly baked using local ingredients becomes Becketts' trademark.

1984

Becketts achieve the prestigious National Farmers Union Marketing Award. This honour is bestowed for the continued success of the business and in recognition of its prowess in marketing its products. The farm shop is extended to **Mark 4** to include a butcher's department selling meat produced on the farms. Simon conceives the idea of a restaurant on site.



1984 - Becketts presented with NFU Marketing Award

1987



Alan receives his MBE at Buckingham Palace

Simon, following in his father's footsteps, is awarded a Nuffield Farming Scholarship. They are the first father and son to achieve this double accolade.

HM the Queen awards Alan with an MBE for Services to Agriculture.

1995

Simon becomes managing director. July 17th at 10.46 a.m. Becketts says goodbye to egg production and all the chickens are sold. Redundant farm buildings will be redeveloped.



1996

Simon fulfils his vision for the new generation of farm shop together with a restaurant. The redevelopment sees **Farm Shop Mark 5** launch with four separate departments: a bakery with sandwich bar, deli, butchery/hot counter, eggs and veg.

The newly built restaurant can seat up to 140 people and offers an all day, family friendly environment serving fresh, simple, good food. Specially arranged cabaret nights prove to be exceptionally popular. Becketts is nominated by their customers for, and subsequently achieves, the 'Open to All' Award for disabled access.

Becketts also gains Investors in People accreditation. Alan and his wife Anne sponsor a new Nuffield Farming Scholarship, the Beckett Award, in this case for an innovator or entrepreneur in the agricultural field.



1996 - Becketts awarded "Investors in People" accreditation

1999

Ian Comer, one of our longest serving members of staff is promoted to Farm Shop General Manager in 1999 and is appointed to the Board of Directors as Retail Director in 2003.

Further internal promotions to the Board of Directors included Geoff Smith who was appointed as Farming & Development Director in 2006.



2003

The UK Farmers Club presents Simon with its Farm Diversification Award in recognition of the huge strides in diversification achieved by Becketts. Poultry houses which became redundant after the chickens were sold in 1996 have now been refurbished as light industrial units. This redevelopment brings new and much welcomed jobs to Wythall making Becketts second only to Resolution as the largest employers in the district.



2008

The exciting expansion of **Farm Shop Mark 6**, almost doubling its size, now houses a larger sandwich bar and a new giftware department. The Orange Kitchen is launched providing the area with its first and only cookery school and offering freshly cooked and prepared meals to take away.



A licensed coffee bar is opened along with a total new look for the restaurant and conference centre.

2010

Simon's first grandson, Thomas is born. The fifth generation of Becketts enters the big, wide world.



2012

Becketts Farm is named the 'Best Family Business' at the 2012 Wilson Foundation Family Business Awards. A proud moment for all of the Becketts Farm family who have all worked very hard to achieve this recognition.



Simon and Holly presented with the award

2013

Becketts Farm receives the accolade of 'Midlands Best Farm Shop' by the BBC Good Food Show. As part of the award, Becketts Farm hosted their own stand at the Good Food Show which was held at the NEC.



Becketts Farm stand at the NEC exhibition

2015

Simon's youngest daughter Holly who joined the business in 2009, follows in both her father and grandfather's footsteps gaining a Nuffield Farming Scholarship. Holly travels to America and Australia researching growing businesses through developing people.



2016



Purchase of a JCB Fastrac and new combine harvester along with other high tech machinery as the need for modernisation in agriculture is recognised. Additional agricultural storage is applied for as the farming side of the business expands.

2017

Becketts Farm wins People's Choice in the Midlands Food, Drink and Hospitality Awards.



Simon, Ian and Jim collect the award

In the same year, Jim Thompson is appointed to the Board of Directors as Hospitality Director. The Farm Shop is highly commended as "Best Independent Retailer" in the Great British Food Awards.



2018

Becketts Farm Restaurant is refurbished as its popularity means that expansion is needed to match demand. The Coffee Shop is improved with additional seating and the kitchen is expanded to allow our team of chefs to serve customers more efficiently.



Initial plans for the 2018 restaurant refurbishment