

The opening of a new flour mill will enable Company Bakery to support local farmers, strengthen food resilience and produce fresh flour from specialist grains. By Ailsa Sheldon

ARAPIDLY growing Musselburgh bakery is going back to its roots – and further down the food supply chain. Company Bakery is preparing to open its own flour mill at Auldhaime Farm near Seacliff, East Lothian, in a £170,000 project designed to bring Scottish farmers and bakers closer together.

Tantallon Mill will create four jobs and, at full capacity, process up to 500 tonnes of wheat a year. The project has received almost £66,000 from the Scottish Government's Food and Drink Processing Scheme.

For Company Bakery, which supplies restaurants, hotels and cafés across Scotland, milling is a return to its beginnings. When the bakery was founded in Edinburgh in 2017 to serve the hospitality industry, its ovens were accompanied by a small Austrian stone mill, allowing its founders to mill organic Scottish grain themselves.

"We were milling wheat that was grown by Scotland The Bread, and it was a great way for us to be in touch with flour and to see it as more than just an anonymous commodity," says Ben Reade, one of Company Bakery's four directors. "There's something fundamentally tactile about understanding where your grains come from." As the business grew, however, the small mill could no longer keep pace.

The move to milling comes from a deep-rooted belief in the importance of provenance. "We started a section of our business called Company Supply," says Reade. "The purpose is to guarantee a good supply of everything we need, whether it's sunflower seeds or yeast or milk, and to look at how we can take greater ownership of those ingredients." Flour, he says, was the obvious place to start. "We're using a significant amount of it, and so milling seemed like the obvious first major project for supply."

Scotland's wheat supply is complex. At the end of 2025 the Scottish Government reported a cereal harvest of 5.14 million tonnes, up 5% on 2024. However, not all Scottish grains are destined for our kitchens. Professor Wendy Russell of the Rowett Institute at the University of Aberdeen says Scottish farmers have traditionally favoured winter wheat because of the country's climate. These varieties

GO WITH THE GRAIN FOR FLOUR POWER



tend to have lower protein and gluten levels and are more suited to cakes and biscuits than bread, with much of the crop used for animal feed or bioethanol. However, "there are some farmers trying to grow wheat varieties that would be good for bread, some really interesting traditional landraces," she says.

That is the gap Company Bakery hopes its mill can help address. By creating a buyer for specialist grain and milling it itself, the bakery hopes to encourage more farmers to grow wheat specifically for human food. The ambition is not simply to trace its flour back to Scotland, but to individual farms. "We really hope that there's an impact of what we're doing: incentivising farmers to grow higher-value food crops rather than just crops for animal feed and the alcohol industry," says Reade. "We're already in contact with producers

who are growing specific grains, who are saying, 'Can you take some of this for us next year?'" Tantallon Mill will join a network of small mills across Scotland. Company Bakery's largest supplier is Mungoswells Malt & Milling, the East Lothian mill founded by Angus MacDowell, and Reade is keen to stress that relationship will continue. "We're not

■ The Company Bakery, from left, Duncan Findlater, Amy Findlater, Ben Reade and Hollie Love Reid

looking to replace Mungoswells in our bread. We're looking to add to the availability of Scottish-milled grain of East Lothian grain. This is not an either/or; this is as well as."

The two businesses will also be producing different types of flour. Mungoswells uses roller milling, while Tantallon will use horizontal stone mills. The emerging Scottish milling sector is not simply about producing more of the same flour: smaller mills can handle a wider range of crops and specialist varieties. Professor Russell says Company's mill could potentially process other crops, including barley and hemp.

"Having more processing facilities in Scotland will certainly support resilience," she says. And resilience is becoming a more urgent argument for local food supply chains.

Wheat is a global commodity, and prices can be affected by events

thousands of miles away. Company Bakery experienced this after Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent grain prices soaring, but strong local relationships proved to be a protection.

"We weren't buying our flour on a speculative market. We were buying it from a local guy who has a farm, who had already grown it, who was fine and who was able to produce it for us." The relationship worked both ways. Because Company had been paying the farmer above market value, Reade says, he chose not to sell his grain when larger buyers came calling.

Reade believes a food system made up of more interconnected local businesses is inherently better able to withstand turbulence, like the recent droughts. "There's been great advantage to industrialised food systems in terms of cheapening food, but in terms of resilience, more nodes to the network definitely complexifies the system and leads to increased ability to withstand shocks."

There are questions over whether that model is commercially viable. Scotland The Bread, which has spent years researching and promoting Scottish-grown grain, recently announced it would cease milling at its Life Facility. Its work demonstrated it was possible to grow organic wheat and rye in Scotland, mill and supply it to bakers, but the organisation is now moving on to focus on research, advocacy and sharing knowledge.

Looking at the booming artisan bread sector, the future seems promising. The tenth Scottish Bread Championship attracted a record 265 entries this year, and there are now excellent bakeries all across Scotland. Reade believes good bread is no longer a luxury purchase: "Even if you can't afford a fancy holiday, you still want good bread and butter."

Tantallon Mill will begin trial milling in December, with its first flour expected to enter Company Bakery's production in February 2027. Reade readily admits there will be a learning curve. "This is us taking a bit of a leap into the unknown. The first batches may not be perfect. We're going to have to build it. We're going to get stuff wrong. We're going to muck up some wheat. Probably we need to find a pig farmer who will benefit a lot from our initial mistakes."

Company Bakery believes the future of Scottish flour will not be found in one giant mill, but in a more complex network connecting farmers, smaller processors and bakers. And for Reade and his partners, the reward will be more than supply-chain security. "When you grind wheat, you've got this amazing smell of fresh wheat, and that only diminishes. Being able to bake with that, you can capture that aroma right there and then. That will be huge for us. Really, it will be emotional."

companybakery.co.uk



The Yard is a flexible new creative space bringing together retail, workshops, artists, community and enterprise in Glasgow's East End, writes Sadie Smith, creative lead at Collective Communities CIC

HERE on the Gallowgate, The Yard, the new retail, events and workshop space on the corner of East Campbell Street, finds itself tucked amongst iconic company. The Barrowland Ballroom glows nearby in neon.

Opposite, the great red and gold Barras sign commands the view. High in the sky, these signs have watched over generations flooding this wide open corner. They have been captured in paintings, photographs, textiles and just about everything in between.

Colour has always had its own language here. Red and gold. Neon. Hand painted signs. Shop fronts and market stalls. Layers added over years. What they say depends on who is looking. Barras Hub is a newer space developed by locals for locals. Nearby, The Pipe Factory and Many Studios are home to artists and creative organisations.

At the centre of it all, the Barras Market needs little introduction. Like Brixton Market or Birmingham's Bullring, its name carries far beyond the streets it occupies. It is an important part of the cultural and commercial story of its city. But places are made by people.

First and foremost, there is a real community here. Shops, traders and locals have given these streets their character for generations.

The Barras itself is a patchwork of markets and owners. Makers, dealers, movers and shakers are woven through it. Windows and stalls are full of curios from around the world. The everyday sits beside the ornamental. The wool shop is always fully stocked,

its satisfying blocks of colour interrupted by handwritten signs. Makers whizz up clothes and alterations. East African eateries and supermarkets sit alongside thriving African and Middle Eastern stores.

This summer I have loved watching every colour and texture glistening in the hot sun. As a textile designer there is almost too much to soak up visually. Tags. Band posters. Football stickers. Old shop signs and murals. Weeds and flowers crack through pavements beside yellow lines. Pebble dash meets spray paint. I photograph tiny sections of it. Close up they become sun drenched palettes.

My background is in textile and accessories design. At The Yard I am turning that eye to a different kind of canvas. I am designing the identity of the space. The brand, graphics and the way it looks and feels. I work alongside Collective Communities Director Mark Armstrong, the artist behind Glasgow. We are shaping a programme that will allow The Yard to keep changing throughout the year.

My own practice continues alongside it. This summer Wilde Ones took me to Kelvingrove for three days of workshops during the Commonwealth Games celebrations and to Fringe by the Sea. Common Goods is my moving retail and events concept. A collection of goods designed with people and place in mind. Somewhere in all of this is a longstanding ambition to build a fashion line made in Glasgow.

From across the street The



A hub for artistic heads to get talking? This must be the place . . .

Yard's huge window looks almost like a television set raised above the pavement. At night the light inside frames whatever is happening there. Step inside and the perspective flips. Suddenly you are in the screen, looking out onto a framed view of Glasgow.

GALLOWGATE
MAKE / SHOW / SELL / MEET

The building behind The Yard has its own formidable creative history. Its East Campbell Street studios have been home to generations of artists including Peter Howson, Ken Currie and Jacki Parry. Painter Tommy Lydon, more than five decades into his practice, still works here. His studio is a gorgeous smash of colour.

Today Glasgow Collective is home to an impressive mix of tenants across the creative industries, social enterprise and independent business. Film crews, photographers and production teams regularly move through the building for shoots. Up on the third floor the perspective changes again. Huge windows flood the space with light. The city opens out around you. There is a little of that New York scale to it, but the view is completely Glasgow. The Big Light has its production studio here too. When Jim Kerr and Charlie Burchill came through the Collective recently for a photoshoot, there was a little moment of stardust. It brought back memories for the team of first gigs and different versions of Glasgow over the years.

The Yard sits proudly on the corner. Its striking black and white brick exterior faces the Gallowgate. The team have been hard at work stripping away years of paint and tags as the Glasgow Collective building is brought back floor by floor. The car park and side garden have already hosted events over the summer. There is much more planned.

The retail space will give members of the Collective Communities Circle an accessible place to test products, try out retail and stage their own takeovers. Beyond the shop we want The Yard to be a useful meeting place for social enterprises and independent organisations. Somewhere to try an idea before taking the next step.

There is a bigger question here

in 1980s New York films. Every screen showing a different version of the city.

The shop has already shown what can happen in a small space. Artist Rachel Burns devised Rock Action's 30th anniversary pop up here. Music spilled onto the street with DJ sets including Mogwai's Barry Burns alongside Rock Action artists and friends. It felt completely at home.

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about how we use space in the city centre. We need to broaden our idea of what these spaces can be and give people more reasons to come into them. Our approach will be wide and varied and, crucially, very Glasgow Collective. Retail can sit alongside workshops, exhibitions, meetings, events and shoots. External links and brand partnerships will bring different people through the doors too.

The space has its own character, but we want people to feel they can make it their own. Use it as it is or transform it completely. For



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those who want a hand, we can help with the dressing, design and details too.

We want to work with artists and creatives at every stage. Established names alongside people making things at kitchen tables. Social enterprises beside independent businesses. Local ideas alongside visiting brands. The point is not to make everything the same. It is to make room for different things to happen.

For The Yard's identity I have taken cues from the building and the visual language surrounding it. I want a little of that New York or Paris or London feeling. An elegant cinema style sign will announce what is happening next. Something distinctive without competing with the iconic signs that have watched over this street for generations.

More than anything, we want The Yard to feel warm. Somewhere to stay a while. To browse, make something or meet somebody. Somewhere to sit on the bench outside with friends after a gig at the Barrowland. We will soft launch during Glasgow Doors Open Days in September. An invitation to come in, see the space and get a glimpse of what comes next. ■ collectivecommunities.org.uk