

# PIE'N'MASH FUTURES

A seven point plan for a successful  
and sustainable future

**Consultation document**



# A University Education

The poshos behind me in the pie and mash queue are puzzled.

Firstly that there's a queue, secondly that the disappearing London they'd set out to discover is thriving.

At the counter I order large pie and mash.

Easy, one perfect pie, mash smoothed to the side of the plate and smothered with liquor.

It fair sets a fellow.

There is some disquiet after me however.

Adding some toit to his hoity voice the chap behind declares 'I can't seem to see a menu'.

The old girl serving stabs her wooden spoon into the steaming vat of mash, stares at him blankly and states, 'this is a pie and mash shop dear.'

The rest of us punters burst into laughter.

A toff fumbles for change.

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**Tim Wells**

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## Foreword – Rob Beckett, comedian, broadcaster

I love my boxing, my whippets, and my Pie'n'Mash.

When I was looking around for ideas for my Sunday Times Best selling memoir, 'A Class Act: Life as a Working-Class Man in a Middle-Class World', telling the story of my journey, from where I came from to where I am now, I needed an image for the cover, to show how even though my life's changed, and I've questioned my identity because of that, ultimately I'm still rooted in the cultural traditions of my childhood that make you who you are, like Pie'n'Mash.

The answer to what picture to use seemed obvious: Me in the suit and tie I wore hosting the Royal Variety Performance but in a Pie'n'Mash shop - the legendary Manze's on Tower Bridge Approach. Spoon and fork in hand, ready to tuck in.

Enjoying Pie'n'Mash is now a way for me to remember who I am, and where I'm from, it goes back to not just my roots, but my family's before me. It has a history and a heritage that's almost unique in London now.

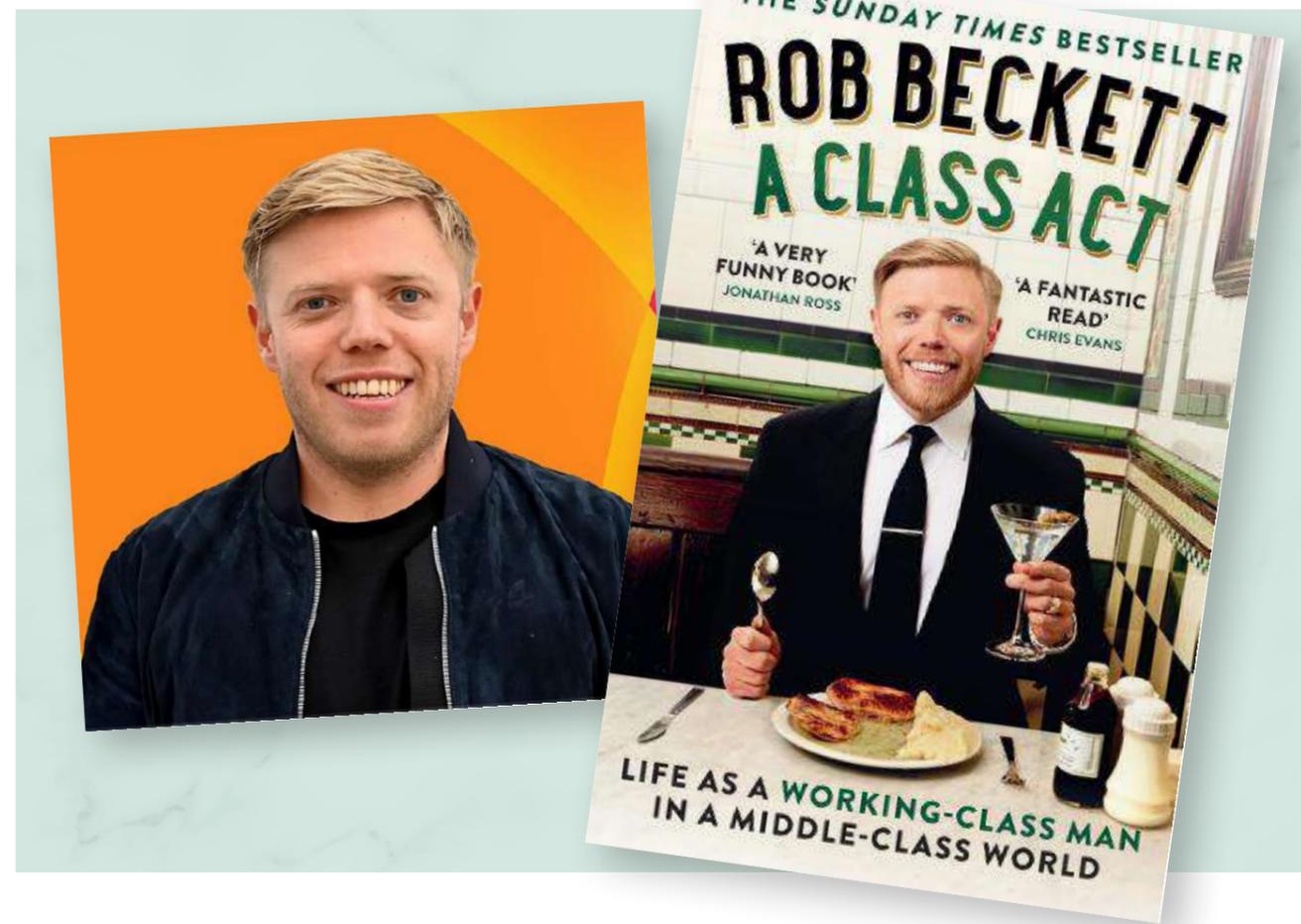
Pie'n'mash goes back generations and is an important part of our cultural heritage as Londoners.

Read this report, enjoy discovering more about Pie'n'Mash's back story, about the people who make Pie'n'Mash what it is today, and some ideas about where it can go tomorrow.

I'm glad my life has had a Pie'n'Mash connection. Let's ensure future generations can enjoy the same privilege."

Be Lucky

**Rob Beckett**  
Comedian, Broadcaster



## Foreword – Professor Rebecca Earle FBA, FRSA, FRHS, Department of History, University of Warwick

Britain's foodways are diverse, dynamic and encapsulate our many histories. How we eat today reflects deep historical trends, the movement of people into Britain and around the world over centuries, and the powerful forces of global commerce that shape our present. The Cockney dish of pie 'n mash encapsulates some of these histories.

Many of our favourite dishes are immigrant food, brought to this country by the numerous immigrants who have enriched British culture in multiple ways. Dishes from curry in its multiple forms, to fish and chips, have their roots in the cuisines and cultures of peoples from elsewhere. Pie'n'mash likewise emerged from this fusion of cultures, from Ireland, Italy, Britain, and beyond.

Consider the mashed potatoes that are a core component of pie'n'mash. Potatoes are native to the South American Andes; no one in Britain was mashing them, or eating them in any other way, before the 1500s. Like so many immigrants, potatoes have become an essential part of our culture, and pie 'n mash would not be the same without them.

I commend a read and reflection of this report on the future of one of our local dishes, the Cockney dish of Pie'n'Mash. Its intention is to raise awareness and draw attention to this food's interesting history and its place in modern British culture. The report also aims to stimulate further debate about the need to promote British regional foods. These foods are history on a plate, and the stories our food can tell are often surprising.

**Professor Rebecca Earle FBA, FRSA, FRHS**  
Department of History University of Warwick



## Foreword – The Rt. Hon. Richard Holden MP

I beg to move that this House has considered the potential merits of providing traditional speciality guaranteed status to pie and mash.” Those were my opening words in the first-ever debate in the Houses of Parliament on pie and mash on October 22nd 2024.

Representing the best of our cockney culture, we are seeking recognition to safeguard the heritage of pie and mash, but this is really about promoting the dish both here in the UK and internationally – from Basildon and Billericay to Berlin and Brisbane.

I was delighted to see the level of support for the motion along with the response from the Minister for Food Security, Daniel Zeichner at the debate that the government would welcome a “formal application”, something the campaign is now taking forward. Although in some ways the original fast food, traditional pie and mash is an artisan food, freshly made – including in my constituency by the excellent Robins, Stacey’s, and Wally’s – using authentic family-

owned recipes that have been passed down through generations like precious heirlooms. It is something that in Italy or France would instantly be recognised as worthy of celebration and preservation.

We are in an age of global fast food brands, yet pie and mash has shown a stubborn refusal to die, partly because the shops are absolute hubs of the local community and represent a vital part of our culture.

We should be doing more for our food products right across the country. There are not nearly enough British products that we are talking up for their local credentials, and their special place in our country’s heritage, national cuisine and the nation’s heart.

It’s now time we protect this important dish, and for it to be recognised and celebrated, to ensure that its unique character is protected for future generations.

**The Rt. Hon. Richard Holden MP**



- Part 1 -

# PIE’N’MASH FUTURES

# Summary

## A 7 point call to action for a successful and sustainable future for Pie'n'Mash

The report is designed to create engagement, start conversations, and spark longer-term thinking about creating a successful and sustainable future for Pie'n'Mash. Produced by Modern Cockney, a community partnership between Grow Social Capital CIC and the Bengali East End Heritage Society.

Pie'n'Mash is a much-loved traditional cuisine, associated with Cockney culture, that survives and thrives despite prevailing media narratives of the tradition 'dying'. The food is a central part of Cockney identity, and like its cultural heritage, has witnessed many profound changes influenced by greater geographical, economic, and social mobility, many challenges such as declining footfalls in high streets and markets, and also opportunities for innovation.

Once solely defined by an inner London location, Pie'n'Mash, like the Cockney Diaspora it serves, Pie'n'Mash has spread geographically across the Southeast of England, where we are currently on the cusp of more Pie'n'Mash shops outside of London than in. With outdoor catering, and online sales, the food is enjoyed in homes and partner food businesses - pubs, restaurants, pop-up outlets - across the UK.

The Pie'n'Mash business community is a fascinating story spanning the emergence of being among the first fast food restaurants, a proud heritage of serving working class communities with good, wholesome, nourishing food at an affordable price in locations at the heart of their communities. A food sector dominated by intertwined families, particularly the Arments, Cookes, Kellys, Manzes, and Robins, which provided a source of continuity with successive generations taking the helm of their family businesses but also, featuring fiercely protected individual recipes and strong family ties, creating barriers to greater collective working. The very qualities that create a unique, quality tradition of artisan, hand-made pies, mash, and liquor can also lead to an inward-looking culture, not open to new innovations, or being adaptable to changing market trends and tastes.

They face intense competition with the emergence of international global fast food chains created competitors who offer a mass-produced food product of consistent quality, with a flexible range of food offerings, open in new locations, often open 24/7, supported with sophisticated consumer marketing creating changing food and grazing habits, and consumer expectations, and in their high street locations, from other independent eating places from fried chicken shops to street food.

The Pie'n'Mash sector clearly cannot compete head-to-head with these. Instead, it needs to play to its strengths of:

- A quality, artisan, hand-made product, often freshly made on the premises.
- A cultural heritage dating back over 140 years.
- An iconic association with Cockney culture
- A passionate core fan base
- Producers who care about their product, traditions, and communities.
- A family heritage among producers, spanning in some cases over four generations

('Non-posh Londoners is a definition of Cockney shared by comedian and broadcaster Arthur Smith at a Modern Cockney Festival event).



## An urgent call for a 7 point plan for a successful and sustainable future

- 1** **Gaining Traditional Speciality Guaranteed**  
recognition to ensure its traditions are properly preserved and protected by law and its status celebrated.
- 2** **Greater respect and recognition from public institutions**  
a call out to public policy makers, academia, and cultural institutions to provide proper respect with appropriate recognition.
- 3** **Need for 'Balanced evolution'**  
how Pie'n'Mash businesses need to embrace change that is rooted in tradition.
- 4** **The Pie'n'Mash business community needs to come together**  
to address the lack of a formal Pie'n'Mash business sector group organisation and representation, with a phased development plan to enable its business community to work closer together to achieve their common goals and collective interests.
- 5** **A call to action for the Pie'n'Mash fan community**  
a need for passionate fans to overcome declining footfall on local High Streets and markets and be more effective evangelists for their cause.
- 6** **A revitalised national strategy for promoting British regional foods such as Pie'n'Mash**  
why has Pie'n'Mash been ignored and what other British regional foods would benefit from a more pro-active engagement and promotion.
- 7** **Support the Modern Cockney Charter to create a new narrative for Cockneys - and Pie'n'Mash**  
Pie'n'Mash shops need to champion and support the Modern Cockney Charter, a 5 point plan for celebrating Cockney culture, heritage, and identity. It promotes a new narrative for Pie'n'Mash - and for Cockneys from a food, and identity that is 'dying' to one of evolving and being celebrated and enjoyed for future generations.

# 1. The need for Traditional Speciality Guaranteed

Central to securing the successful and sustainable future of Pie'n'Mash is securing Protected Speciality for Pie'n'Mash to respect its heritage and promote itself worldwide. Obtaining Protected Speciality elevates the cultural significance of Pie'n'Mash, shining a spotlight on its role in London's culinary history, fostering a sense of pride and identity, fostering a deeper appreciation of the iconic food's cultural status.

Protected food speciality is a UK Government scheme. The UK has 94 products with protected status, compared to Italy (882), and France (758). The protection guarantees a product's characteristics or reputation, authenticity and protects the product name from misuse or imitation.

It would put the traditional London fayre alongside the likes of Cornish Pasties and Branley apple pies. If the Cornish can protect their pasties, and the Cumberlanders their sausages, why not the Cockneys with their Pie'n'Mash? It is asking for respect for the traditional food of the non-posh Londoner. Pie'n'Mash has a special place in Cockney culture and that's why it is worthy of protected status.

In addition to its cultural value, protecting Pie'n'Mash can have tangible economic benefits for authentic producers and sellers. With official recognition comes increased visibility and marketing opportunities, drawing attention to establishments that specialise in the traditional fayre. This, potentially, can stimulate tourism and drive more custom, supporting small, independent family-owned businesses and preserving the authenticity of London's culinary tradition.

Protected Speciality for Pie'n'Mash aligns with broader efforts to promote sustainable food practices in the Mayor of London's Food Policy. By prioritizing locally made produce, it encourages a more environmentally conscious approach to food production and consumption. This emphasis on sustainability resonates with contemporary consumers who are increasingly mindful of the origins and ecological impact of their meals.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is responsible for the Protected Food Speciality scheme. The protection guarantees a product's characteristics or reputation, authenticity, and protects the product name from misuse or imitation.

There are three types of protected speciality. Two of these - Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indication - centre around foods where the main ingredients come from and/or the preparation takes place in a specific and tightly defined geographical region. This would not be suitable for the Pie'n'Mash sector which is witnessing a changing geography, growing from its traditional heartlands in inner London.

The third category - Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) - does not rely on this geographical connection but does demand that the food has a traditional name that's been in use for 30 years or more and is produced using traditional methods or a traditional recipe. TSG would allow for the inclusion of all traditional Pie'n'Mash producers and shops whilst still protecting and celebrating its inherent characteristics and authenticity.

Although each pie shop has their own recipes and traditions in making their pies, mash, and liquor, the protected status will mark the geographical connection, using traditional methods. The purpose of the law is to protect the reputation of British regional foods.

In an age of global brands, the McDonalds, KFC's, Burger Kings, Greggs dominating the fast-food sector Pie'n'Mash shows a stubborn refusal to die. Traditional Speciality Guaranteed provides a formal recognition of both Pie'n'Mash traditions but also a vote of confidence about its future. It changes the narrative of the Pie'n'Mash story from one that is 'dying' to one that is evolving, combining proud traditions but also adapting to change.

Traditional Speciality Guaranteed confirms a pedigree of an authentic British tradition, a symbol of authentic food status and recognition of being a proud British tradition putting our Pie'n'Mash on an international map.

Other countries are far more ready to celebrate their unique food cultures and then, within the UK, other parts of the country have their cultural traditions respected - why not Cockney culture and cuisine? Recognition for traditional Pie'n'Mash has been ignored for too long. Obtaining Traditional Speciality Guaranteed will help put that right.

**MAKE PIE'N'MASH GREAT AGAIN!**  
Give Pie'n'Mash Protected Food Status!

**What is Protected Food Status?**  
It's a UK Government scheme guaranteeing a product's characteristics, reputation, authenticity and origin, protecting its product name from misuse or imitation.

**Why is it important?**  
It would be a mark to protect Pie'n'Mash's unique heritage and worldwide status.

The UK has far less products with protected status compared to Italy and France. The Cornish can protect their pasties and the Cumberlanders their sausages, so why not Cockney Pie'n'Mash?

UK	FRANCE	ITALY
94	758	882

**What can YOU do about it?**  
Sign the petition [here](#) | Tell your family and friends to support it | Contact your MP to back this campaign

**LOVE PIE'N'MASH**  
NATIONAL PIE WEEK  
March 16th to 17th 2024

**THE MODERN COCKNEY FESTIVAL**  
MARCH 17-19 2024

[www.nationalpiemashweek.org.uk](http://www.nationalpiemashweek.org.uk) [www.moderncockneyfestival.org.uk](http://www.moderncockneyfestival.org.uk)



## Protected food status

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is responsible for the Protected Food Speciality scheme. It requires an approved method of production (not a recipe) with evidence that the Pie'n'Mash business community supports the application and has been fully consulted.

Once DEFRA formally receives an application it examines the merits of the case, including whether there is proof of the applied food being publicly recognised for over 30 years, before consulting with the wider community, to allow for, and listen to any objections.

If agreed and a formal method of production is established, a Pie'n'Mash business can apply for formal recognition that it complies with the standard. Local trading standards will ensure the standard is complied with.

If verified, a qualifying Pie'n'Mash business can proudly display its Traditional Speciality Guaranteed badge, telling the world of its status, heritage, and significance.



## 2. Greater respect and recognition from public bodies

Imagine a city boasting an iconic indigenous food, unique to its location, featuring a network of around 30 or so artisan cafes in its city serving this cuisine. The food is much loved and cherished by local people. It even inspires eulogies from poets, authors, comedians, film producers and more. Its traditions, spanning generations, are proudly preserved. Indeed, there are remarkable shops, like museums in some cases, that celebrate a heritage dating back over 100 years.

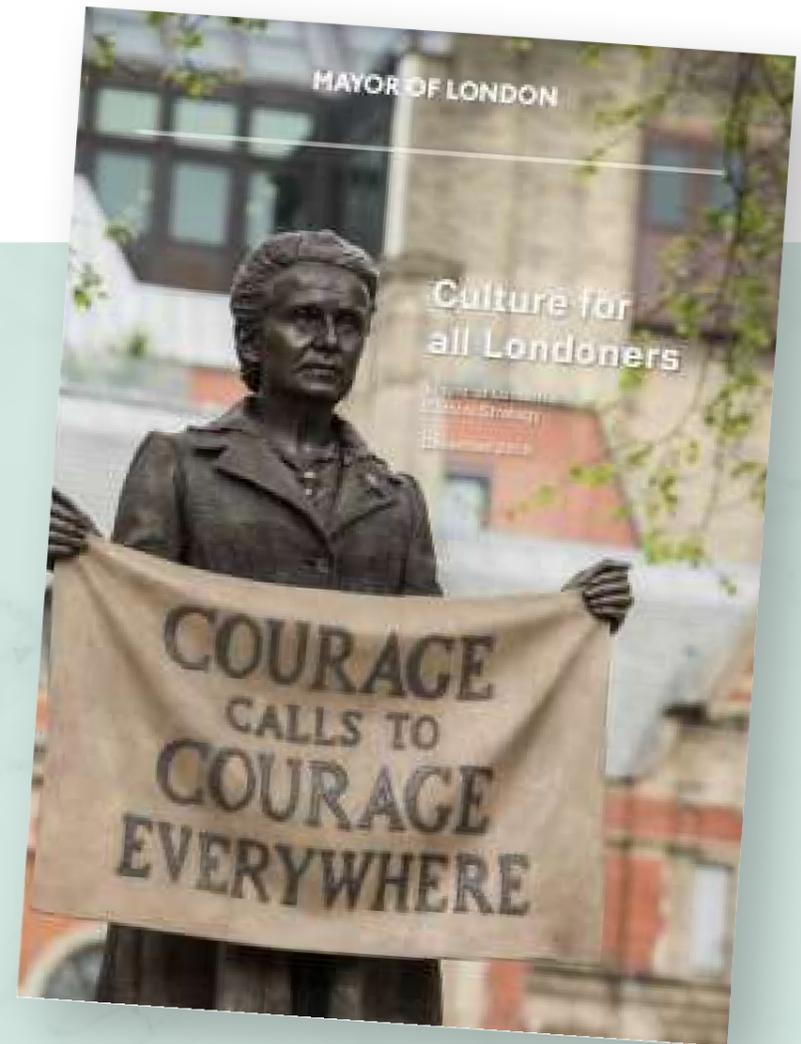
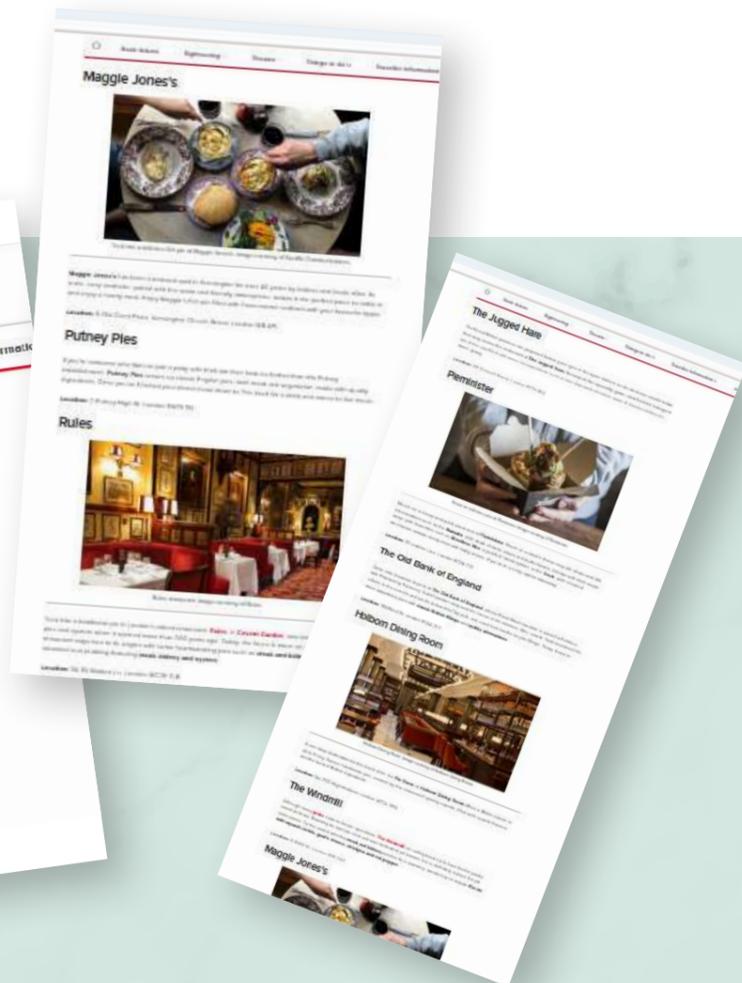
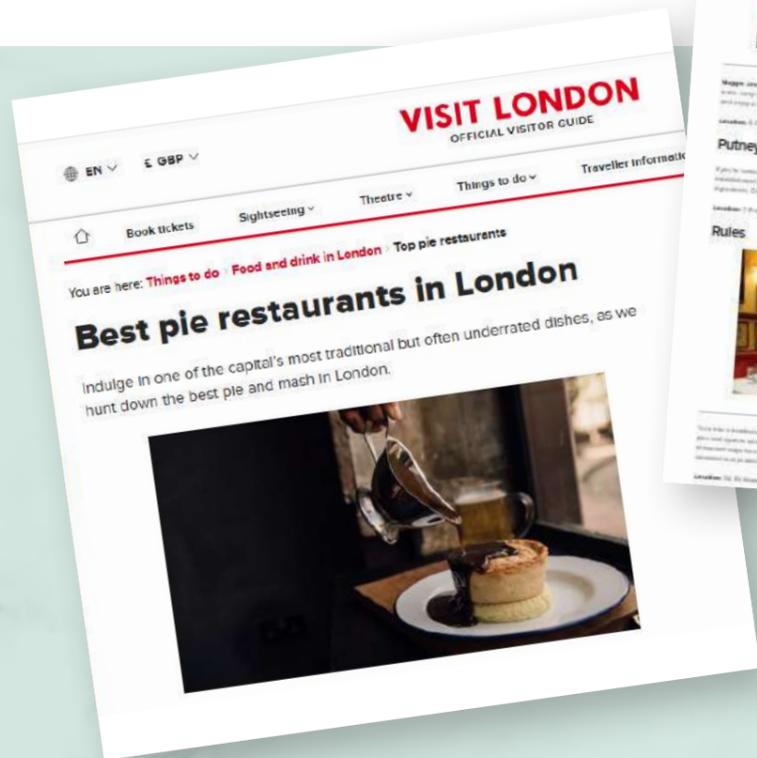
For evidence of a disregard, a failure to recognise how Pie'n'Mash is more than just food to Cockneys, you need look no further than the Visit London, visitor guide to London, the official visitor's guide to London (www.visitlondon.com) You would have thought the Visit London website would feature a message of 'No trip to London is complete without enjoying a traditional Pie'n'Mash'. You would be however, disappointed.

A dividend from gaining Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) would make organisations like Visit London look again at how it tells and celebrates the story of traditional Pie'n'Mash. Rather than having a special focus on the Capital's unique, indigenous cuisine, with its attendant culture it currently just lumps a tiny selection of shops in with any other establishment, from national chains to haute cuisine, that happened to serve a pie.

There is no special status given to Pie'n'Mash, merely listed amongst an array of eating places. And sacrilege among the Pie'n'Mash fraternity, the website's feature photograph of the Pie section containing its token references to Pie'n'Mash shows a non-Pie'n'Mash pie with gravy, a profound no-no for aficionados of Cockney cuisine. (Just visit a Pie'n'Mash fan Facebook group to find out their response to 'Pie'n'Mash' with gravy. It's like the equivalent of serving Yorkshire Pudding with custard!)

For Cockneys it feels like we must be living on a different planet, and not the denizens of the same city to the people who run this website.

How the visitlondon website defines the London 'pie experience' an image that would be absolute anathema to lovers of traditional London Pie'n'Mash. Supporters of Pie'n'Mash would have expected a dedicated page exclusive to traditional Pie'n'Mash.



There are even more extreme examples of how public bodies marginalise or even ignore Pie'n'Mash and wider Cockney culture. The Mayor of London Office cultural strategy report for the Capital, entitled 'Culture for all Londoners' (produced 2018) where you would think it would be reasonable to expect at least some reference to the Capital's indigenous food. Indeed, a positive, constructive strategy, would contain policies for active assistance and support in promoting the future well-being of this cultural asset.

Guess how many times the Cultural Strategy Report references 'Pie and Mash'? The answer is zero.

The Report similarly ignores, airbrushes out of existence not only Pie and Mash but also the term 'Cockney'. Yes, the report does not even reference 'Cockney'. Further research on the Mayor of London's communications on its website reveals a cultural denial of Cockney going back over 12 years and spanning both major parties. During this period the website used the terms 'Londoner' and 'Londoners' were used 179,000 and 180,000 respectively, while 'Cockney' was mentioned just 22 times - 18 of which were by third parties. To put

into context, the website used the terms 'Alaskan' 52 times, 'Peruvian' 142 times, and 'Samoan' 217 times, honouring so many other important communities in London, but not ours. All this at a time when general use of the term Cockney in popular culture increased.

Obtaining TSG provides a legitimacy for the Pie'n'Mash sector to call for its status and significance to be recognised. If you arrive for example at one of London's Tube stations its local map should feature, if appropriate, a recognised Pie'n'Mash shop among its local landmarks. Small signifiers that can play a part in contributing to the future well-being and sustainability of Pie'n'Mash.

The cultural status and significance of Pie'n'Mash needs to be recognised, and where possible, encouragement and support need so be provided for its future success and sustainability.

The Mayor of London Office cultural strategy report, 'Culture for all Londoners'.

### 3. Need for 'Balanced evolution'

Darwin teaches us how to survive you need to adapt and evolve. Pie'n'Mash business face a delicate balancing act. On the one hand they need to connect to and uphold a century-old tradition associated with Cockney culture. Yet on the other hand, face changing tastes, demographics, and social habits. It suffers not having the convenience that competitor finger foods offer. Change too much with the dish and you risk breaking the umbilical cord to your cultural foundations. Don't change enough and you can face a dwindling customer base and business.

The way ahead for Pie'n'Mash businesses is to adopt what can be called 'balanced evolution' - embracing change while being open and alert to new opportunities while still being rooted in some way to your traditions. The spectrum of change can range from traditional, with limited, if any variation of the customary pie, mash, and liquor, along with eels to 'nouvelle pie mash' featuring a host of new innovations.

#### Here are several strategies that could be explored by Pie'n'Mash businesses using 'balanced evolution.'

1. Offer gravy as an alternative to liquor. A seemingly innocuous suggestion that sends keyboard warriors into a wild frenzy. Somehow, by breaking the sacrosanct holy trinity of traditional pie, mash, and liquor is a gastronomic blasphemy to Cockney palates. Yes, the holy sauce can be off-putting for some, refusing to either try the food, or even come into a shop being of the distinctive green liquor being unfamiliar and having its own distinct taste. Many shops overcome this with the simple expediency of a gravy alternative. Shop owners serving gravy tell how customer can bring in friends to try Pie'n'Mash and the gravy provides a palatable choice for them.
2. Be a Pie'n'Mash reseller with shops offering the Pie'n'Mash experience but their pies are supplied by a traditional producer with a growing number of outlets.
3. Become licenced to serve alcohol - particularly if you can offer an authentic London ale or even 'Chateau Cockney' - the incredibly good wines now being grown from vineyards in a region dubbed 'Cockneydom' across Essex and Kent (Cockneydom is a term coined by Modern Cockney to describe the region across the Southeast of England defined by the core spread of Pie'n'Mash shops, with Bishops Stortford in the north and Tunbridge Wells in the south). Can wine elevate the Pie'n'Mash experience?

To those Pie'n'Mash fans who swear online damnations to shops offering gravy, the simple response is that the shop would probably be out of business if they didn't serve gravy as an alternative option.

2. Creative options within Pie and Mash. A number of shops report business success by offering choice of pies. F Cooke in Bishops Stortford serves new alternatives such as Chicken Tikka which are proving popular with regulars. There are even permutations of mash that can be offered. Shops, such as 'London Calling' in Felixstowe now offer four choices of mash - butter mash, cheesy mash, mustard mash, and root veg mash.
3. Artisan range extensions. Capitalising on the expertise and capability of artisan-based businesses, menu extensions can range from a 'London pea soup' offered by Manze, to traditional British bangers, mash, and gravy at Cathedral in Rochester, through to traditional British desserts such as 'Spotty Dick', and Apple crumble.
4. Explore new delivery options. Most shops now offer a home delivery service, a number offer delivery both scheduled and online orders. Pie'n'mash is now being offered in new formats and places, with outdoor catering, special events such as birthdays and even weddings, and pop up offerings, and a growing number of pubs, cafes, and restaurants served by traditional producers.

**TUKKA TO RIDE**

**This Month's Special :**

Speciality

**Chicken Tikka Pie**

**\*\* LIMITED EDITION \*\***

**Available while stocks last**

### 4. The Pie'n'Mash business community needs to come together

What do British apples and pears (not rhyming slang), biscuits, coffee houses, Cornish pasties, curry, fish fryers, ice cream, kebab shops, sandwiches, sausages, soft drinks, and Melton Mowbray pork pies all have in common?

They all have trade bodies of their manufacturers, producers, or retailers representing their collective interests.

There isn't a body representing or advancing the collective interests of the Pie'n'Mash sector.

The Pie'n'Mash business community is a fascinating story spanning the emergence of being among the first fast food restaurants, a proud heritage of serving working class communities with good, wholesome, nourishing food at an affordable price in locations at the heart of their communities.

A food sector dominated by intertwined families, particularly the Cookes, Manzes, Arments, Kellys, and Robins,

Despite different shops trading under the same family names, surprisingly they are often individual, independent businesses. The family connection provided a source of continuity with successive generations taking the helm of their family businesses but also, with the fiercely protected individual recipes and strong family ties, created barriers to greater collective working. The very qualities that create a unique, quality tradition of artisan, hand-made pies can also lead to an inward-looking culture, not open to new innovations, or being adaptable to changing market trends and tastes.

There are three prime ways of growing a business. The first is stealing customers from your competitors. The second is extending your product range to meet new and different needs and demands - that can be achieved through the strategy of 'balanced evolution'. The third way is to grow the market, increase the total number of customers who want to buy your products.

The significant media interest in this campaign's story of seeking Traditional Speciality Guaranteed reveal a potential to reach out and engage to a wider audience.

The possibility to attract visiting tourists to shops goes largely untapped, except for a few intrepid venturers.

The potential to encourage the core fan base of Pie'n'Mash lovers to buy more of your product (see #5 in this report of 'A call to action for the Pie'n'Mash fan community') all point the way ahead for a Pie'n'Mash business community stands more to gain from coming together to grow their market.

A critical test for the application for TSG is demonstrating the business community approve and support the proposal, with evidence of its community being consulted. This campaign, run by Modern Cockney, is organising the very first formal meetings of the business community to progress the TSG application.

This gathering could be the first steps in at least establishing a network of the Pie'n'Mash business community, with the potential, with the right support and backing, to develop a body that actively works to advance, promote, and protect the interests of the sector.



## 5. A call to action for the Pie'n'Mash fan community

Pie'n'Mash enjoys a significant fan base with an estimated 50,000 people members of different fan base groups on Facebook alone. Could this core base of fans do more to support the future success and sustainability of Pie'n'Mash?

There are a number of practical ways fans of Pie'n'Mash could do more to help support their own ambrosia of the Gods.

Most shops report experiencing problems resulting from changing shopping habits which have led to a declining footfall on Britain's high streets and markets. For many having Pie'n'Mash was part of a shopping ritual – you popped in to enjoy some food while shopping. That habit has now been disrupted with a negative knock-on impact for Pie'n'Mash shops with fewer people likely to pop in while they are shopping.

### Fans can help by:

- 1 Don't just talk, eat – commit to creating new ritual for enjoying your favourite food. There is a need to be pro-active, consider scheduling on a regular basis, such as once a week/month/quarter or whatever appropriate for supporting your favourite shops.
- 2 Be a Pie'n'Mash buddy and take a 'Newbie', a friend, a 'Pie'n'Mash virgin', to try the Pie'n'Mash experience, possibly for the first time
- 3 Be a Pie'n'Mash Pilgrim by visiting a shop you have not been to before to extend your experience of what your favourite food has to offer
- 4 Practice good Netiquette when on social media. Online platforms provide excellent opportunities to share new and positive experiences. Sadly, they also witness negative, sometimes toxic comments, even from so-called Pie'n'Mash fans who can make outrageous and nasty comments about an experience or an unfavoured shop. Speaking to business owners this hostility can sometimes be a painful experience, as it is their business, their craft, their pride and joy which is being traduced.
- 5 Support the campaign to get Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) for Pie'n'Mash. Be proactive on social media in showing your support and encourage others to get behind the campaign. Make sure you sign the petition in support of TSG. Register your vote at: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/give-us-respect-for-pie-n-mash>
- 6 Shop owners take it personal. When online don't unfair comments go unchallenged, make people accountable for what they post, and counterbalance with the positive where appropriate.
- 7 Don't moan about rising prices – inflation is affecting every home and business. Also, comparing prices between shops can be unfair and unreasonable as their costs they need to cover – rates, rents, staff – may vary.

## 6. A revitalised national strategy for promoting British regional foods such as Pie'n'Mash

Does the promotion of British regional foods need to be revitalised with the range of foods covered by Protected Food Status extended?

Until the campaign by Modern Cockney to seek recognition for traditional Pie'n'Mash it had been totally ignored. How many other 'forgotten foods' are there? How many more dishes would benefit from being recognised, celebrated, and actively supported and promoted?

The UK currently has 94 products with protected status, compared to Italy (882), and France (758). Seemingly more could be done to extend this list and celebrate local foods that meet the criteria for recognition wherever they are in the UK.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [www.gov.uk/protected-food-drink-names?keywords=pie+and+mash](http://www.gov.uk/protected-food-drink-names?keywords=pie+and+mash). The page is titled "Protected geographical food and drink names" and is from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. It features a search bar with "pie and mash" entered, and two search results are displayed:

- Melton Mowbray Pork Pie**: Protected food name with Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). Registered name: Melton Mowbray Pork Pie. Status: Registered. Country of origin: United Kingdom. Time registration: 23:00. Date registration: 31 December 2020.
- Traditional Bramley Apple Pie Filling**: Protected food name with Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG). Registered name: Traditional Bramley Apple Pie Filling. Status: Registered. Country of origin: United Kingdom. Time registration: 23:00. Date registration: 31 December 2020.

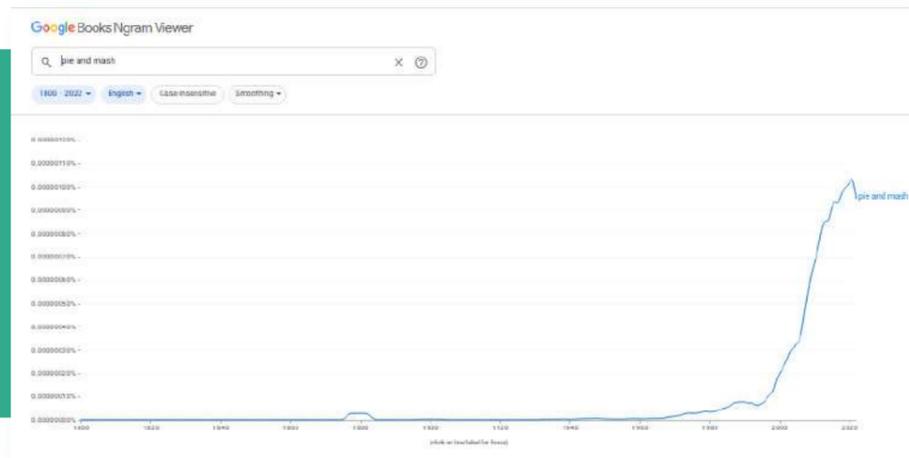
Navigation options include "Register", "Status", "Class or category of product", "Protection type", and "Country of origin". There are also links for "Get emails" and "Subscribe to feed".

# 7. Support the Modern Cockney Charter to create a new narrative for Cockneys – and Pie'n'Mash

There is a well-trodden media narrative that 'Pie and Mash is dying'. News of a long-established shop closing is typically accompanied by a text repeating a lament that traditional Pie and Mash is 'dying'. A food that has been enjoyed for over 180 years, closely associated with London's Cockney culture, is seemingly a thing of the past, old-fashioned, and on its way out, that somehow something traditional and part of the fabric of British life is passing away, doomed to be extinct. Reports of its death seemingly have been greatly exaggerated'.

Does the so-called decline of the Pie and Mash shop mirror the wider decline of the Cockney culture, the food is associated with? Do we need to look at a bigger picture, beyond the gloomy news headlines of a Pie and Mash shop closing, and its associated demise of Cockney culture? Are reports of pie and mash's death similarly exaggerated.

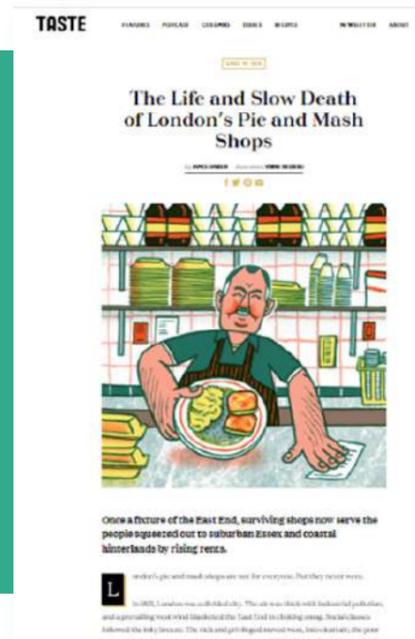
The data suggests a different picture. Online tools, like Google Ngram reveal interesting insights indicating the level of usage of words and phrases and identify their longer-term trends. An analysis of the level of usage of the term 'Pie and Mash' reveals an interesting trend. Rather than 'dying' or even be in decline, the opposite seems to be the case with a profound upsurge in usage of the term (see graph below)



Certainly, further investigation would yield deeper insights, but the evidence is clear: The idea of Pie and Mash is 'dying' is far from the truth, and we need a more accurate picture, and framing of the real story of Pie and Mash in 2025. narrative needs to be reframed to one of 'Pie'n'Mash is evolving'. Yes, there are high profile closures of individual Pie'n'Mash shops, challenging and changing market conditions for all in the food sector, as well as contemporary trends in fast food, grazing and eating out. Yet there are new opportunities from online sales, new outlets, other ways of enjoying Pie'n'Mash, new products, new fashions, to keep its loyal customer base happy while attracting new, and more diverse customers to its pleasures.

Pie'n'Mash is more than just food. It's a passion. It's an inspiring story of small independent artisan producers surviving in the age of global fastfood outlets. It's a bastion of the culture of the 'non-posh Londoner', of a community proud of its traditions. Read on, discover its amazing story, and do your bit to ensure Pie'n'Mash has a successful and sustainable future.

**An example of the 'Pie and Mash' is dying journalism**



## Support the Modern Cockney Charter

Pie'n'Mash shops need to champion and support the Modern Cockney Charter, a 5 point plan for celebrating Cockney culture, heritage, and identity. It promotes a new narrative for Pie'n'Mash – and for Cockneys from a food, and identity that is 'dying' to one of evolving and being celebrated and enjoyed for future generations.

As comedian and broadcaster Rob Beckett said in the foreword to this report, "Enjoying Pie'n'Mash is now a way for me to remember who I am, and where I'm from, it goes back to not just my roots, but my family's before me. It has a history and a heritage that's almost unique in London now. Pie'n'mash goes back generations and is an important part of our cultural heritage as Londoners. I'm glad my life has had a Pie'n'Mash connection. Let's ensure future generations can enjoy the same privilege."

The Modern Cockney Festival identifies how the idea of 'Cockney' because of greater economic, geographic, and social mobility has become more complex. This is reflected as we are now on the cusp of there being more Pie'n'Mash shops outside of London than within.

Modern Cockney identifies four, what you might call sub-tribes, within the Cockney community, yet all possessing an affinity with the 'non-posh Londoner':

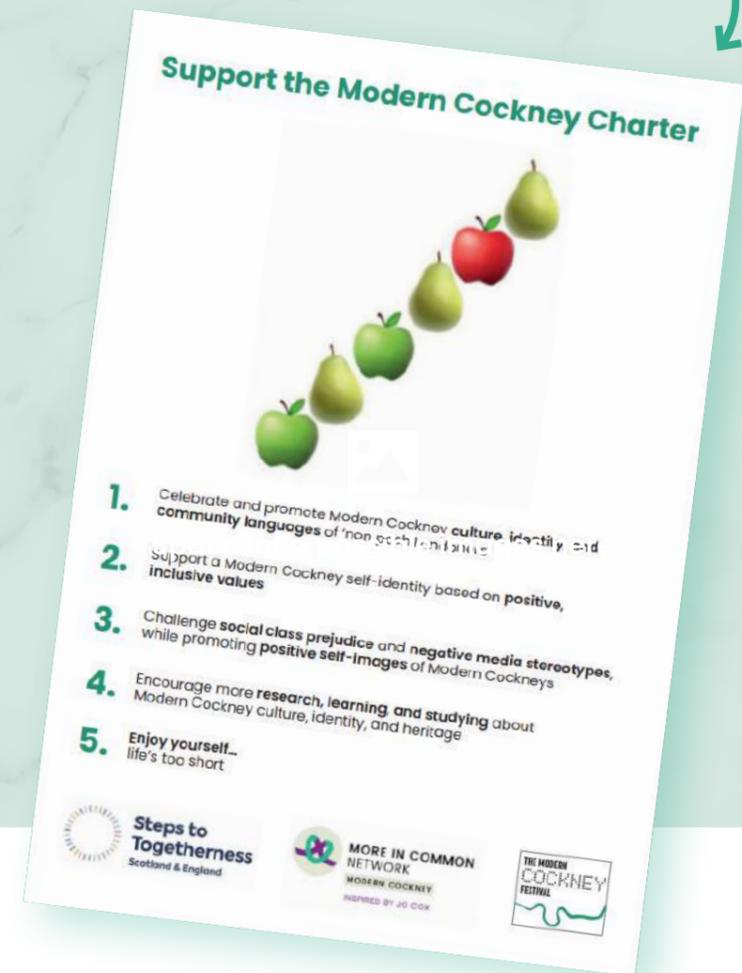
'Old School Cockney' – characterised by being from working-class roots, from a traditional inner London heartland, stereotyped by language, use of rhyming slang etc

'New School Cockney' a more globally influenced culture of the latest iterations from incomers from all parts of the globe to the traditional Cockney heartlands, leaving their imprint, like previous generations, on the ever-evolving Cockney identity and culture.

'Cockney Diaspora' living outside the traditional heartlands yet possessing characteristics of 'Old and New School Cockney' and retaining an affinity with its heritage, language, and identity. Typically found in a region nominally called 'Cockneydom' (defined by the core spread of Pie'n'Mash shops across Southeast England).

'Ancestral Cockney' separated by generations, although no longer identifiable as a 'Cockney' by social class, language, or other cultural indicators yet still draw inspiration from their Cockney ancestral roots, like the actors Charles Dance, Keira Knightley, Dame Helen Mirren, and many more.

**A healthy future for Pie'n'Mash and Cockney identity are intertwined.**



- Part 2 -

# PIE'N'MASH THE BACK STORY

## Pie and Mash – A (very) brief history by Dr. Stuart Freedman, Westminster University

As the famous sociologist Norbert Elias once noted, “nothing is more fruitless, when dealing with long-term social processes, than to attempt to locate an absolute beginning.” He might have been talking about pie and mash shops.

Like much of British working-class history, the origins of London’s pie shops are opaque and incomplete; generally deemed unworthy of examination or documentation in the first place. My task has been to piece together what little we do know and make sense of it in terms of larger themes of economic and cultural change – so when I hear people ask, ‘what was the first shop?’ – I think they might be asking the wrong question.

As everyone seems to ‘know’, the first recorded shop, classified by the Post Office London Directory for 1844 as an ‘eel pie house’, belonged to Henry Blanchard at 101 Union Street in Southwark. However, a watercolour by Frederick Napoleon Shepherd from 1835 clearly records a Blanchard’s eel pie shop on Fleet Street. Indeed, an advertisement in *The Morning Advertiser* in 1846 refers to an Eel Pie House in Walworth, “established six years (my underlined italics)... doing a snug business”. All this signals that these enterprises were likely already reasonably common.

The problem lies with the vagaries of how early eating houses in general were classified and recorded. More, the issue as the century progressed, is about what these shops sold, where they were sited and crucially, who they were for. What we can be sure of however is that they bore only a passing resemblance to today’s pie and mash shops.

Although the pie in various form had been around since at least the Middle Ages, we need to go back to the early eighteenth century to see how they came to be a mass saleable commodity. Here, increasing changes in economic structure led some artisans who had originally served the great houses to migrate to London to provision the growing metropolis. These were ‘small masters’ like dressmakers, vintners and, crucially for us, pastry cooks who served both the wealthy and the aspirant.

Eel (and meat) pies had traditionally been largely served in public houses or by street hawkers, but these were adjacent to a rowdy Regency street culture. This culture began to be threatened by a powerful and ascendant Victorian middle class who feared and associated it with danger to their new social order. The street began to be a contested arena that linked idleness with chaos and work with respectability. As the nineteenth century progressed, the urban thoroughfare and its trade became disciplined and regulated, the roving pie trade disappearing into settled businesses.

Dining for the wealthy remained largely a leisured performance translated from elite circles, but the necessities of a changing economy and population growth meant commercial enterprises sprang up to cater for the middle orders and respectable workers.

In the early century there was a hierarchy of eating places delineated by income; from cookhouses and ‘ordinaries’ to soup houses, chop houses, coffee houses and dining rooms. Eel pie shops became part of this expansion.

Whereas at the start of the century a gentleman might have eaten a pie from a hawker or an established pie shop in a salubrious area, class tastes began to be more clearly stratified. By 1837 *The Champion* relates the court case of a fight between a pie shop owner in Wardour Street and “four young shopmen”, one of whom is quoted as, “Heel-pies are only fit for snobs, give me a mince ‘un.”

By 1856 the new pie shops are according to George Dodd, “numerous”. For Charles Manby Smith, writing the following year, they were to be found, –“...especially in the immediate neighbourhood of omnibus and cab stations, and very much in the thoroughfares and shortcuts most frequented by the middle and lower classes.” Lit by gas lamps and aping the burgeoning (and reinvented) public house trade they were decorous in plate glass and mirrors and were places where artisans and clerks might rub shoulders with cab drivers. From sparse sources, we know that these were places where men ate their pies standing up and by hand as fast food.

By this period, the wealthier middle classes had started to move to leafier suburbs on the edges of the city, vacating much of the centre to the destitute and very poor. Most of these relied on transient coffee stalls in the street for sustenance, although it seems that some cook shops, analogous perhaps in some ways to later working class catts, started to provide limited seating for their customers to eat adjacent to the shop. Dominant in these areas however were unofficial markets that sold small amounts of food and goods very cheaply and often on credit. These were worked and patronised by coster communities whose livelihoods had been disrupted by the redevelopments of the city’s main markets. By the 1860s Mayhew suggests that there were more than sixty of these small largely unofficial commercial zones and their presence would later correlate well to areas of slum clearances.

Some of the eel pie shops located in formerly wealthier areas were left marooned in the penumbras of these markets and it is here, during the second half of the nineteenth century, that a culture based around street selling and hyper-local family ties that became known as cockney (itself a class-demoted term from its earlier associations) would establish itself. These cockney communities formed within a culture of a larger working-class political defeat (after the Charter) and adjacent to mass Irish immigration. As 'the great unwashed' they were largely feared as a potential radical threat but became gradually incorporated into the nation by the political class through limited, incremental suffrage and a nationalist agenda.

We know little in detail of the culture of the early cockney because it formed in unreported zones troubled only occasionally by missionaries and sensationalist writers. What we do know has been largely refracted through and ventriloquised by later bourgeoisie music hall performers.

According to the historian Gareth Stedman Jones, theirs became an inward looking 'culture of consolation'. This became defensively orientated towards the family and home, set against a pacified lifestyle of distraction congruent with the new entertainment economy that gave the opportunity to demonstrate and crucially perform respectability. The pie shops would become the cornerstone of that culture.

As the customer class base of many of the pie shops descended there are virtually no descriptions of them although we can see from newspaper advertisements from the mid-century that some might be joint ventures with coffee houses. By 1874 Kelly's lists thirty-three eel and pie houses and we might assume that they were at some level a deliberate lower-class replication of successful and fashionable bourgeois restaurants. By this period the mid-century pie shop has likely morphed into a largely working class space that probably served pies of eel, and (probably) meat, stewed eels (likely in a liquor) and soup.

The fare is almost certainly an aggregate of the offerings of earlier pie shops with proletarian street food served in a space that resembles a cookshop or coffee house with bench and (possibly) booth seating. The pie-shop or house (not the bourgeois, restaurant) appealed largely to the employed, skilled or semi-skilled working class and possibly (depending on location), self-employed petty-bourgeois tradesman. It is situated within, or in close proximity to, a street market with some operating until very late at night.

In 1889 Robert Cooke, an East Ender, significantly with Irish roots and a background as a butcher, fishmonger and publican, opened an eel and pie shop in Watney Street Market and, shortly after, his wife opened another in Hoxton Street (adjacent to the market). On his death, his widow Martha would also own a coffee house at 169 Hoxton Street, illustrating well the complimentary and commutable relationship between different early taxonic working class eating establishments. A decade before, a penniless Italian peasant, Michaele Mansi, had arrived from Ravello and married Cooke's daughter Ada. The Cooke family gifted them an eel and pie shop in Tower Bridge Road (that remains open

to this day). From this Mansi built an empire of such establishments in his own name, making himself and his family fabulously wealthy.

The Cooke family's claim that theirs was the first to pair meat pies and mashed potato is certainly plausible (some evidence may additionally point to a former Dutch eel trader, John Antink) although no record of that nor their originally claimed shop in Sclater Street exists. To muddy the picture further, in David Furnham's forgotten documentary, *Noted Eel and Pie Shops* (1975) the matriarch, Lily Cooke, 91 at the time significantly recalled that:

“Robert Cooke was-my-father in law... in Watney Street, Stepney. He never sold pies, he sold hot eels and mash...”.

A photograph of Malvery serving 'in a cheap coffee house' in 1900 however is revealing. The image shows her next to six men seated on wooden benches around a long table. It looks exactly as we've come to expect a contemporary eel, pie and mash shop to look. Again, the similarities between different stages of working class eating places are significant.

The early twentieth century was certainly the hey-day for the (now) eel, pie and mash shops and by 1920 there are 89 such premises listed in the Post Office Directory. By 1938, Mass Observation reports from the Old Kent Road that,

“...at closing time... Some make for the fish and chip shops, others to meat pie and jellied eel establishments. In these the main sale is 2d and 3d. hot meat pies, with pennyworths of mashed potatoes, which have lots of parsley chopped up with them”.

A further report also notes that soup is a common item for sale in the shops - giving lie to claims that the shops have only ever sold their modern (and falsely) memorialised combination.

In all of this it's clear that the history of the shops is not, and never has been - despite contemporary claims - linear. The shops and their current fare are the culmination of different historical processes mediated by need, circumstance and the availability of ingredients. They are the convergence of different types of eating establishments and stages in a process that, after stasis for much of the post-war era, has been revived in the newer pie shops outside of the capital.

**And long may they continue.**

## The Pie & Mash Club

The best information source on Pie'n'Mash today is the Pie & Mash Club. Established in 1994 by Nick Evans, Richard Lucas and Jamie Tanner - colleagues working at a book publishing house in central London. The genesis of the club came from a works softball league team. When the former folded, they sought inspiration for a new type of club that would retain both social and competitive elements, and the idea of holding a lunch club at a pie and mash shop was born.

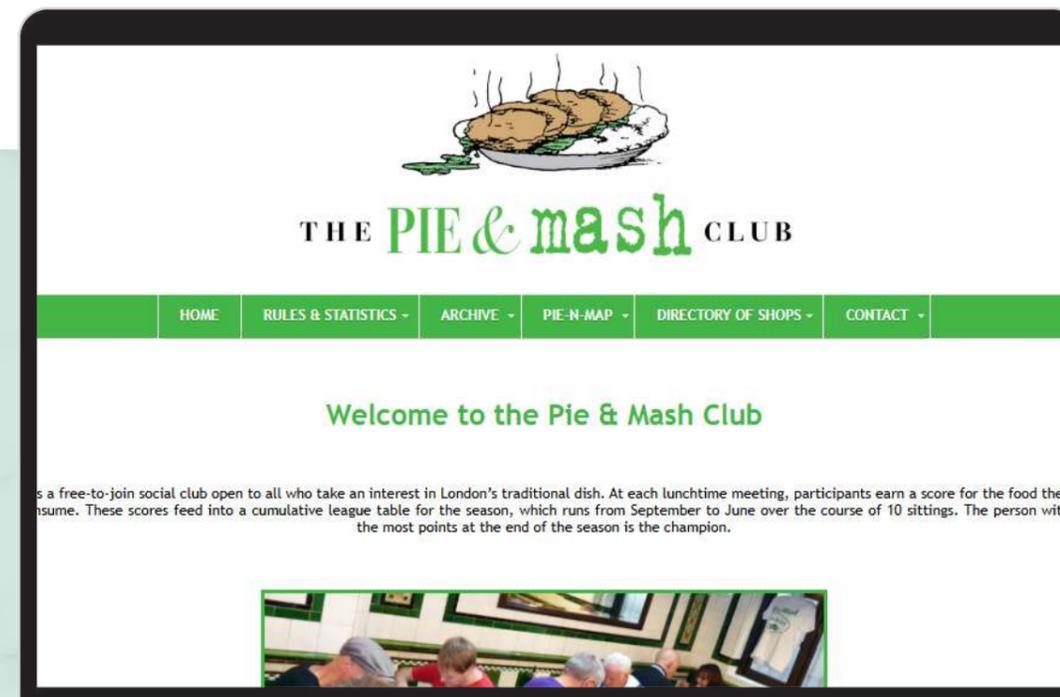
Since the very beginning, the club has operated a points-based system which has been modified over time, where participants earn a score for the food they consume. So, for instance, a portion of pie or eels is currently worth 4 points, mash 3 points, liquor 1 point and afters 2 points. The food must be consumed to earn points - any wastage incurs a penalty. The Club holds ten meetings between October and June, and the person with most points accumulated over the fixtures is crowned the winner at the last meeting of the season and is awarded the 'Realistic Clay Pies Trophy'. The Club also awards a Silver Mash Spoon trophy for 2nd place, and Baby Bib award for 3rd place and a wooden spoon for the lowest average scorer.

Meetings and scores were initially announced and recorded on paper memos and newsletters, but in early 2003 the Club set up its website (<https://pie-n-mash.com>) and has since covered its meetings through richly illustrated and detailed reports that have provided valuable and unique insights into dozens of pie and mash shops. Since then, the Club has gradually expanded its presence over the internet, establishing a YouTube and Facebook page, with the latter gaining over 6000 members since being set up.

The Club initially held all meetings at R. Cooke in Waterloo; after the second season Clarks in Exmouth Market became the nominal home venue, but from the late Nineties onwards the Club gradually expanded its remit to include the Greater London area. Since 2009 it has ventured even further afield, visiting shops in Clacton-on-Sea, Felixstowe, Basildon, Rochester, Eastbourne, Southend, Hoddesdon and even Skipton! Over time the Club has visited various branches of family businesses like Manze, Cooke, Kelly and Robins. It has also made trips to legendary and much-missed shops like The Cockney Grub House, A.J. Goddard, Duncan's and A. Cooke.

Through its travels over the past three decades, it has seen the pie and mash scene change irrevocably, witnessing the closure of historic London shops that have served local punters for generations, the introduction of innovations like vegetarian pies and delivery services, along with the gradual expansion of the pie and mash trade into Essex, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, Kent, Surrey and Norfolk - these outliers becoming increasingly abundant in the past decade.

Although the Club started out as a lunch-hour get-together for a small group of work colleagues, since the early Noughties and the advent of the internet, it has gradually expanded our base and now welcome to our meetings people of all ages and from all walks of life - anyone who shares our passion and commitment to the only dish traditionally associated with London - pie and mash.



# The evolving Pie'n'Mash businesses

## M. Manze - a story of continuing tradition from London's oldest pie 'n' mash shop

M. Manze has been trading on the same site since 1892, making it London's oldest surviving pie 'n' mash shop. Though it wasn't until 1902 - when Michele Manze purchased the shop from his father-in-law Robert Cooke, that the shop took on the Manze name.

Now, four generations and 122 years later, the shop is still in the Manze family, along with two other branches in Peckham and Sutton. Michele's great-granddaughter Emma Harrington now sits at the helm alongside her husband Tom and has worked in the family business since she was just 14. Emma started out in the Peckham shop clearing tables and washing up after school, before moving across to Tower Bridge and progressing to "the real work of making pies and pastry and cooking the mash and liquor on the hotplate".

As it states on the M. Manze website, the establishments' "mouthwatering pies, mash, green liquor and eels are legendary and uphold the tradition

of excellence established by our founder Michele Manze more than a century ago", yet Emma and her family have also innovated over the years to adjust to a changing world and to keep business thriving.

Expanding upon bricks and mortar trade, Manze's introduced a cold delivery service so people all over the UK can enjoy the iconic fayre. For piping hot pie 'n' mash Manze has partnered with Just Eat and Deliveroo so customers can have delivered to their homes in London. Most recently, they have collaborated with chefs Ivan Tisdall-Downes and Calum Franklin to host pop-up takeover events blending new flavours with the classic dish.

But in all this time, despite the changes in the local communities, the influx of new exotic cuisines and the difficulties that continuously hit the hospitality sector, the Manze family's commitment to serving the best traditional pie 'n' mash in the city has been unwavering.

## Robins - a family tradition beyond the traditional heartlands

Robins is one of the biggest 'movers'n'shakers', perhaps the nearest you will find to a chain in the Pie'n'Mash world. Although a number of other Pie'n'Mash shops share the same name such as Cooke's, Kelly's, and Manze, they are in fact independent businesses, although related by shared connections in a long family tree.

Now a fifth-generation empire, Robins was founded in 1929 by Harry Robins in east London.

The business, with a shop in Queens Road Market, Upton Park - a pie's throw from the West Ham football ground, was passed to his son William. Also known as 'Binkles', he was the largest eel supplier in Essex. Crucially, on his death, the business was passed on to his iconic daughter June, then aged 27.

She gained a reputation as a formidable woman. June was a wife, mother and businesswoman in a man's world. She grafted with dedication for 55 years, with the support of her Uncle Ted and Aunt Grace and her brothers Teddy and Billy, until her passing in 2019.

A woman with high standards, she believed in hard work, good morals and helping others - an ethos she carried into her Pie'n'Mash produce, expanding the business to another shop in East Ham.

As their website proudly proclaims, "In a work era dominated and controlled by men, June stood shoulder to shoulder with them proving women could raise a family, be a wife and own and run a business. June's two brothers also worked within the family business - Teddy and Billy Robins. June worked day and night for 55 years till her passing in 2019 building a legacy [for the family's future generations]".

"Our strength and wisdom as a family and as a business comes from the great late June Robins. June was a one of a kind, who left her mark on everyone she crossed paths with. She set the high standards back then that we still continue today. She believed in hard work, good morals and helping others within our communities. We will continue June's legacy and family name just the way she would have wanted us to".

Over the years, Robins has moved out of east London, with six shops across Essex; the heartlands of the Cockney Diaspora. Just like June, her daughter Julie Robins learned her pie making aged 11, in Upton Park, herself being taught by Lil Finlay.

The shop keeps to the same recipe from nearly 100 years ago. And, as traditional, every pie is still crafted by hand, fresh every day, to the same technique and recipe, although now with the addition of the increasingly popular vegan pie.

Currently, Julie and her own daughter Claudia, run the three shops in Romford, Chingford and Chelmsford, with Julie's siblings running the shops in Southend, Basildon and Wanstead. Robin's also supplies Pie'n'Mash to supermarket and overseas.

## The last Cooke's in London

If you go down to Hoxton today, you'll be in for a big surprise. Over the last few decades this long-established working-class area has become more and more gentrified, artistic, with shops turning bijou and artisanal; restaurants, bars, pastry and coffee shops are taking over the old buildings. But amongst the new locals is an old standard bearer for traditional London artisan food.

Trace the earliest days of Pien'Mash and the Cooke's family were there. Founded by Robert Cooke, a butcher, they have been serving hand-made pies, and other traditional Cockney fare, since 1862. Once boasting twelve Pie'n'Mash shops across London, the recent closing of the shop in Broadway Market, Hackney, run by the founder's great-grandson, Bob Cooke on Christmas Eve, 2019 after 120 years, there is now only one remaining in the capital.

Located in Hoxton Street, it's run by another great-grandson, Joe Cooke, and his wife Kim. Selling fresh, filling, hand-made pies to the labouring working-classes, they opened this shop in 1987. The shop is a

classic of its type. Above the frontage, the Cooke's name is displayed in traditional gold lettering on a green background, unchanged since it opened.

Inside, the shop has the classic marble tables, white and blue wall tiles, and still has sawdust on the floor - originally to stop customers slipping on the odd spat-out eel bone. A custom frowned upon these days but a common feature just two generations ago.

In 2020, Covid took a toll, destroying two-thirds of the business, with many of its patrons, being old-EastEnders who couldn't venture out to enjoy their favourite comfort meal. Despite the changing demographics, tastes, rising rates, and the worse Covid could throw at the old place, it's still standing - a testimony to Pie'n'Mash, the original Cockney artisanal meal and how it is now appealing to established and new tastes with an eclectic mix of old established Pie'n'Mash lovers and new people moving into the area discovering the delights of Cockney cuisine for the first time.

A true testimony to the enduring appeal of Pie'n'Mash.

## F Cooke at Bishops Stortford

Although maintaining a family tradition dating back to 1862 and now in its fifth generation, F Cooke at Bishops Stortford is very much at the forefront of innovation and evolution.

Fred Cooke, 56, is the fifth generation of a family of traditional piemakers. A classic Cockney from Dalston, he opened a new Pie'n'Mash shop in Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire just over three years ago.

It may seem a far Coster's cry from his Cockney roots but as he says, 'this is where the Cockney's are now!' And he's kept it in the family, with his 82-year-old mum working in the shop, as she has been doing since her Dalson days at the age of 12.

Starting work at seven thirty every working day, he keeps it fiercely traditional, making his pies from scratch, to sit alongside other classic favourites such as jellied and stewed eels. But he knows he has to modernise at the same time. He now does vegan pies, while boasting that 'I'm the only one to hand-make my own gluten free pies!', and offering gravy instead of the more traditional liquor, fruit pie and custard and even the ever-popular sausage roll! He may have to move with changing tastes, but he'll always keep the classics.

Yet, as he says, he can only survive if people keeping eating Pie'n'Mash and it's becoming harder. This was always a 'poor man's meal' and with prices going up due to things outside of his control, it's not as cheap as it once was. But then, what is?

Add in rates, rent, the squeeze on the High Street all makes it harder for him to survive. Although the ability to offer deliveries has helped.

Backing the move to get this dish 'Traditional Speciality Guaranteed' recognition would help a lot, and he has the support of his local MP, Kemi Badenoch, who he's offered to name a pie after!

Proud of his family's rich Pie'n'Mash heritage Fred Cooke keeps one foot in the past by serving the traditional Cockney dish of Pie'n'Mash along with eels yet also is open to doing new. Whether it is his shop's location, outside the traditional inner London heartlands to the leafy borders of Essex, through to new food offerings that respect the past but also open to new tastes while also offering Sunday openings.

Fred's creative flair extends to his marketing with many tempting and attention-grabbing offerings, whether it is a special as-much-as-you-can-eat events, offering oysters in the very first National Pie'n'Mash Week celebrations, to even offering a takeaway at 1862 prices of a penny - a nostalgic throwback to when the shop's ancestors first started.

His food range innovation includes extending the range of pies he offers with new delights such as Chicken Tikka pie through to a minced lamb pie.

With a lineage dating back over 160 years and yet offering new choices, F Cooke in Bishops Stortford demonstrates the need for a balanced evolution.

## Arments - a long tradition still flourishing

Arments continues to be a family run business and is now in its fourth generation. Roy and Cheryl's nephew Paul, along with other family maintain a Pie'n'Mash tradition dating over 100 years.

According to their company's web site, they lay claim to possibly the oldest running pie shop trading with a heritage spanning back over 140 years with earlier eel and pie house operating at 386 Walworth Road.

Roy's grandparents, William and Emily Arment started their family business at 386 Walworth Road, Walworth in 1914 taking over management of Evans Pie and Eel shop.

Walworth at that time was the most densely populated half square mile in London, and many of its inhabitants were living in slum like conditions. Arment's eel, mash and pie shop provided local people with meals that were relatively cheap and nutritious, being an essential part of local community life.

In 1917 William went off to war, serving as a gunner in the Royal Garrison Artillery, leaving behind a family with two young daughters. After being injured in action, William returned home in 1919. The family and the business grew, with the arrival of two more daughters, then a son, William James (known Bill), arriving in 1923.

After William's death in 1931 Emily, helped by her children kept the business running, even through the food shortages of the Second World War. Emily made up for the shortfall by selling nutritious soup - and was known for offering free meals for those in dire need especially the children from the nearby workhouse.

Following Emily's passing in 1945, her son Bill took over Number 386 Walworth Road, continuing as a pie, mash and stewed eel shop until the 1960s. Arments also had other shops at 278 Walworth Road and at 10-12 Westmoreland Road. Arment's moved to their current location at 7 & 9 Westmoreland Road in 1979.

Various members of the family have worked in the business since then with Roy and Cheryl Arment taking over in 1983. After 50 years in the business and millions of handmade pies, Roy has now semi-retired and it continues to run under the direction of Cheryl and other family members Paul, Lorraine and Steve. Their shop tells both a profound story of a business at the heart of its community and the wider history of Walworth and South London.

Moving with the times Arments now offer online and home delivery, ensuring they maintain a proud history of keeping the Pie'n'Mash tradition going.

## Wally's Pie'n'Mash

Billy Cutting, 35, trained as a plumber after he left school in Dagenham. Many years later, disillusioned, he and his wife Dee bought a horse box and started selling fruit and vegetables and 'chocolate strawberries' from the back, then, with a mutual love for Pie'n'Mash, they ran a pop-up Pie'n'Mash shop for a while before deciding to establish a shop in Maldon, a picturesque town on the Essex coast.

'I came to Maldon because my old mum has retired out here. There was a Pie'n'Mash shop here for a long time, but it shut down about three years ago.'

Calling it 'Wally's, after both of their grandfathers, they opened in May 2025. Not coming from a traditional pie making family, they currently buy in their pies from 'Tony's' in Waltham Abbey (the shop used by David Beckham) and plan to start selling both jellied and stewed as they get better established - but they do a specialty 'school cake' and custard (sponge cake topped with pink icing and sprinkles!)

And he admits to offering gravy as a concession to modernity 'I have to, if that's what people want.'

They're confident they can thrive here, 'there's a good few caravan sites around and about, full of Londoners' in the summer.' So, he hopes he's chosen his location well, especially as there is also a lot of free parking space around for his customers.

When asked if they will start making their own pies one day, they're both amused and attracted to the idea. 'Our kitchen isn't big enough...but if we do well and can expand it's something to look into for sure.'

A great example of how Pie'n'Mash is evolving and flourishing in new ways.

## G Kelly - a story of a new generation taking over a family business

Founded in 1939 by George Kelly this pie 'n' mash shop on the Roman Road, in the heart of London's East end in Bow, is another fourth-generation family business. The establishment is so loved in the local community, that when it reopened in 2019 after a two-year refurbishment, Londoners queued round the block to get their fill, and the owners had to limit opening times to avoid running out of pies.

Neil Vening, who's mother Sue, was brought up in the flat above the shop, now runs the business, and led the refurbishment project which he saw as integral to its long-term survival. While the new bakehouse is unrecognisable from the shed where the pies would have been crafted previously, the rest of the shop has been designed to look as similar to the original shop as possible, with many of the original fixtures and fittings retained.

The new design was inspired by a photograph of G Kelly taken in the 1930s, and features white tiles, faded photographs, original doors, mirrors and window grills. This commitment to quality, authenticity and tradition isn't just in the aesthetics - most importantly it filters down into the food itself. Vening insists on leading a team of cooks who handmake the pie 'n' mash from scratch every single day. Which is precisely why G Kelly is loved by locals and tourists alike, why people travel for miles around to get their fix, and why the shop is now the busiest it's been since the 1980s.

## Barney's Pie'n'Mash - a story of a new kid on the block

Tommy Barnard is an anomaly in the pie 'n' mash world. He's not the great-grandson of one of the great pie 'n' mash pioneers and his shop hasn't been in the family for generations... He's actually a former plumber who loved the iconic London grub so much that he taught himself to cook and opened his own shop in Walthamstow just seven years ago.

But while his shop - Barney's Pie'n'Mash - might not have the steep history that most shops in London have, that hasn't stopped him from amassing 100s of online five-star reviews and being named The Guardian's Takeaway of the Year 2022. And it's not hard to see why...

With Barney's, Tom has created something special. He has fully embraced all the traditions that make the pie 'n' mash experience unique - from the décor inspired by the shops of old, through to the

food itself, which he lovingly crafts by hand every single day, reportedly having pie making down to such a fine art he can create 98 in an hour. But he's also injected Barney's with his own personality and passion - most notably with his homemade condiments, such as Barney's Big Boy Chilli Vinegar, which is so loved by locals that it often sells out faster than he can make it.

Barney's may not be a fourth-generation pie 'n' mash shop, but it's still a family affair, with his kids mucking in when they can, and it's his dream for his children to take over one day and create what other families have done before him. So, who knows, by the time we're celebrating the 100th annual pie 'n' mash week, we could be writing a story about how Tommy Barnard's great-grandchildren are still serving-up delicious traditional pie, mash and liquor to Walthamstow locals all these years later.

## Tony's in Waltham Abbey - Pie'n'Mash to the stars

Where the 'food of the gods' is served to the stars.' Tony's in Waltham Abbey has been serving up Pie'n'Mash' and eels for thirty years. Traditional, feted, daily hand-made produce, he regularly has stars drop to eat, maybe also indulge in a bit of 'school sponge' and custard if they're particularly hungry.

Famously, David Beckham, born locally, visits when in town. While other footballers can be seen there, Carlton Cole, ex-West Ham is a visitor and if it does all kick off, hardman actor Danny Dyer can jump in as he steps away for a double-double (two pies, two mash) to sort it.

But for Tony, the spotlight is firmly on the business side of things. 'It's been a tough few years across the whole catering trade especially with many Pie and Mash shops closing in the last few years and without customers still showing up and introducing the next generation we wouldn't be able to keep doing what we love and sharing this tradition with so many of you!'

If the industry is to be saved, then tradition is important to Pie'n'Mash. So, it's double good that David Beckham was seen 'passing on the baton' by taking Romeo, his London born son, to Tony's, keeping him firmly in touch with his Cockney roots and heritage.

Of course, Tony's also does delivery in the company van, everyone must these days, but LA might be a bit too far - so the stars must come out to Waltham Abbey!



One of Tony's regulars!

## Now offering Pie and Mash for event catering – The London Pie and Mash Company

After 25 years in the corporate arena, the founder of the company, Olac Coombs, started the multi award-winning The London Pie and Mash Company Limited when a love of events and this traditional meal came together.

The London Pie and Mash Company was established in 2014, so is looking forward to celebrating over 10 years within the catering industry, quite an achievement in this day and age. Key to its success has been adapting the offering to meet the changing needs of its clients both privately and publically. As a business it has three core avenues of revenue: public events which includes everything from Formula One at Silverstone to Glastonbury (where we cater 9000 meals in 10 days!), our second key service is our mail order business where we send our pie meals via courier the length and breadth of the country, a service which certainly came alive during the difficult Covid months. Our third and biggest area of business is private catering. From Corporate events to birthday parties to weddings we have catered well over 1000 private functions all over the country from 10 to 1000 guests!

The three business streams work in great harmony as many of our private bookings come from customers who have eaten with us at public events, and our mail order allows customers to have a taster before they commit.

In our early days we used to just serve pie and mash, but through our wedding business specifically we have

expanded to offer a full range of canapés, starters, mains, desserts, buffets and late-night snacks. We can provide staff, plate, cutlery, glassware and linen hire and can provide either a relaxed buffet “come and get it” type of service to a formal table service. We even have our own fully licenced mobile bar, Tinos, so we can offer a true one stop shop for our clients offering savings and reduced risk.

That said, at our heart is traditional pie and mash, so every booking starts with this historic meal! This diversity is important in a modern world. Whilst die hards will say we should just serve traditional pie and mash, these other revenue streams smooths out the ups and downs of running a business and allows us to promote the great London food around the country.

One of our key skills is listening to what our customers want and helping them through the many potential pitfalls of event organising and management. Many of our clients have not organised a large-scale event before, so it can be very useful to share our many years of experience with them and offer real practical advice.

With well over 25,000 followers on social media, we are one of the most followed caterers in the UK, and in a world where everyone has an opinion, we always need to be on top of our game and never take our history or future customers for granted. For us, every job is ultra-important, big or small, and we always strive for continuous improvement by listening to what people want and need now and in the future.



## Noted Eel and Pie House, Leytonstone – a very long family tradition

As the fifth generation of pie makers, Alfie is a young man who is proud of his family tradition and heritage.

In 1894, a family of Dutch eel exporters left a young son, Huite, in London, to work his board and keep and to learn a trade with a pie making family.

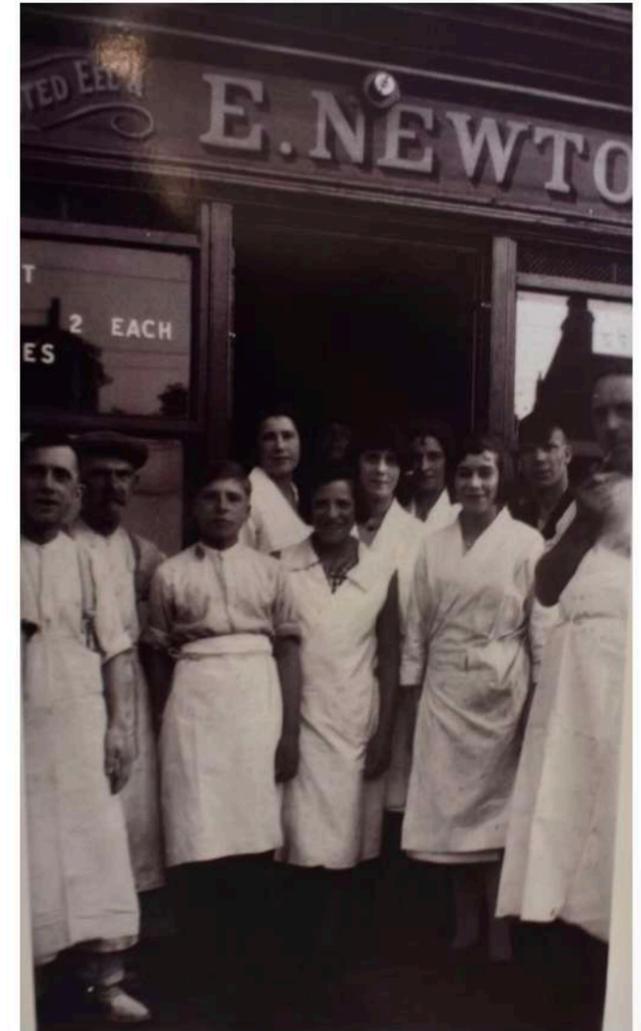
Eventually opening his first shop in Hoxton before the Great War, he married into the family of Ernest Newton, another pie making family. In 1926 he moved the shop to Bow Road under stipulation that it was named 'Newton'. During the second world war, as 'Friendly Aliens', they had to change the shopfront to their real family name. Thinking 'H Hak' would look too Germanic, they opted for 'Noted Eel and Pie House', and the business has retained the name ever since.

By 1976 the business was being run by sons Cyril and Russell, when the local council marked the area for regeneration. So, they moved the premises once again, this time to Leytonstone, where it's been for the last forty odd years

Every morning, Alfie prepares all of his produce from scratch, using the same family heritage recipes to make the pies and liquor, with no preservatives or artificial flavourings – but now with the addition of vegan pies. He is one of the few shops that still stores live eels, serving them up both stewed and jellied.

Traditionally, the eels were exhibited out in front of the shop, before being gutted in front of customers to prove how fresh they were – but this is now done behind closed doors – to everyone's relief!

It's hard work, early hour starts, but he's proud of being the fifth generation of the family to run the business, proud that his loyal customers still visit when they come back to the area, amused that some even take a batch of pies and liquor back to Spain with them!



## Champs, Poole, Dorset

Going for the title of the most far flung Pie'n'Mash shop from the traditional heartlands is 'Champs' in Poole, Dorset.

Opened in 2025 by Londoners Warren Roberts, 41 and his partner Megan Hogarth, they're bringing a bit of London to the West Country.

Both originally from Plumstead, they moved to Poole, with their family, seven years ago. Wanting to capture the spirit of his first Pie'n'Mash as a kid on a family trip to Manzes on Tower Bridge Road, they opened Champs. The shop captures all of the elements you would expect of a classic London pie shop, offering a traditional menu, with a bit of bread pudding or school cake to fill up even the hungriest punter. Megan says "We're aiming to provide the simple and traditional, we are not putting a modern twist on it."

Originally Warren made his own pies, a case of trial and error, having bought some from 'Flo's Pie'n'Mash' shop in Dartford. With some pastry advice from Paul, Flo's

piemaker, he eventually came up with his own recipe. But has since started taking pies supplied by 'Manzes', as well as eels from a company in London – as Dorset can't supply them! But he'd eventually like to make his own pies.

With two tables, four church pews from London, the shop can seat twelve people. 'I'm going for the smallest shop,' jokes Warren. There's a large Cockney diaspora in Poole and the surrounding area and when they all have to cram in, then start chatting, they soon discover they have a lot in common. It's like a social club for Cockneys! Of course a few inquisitive locals do come in as well.

"We didn't expect it quite take off like this, we were amazed...It's actually hit home, this could go really well."

Warren says, "The big goal would be to have multiple locations across Bournemouth and Christchurch as well as Poole."

A Pie'n'Mash empire in the making!

## Flying the flag in West London – ‘Cockneys Pie’n’Mash’ Portobello Road

Cockney's Pie'n'Mash shop is in the Portobello Road, west London.

Run by Ruth, 67 and her son Billy, 39, she started it over 42 years ago by refitting a former laundrette.

Born and raised on the Portobello Road, she had her first Pie'n'Mash aged about three in Smart's Pie'n'Mash shop (aka Renee's) in the Goldborne Road. Sadly, now closed down. With a mother-in-law who made the pies in a local Cooke's, she learnt the traditional recipes and skills to set up her own shop.

But times are getting harder for her. The rents and rates in that part of London are becoming eye-wateringly high. "I can't see us surviving more than a few more years", she says. "People still think of Pie'n'Mash as a cheap meal, but the price of supplies has all gone up, potatoes, beef and the war in Ukraine saw electric and gas prices rocket. We were paying about £15 for our cooking oil, when the war started, it went up to over £40. But regulars still want us to hold our prices - £5 for a single/single while they're paying over £3.50 for a cup of coffee!"

Being in such a tourist area may have been a blessing for them, and she says many do drop in. But they see it as a bit of a novelty meal, "They'll order one pie and one mash between three of them, just to try it. They like it, but it's not helping my business!"

The challenge Ruth faces are why we need a 7 point plan to create a more sustainable way ahead for all Pie'n'Mash shops.



## A fan's story. Terry Carney who run a Pie'n'Mash fan community on Facebook.

My family's love for pie and mash, a traditional Cockney meal, has always been a significant part of my life. When I moved to the leafy county of Hertfordshire, my trips to the pie and mash shop weren't so frequent anymore.

There were no local pie and mash shops, so only when I was in London would I get to taste the green liquor, succulent meat pies, and a good old scoop of mash. Then one day on social media I saw my first pie and mash post, I thought I would become involved, but only on my terms.

I was already heavily involved in social media with my own digital marketing agency. My next move involved establishing a Facebook group dedicated to "pie and mash" aptly named "The Pie and Mash Appreciation Society". It started as a bit of fun- the odd post, a review, and now the staple favourite of most people's social media posts - a good old foodporn post.

I soon noticed that my posts were gaining interest; others were requesting to join my group and then starting to post their own experiences, thoughts, and opinions and of course food pics. What amazed me was the passion others had for this traditional London dish and how the group just gained more members organically, never promoted, and they just kept coming.

I had no idea so many were interested in or so passionate about pie and mash. Today, my group has over 17,000 plus members, some as far away as Australia, who love the group so they can keep that connection with pie and mash, the shops they visited, and the experiences they had. Members post their pie and mash pictures, give their thoughts on their meal, and champion their favourite shops.

In fact, there are many tribes within the overall tribe, and passions are high when it comes to pie and mash shops.

The group does have challenges, sometimes infiltrated by gravy lovers, knife users, and liquor haters. If you're not a spoon user, you are a loser; there's no middle ground there. Pies crust up, chilli vinegar or good old malt, liquor too green or light, they are all topics that can start a Facebook group fight!

The members clash, the trolls ridicule, and intergroup member rows appear. It takes a little managing, and the odd member is banned. After all, I set out to create a community of like-minded, passion-fuelled pie and mash lovers, not fighters. The one thing that is always overriding is their pride in this dish, their concern for the shops that are closing, and what the future holds for pie and mash.

The concerns are that the working man's traditional dish of London will be out of reach if the price continues to rise, and the doors shut firm on the shop in their area someday soon are always topics high on the agenda.

From a kid to now some 60 years later, I have eaten pie and mash in many a London borough, both north and south of the river.

I now use Cookes in Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, and Tony's in Waltham Abbey, Essex. This is a trend I have seen growing over that last five years, pie, and mash shops popping up in areas out of London, in some cases far away from the traditional London stomping grounds of any pearly King or Queen.

These are far removed from my early days of eating pie and mash in the Lambeth Walk, The Cut, and Brixton. While the food still hits the spot, the ambience and look are no longer there; marble tables, dark wood, sawdust on floors, and tiles indoors and outdoors are rare these days. How do spit your eel bones on a floor with no sawdust, a habit my nan had that amazed me as a kid while I ploughed through my own pie and mash dish.

Memories are often reignited in the group when someone posts a picture of a shop that is no more, and the way it was before- you know, 'the good old days'. Things have changed, but still, the pie and mash shops are holding in there, but for how long? The group gives me hope; it gives me a way to stay attached to the people, and the dish, that I believe, is the fabric of the Cockney eating culture of my forefathers in London, and the forefathers of many more.

As a kid while I ploughed through my own pie and mash dish.

Memories are often reignited in the group when someone posts a picture of a shop that is no more, and the way it was before- you know, 'the good old days'. Things have changed, but still, the pie and mash shops are holding in there, but for how long? The group gives me hope; it gives me a way to stay attached to the people, and the dish, that I believe, is the fabric of the Cockney eating culture of my forefathers in London, and the forefathers of many more.



## Keeping Pie'n'Mash Alive: Lessons from Danny Sains of Sainsy's Pie Shop Lakeside Shopping Centre

Having owned a Pie'n'Mash shop for over a decade and serving hundreds of thousands of pies to loyal, passionate customers, I've come to one conclusion: Pie, Mash, and Liquor will live on forever.

It's a true London institution, right up there with the Crown Jewels, London Bridge, the red bus, the black cab, and the classic telephone box. For many of us, our love for Pie'n'Mash started in childhood - memories of shopping with mum and nan, enduring the market trip but knowing the reward of a "one and one" with a glass of milk was coming. Pie'n'Mash was a ritual - before football, after swimming, a staple of 'the good old days'.

That nostalgia played a big part in me opening my first shop. I didn't set up on a traditional high street; I chose Lakeside Shopping Centre in Essex. It made perfect sense - most of Essex has London roots, the centre had huge footfall, and it was open seven days a week. What could go wrong? Absolutely nothing - until Covid.

I had never run a business before, let alone a Pie'n'Mash shop. But from the moment I opened on 2nd August 2010, it just worked. No gimmicks, no meal deals, no heavy advertising - just great Pie'n'Mash. And why? Because I believed in it. Pie'n'Mash is more than just food - it's heritage, tradition, and community.

## The Future of Pie'n'Mash: Embracing Change - a personal reflection by Danny Sains, former shop owner

Pie'n'Mash will live on—but only if we accept one crucial truth: change is necessary.

The days of expecting to pay £3.50 for a one-and-one are gone. Rents, taxes, VAT, wages, ingredients—everything has risen. Potatoes alone have gone up by 400%! Yet, some customers still expect to pay prices from decades ago and walk out if they see a single pie priced at £5.

It's time to stop resisting change. Shops introducing gravy, veggie or vegan pies, and different payment options aren't betraying tradition—they're ensuring it survives. If we all adapt, Pie'n'Mash shops will continue to thrive.

## Lessons from a Pie'n'Mash Owner

1. Treat Every Pie Like a Customer- If a pie is burnt, undercooked, or past its best, don't serve it. A bad experience means that customer may never return—and they'll likely leave a bad review too. In my experience, customers are happy to wait for fresh pies cooked to perfection.
2. The Experience Matters- Pie'n'Mash is more than just food—it's about atmosphere. Customers love the banter with cockney staff, the memorabilia on the walls, the music playing in the background. No matter how busy we were, I always told my servers to have a chat with customers. Every visit should feel special.
3. Consistency is Key- Regular hours build trust. My shopping centre location meant we stayed open until 10 PM, and I often had a last-minute rush at 9:30 PM, selling another 40-50 pies. Closing early could mean missed business and unhappy customers.
4. Be Open to Change- Offering gravy or vegan pies isn't 'selling out'—it's adapting to a wider audience while keeping tradition alive. If it means a shop stays open, it's worth it.
5. Support Other Pie Shops- New Pie'n'Mash shops are opening across the South East - this is a good thing! It keeps the tradition alive. We should celebrate and support each other, not treat competition as a threat.
6. Enjoy It!- A smile goes a long way. I had a sign in my shop that read: 'For F..k's sake, Smile!' Being served by someone who enjoys what they do is priceless, and that energy is contagious.
7. Additional Considerations for a Sustainable Future
8. Modern Business Strategies: Shops need to embrace online ordering, delivery services, and social media marketing to attract new generations of customers.
9. Sustainability: Where possible, sourcing local ingredients and minimizing waste can help keep costs down and attract eco-conscious consumers.
10. Collaboration and Innovation: Working with other local businesses, offering collaborations, or even pop-ups can help bring Pie'n'Mash to new audiences.
11. Let's keep it simple: Pie'n'Mash is part of our heritage, and it's up to all of us to keep it going. Whether you visit your local shop, introduce a friend to it, or order a delivery - just make it count. Eat Pie'n'Mash and keep the tradition alive!

- Part 3 -

# PIE'N'MASH THE NEXT STEPS

# What do you think?

The Modern Cockney Festival was launched by a community partnership between the Bengali East End Heritage Society (whose co-founder was born in the London Hospital, Whitechapel) and social enterprise Grow Social Capital (whose co-founder was born in the East End Maternity Hospital, Stepney).

There was a concern that talk around their shared identity 'Cockney' was dominated by a narrative of 'Cockney is dying'. Yet, to them it provided a strong sense of who they are, what they stand for, and where they come from. An identity based on values of resilience and defiance, resourcefulness, underpinned by a stoic and irreverent wit. Assets that can help them – and others in their communities – face up to and overcome adversity, come together to face common challenges, and build a greater sense of togetherness within wider society.

Some interesting things emerged. Despite media talk of 'Cockney dying' usage of the term had increased 40% over the last 50 years. (Source: Google Ngram). There seemed to be a contradiction between chattering class talk and reality.

News coverage of any high profile Pie'n'Mash shop closing (often down to the owners retiring or the property lease expiring) was met with a similar narrative of 'Pie'n'Mash' is dying. A narrative at best myopic, if not blind, to the realities within the Pie'n'Mash market of an evolving food, culture and business.

Sociolinguists (the people who study the social significance of language) in their research again echoed the 'Cockney is dying' narrative. Yet at the same time talk of new realities anchored firmly on Cockney, whether it was the apparent rise of what's called 'Estuary English' or 'Multicultural London English' (the latter ignoring the fact the Cockney has always been 'multicultural') all over-looking a reality that Cockney was a key ingredient in any new emergent forms of language they were describing.

There is also the new reality how over the last 50 years we've also witnessed, thanks to greater geographic and social mobility, more extensive global mass media, and greater self-awareness, how modern social identities are more complex, fluid, and multi-layered. People nowadays have a wardrobe of identities to define themselves.

All these factors led to the idea of creating the Modern Cockney Festival, a month-long space and place enabling anyone to explore, discover, and articulate what it means to be 'Cockney' in 21st century Britain. We don't need a Royal Institute of Cockney to tell us 'What is Cockney in 21st century Britain?'. We need to find out for ourselves, give ourselves permission to find out new things, discover or re-discover the old and create our own stories of who we are, what it means to have a Cockney identity in our wardrobes.

Being a modern Cockney, we discovered, helps you do the right thing. In September 2022 David Beckham received widespread accolades for his decision to queue for 12 hours to pay his respects at Queen Elizabeth II's lying in state. His decision to queue was inspired by the memory of his East End grandparents. It was what they would have done, he said. What they would have wanted him to do. When he's in town with his family, he takes them to their local Pie'n'Mash shop. Not because they're Hank Marvin but to connect them with their background and culture.

Rob Beckett eloquently captures this spirit in the foreword to our report, "Enjoying Pie'n'Mash is now a way for me to remember who I am, and where I'm from, it goes back to not just my roots, but my family's before me. It has a history and a heritage that's almost unique in London now. Pie'n'Mash goes back generations and is an important part of our cultural heritage as Londoners." And as Professor Rebecca Earle added about foods like Pie'n'Mash "are history on a plate".

Pie'n'Mash is more than just food. It's a part of our culture, for anyone who identifies as a ;non-posh

Londoner' aka Cockney. Its evolving journey is a story of many futures. For some shops, rich in authentic history, their pathway may be of not changing, celebrating their heritage. That is not inertia but a wilful strategy of preserving a precious asset. Other shops still need to respect a heritage, but need to be open to new ideas, new changing tastes, new ways of providing a Pie'n'mash experience.

Let's ensure we respect our history while future generations can enjoy the same privilege of Pie'n'Mash. Do reflect on the contents of this report and how you think it needs to evolve, and what can best secure a successful and sustainable future.

# What you can do!

## Pie'n'Mash business owners:

1. Support the bid to get Traditional Speciality Guaranteed recognition for traditional Pie'n'Mash
2. Take part in the consultation and have your say for submitting our proposal to The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
3. Get your customers to sign the petition in support of TSG at: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/give-us-respect-for-pie-n-mash>
4. Support future National Pie'n'Mash Week and download free publicity materials at [www.nationalpiemashweek.org.uk](http://www.nationalpiemashweek.org.uk)

## Supporter of Pie'n'Mash:

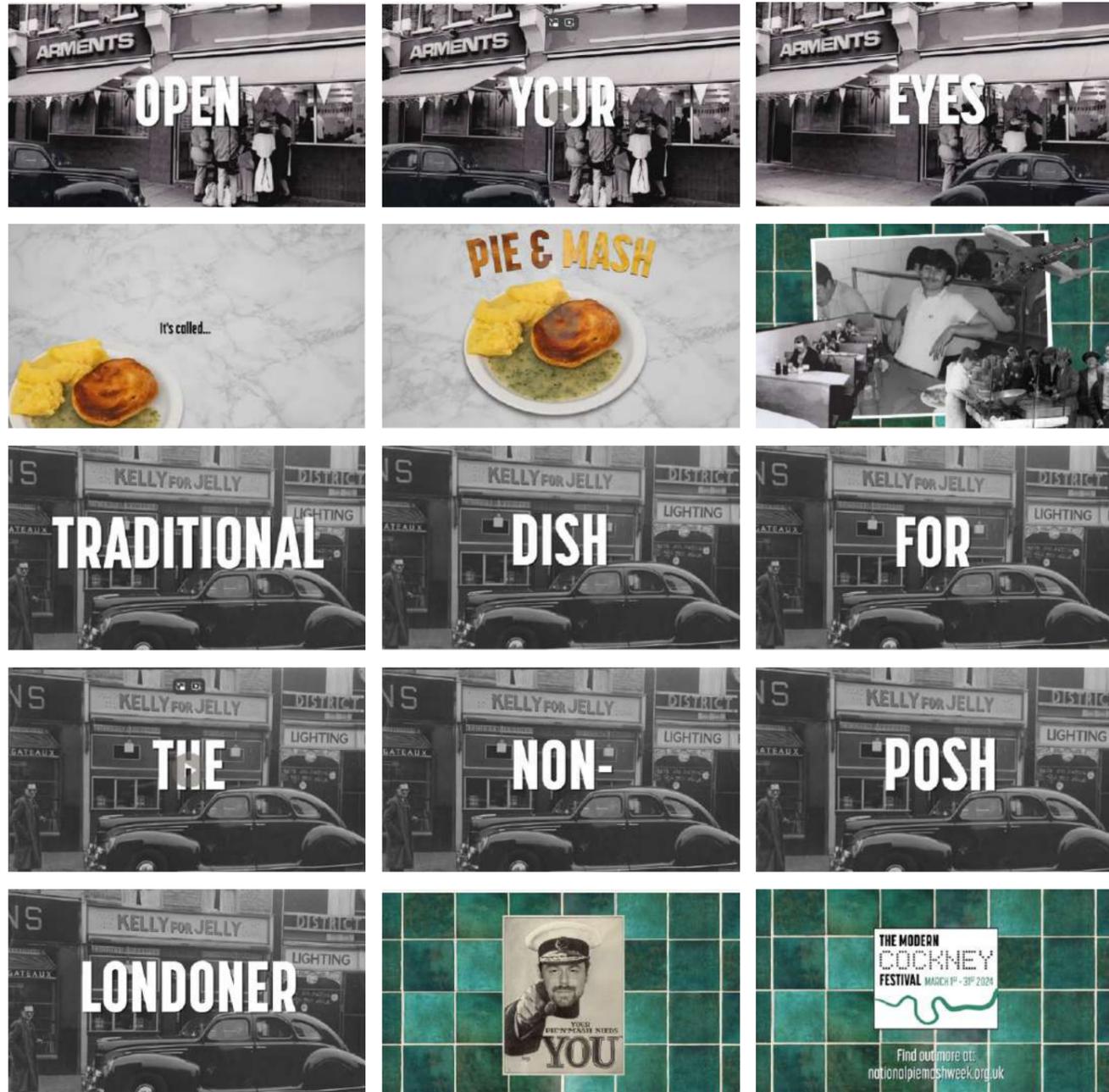
1. Don't just talk, eat – commit to proactively enjoying your favourite food on a regular basis such as once a week/month/quarter or whatever appropriate.
2. Be a Pie'n'Mash buddy and take a friend to try the Pie'n'Mash experience, possibly for the first time
3. Be a Pie'n'Mash Pilgrim by visiting a shop you have not been to before to extend your experience of what your favourite food has to offer
4. Practice good Netiquette when on social media. Online platforms provide excellent opportunities to share new and positive experiences. Sadly, they also witness negative, sometimes toxic comments, even from so-called Pie'n'Mash fans who can make outrageous and nasty comments about an experience or an unfavoured shop. Speaking to business owners this hostility can sometimes and painful experience, as it is their business, their craft, their pride and joy which is being traduced.
5. Support the campaign to get Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) for Pie'n'Mash. Be proactive on social media in showing your support and encourage others to get behind the campaign. Make sure you sign the petition in support of TSG. Register your vote at: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/give-us-respect-for-pie-n-mash>
6. Find out more about National Pie'n'Mash Week at [www.nationalpiemashweek.org.uk/march2025](http://www.nationalpiemashweek.org.uk/march2025) and the Modern Cockney Festival at [www.moderncockneyfestival.org.uk](http://www.moderncockneyfestival.org.uk). Attend its online and live events.
7. Support the Modern Cockney Charter when it launches in autumn 2026 (see next page).

## For Public bodies:

1. Support the bid to get Traditional Speciality Guaranteed recognition for traditional Pie'n'Mash
2. Show your support for the Modern Cockney Charter.

**Let us know what you think contact [Hello@growsocialcapital.org.uk](mailto:Hello@growsocialcapital.org.uk)**

# Check out the first-ever generic promotional film for Pie'n'mash



'Pie Mash the Movie' the first-ever generic film promotion of Pie'n'Mash created as part of the first National Pie'n'Mash Week in 2024. Kindly produced by Working Word Communications and narrated by broadcaster and comedian Arthur Smith.

See it here: <https://moderncockneyfestival.co.uk/national-pie-n-mash-week/>

## Thanks

**Rob Beckett**, comedian and broadcaster

**Professor Rebecca Earle**, University of Warwick

**Rt Hon Richard Holden MP**

**Dr. Stuart Freedman**, University of Westminster

**Lodestone Communications** providing their public affairs, lobbying, and public relations services pro bono

**Gary Wiggins** of W Design providing design services pro bono

**Terry Carney** of Sales Remedy providing a campaign website [www.nationalpiemashweek.org.uk](http://www.nationalpiemashweek.org.uk) pro bono

**Working Word Communications** producing the first ever generic promotional film for Pie'n'Mash pro bono

**Arthur Smith**, comedian and broadcaster providing voice over for the film pro bono

**Danny Dyer** - allowing image to be used in publicity pro bono

**38 Degrees** petition site supporting the campaign pro bono

**Nigel Dobson**, providing support to the campaign pro bono

**Laura Burch** writer, copywriting services pro bono

**The Pie Mash Club**

**Andy Green** - editor

**Saif Osmani** - editorial

**All the contributors to this report**



## Oxton Was Better Before It 'Ad An H

There's a chill  
to the Spring air.  
The pie and mash shop  
is warm with steam  
from the liquor.  
The window  
runs with condensation.  
A football scarf  
'angs on the back  
of a wooden bench.  
I'm at the scrapings  
with me spoon  
and she leans over  
and writes our names  
in the run,  
cartouches them  
with an 'eart.  
It's the 'ipsters  
that pierce with an arrow.  
Come winter  
we are consigned to history.

**Tim Wells**

## Death of a Pie Mash shop

Real poets don't do that nine-to-grind, shlep to work on the Northern Line, wage slavery thing.  
Real poets don't organise strike ballots, handle personal cases, or stand on picket lines.  
Real poets don't wear button-down 'Shermans, Baracuta Harringtons, and step out in proper daises.  
Real poets don't rub-a-dub, unity style, inna dance at the Betsey.  
Real poets don't go for two 'n two, with an old china, at Clark's on Exmouth Market.  
Not anymore they don't.

**Chip Hamer**



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Bengali  
East End  
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