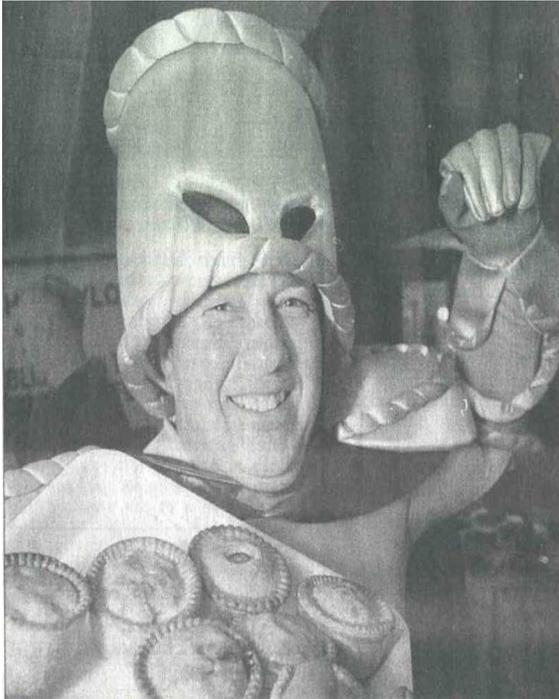


Eating a pork pie in Ripponden is very serious business - only the crunchiest pastry, tastiest jelly and most succulent meat will do. Mr Brian Turner, was guest judge. "I love pork pies," said Mr Turner. "I was brought up in Morley and lived on pork pies and fish and chips. "I came here last year and made a bit of a bee's knees of a pork pie, or at least so the lads from the society told me.



Pork Pie Man Stuart Booth

Pictures Alan Barton

"A great pie has to have a good consistency, flavoursome jelly and another thing which makes you say 'that was grand'". Mr Turner. Who appears regularly on BBC TV's "Ready, Steady, Cook" has opened a hotel and restaurant at the Birmingham NEC, called Brian Turner's Crowne Plaza Hotel.

He also has a restaurant in London called Foxtrot Oscar and has just finished filming a cookery programme for Anglia.

The society was founded in 1982 by a group of men who popped into the pub for a pint after a work-out at a local gym and found themselves peckish. The Old Bridge Inn did not serve food so one man offered to bring pork pies with him after their next session the following week.



Kevin Booth Prepares The Trophy

As they took it in turn to buy pies each week - taking home a wooden box each week to remind them it was their turn - the men became competitive and started judging each pie, so the Pork Pie Appreciation Society was formed.

"Ten years ago we decided that since we knew a bit about, pork pies we should start having an annual competition. We thought we'd raise some money for local charities at the same time," said member Mr Peter Charnley, of Huddersfield.

"The standard of pie making has improved over the years. They are all independent bakers and butchers who are very proud of their products," Over the years the event has raised more than £5,000. A team of judges mark each pie on its glossy

finish, appearance, pastry, jelly and quality of meat.

Mr Charnley added: "It's got to look wholesome, be a good size, have a nice gloss, but most important is the taste, then crunchy pastry."

"A pork pie is the original convenience food. It has a good balance between fat, protein and carbohydrate - it's a nutritious meal that you can take with you."

Honorary society member Mr Phil Batley, 49, of Parkland Drive, Triangle, said: "My wife says she's a pork pie club widow."

"We come down here every Saturday to have a laugh, natter put the world to rights and eat some pies."

First place in the competition went to Andrew Jones, of Bethel Street, Brighouse. Second was Wilson's of Crossgates, Leeds, third placed was Ian Hopkins, of Birkenshaw, and fourth was Weegmann's, of Otley.

Pork pie fact file

- The Pork Pie Appreciation Society has named the jelly-filled gap in between the meat and the pastry the 'rat run'.

- Pork pies are a Yorkshire delicacy and are known to locals as 'growlers'.

- The average 4oz porkpie contains around 400 calories.

- Society members recommend pies are served at room temperature and on their own.

- Large family sized pies are known as 'stand' pies.