



The accidental biscuit that put Grantham on the map

By Charlotte Miller

Grantham is known for its fair share of famous names and rich history, yet one of its most intriguing claims to fame began with a simple mistake in a bakery. In fact, this mistake created one of the UK's oldest commercially traded biscuits – gingerbread.

The origin story of this beloved biscuit, often known as 'white gingerbread', dates all the way back to 1740 when local baker William Eggleston opened a bakery with the desire to produce the popular Grantham Whetstone biscuit. These biscuits, with their firm and dry characteristics, were designed to endure the four day journey from London to York. While attempting to recreate this, Eggleston accidentally produced something entirely different; the white, crumbly and buttery ginger biscuit we now know as Grantham gingerbread. A deeply traditional biscuit made entirely by accident.

Over time, this gingerbread became an integral part of the town's identity. Its importance is most obvious in Grantham Town Football Club's adoption of the nickname "The Gingerbreads", a title still proudly used by players and supporters today. This nickname is a reminder of Grantham's local history which exists in the daily lives of those who grew up in and live in the town and its surrounding areas. The continuing tradition of baking Grantham gingerbread shows the

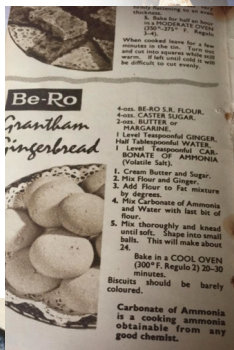


Photo courtesy of Tamsin Burnett-Hall

town's desire to remain connected to its past. In 2009, fuelled by a desire to reconnect Grantham with its history, Alastair Hawken worked to revive the tradition after its decline in production during the 1970s as independent bakeries began to disappear from the high street. Today, the gingerbread is once again being baked and sold

locally, reconnecting Grantham with a small but incredibly intriguing and meaningful part of its heritage.

Grantham gingerbread remains a symbol of an accident which led to centuries worth of history. Its story shows just how ordinary moments can leave a lasting mark. By celebrating something as simple as a biscuit, Grantham celebrates its history, community and the traditions that still bring people together.



Photo courtesy of Nottingham Industrial Museum