When the newly-arrived settlers established grain crops in 1837, they needed to process the grain for use. This meant turning the wheat into flour for bread, and barley into beer.

John Ridley’s Hindmarsh mill produced the first flour in 1840. The South Australian Company built its own mill on the River Torrens, adjacent to what is now Hackney Road.

Most mills were steam driven. Often the owners made their own boilers and steam engines. By 1842, there were mills in Wright Street and West Terrace driven by wind. As grain increased, many country mills were established, the Blumberg (Birdwood) mill being still best known.

Most mills used stone grind-stones but later, some used rollers to crush the wheat into flour. The by-products of bran and pollard were used for feeding milking cows and poultry. However, mills were very dusty places and the fine dust when combined with a spark could explode. Much of the sieving equipment was made from wood. Many mills were destroyed by fire. Searches of old papers tell the story.
Overheated boilers could also explode.

A terrible boiler explosion occurred at Mr. Pool’s Mill, Reynella, on December 9, when the stoker, Edward Condy, was killed, and the boiler carried a distance of about 140 yards.

Bakeries soon proliferated in Adelaide. Some were established by people whose names we still recognise today – Balfours (from 1853), Menz (1850), still known for Yo-Yo biscuits. Some entrepreneurs brought together wheat and barley. WH Clark built a state of the art flour mill and bakery next to his brewery in Halifax Street

Most country towns had their own bakery. Many still do – a centre of the local community.