

For some it is the crust, others the jelly and more still the meat it seems no one can quite agree on the perfect pork pie. But connoisseurs from far and wide descended on Calderdale for the 16th Annual Charity Master Pork Pie Maker Competition, to give it their best shot.

Hundreds piled in to the Old Bridge Inn, Ripponden, for the judging and with 47 entrants, the competition was as stiff as the pies crumbly.



Tucking in: Eleanor Paige Gifford and Lucy Parker, both nine, at the pork pie competition

Pictures: Bruce Fitzgerald

Aside from the agony of decision, there were pie making demonstrations, music from Friendly Brass Band and an appearance from Pork Pie Man, the savoury superhero who famously declined a cake at his wedding, opting for a three tiered pie instead.



The event has grown hugely since being dreamed up by the Calderdale based Pork Pie Appreciation Society, with entrants from across the country jostling for the prestigious trophy. Peter Charnley, society secretary, said: "We had humble beginnings but each year it gets more and more popular and each year the competition gets stiffer." As young and old sampled the savoury treats, opinions were as divided as the dazzling array of pies on show.



Bruce Andrews, 39, a senior judge said: "It has to be fresh, crisp and with the right amount of seasoning. None of your soggy service station pies here." Senior craftsman and ex judge Alec Fozard, 100, said: "Pies are getting better every year and it is the quality of the meat that makes them."

While Lucy Parker, a nine year old pupil at Holy Trinity Junior School, Halifax, said: "I like them best with peas." A decision, however had to be made and after a gruelling day, judges ruled the pies from Allums Butcher of Wakefield, the winners, with Hinchcliffes Netherton, Huddersfield and Brosters Farm Shop of Lindley, Huddersfield, also bringing home the bacon in second and third place.

The event raised more than £2,000 for Calderdale Bird Conservation Group and Yorkshire Air Ambulance.