

Pork pie sales have soared by 50% at Wilsons Butchers in Crossgates, Leeds following the shop's supreme championship winning success in this year's 13th annual charity pork pie competition staged by The Pork Pie Appreciation Society at the Old Bridge Inn, Ripponden, on Saturday, April 9. Wilsons success in the competition also achieved widespread publicity in local and regional newspaper and broadcast media, including personal appearances for the owners, brothers Andrew and John Green, on both BBC Look North and YTV Calendar.

Mind you, the duo were quick to take up the initiative, personally delivering batches of their championship pies to the media, who were highly appreciative of the gesture.

John explains: "We have also had enquiries from further afield. A cafe from Wakefield wanted us to deliver, while a man from Liverpool who works near Skipton asked us to post him some of our award winning pies.

"Winning The Pork Pie Appreciation Society competition has certainly boosted our profile considerably and our sales!

It was third time lucky in 2005 for Wilsons Butchers, based in Austhorpe Road, Crossgates, who had finished runners up in the competition for the previous two years.

Fourth generation butchers, Andrew and John Green, have made remarkable progress since taking over at in Crossgates in 1985.

Expansion, diversification and a true commitment to their chosen trade, backed by a skilled and experienced team both in the shop and behind the scenes, have seen Wilsons become one of the best known and most successful butchers in the whole region.

Andrew Green recalls: "In the early days, we operated as a specialist meat shop,

before opening an in house bakery and introducing our own home made pies. We haven't looked back since. The bakery has grown since day one and is going forward all the time."

Over the ensuing years, the business has developed beyond recognition. The main retail area was completely refitted and upgraded in 1991. Behind the scenes, a great deal of work has also taken place. Pie baking first started in an original house kitchen, with burgeoning demand soon leading to the installation of a much larger baking area. Some five years ago, acquired two neighbouring first floor rooms to further expand the bakery.

The pie making operation now takes over the entire first floor area and it is this side of the operation that has brought fame to the business. Today, on average, Wilsons bakes an amazing 10,000 plus pies and related products per week. These include award winning small pork pies, large pork pies, steak pies, chicken and mushroom pies, sausage rolls and Cornish pasties.

All meat is cooked on the premises and, wherever possible, Wilsons Butchers attempts to source all its meat from established, reputable local producers. The shop has cemented innovative "Gate to Plate" partnerships with local farmers, so ensuring complete control over the entire process backed by the supply of only the very best quality, fully traceable meat products.

Wilson's Butchers has been a member of the Guild of Q Butchers from soon after the industry leading body was first established in 1990.

The Guild is an association of independent meat retailers committed to offering top quality meat and meat related products, with customer service to match. High standards of hygiene, food safety and risk assessment are essential criteria for membership, with independent inspections carried out at all member shops.

has picked up many other awards for its products in regional and national meat trades competitions over the years, twice winning the small pork pie category in the Great Yorkshire Pork Pie, Sausage & Black Pudding Competition.

The shop also clinched the overall title at the Guild of Q Butchers National Barbecue Championships in 2003 with its Pork and Apple Turnover, a pork loin steak filled with a slice of Bramley apple and caramelised onion, coated in a fruity sauce. In 2004, the shop was presented with an award for outstanding services to the great British banger during British Sausage Appreciation Week. publishes a bi annual customer newsletter "Wilson's World of Fine Food," which has done a great deal to promote the business.