

# Bakery taken over, but it'll keep its well known name

A HISTORIC North-east bakery will keep its name despite a takeover by another firm.

Family bakery Murdoch Allan, based in Hatton, has announced plans to expand by taking over Thain's Bakery.

But bosses at Murdoch Allan said Thain's, which has its base in George Street in Aberdeen, will not be lost and will retain its name, while current owners Graeme and Allan Thain will remain in the business.

Murdoch Allan is managed by third-generation craft baker Paul Allan and his wife Katrina.

**By Adele Merson**

Managing director Paul said it was a "particularly exciting" time, as his grandfather, James Allan, made his first steps in the baking world with an apprenticeship at one of the brands belonging to Thain's.

Paul said: "My grandfather was the first baker in the family.

"He served his apprenticeship at Cummings of Tarves, which was one of the constituent brands of the Thain's company.

"I was brought up with baking from a very young age.

"I was always running in and out of the bakery when I was younger.

"It becomes a part of you."

Thain's is a well-known name in Aberdeen with their late night shop drawing crowds of party-goers after a night on the town.

It is also renowned for producing the 'veggie rowie'.

The bakery was established by Graeme and Allan's father, the late Jack Thain, and his wife Ilene.

The brothers took over the business when Jack died suddenly while playing golf at the Deeside Golf Club in 1988.

The business has been expanded by

his sons to become one of the largest bakeries in Aberdeen.

The brothers have acquired various businesses including Duncan's Bakery in St Machar Road in March 1995 which is now one of the units used to produce its wide range of bakery products.

Thain's also ran Cummings of Tarves and the Aberdeen Buttery Company.

These companies are included in the takeover.

Jack moved into the George Street shop in 1965 after his first premises in West North Street had to be demolished.

## Brothers welcomed the move

The George Street shop is open round the clock at weekends and is famed for its pies, including macaroni and stovies.

The firm currently employs 50 people.

Graeme Thain said they welcomed the move which he said would bring "youth and enthusiasm" to the company.

He added: "My dad started off with a bakery in West North Street, where Morrisons now is.

"It had to be knocked down to make way for the dual carriageway there in 1965.

"At that point he moved



**ROLLS:** Graeme Thain with some of the firm's rowies.

on to George Street, where we remain."

Murdoch Allan bakery started in 1991 when Paul's parents Murdoch and Caroline Allan bought Reid's bakery in Cross Street, Fraserburgh.

Paul joined the team fresh from bakery college in Aberdeen at the same time.

Paul said: "We bought Robb's bakery in Strichen and also started supplying corner shops and independent shopkeepers."

Now Murdoch Allan employs more than 100 people, and Thain's employs around 50.

In 2002, with the long-established Simmers



**EARLY YEARS:** A young Paul Allan with his grandfather James.



**EXPANSION:** Paul Allan, MD of Murdoch Allan at the Hatton bakery, and inset, Thain's on George Street, Aberdeen.



**LOOK BACK:** The Riding of the Marches ceremonial 'douping' for Jack Thain, First Master, Bakers' Incorporation, at Trinity Cemetery, Aberdeen.

factory in Hatton due saw turnover treble for closure by a overnight and safe- United Biscuits, a guarded local jobs.

deal was struck with the help of then local MP Alex Salmond and local councillors for Murdoch Allan to take over the factory and maintain production in the village.



**FOUNDER:**  
Jack Thain.

Murdoch Allan now operates six retail outlets in the North-east offering fresh bakery goods and takeaway meals.

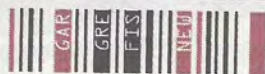
Paul said the takeover "most definitely" would be a positive

step for the companies.

He said: "There's a real skill in the workforce of Thain's Bakery. The George Street shop is iconic and their pies are well loved in the North-east."

"For the future we're just looking at building up the business."

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