



Left, Daisy the Labrador, who was stolen in 2017, is reunited with owner Rita

Tears flow as couple reunited with dog seven years on

A COUPLE who never gave up hope after their dog was stolen more than seven years ago said it is a “dream come true” after the RSPCA reunited them.

Rita and Philip Potter from Norfolk said they “never gave up hope on her being found one day” after their beloved pet Daisy the Labrador was stolen from their garden in November 2017.

The theft sparked social media appeals and a petition urging the government to do more to tackle pet theft.

Daisy, now 13-years-old, was discovered more than 200 miles away by Kim Walters, an RSPCA inspector who carried out routine investigations in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset on February 2 and found the Labrador with untreated mammary masses.

The inspector took Daisy to

a vet and checked her microchip where she found contact details for Mr and Mrs Potter.

The couple struggled to hold back tears after Daisy was returned to her former home in Old Buckenham on Thursday. Mrs Potter, 80, said she and her husband are “so, so grateful”, adding their pet will now be given “lots of love and attention”.

“We kept a photograph on the mantelpiece and would look at it every day thinking of her and where she might be. So it is an absolute dream come true that the RSPCA found her and have returned her to us - where she belongs - we are so, so grateful,” she said.

“We know she is elderly now and has health issues but whatever time she has left she will now be surrounded by lots of love and attention.”

Major outage hits Playstation gamers

A major outage of Sony's PlayStation Network (PSN) yesterday left tens of thousands of gamers unable to access online services, stores and multimedia apps.

“We are aware some users might be currently experiencing issues with PSN,” PlayStation said on its social media platforms, confirming users' mounting complaints around the globe.

Reports of connectivity issues spread quickly

across social media, with users frustrated by error messages and log-in failures.

“PSN down on a Friday night is criminal,” a London-based user named Ramos wrote on X.

According to the Downtetector outage tracking site, users started to report issues with PSN late on Friday.

Shortly after, Sony responded to users' concerns, confirming the problems.

INSIGHT

By Sandra Dick

AT a primary school in Perthshire, the school day begins with the scent of freshly baked bread drifting through the corridors.

Every morning, groups of pupils take turns kneading dough, shaping loaves, and baking bread as part of a unique hands-on learning experience.

Dubbed ‘Breaducation,’ the pupils at Comrie Primary School learn how to make real bread but and where their food comes from, fostering an appreciation for locally grown Scottish grains and traditional baking methods.

The project, supported by The Edinburgh Bakers' charitable trust, has led to the ‘Shaky Toon Loaf,’ a recipe developed by the children alongside baker John Castley of Wild Hearth Bakery, a sourdough specialist operating from the unlikely setting of a former Second World War prisoner of war camp.

The learning doesn't stop at baking - the children have grown small patches of their own wheat and barley at the school, at community allotments and Tomnah'a Organic Market Garden in Comrie.

Once harvested, they've threshed and winnowed it, using a borrowed threshing machine, with delightfully messy results.

“Every child had a sheaf of wheat that they had been growing,” says John, whose links with the school now span several years and have included supplying it twice weekly with free sourdough bread for children's lunches and snacks.

“They harvested it and put it through the thresher and watched the grain getting separated from the straw. The straw gets blown out the back, and the kids were running around, throwing straw at each other.”

Their yield of three types of wheat came to 14kg, enough to make 80 loaves when combined with flour grown and milled in East Lothian at Mungoswell Farm.

With a micro-bakery and bread oven set up within the school, the aim is that by Primary Seven every child in the school should be capable of producing a loaf of bread and understand the basic nutritional benefits of creating a product from scratch.

Fermentation

AT the same time, they learn of sustainable agriculture and nutrition, the science of fermentation, mathematics applied to scaling and mixing the dough, responsibility, teamwork, and task management.

“Currently all our nursery and school children bake bread every morning. This is done on a rota basis so that every month every child has a chance to make bread once,” says Heather White, the school's headteacher.

“The bread is then used to support nursery snack, soft starts and provide children who may have forgotten snack with a healthy and nutritious option.

“We also bake enough bread that this is offered as part of lunch instead of the white bread offer from Tayside contracts.

“On a Thursday we do a Big Bake. Our families can order loaves of bread and then “pay what they can afford,” and we deliver these to the families on a Friday.”



A new era of flour power Scots bakers are a rising force with new rollout of lessons

A growing number of grassroots projects are helping to reshape how young people think about bread, reviving traditional grains and, ultimately, securing a better quality product for the future



Left, Comrie Primary School pupils get messy as they learn how to make their own bread

and has inspired other similar groups including 'Bread Club' in Whithorn. Like Comrie Primary School, the group sources organic flour from Mungoswells Farm in East Lothian, and wholemeal flour from Scotland The Bread, the Fife-based social enterprise that grows and mills its own grain.

There, wheat varieties are chosen for their ability to thrive in Scottish soil and climate, bringing biodiversity back into farming while producing flour with superior nutrition and flavour.

According to Liz, at Doughlicious, it's not just about the bread. "We call ourselves a community group," says Liz. "We're reducing social isolation, helping people make new friends. Our ethos is nurture, enrich, flourish—it's a very kind, friendly place."

It is also nurturing the next generation of bakers: it works with local children - a gala day saw Doughlicious provide 200 pizzas, giving children the chance to get hands on and learn about flour and dough.

The group has even secured a small mill to show how pots of wheat grown locally become flour.

Ukrainians

MEANWHILE, its sessions tailored for Ukrainian refugees, providing both skills and connection, have been described as a "lifeline."

At Cultybraggan Camp in Perthshire, the former WWII prisoner-of-war site turned community space, John's Wild Hearth Bakery is also on a mission to create better bread using only organic flour and long, slow fermentation.

Originally from Australia, he quit his IT career for baking. What began with just him and two others, has become a full-scale artisan bakery with 35 staff.

Baking his award-winning bread is a slow process: working from within his two reconditioned Nissen huts, his own 'flour power' revolution uses organic flours and wild "starters", even the croissants that emerge from the wood fired ovens are made using sourdough.

The ovens take 12 hours to fire up from cold, the starters ripen for around 16 hours before being mixed into dough. Then, the doughs rise on average for seven hours being baked; pastries taken even longer.

His customers include high-end restaurants across Scotland, but he remains focused on bringing 'real bread' to Scottish tables. "It's my

passion," he says. "It's about how good the bread is and for you, that it's digestible, delicious and puts a smile on faces. Artisan bread is so much more expensive than a supermarket loaf but so much more nutritious and healthy."

"It costs a lot more to make this kind of bread, there's a huge amount of labour involved."

"I don't think many sour bread bakeries are making massive profits."

He is hopeful plans to grow wheat on a neighbouring farm, which began last year but failed due to a poor batch of seed, will produce a crop this year.

Before then, champions of the real bread movement will gather at the Scottish Festival of Real Bread, hosted by Scotland The Bread, at the Bowhouse food hub in Fife later this month.

The event celebrates the power of flour and the efforts being made to incorporate it into a more sustainable, locally driven food system - from projects such as Doughlicious and Wild Hearth, to groups like Granton Wheat in Edinburgh which grows patches of wheat on corners of land on the edges of Edinburgh to make Granton Garden Bakery loaf.

Milled locally

AT its largest site, at Lauriston Farm, 2,100 square metres of Hebridean landrace of oats and rye and the same amount of the project's own variety of grain, Granton Rouge

D'Ecosse wheat, was harvested last year to be milled locally and used for bread and baking.

The Festival includes hands-on workshops for amateur and professional bakers, discussions on the environmental benefits of local grain production, and practical demonstrations of traditional milling techniques.

Visitors can also view Scotland The Bread's innovative milling facility, where grains are transformed into ultra-fine wholemeal flour using a unique Zentrofan mill. Its centrepiece is the Scottish Bread Championship.

Organised by Scottish Food Guide, Scotland The Bread and sponsored by the Edinburgh Bakers Trust, it sees bakers from across the country competing with loaves judged on flavour, texture, and use of locally grown ingredients.

Last year's Supreme Champion was a spelt sourdough bread made by Station House Bakery in Haddington, which began as a lockdown project in 2020, closely followed by three times winner John's Wild Hearth Tortano, a round, crusty bread that originates in Naples.

According to Andrew Whitley, co-founder and honorary chair of Scotland The Bread, the Festival is more than a 'foodie' event. "This festival isn't just about bread, it's about creating connections," he says.

"By inviting community members, farmers, bakers, researchers - in fact, everyone who in any way depends on bread - we're fostering a collective effort to throw off the shackles of ultra-processed food and to grow equitable access to nutritious bread for all."

■ The third annual Scottish Festival of Real Bread on February 15. Find out more at scotlandthebread.org.



Above, Comrie Primary School's Shaky Toon loaf along with other entries in the Scottish Bread Championships

Picture: Comrie Primary School

It is among a growing number of grassroots efforts helping to reshape how people think about bread, bringing better loaves to consumers and reviving traditional Scottish-grown grains.

Inspired by the Real Bread Campaign which shuns shunning spongy supermarket loaves, the movement aims to encourage consumers to regard their daily loaf in the same way they might seek out organic meat or free range eggs.

In Dumfries, the community-driven initiative called Doughlicious shares breadmaking skills and aims to give locals on low incomes 'real bread'.

Founded in 2019 retired Macmillan Cancer nurse Liz Grieve, what started as a small gathering of home bakers sharing

skills at The Stove, the town's community run hub, is now a thriving movement.

"Dumfries doesn't have any artisan bakeries," explains Liz, who grew up in Ireland on a diet rich in home baking including bountiful wholemeal loaves - a world away from bleached white supermarket bread.

"The idea was to bring bread-making skills to everyone in the community, particularly those who don't normally get a chance to enjoy good bread, like those on low incomes or students."

Savoury twists

DOUGHLICIOUS now runs monthly workshops, guiding learner bakers through sourdough starters, kneading techniques, and experimenting with flavours - whether a fragrant fruit loaf laced with cranberries and walnuts or a savoury twist using olives or cheese.

Baking kits and flour are available to people on low incomes, there's a bread book library and the group provides bread for the community pantry, and for a charity which provides sandwiches for the homeless and people with multiple deprivation.

Cut off: the Scottish communities failed by Dr Beeching's railway axe

Life under the stars: the stories behind Scotland's Travellers

It now makes around 60 loaves and varying amounts of pizzas weekly destined for community organisations

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Their bread provides the children with a healthy, nutritious snacking option