Boghall Butchers shell out after pie success



It was the sight of customers queuing outside the old shop that encouraged Paul Boyle to enlarge the customer's floorspace. Paul was always determined to resist all the suggestions to move to a high street position:-

"These are the people who have been our customers for years, they have been loyal to us and more people have come from outside the area to use us as well."

All resources generated from the hard work since winning the World Scotch Pie Championship in 2005 was re-invested in those customers. With the security of a 30 year lease on the council owned premises allowed Paul Boyle to transform his Boghall shop. It is now just over a year ago since the ten day closure that ended up with his front shop virtually doubled in size, his all important bakery was relocated within the unit and his fresh meat chill ended up where his bakery used to be. The new bakery is air conditioned and every square inch of space has been utilised.







A separate Cooked Meat fridge was also fitted out to ensure complete separation between raw and cooked.

Although the existing Criosbanc counters were used the refrigeration units are cited externally to take the heat out of the shop. Soundproofing is provided by an acoustic blanket. There is now a separate refrigerated bakery counter and the rear display affords space for scones and other bakery items.

From a staff of three full time and one part timer the Boghall Butchers now has six full time and five part timers.



The new shop was designed by Peter Rae and the work carried out by Jim Divers of Peter Craig. The uplift in sales was nearly 20% but after the initial six months that settled down at a very acceptable 10% increase.

Anyone requiring encouragement to stimulate taste buds should be directed to Boghall. In this shop in the midst of a West Lothian housing





estate there is the most tempting display of fresh meat, ready meals, pies, scones and cream cakes that you could ever imagine.

Paul's wife, Christine (right) left her position in charge of a Spar outlet in Linlithgow to come and work in the family business. While confessing that cooking is not something her family would recognise as her forte, she has developed a fantastic ability to churn out pastries and baking of the highest standard. First job in the morning is the fresh cream cakes first thing while it's still cool and before the surfaces are touched by anything else.



Thereafter it is like a never ending conveyor belt with pies being cooked throughout the day. As World Scotch Pie Champions in 2005 the Boghall was doing 40 dozen every day. That might have settled down to 30 dozen now but that means pies have to be made continually throughout the day. Luxury Chicken and Mushroom Pie, Chicken Curry Pie, Macaroni Pie, Steak and Gravy, Haggis and Gravy, Steak and Bean, Steak and Gravy, Black Pudding Pie, Steak Mince Rounds, Steak and Bean Mince Rounds, pasties, sausage rolls, bridies, Chicken and Mushroom bakes, Cheese and Tomato Quiche, Cheese and Onion Quiche, Bacon and Egg Quiche.

Paul views the freshness of his products as a major selling point:- "Our customers like getting their pies straight out the oven. The smell around about the shop draws people in. If we didn't have that then the shop would become ordinary."

The Scotch Pie success ensured that Boghall Butchers would never ever be "ordinary" ever again. Customers came from far and wide to sample the taste that was declared the best and while they were in they tried other things. According to Paul, "the award had a major impact on the business." This impact that has been injected once more with the enlargement of the shop.





Walking through the same front door customers now find themselves in a smart modern shop with temptation attacking them from all sides. Bakery to the left, fresh meat and pies straight ahead, cooked meat and ready meals to the left and even fruit and vegetables behind them on the right.

The residents of Boghall know that they are lucky having this larder on their doorsteps and have more than supported their local butcher since the refurbishment. Paul again:-

"It was a big investment for us, we had to use everything we had to refurbish the shop but looking back now it has been well worth it. If I'd known what I know now I'd definitely do it again. It is a far better shop, a better environment to work in and increased our sales. I didn't really believe them when they predicted my sales would go up by ten per cent but it has worked out.

"We saved up for years to do this, we could only do it once and it had to be right. It is done and paid for now and we are delighted with the response."

The shop opens at seven in the morning, six on a Saturday to catch the shift workers from the nearby Tesco distribution centre. A refrigerated van is used for deliveries and beef is supplied from Michael Malone and John Scott Meats with the flanks for pies coming from Millers of Speyside.

Paul's father, William, started the business in 1975 but Paul was not allowed to enter the business until he had got a trade. He trained as a chef and was five years at the North British Hotel in Edinburgh (now Balmoral Hotel). When Paul's daughter, Mariesha left school Paul insisted that she went to college and achieved an HNC in Business Management. She had covered Saturdays as a schoolchild, graduated very quickly to serving the public. Now she is very much the personality of the shop, oozing enthusiasm with a welcome that just bursts to please.

The South East Scotland Potted Meat and Beef Sausage championships, presented at the Regional Meeting in St Boswells last month, were their 21st and 22nd awards. Paul's father plays his part here too, the 80 year old acts as tester and adviser performing a weekly check over the products. Despite the regularity of wins Paul confesses to getting very involved with all the buzz of competitions:-



"I just love the excitement of it. This was the first time for sausages; we always left that because that was outside the comfort zone. We had never entered the links or black pudding before but I have got the bug for it now, Mariesha as well."

These successes and the optimism over going on to the finals are reflected in the business. Prizes can only be expected where such dedication and enthusiasm exists. Boghall Butchers is already a Tardis and the Boyle family know how to make it really take off.