



SCOTLAND  
THE **BREAD**  
Home-grown bread for a healthy future

## Bread for Good Community Benefit Society Annual General Meeting

Sunday June 14th, 2020 at 10.30 am  
(online)

### **Honorary Chairman's Report for the year 2019**

Writing about the previous financial year to present to an Annual General Meeting six months later always feels a little like describing a bygone era. This year that is painfully true. BC (Before Covid) is ancient history, so changed is the world from which this report is being written. But it is, I hope, none the less interesting as a measure of our progress in the year 2019.

The aims and intentions we set out for 2019 were:

- get our flour sales up to break-even level (400+ kg per week) as soon as possible (from about 150 kg at the end of 2018)
- sow our spring wheats on about 8 hectares, and harvest about 60 tonnes of winter and spring wheat later in the year
- continue our research into and testing of nutrient-dense diverse grains
- develop our Soil to Slice community growing/baking work with new collaborations round Scotland
- and, perhaps most importantly, raise the money to do all the above: without significant core funding, we will inevitably take longer to become the significant agents of change that we want to be.

A brief update on each of these points:

- By the end of 2019 we had exceeded the target of 400 kg of flour per week and had successfully sold excess milling wheat to E5 Bakehouse in London.
- We didn't sow any spring wheat, reckoning that the 33 tonnes or so of (dried and cleaned) winter wheat that was harvested in August 2019 would see us through.
- These wheats (including our new 'Balcaskie Landrace') were tested for minerals at the James Hutton Institute in February 2020. [A full analysis is available on our website](#). Some sample increases over typical commercial wheats: 205% manganese; 186% zinc; 140% magnesium; 202% copper. More on the Balcaskie Landrace below.
- We worked with 9 Soil to Slice community growing groups, some of whom were able to bring grain to our annual threshing event (in this case at Blackhaugh Community Farm in Perthshire) and participate in our second 'People's Plant Breeding' grain selection workshop in September.

- Funding from The Network for Social Change (£15,000) supported our general work while we pursued larger core funding applications, though without success in 2019.

## Notable Activity

In July we added a large hopper and bin to enable our Zentrofan mill to mill 125 kg (instead of 25 kg) in one batch unattended. Although this made a big difference to our efficiency, we are still hampered by some unexpected consequences of working at intermediate scale and with a farm (Balcaskie) in transition from commodity production to organic, e.g. the presence of bean fragments in our wheat. These come from 'volunteer' plants from the previous year in an organic rotation and, while desirable from an agronomic and nutritional perspective, have a tendency to block our mill. We need medium-scale grain cleaning technology that can remove everything from our crop except clean, whole wheat or rye.

Our new website launched in September 2019. The new site has a better layout and up-to-date information, with an enhanced shop including (since October 2019) a selection of baking-related merchandise formerly sold by Bread Matters Ltd. Online turnover increased significantly in line with expectations, as customers added books, sourdough starters or proving baskets to their flour orders and spread the shipping cost over larger purchases. Nutritional analysis information of our grains and flour is also more easily accessible on the new website.

One of the year's most significant developments was the emergence of our Balcaskie Landrace wheat. A landrace is a genetically diverse population that adapts to a locality (geographically, biologically and culturally) over time through natural evolution and farmer selection. Ours is an early-stage 'modern landrace' formed by mixing three historic Scottish varieties (Rouge d'Ecosse, Golden Drop and Hunters), growing them together and then sowing the resulting seed. We will add other diverse population wheats, probably from Scandinavia, into the mix in due course.

We had to wait until April 2020 to launch the Balcaskie Landrace flour due to another unintended consequence of our commitment to a grain chain that is radically better for people and the living world – in this case, drying our small parcels of grain on a typical farm dryer designed to process thousands of tonnes. Fortunately, an aroma that some people could detect in the flour (probably from the dryer) did not make it 'non-compliant' with the regulations (according to the Public Analyst who tested both grain and flour). Another lesson learned along the rocky road to system change.

## Campaigns

For the second year running, the overall winner of the **Scottish Bread Championship** (June 2019) triumphed with a loaf made from Scotland The Bread's heritage flour.

Our celebration of **Real Bread Week** took the form of a challenge to 'Bake Two, Share One' in the last week of February.

We also participated in Nourish Scotland's annual conference on 21-22 November. As a Nourish member, Scotland The Bread has been involved in campaigning for Nourish's Good Food Nation bill.

Scotland The Bread was well represented at **Common Grains**, which took place on November 24th at Bowhouse in Fife. The event was described by the organiser Rosie Gray as 'a Scottish Grain Revolution connecting crofters, farmers, millers, brewers, bakers and scientists', 55 of whom gathered to discuss such themes as Real Quality, Cereal Intercropping, Protecting the Artisan and Diversity Pays (in Crofting).

## Team Updates

We welcomed our Honorary Treasurer Kate Anstruther to the board of directors in July, and Colin Gordon in January 2020. We will bid goodbye to Christine Lewis who is stepping down as Honorary Secretary at the AGM, and extend our grateful thanks for all her work and support during the two years she has held the role.

Assistant Miller Clément Boucherit joined the milling team part-time in May 2019, alongside running his own business [Langoustine the Box](#). We are also grateful for regular help at our Bowhouse market stalls from Robert Campbell, Christopher Trotter, Mary Gifford and several other members.

## Current year developments

Everything changed, of course, in mid March. Demand for flour, yeast, sourdough starters and baking equipment exploded and we had to close the online shop while Connie and her team caught up. Sales of £33,599 in Jan-Apr 2020 were over four times the same period last year.

The Covid-19-related groundswell of interest in bread-making and flour is one we hope will live on post-lockdown, and we are doing our best throughout it to support community breadmaking groups and further the aims of our community benefit society. In the weeks since lockdown began, we have worked to establish a routine that allows us to fulfil our various aims of supplying retail and wholesale customers, keeping our milling and despatch team safe, and offering some priority benefits to our members and subscriber-supporters.

Scotland The Bread is working with Nourish Scotland on 'Baking in the Community', a programme bringing together community bakeries, baking projects and groups with the aim of improving access to nutritious and locally baked bread for people living in areas of multiple deprivation. This will be extended later in 2020 thanks to some funding from InnovateUK for our **Flour to the People** project. We have also been successful in getting a National Lottery Community Fund grant to support more **Soil to Slice** work from the autumn.