



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

Bread For Good Community Benefit Society Annual Report 1 January - 31 December 2023

*Photo: 100% Balcaskie Landrace
sourdough with linseeds, made by Mark
James*

BALCASKIE

**Bread For Good Community Benefit Society,
trading as Scotland The Bread**

01333 730625

info@scotlandthebread.org

FB: @ScotlandTheBread

IG: @scotlandthebread

T: @scotlandbread

Unit 8, The Bowhouse

St Monan's

Anstruther

Fife

KY10 2FB

The Board

Kate Anstruther

Louisa Cocris

Paul Durrant

Dr. Clare Fennell

Sinéad Fortune

Paul Hooper (Honorary Secretary)

Duncan McArthur

Alison Ramcharran

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scotlandthebread.org

A registered charity (SC048892)

A community benefit society (FCA registration # RS007315)

INTRODUCTION

Andrew Whitley, Honorary Chair and Co-founder of the Bread for Good Community Benefit Society (Scotland The Bread)

Why do we bother?

This may seem an abrupt way to introduce our 2023 report. But in the thick of an election campaign that's given off more than a whiff of manipulated despair, it's a question on many a lip. I'll answer my own question with another, borrowed from *ARISE! Songs & Stories for the Bread Revolution* (performed at the Scottish Festival of Real Bread at Bowhouse in February 2024) that springs from a widespread sense that something's wrong and not enough is being done to fix it:

'What price our right to healthy food when we're stuck with UPF?'

Industrial white bread is, among its many questionable attributes, the 'original' Ultra-Processed Food. Co-creating a food system where the right to food means that everyone has equal access to bread that's truly better – for our soils, our stomachs and our society – is Scotland The Bread's mission. Through our membership of Nourish Scotland, we played a very small part in the collective effort to get a Good Food Nation Act through the Scottish Parliament. Implementation is crucial, of course, if we are all to be empowered to 'unstick' ourselves.

Real change requires more than 'reformulation' (taking some sugar, salt or fat out of ultra-processed products) or a little corporate 'greenwashing' (including ill-defined allusions to 'regenerative' methods). It won't happen without both an upsurge of community indignation at what we've been forced to swallow for so many generations and the materials and know-how to take culture change into our own hands. This is what we do.

Bread and Circuses

The inaugural Scottish Festival of Real Bread at Bowhouse in February 2023 and our joint curation (with Fife-based Scottish Food Guide) of the Scottish Bread Championship are designed to raise awareness of these issues while championing the people who are bringing real bread to their communities.

Means and Ends

Scotland The Bread doesn't just research and mill organic wheat and rye grain into wholemeal flour with above-average nutrient content. With very limited resources, we are out there communicating the science and the stories of bread adulteration while sharing practical, delicious alternatives.

In 2023, The People's Bread project defined a simple, evidence-based standard for what our daily bread would be if we all had the right to whole and minimally-processed foods. This requires a 'culture change' – and it begins with the simple fermentation of flour and water into what is sometimes known as a 'sourdough'. It thrives when human hands are involved. By sharing the flour and the skills to turn it into the best bread, Scotland The Bread is both modelling a way of 'getting to scale' that respects biological limits and defining a new community standard for healthy nutrition that merits support as part of the Good Food Nation process.

Looking ahead

Previous annual reports have mentioned the Fife Fermenter – a plan for a new operational incarnation of Scotland The Bread in old farm buildings across the fields from our current base at Bowhouse. We spent 2023 working with the architects on the overall design and gathering evidence of community need for a major project such as this. We are now nearing the stage of applying for planning permission and beginning fundraising in earnest. We'll share more news in due course in our bi-monthly newsletter.

All of the above (and our plans for the future) wouldn't be possible without the enormous effort put in by our trustees and volunteers. I thank them all and invite others to join us.



THE TARGET:

By 2030, double the amount of grain grown for food in Scotland to support achieving the Scottish Dietary Goals from local production

Why this target?

Grains are the foundation of Scottish diets, yet we have little data on the amount of grain grown for direct human consumption in Scotland. It is estimated that most grain grown is for livestock feed or distilling, not for processing into flours and other edible grain-based ingredients.

The government established the Scottish Dietary Goals in 1996 to describe a diet that will improve the health of people in Scotland. Since then, there has been little or no progress towards achieving the goals.

For locally produced grains to support people in Scotland achieving the Scottish Dietary Goals, the grains should be:

- 1 Consumed as whole grains to increase fibre intake
- 2 Minimally processed with few additives to decrease free (added) sugar, salt, and saturated fat intake
- 3 Minimise quantities distilled into alcohol
- 4 Reduce quantities fed to livestock to decrease red and processed meat consumption

THE MISSING DATA

In order to achieve the target of doubling production of Scottish grains that contribute to healthy diets, we must first establish the amount of grain grown

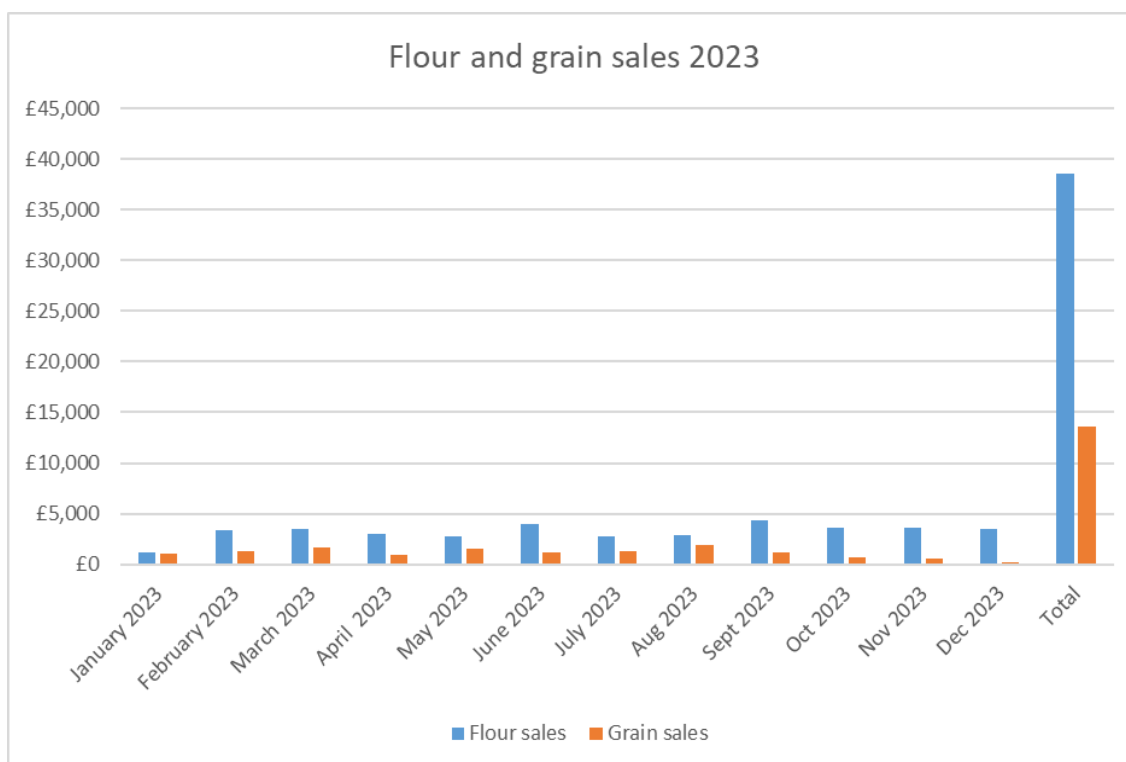
- At present, data are not publicly available on the amount of Scottish grain contributing directly to diets as edible foods
- Such data are necessary to coordinate efforts to increase Scottish grain production in order to support the Scottish Dietary Goals

TREASURER'S REPORT

Martin Sherring

Headlines from 2023:

- Flour and grain sales in 2023 were £52,262, up from £46,020 in 2022 but still well below the 2021 figure of £72,051 – which reflected the surge in home-baking during the Covid pandemic and a one-off opportunity to supply significant quantities of grain to a London bakery.
- Within these total figures, grain sales fell in 2023, but this was more than compensated for by a 33% increase in the value of flour sales. It was also gratifying to see a 26% growth in the volume of flour sold.



- Despite this increase in sales revenue, we recorded a loss of £5,341 on our unrestricted activities, compared with a corresponding surplus of £9,214 in 2022. The 2022 result was heavily influenced by donations of £25,454, largely arising from a crowdfunder campaign.
- There was a £5,370 surplus on our restricted funds. This represents a net surplus from grants for specific projects, and will reverse as the projects are implemented in the current year.
- We received £2,250 in share capital compared with £2,300 in 2022. Membership is vitally important to us, both in bringing in cash to support our work and in demonstrating the wide support we enjoy.
- High inflation in recent months has led to increased costs and in a competitive environment we have been unable to pass these on completely. Grant funding is also stretched, making it harder for us to secure funding for our charitable activities. We are encouraged to see our flour sales rising, but recognise that these factors mean that the outlook remains challenging.
- The accounts do not recognise the essential work carried out by volunteers who contribute in many ways - helping with market stalls, participating in our trial plots and acting as trustees. We are very grateful to them for their efforts.

FLOUR AND GRAIN SOLD

Flour sold (kg)

	2022	2023	2024
January	1,198	694	1,888
February	1,875	2,541	2,135
March	2,279	1,951	2,626
April	2,770	1,979	2,792
May	1,316	1,809	2,645
June	1,929	2,681	
July	871	1,846	
August	1,616	1,872	
September	1,388	2,599	
October	1,591	2,407	
November	1,523	2,469	
December	1,572	2,319	
Totals	19,927	25,164	12,086



COMMUNITY ACTION

Lyndsay Cochrane, Project Coordinator

Note: the following update is from last year's report—we rather jumped the gun by including it then as the work was completed in 2023...

The People's Bread

The People's Bread is a tangible product of our belief that everyone should have access to nutritious bread, as of right.

Funded by Rural Life Development Fund and carried out between January and March 2023, this project saw us develop a template for creating delicious healthy bread, guaranteed to benefit both people and planet and made available and accessible to all. Rather than prescribing a specific recipe, our guidelines were designed to provide bakers with the flexibility and inspiration to create their own nutritious breads based on their community's tastes, culture and needs.

We partnered with baker Ivy Kong to hold a 'Train the Trainer' workshop for local food organisations. This event aimed to share The People's Bread concept with community leaders, chefs and bakers, along with breadmaking skills and the confidence to share these with community members.

As well as plenty of hands-on baking, this event involved time for discussion of how to bring The People's Bread into regular activities, barriers to access and ways of overcoming these.

Participants had lots of exciting plans which we hope to support in-person as well as through materials - including a [toolkit and infographic posters](#) - designed as part of the project.

It became clear during this workshop and from feedback that the opportunity to network with other local food organisations was as beneficial as the hands-on learning, with neighbouring projects planning to work together and share resources.



Feedback from the session

It became clear during this workshop and from feedback that the opportunity to network with other local food organisations was as beneficial as the hands-on learning, with neighbouring projects planning to work together and share resources.



"The hands-on session was very informative, lots of hints and tips. The time to chat and exchange ideas and experience was very useful."

"I would love to establish breadmaking workshops in the local communities for individuals and families. I am also keen to explore the idea of community bread clubs. I want to include info on the bread system in all of the above."

"I absolutely loved the workshop. It was fantastic to be part of a group who are all so enthusiastic about bringing bread-making skills back to the community."

"I cut my square loaf this morning and it was delicious, a really lovely way to start the day. My 3-year-old loved it too. the wholemeal flour has such a nutty yet light flavour!"

Funding setbacks limited our ability to run a bigger programme of workshops later in 2023 but that remains our ambition. We've created the toolkit, we mill the flour, the community bakers are ready to go.

Images taken from The People's Bread Toolkit

The Wheat Family Tree

Different types of grains

Wheat

Einkorn (*Triticum monococcum*)
This name comes from a German root meaning 'one grain' and refers to the fact that one grain grows per spikelet. It is the oldest domesticated form of wheat.

Emmer (*Triticum dicoccum*)
Also known as farro, emmer was first domesticated in the Southern Fertile Crescent. It was cultivated in the ancient civilizations of the Middle East and Europe and was particularly popular in Egypt, being used to make flatbreads and beer.

Spelt (*Triticum spelta*)
Evidence of spelt grains have been found in the Caucasus region and Southeastern Europe, dating to the 6th Century BCE. From there it spread throughout the Balkans and Europe and is now grown primarily in Germany and Switzerland. It has a lower gluten content than bread wheat, meaning that it will produce a denser bread.

Bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*)
The most widely grown wheat. It is able to adapt to either winter or spring planting, giving rise to thousands of varieties grown in diverse climates.

Durum (*Triticum durum*)
Evolved from emmer, with a name meaning 'hard'. It is high in protein but low in gluten, making it most suitable for noodles, pasta, flatbreads, bulgur and couscous.

Khorasan (*Triticum turanicum*)
Named after the province in Iran where it originated, it has been trademarked as 'Kamut' in the US. It contains high levels of protein and is nutritionally superior to bread wheat.

Rye (*Secale cereale*)

Previously regarded as a weed within fields of wheat or barley, rye was often called the 'poverty grain' because of its ability to grow better than other cereals on poor soils. It copes well in cool and wet conditions, so it thrived in Scandinavia, Russia and Eastern Europe where it became a predominant bread grain. Thinner and taller than wheat, it has more narrow and pointed grains.

Rye flour contains less gluten than wheat (though is still unsuitable for those with coeliac disease) so bread made with it will not rise much. It is rich instead in complex sugars called 'pentosans', which contribute to its ability to absorb lots of water. It is best to use sourdough if making bread with rye flour, as the acids will counteract the effects of high enzyme activity normal to this flour, as well as creating better flavour.

Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*)

The principle cereal grain for breadmaking in Southern Europe until the late fifteenth century, this grain featured as food or drink within many important civilizations. An incredibly adaptable crop, it can grow across a wide range of environments from the hot dry climate of Ethiopia to the cold and wet islands of Orkney.

It has a low gluten content and moderate protein, with the highest level of fibre of all whole grains containing beta-glucan that is important for heart health. Despite its excellent nutritional qualities, barley is today more often used for animal feed and malting for beer than for direct human consumption. To prepare barley for the latter requires a complex dehulling process due to the tight hulls on each barley grain (except in the case of 'naked', or 'hulless', barley).

Soil to Slice

We welcomed lots of new groups to our Soil to Slice network in 2023, from up in Tain, across to the islands of Coll, Arran and Orkney, and down to Hawick in the Borders. There are now 42 groups across Scotland growing grain in their communities.

Harvest time was an inspiring example of the range of projects now in action:



Forres Friends of Woods & Fields (pictured) lined up a healthy crop of wheat and rye which they enjoyed threshing, winnowing and milling with a stone quern at their open day, accompanied by delicious bread from local baker Bruntlands Bread.

Many hands made light work of harvesting the wheat grown at Lauriston Farm where workers were rewarded for their efforts with a beautiful lammas loaf baked by Mahala le May.

Children at Little Beehive Nursery schools across Fife and Angus loved getting hands-on with their wheat. They particularly excelled at any task that involved making a lot of noise (or mess) and are very excited to make scones with their flour!



Granton Community Gardeners found uses for the long straw of their Rouge d'Ecosse wheat at a basket-weaving workshop (left).

Windy days were a great help for Grow73 as they hand-threshed and winnowed their first and very successful crop of wheat.

Here at Scotland The Bread we were very grateful for help harvesting our own trial plot. The less-than-fertile ground produced a smaller crop than hoped, but we were delighted to discover some resilient self-sown

Shirreff's wheat from the previous season.

For threshing events in October we dusted off our crowd-funded Alvan Blanch thresher to help process the larger crops grown by members of the Soil to Slice network. Joe from St Paul's Youth Forum brought along a healthy harvest of Balcaskie Landrace winter wheat which has been growing and adapting to the climate in north-east Glasgow since 2020, while Tom and Toby arrived with a carful of Rouge d'Ecosse wheat sown on Granton street corners and at Lauriston Farm. It was fascinating to examine the baking qualities that could be observed in the threshed grain and particularly to note differences between two crops of the same variety grown just a short distance apart in Edinburgh.



SCOTTISH REAL BREAD FESTIVAL

Another first for Scotland The Bread! On Saturday February 25th we put on the inaugural Scottish Real Bread Festival at Bowhouse (re-named the Scottish Festival of Real Bread this year). With a small grant from the Fife Strategic Events Fund, too little time, too few people but plenty of ambition, our little 'starter' definitely rose to expectations. We'd hoped for 500 visitors and got over 800. The communal bread stall, featuring some of the best Real Bread bakers in Scotland, sold out quickly, was re-supplied in the middle of the day and sold out again. Stallholders had a good day. There was a real buzz of interest in the mix of talks, demonstrations and events.

The Scottish Bread Championship (co-founders: [Scottish Food Guide](#) and Scotland The Bread in 2017) had been judged on Feb 23rd and we were delighted that the main winners were presented with their certificates by Mairi Gougeon, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Islands.



A lively discussion on the main stage began with Chris Young, Coordinator of the UK-wide [Real Bread Campaign](#), demanding “we’ve a right to know what’s in our dough”. He recounted the Campaign’s 14-year struggle to reveal what’s hidden in industrial loaves and lamented the resistance (from both industry and government) to an ‘[Honest Crust Act](#)’ that would respect

our right to healthy bread. Professors Lindsay Jaacks (Edinburgh University) and Wendy Russell (The Rowett Institute, Aberdeen) detailed the lamentable state of the Scottish diet (and the negligible progress towards the Dietary Goals set in 1996) while lifting our spirits with news of initiatives to change grain and bread for the better in Scotland. Storyteller Neel Paul from Bengal reminded us how we might learn from the lived experience of New Scots in confronting a food system based on low price and convenience, where misleading marketing so often frustrates community truth-telling.

The stand-out ‘side-show’ was the Big Thrash. Children of all ages were invited to thresh some grain and hand-grind it into flour before looking at our Zentrofan mills and hearing how they work from Clément our Head Miller. Miller-Manager Connie was on maternity leave but very present in ‘[Celebrating Scottish Grain](#)’, the film she produced that was premiered during the Festival.

It’s always a good sign when people leave a ‘first’ event asking “will you be doing this again?” We did...

SCOTTISH BREAD CHAMPIONSHIP

The Scottish Bread Championship is the UK's only competition exclusively celebrating Real Bread. It is run by Wendy Barrie of the Scottish Food Guide, who co-founded the annual event in 2018 with our chair and awards convenor Andrew Whitley. The 2023 competition was judged on the 22nd June, and we received a record number of entries from three dozen bakers submitting 138 entries – more than double previous years – from Perthshire, Moray, Lothians, Aberdeenshire, Deeside, Glasgow, Argyll, Trossachs, Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty & Fife. The award ceremony was held during the Scottish Real Bread Festival, and this year saw the Supreme Champion award going to Company Bakery for their New York Rye Sourdough, and Reserve Champion to The Culinary Kiwi Bird for their Beremeal Boule. There was also a particularly impressive silver award for Comrie Primary School for their Shaky Toon Loaf.



Children from Comrie Primary School with Mairi Gougeon, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Islands.

Photo credit: Chris Young

www.realbreadcampaign.org

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The Awards and Festival were held in February to coincide with Real Bread Week, and are a

showcase for the world-class quality and diversity of bread-making and ingredients available in Scotland. Our thanks go to Wendy Barrie for her tireless work in coordinating and making this event happen, to Douglas Scott for his invaluable assistance on the day, and to our sponsor the [Edinburgh Bakers Trust](#).

The judging panel, photo credit Douglas Scott. L-R: Neel Paul, writer; Andrew Whitley, STB and awards convenor; Professor Lindsay Jaacks, University of Edinburgh; Walter Mowat, Slow Food Scotland; Professor Wendy Russell, Rowett Institute; Neil Forbes, Chef Director Café St Honore; Elizabeth Drummond Young, Edinburgh Bakers Trust; Chris Young, Real Bread Campaign Co-ordinator; Wendy Barrie, Scottish Food Guide. Not pictured: Anna Chworow, Nourish



SOLIDARITY BAGS

Scotland The Bread coordinates the free supply to community bakeries and food programmes of 'Solidarity Bags' of nutrient-dense, organic wholemeal wheat flour.



Photo: Bread Therapy at Increased Access to Psychological Support

Over 2023, 372kg of tasty, nutrient-dense organic wholemeal Solidarity Flour reached community food hubs and bakeries thanks to you, our community. This brings the total to over two tonnes since the scheme started.

The bags are paid for by our customers and delivered by us to community bakeries and organisations working to ensure equitable access to nutritious bread and flour.

The flour headed off across Scotland to groups including Bere Peninsula Foodbank, Breaducation for Kids, Summerhill Community Centre, Greener Kirkcaldy, Crail Community Food Larder and Culross Stables Community Hub. We have some solidarity stories illustrating what this looks like in practice [on our blog here](#).

We devised the Solidarity Bag concept in response to the critical shortage of flour during the first Covid-19 lockdown, but the problem of affordable flour that supports both personal and

environmental health is not one that dates back to March 2020. Affordability is an oft-cited barrier to swapping sliced white for slowly fermented sourdough, but we reject the idea that people on low incomes must be resigned to eating industrially produced 'bread' devoid of nutritional value.

Our Solidarity Flour fund is in deficit. We need your help to put it back in the black so that we can go on introducing people to a better way of baking at little or no initial cost. It's not philanthropy or virtue signalling – just a community coming together to help each other in times of need.

Next time you order Scotland The Bread flour – or even if you don't – please think about chipping in a bag (or the cash) to support this small piece of 'companionship' (which is how we like to think of food system change). [You can do that here](#).

Scotland The Bread will then organise and pay for delivery of the flour, which is then distributed among community members by the bakeries either as flour or bread.

If you are part of a community bakery, organisation or project that could benefit from a free delivery of flour [please fill in our online request form](#).

Thanks to all our members for your continued support.

2022 AT THE MILL

Head Miller Clement Boucherit

Last year I took over from Connie as she was leaving on maternity leave. Helped by Liz, I have been managing the mill since. I was quickly put into the thick of it with the first Real Bread Festival, held at Bowhouse, which saw me running frantically between the mill and the main hall to re-supply our stall due to a high interest in our flour!

In July 2023 we switched to the Balcaskie Landrace harvested in 2022, with a marked improvement in breadmaking quality confirmed by Andrew. We are very hopeful that the 2023 harvest will see another improvement when we start milling it later this year. The mill setup (grain stored in big bins and passed through a polisher before being sent next door for milling thanks to an auger system) is proving more efficient to operate and improve grain cleanliness. Some changes are being made this year to improve grain cleanliness even further.

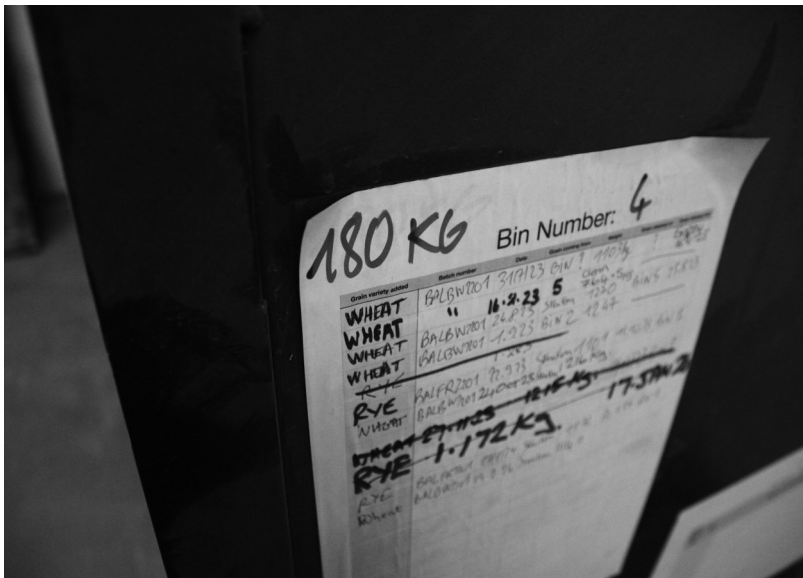


Photo: Chris

Young / www.realbreadcampaign.org published under Creative Commons license CC-BY-SA -NC-4.0 Find out more at: www.sustainweb.org/news/feb24-scottish-festival-of-real-bread-and-championship/

Overall in 2023 we milled and sold 25.2 tons of flour and 15.4 tons of grain. Compared to 2022, we have managed to increase by 5.3 tons our flour sales. The sharp decline in grain sales (down 8.2 tons from last year) is mostly due to our main client for wholesale grain stopping their regular orders while moving their business to new premises.

Wholesale is our most important sales outlet with 82% of the flour and 94% of the grain sold this way, 75% sold through Greencity. The price list finalised in 2022 to better

display our price and shipping conditions has played a role in increasing the number of wholesale clients, even if lots of them now find it more economical to order through Greencity, especially for small quantities (hence the big increase, compared to 2022, in Greencity's orders size and frequency).

2023 sales figures for our online shop are quite similar to 2022 (up £1000). We sold 10% of our flour through the website (and 6% of our grain). Some new products have appeared, like a very nice ceramic bread dome. Overall, we sell online much more non-flour/grain items like books, baking equipment, breadmaking courses, etc (74% of online sales value) than flour and grain (26%).

We are also present at Bowhouse monthly markets and, while we do not sell a lot overall this way (8% of our flour in 2023, and most of market takings come from the sale of books and baking equipment), they are always an opportunity to meet new people, interest new clients, make connections and talk about bread, flour and all that we do at Bread For Good.

GET INVOLVED

Is it Time to Renew Your Subscription?

Shareholder-members of the Bread For Good Community Benefit Society (which trades as Scotland The Bread) automatically receive one year's free subscription, normally £30, with their share purchase. Subscriptions entitle supporters to a 15% discount on flour and grain from our online shop or at occasional markets, as well as exclusive newsletters, invitations and access to events. If yours has expired, **renew on our website [here](#)** to continue receiving both your supporter benefits and our grateful appreciation!

Membership

[Become a member](#) by buying shares with the option to be actively involved with Bread For Good.

Supporters

[Become a supporter](#) to be the first to know about events, and products as soon as they are available.

Soil to Slice

Set up a citizen science grain-growing group with [Soil to Slice](#).

The People's Bread

[Explore our toolkit](#) to develop your own People's Bread recipe—[email us](#) the result to share.

Volunteer

Local to Fife? [Let us know](#) if you can help on our Bowhouse Food & Drink Market stall, or with maintaining our grain test plots.

Keep in Touch

Sign up to receive our bi-monthly [newsletter](#).

[Instagram](#) / [Facebook](#)

[Donations](#) to support our work are welcome and help us to do more. Thank you for your contribution.

MEDIA OF THE YEAR

A selection of the year's coverage. Head to the [media page](#) of our website for the full list, and [our blog](#) for more stories and recipes from ourselves and contributors.

JANUARY—MARCH

The Scottish Bread Championships and the Scottish Real Bread Festival are covered by a number of outlets, including [Scots Radio](#)'s audio coverage of the Festival.

FEBRUARY

Miller-Manager Connie showed Edith Bowman around the mill for an episode of Food Fest Scotland on BBC One Scotland.

MARCH

Jenny Jefferies' blog in the [Farmers Guardian](#) highlights Real Bread Week, featuring a recipe by STB Honorary Chairman Andrew Whitley.

MAY

'Currently Scotland grows very little grain which is destined for baking – Andrew and Sam are seeking to change that.' BBC Radio 4's ['On Your Farm'](#) programme features Andrew Whitley and Balcaskie Estate Manager Sam Parsons.

JUNE

[Family blog](#) features one of our Soil to Slice groups on growing wheat with pre-schoolers.

SEPTEMBER

STB Hon. Chair Andrew Whitley is quoted in Waitrose Magazine's Sourdough September profile. Pages [one](#), [two](#) and [three](#).

OCTOBER

[The Quintessential Review](#) covers the premiere of *Arise!* at the Scottish International Storytelling Centre.