

## FLOUR POWER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY IS A HEALTHY WORKOUT

Athletes preparing for the London Olympics in 2012 might improve their chances if the energy they expended in fitness training could only be fed into producing a nutrition packed diet. Perhaps they should try out the innovative new People Powered Flour Mill, a bicycle driven grain grinding mill designed by 24 year old Fergus Walker.

The mill, having already caused a stir in Scotland, appearing in national newspapers, on television and having been booked for two festivals already, is now is now coming to London where it will be exhibited at the acclaimed New Designers. This showcase of UK design graduates takes place between the 16th and 19th of July in the Business Design Centre, and Fergus Walker's design will be showing as part of the award winning Product Design course from Dundee University. The People Powered Flour Mill has also been entered in the international James Dyson Award, where it is currently in the People's Vote stage.

Walker, a Gaelic speaker from a croft in the Isle of Skye, is amazed by how popular the mill was at Dundee University Degree Show in May this year:

"I was just run off my feet! The millstones never stopped turning, and I had continuous questions – and requests to try out the mill – from all sorts of people, from age 5 to 85"

The mill is simple to use: fill the hopper with grain, which is fed into the centre of the stones, and adjust the fineness with the adjusting wheel. Then, pedal the bicycle - connected to the mill with a flexible drive shaft which turns the bottom stone. Flour falls into the collecting bucket below. In one hour of continuous milling, a community could produce 50kg – enough for 100 large loaves.

The mill received resounding support from Andrew Whitley, founder of the Cumbria-based firm The Village Bakery:

"It's terrific - and it really demonstrates how much energy we use grinding our flour. This is something we can learn from. Instead of cycling away pointlessly in a gym, why not do something useful?"

The mill is destined for the town of Falkland in Fife, where working with local group Falkland Centre for Stewardship, the project won an award from 'O2 It's your community' for £1000, for which it was selected as one of 15 UK 'Champions'. Edinburgh Bicycle Cooperative also kindly came on board, donating a bicycle.

Inspiration for the mill came following a visit to Terra Madre, the Slow Food Festival in Turin in 2008. In Italy while over 95% of Italian bread is made by artisan bakers, in Britain, the figure is only 2%; the rest of the loaves are made in factories using the Chorleywood method, a high speed, energy intensive factory process involving many additives.

The hope is that the mill will inspire a critical look at the food system in the UK. We are completely divorced from the food chain, and we are subjected to a supermarket monopoly where 80% of our food is imported. It is so centralised and so industrialised that we really have little control over where our food comes from, what gets put into it, and what gets removed from it. In order to achieve true sustainability, we need to relocalise a food system which currently accounts for 25% of UK carbon emissions.

"I believe there is a need for a new generation of designers, who strive to create designs which forge a connection with community and place. There is a need to re-involve the people, and to re-empower them. Users of 'products' should have more say in the design process; and communities need to regain control of production, starting with food." says Fergus Walker

"This is 'intermediate technology' for the First World, the so-called developed world. It's time we shouldered our responsibility to end our addiction to oil, and not just optimistically hope that high tech solutions will solve all our problems. Flour to the people!"

-ENDS-

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[www.jamesdysonaward.org](http://www.jamesdysonaward.org)

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### CONTACT:

#### FERGUS WALKER

EMAIL: [shout@ferguswalker.com](mailto:shout@ferguswalker.com)  
WEBSITE: [www.ferguswalker.com](http://www.ferguswalker.com)  
MOBILE: +44 (0) 77 2192 4414

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