

## Rising to Success



When it comes to growing things in your back garden most people think about flowers and maybe some vegetables but for the Murdoch brothers, Graham and Ronnie, in Forres they had something bigger in mind.

Pies were selling so well for the Murdoch Brothers that they had outgrown their backshop bakery area. A fine blend of quality and value for money pricing meant that local convenience stores, supermarkets, petrol stations and Co-ops were stocking their pies.

Behind their butchers' shop they owned a couple of gardens and it was on that space that they decided to build a new bakery solely for their pie production.

Graham Murdoch describes the philosophy behind their success:-

"Keep the quality up and the sales will build from there. We got to the point where we were selling more and more and really outgrown the space we had. It was either cut back or take a massive leap.

"Before you take that massive jump you really need to be in a situation where you cannot possibly cope with any more. That is the point we were at, there were two options:- do less or do a lot more. To go backwards is not the right direction to go, so we went with the expansion."





The garden space at the rear of their High street property already belonged to the Murdochs and so the decision to build really evolved. Graham and Ronnie soon found themselves cutting more than meat. Armed with a pair of scissors they produced cardboard cut outs to devise the best layout possible for their new bakery.



Amazed at just how quickly they filled up the 70' by 40' space the project then went on to two levels with production downstairs and storage, staff facilities and office space on the first floor level.

Each and every process was examined and a full day's consultation taken with the local Environmental Health Officer. In Graham's own words "the EHO was brilliant, very helpful." The design was worked up using a useful publication from Highfield Publications called *Hygiene Management for Business\** and the BRC standards.



The Planning Department caused Graham much more concern. Although he and his brother had previous experience of building regulations when they had built their own houses the obstacles that came in their path when designing this new building were very frustrating.



\* Hygiene for Management includes all the latest information on food safety legislation, training and epidemiology for managers. Indispensable reading for owners and managers of food businesses and anyone concerned with food safety. Often referred to as the 'Bible' in the food industry



What is termed the Simplified Energy Model also caused problems seeking energy efficiencies to counter heat loss from a building that you would want to lose heat from. A fire alarm system was also installed to keep the regulators happy when the installation costs of a sprinkler system proved excessive.

In October 2008 Murdoch's finally received a completion certificate and they and their 14 staff moved into the new premises but with new equipment having been installed at every stage the transition did not come without its pain.



The bakery is fitted with two Talsa electric boilers (opposite: bottom right), a Unifiller depositor (opposite left), an Acadian oven, Williams blast chiller (above), Ulma flow wrapper and Weber labeller (overleaf). The cardboard cut outs worked well and they are happy with the outcome. They admit the dispatch area is tight but there was just no extra room to sneak that from.





Ronnie spent countless hours getting the processes and settings right until now some six months on both he and Graham are happy that things are now working well.

Expanding their range will be carefully considered but for now all that remains is to sell more of each of their products. The ASDA buyer and Quality assurance team were delighted with their inspection and Murdochs will next apply for SALSA accreditation. [Salsa - Safe and Local Supplier Approval].

Murdochs already supply ASDA in Elgin and Huntly but they now have scope for supplying to a few more stores. Whoever they end up supplying, the customer can be assured that this is a supplier that is only interested in doing the job right. With their new build bakery they are certainly geared up to do a lot more of that. More pictures at <http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/SFMTA1/MURDOCHSFACORY#>

