

POETS CORNER

The Warning of the Watermill

Vitruvius Molinus made me,
With wheel and stone and leat,
Whilst cohorts marched against the tribes
Westward on Watling Street.

Four generations tended me,
Till the Legions' recall to Rome,
But a Molinus stayed to work my mill -
He knew no other home.

When invading hordes had settled down
And village life was born,
The sokeman and villains needed me
To grind the Saxon corn.

I was listed in William's Domesday Book,
As were five thousand more;
I tendered my tax in "sticks of eels",
According to Norman law.

For centuries have I worked away,
Whatever line was in power;
I garnered the local harvest
And ground it into flour.

Men said then that the power of steam
Was a more efficient way;
So my weir, my leat, my wheel collapsed,
And I began to decay.

Then a "property developer" rebuilt me,
With deal and glass and paint,
He turned me into a restaurant,
Described as "rather quaint".

He took out all my machinery,
Hung my artifacts on the wall,
Displayed my sluice behind plate glass
As a "picturesque waterfall".

Perhaps when you've used all your North Sea oil
And your fossil fuel is done,
You'll remember I was once a watermill
And rivers will always run.

By Richard Holding.

FLOUR POWER

REFRIGERATOR COOKIES

Tony's cool choc chips take the biscuit

This delicious recipe for a teatime treat from the chiller was sent in by Tony Yoward as he enjoys making them. "But," says Tony, "there's only one snag - they go very quickly!"

So what you need to have ready is:

- 8 oz Plain wholemeal flour
- 5 oz English butter - warmed so it's soft
- 6 oz Caster sugar or light brown sugar
- 1 level teaspoon Baking powder
- 1 teaspoon Vanilla essence
- 1 Egg - beaten
- 2 oz Plain chocolate - finely grated or in very small pieces
- 2 oz Ground hazelnuts or walnuts
- Sugar for dusting

Mix the flour and baking powder together, then add the butter; mix with a wooden spoon, add the sugar and continue mixing. Stir in the vanilla essence and egg until it forms a stiff dough. Then add the chocolate into the mixture and lastly add the nuts. Stir just enough to combine the ingredients. On a lightly floured surface, shape the dough into a sausage about 2 inches wide. Wrap it in foil, securing the ends, and chill in the fridge for at least 3 hours (or use next day).

To bake the biscuits, slice off as many thin biscuits as required from the roll. Set them, well spaced out, on a greased baking tray. Sprinkle with sugar and bake in the centre of a pre-heated oven at 190degC for about 10 - 12 minutes if you prefer a softish centre, or longer for a hard biscuit - until the bottom of the biscuit is just darkening. Cool on a wire rack.

Thank you Tony. What's the best time to call round to your house for tea and bikkies?