

Newsletter

Editorial

Michelle Selinger

Happy New Year. Welcome to the first newsletter for 2016. It's this time of year when being Coeliac isn't so bad as we all try to shed the pounds after an over-indulgent Christmas - there are far fewer temptations!

Since the last newsletter we have held the garden party, another fish and chip night, a curry evening, a meeting in Greenwood Hall and Christmas dinner at the Watford campus of West Herts College. All were well attended with record attendance numbers for the dinner. The curry evening had a few minor mishaps so we have decided not to go to Devdas again and are exploring other options. There are write ups and photos of some of the events in this newsletter as well as the recipes from the cake competition we held during the November meeting.

The committee met earlier this month and have planned a full programme of events for the year. We are planning to approach Intu in Watford to request a stand there during Awareness Week in May. We also had a meeting with neighbouring local groups and, as a result, we have approached the Beds and mid-Herts group about supporting their biennial food fair in 2017.

Tony Cartwright is leading the charge on making sure the three CCG's in our area are keeping us abreast of

developments in the prescribing of gluten free foods, and discussing any potential changes with us.

I wrote this editorial on the plane back from a work trip to Jordan. During my last trip there in July 2015, the hotel I stayed in then were more than happy to provide me with gluten free bread, but this one refused point blank and told me that if they bought some in for me I would have to pay for it as it was too expensive!. In the event I bought my own—four wonderful, large and soft pitta breads for less than £2.50, so it would have been 62p a day for the hotel! They have lost my custom. Do avoid the Geneva hotel in Amman!!

Group Events 2016



Details on
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Group Events 2016

We also plan to hold a pizza lunch for the youth group

Tesco Food Tasting March 16th 2:30pm	Tesco, Jarman Park Hemel Hempstead
AGM March 19th 2:45pm	Greenwood Hall
Fish and Chip Supper April 18th 7:30pm	Godfreys, Harpenden
Dinner May 11th 6:30pm	West Herts College Watford
Canal Boat Trip June 12th 1pm	Kings Langley Wharf
Afternoon Tea July 17th 2:15pm	Henderson Hall Abbots Langley
Garden Party & Barbecue September 10th 1:30pm	Abbots Langley
Fish and Chip Supper September 26th 7:30pm	Godfreys, Harpenden
Themed Food Night October 27th 7pm	TBA
Meeting and Talk November 19th 2:45pm	Greenwood Hall
Christmas Dinner December 7th 6:30pm	West Herts College Watford

Consultant gastroenterologist talk organised by Beds and Mid-Herts Group

For those of you in the East of the area you may be interested in this event being held by the Beds and Mid-Herts group . It is at 2pm on Saturday 6th February 2016 at Johns Community Centre, St Johns Road, Hitchin SG4 9JP Dr Harvey - Consultant Gastroenterologist at Bedford Hospital has kindly agreed to give a talk to the group on all things Coeliac on the afternoon of Saturday 6th February 2016 . Refreshments will be available both before and after the talk. There will also be a stand promoting the new Dr Schar range recently released into the UK. The cost to attend the event will be £5 to include a drink and a cake. There is no need to pre-book this event just turn up on the day, as I'm sure you will agree this should prove to be a very informative event.

Event reviews

November meeting at Greenwood Hall

Michelle Selinger

We were delighted to see so many people at this meeting and to welcome newcomers. This year's talk was given by Dr Angela Madden from the University of Hertfordshire who advised us on good nutrition for those with coeliac disease. We have a copy of Angela's slides so please let me know if you would like a copy. My contact details are on the first page of this

Debbie Grant sold her wonderful gluten free savoury products and the cake competition saw some lovely but fewer than usual entries. Angela judged the competition and the clear winner was Judi Holmes' Coffee Cake. Congratulations Judi!

All the recipes are given later in this newsletter and if you want to buy Debbie's goodies more often then visit her market stalls either in St Albans on the 2nd Sunday of the month or Berkhamsted on the 3rd Sunday of the month. If you are travelling further afield, Debbie is also in Chesham on the 4th Saturday and Aylesbury on the last Tuesday of the month.

Christmas Dinner, West Herts College

Lynda Trembling



On the 9th December we ventured out for a Christmas meal at the West Herts College. We were greeted by friendly students who took our coats and asked us to take a seat. The table were set out neatly and we all had Christmas crackers complete with corny jokes! There were about 48 of us in all waiting in anticipation for our gluten free dinner. We had previously made our choices - choosing from a selection of three dishes for each course.

The waiting staff first came around with a basket of freshly baked bread and our starters followed shortly after. Each of my courses were absolutely delicious! Everyone else at the table enjoyed their meals too - coeliac and non-coeliac alike.



At the end of the evening we gave a big round of applause to the chefs from the kitchen and all the waiters/waitresses - the tutors at the college must be very proud of them! It was a wonderful evening spent in lovely company in pleasant surroundings.

Volunteers Conference 2015

Jackie Diamond

I attended the conference in September with Michelle Selinger and Jean Pavan. The day started with a welcome from Sarah Sleet Chief Executive of Coeliac UK followed by an overview of research activities by Heidi Urwin, Research Manager.

'Is it Coeliac Disease?' by Lisa Bainbridge head of Campaigns followed. We looked at and discussed the recent adverts that have been on television, on the internet and billboards. The main points I took from the morning sessions was that only 24% of Coeliacs are diagnosed, half a million people are going undiagnosed, and you are less likely to be diagnosed if you are under 49 or of low income- so let's hope the recent adverts will reach out to these people. We then broke for lunch when there was the opportunity for networking with Volunteers from other areas.

The afternoon started with a sharing of ideas and best practice in volunteering. We then had a couple of breakout sessions. I attended one on reading labels and deciding if the product was gluten free. My last session was discussing the trend towards limiting, and in some areas completely cutting, the prescribing of gluten free food. This discussion could have continued for hours. We then came together to close the day. This was the first Volunteers Conference I have attended and I found it most enjoyable and informative.

Eating out

Alford Arms, Frithsden, nr Berkhamsted

Michelle Selinger



This is my local pub so imagine my delight when I discovered they had won the 2014 inaugural [Free-From Eating out Awards](#).

They now serve two gluten free beers to boot! The restaurant has long had a gluten free menu so it was a delight to see it recognised. It isn't the cheapest of restaurant but the food is always fabulous, the staff friendly and the atmosphere welcoming. You need to book the restaurant but they serve the same food in the bar and if there are no available tables in the bar, then they will put your name on a list for the next one to come free.

One more thing ... Ronnie Woods of the Rolling Stones and Mick Jagger were seen there just a few weeks ago, so you never know who you might meet if you visit!!

See their website for details

www.alfordarmsfrithsden.co.uk

Niche Food and Drink, Islington (next to Sadlers Wells Theatre)

Michelle Selinger

I ate at this *completely* gluten free restaurant very recently with my daughter as we were meeting to



go to the ballet at Sadlers Wells. I didn't realise until after I had booked that they were highly commended in 2015's [Free From Eating Out Awards](#).— and now I know why! For the first time since my diagnosis. I had a meat pie (chicken and mushroom). It was delicious. I asked for chips instead of mash and they were amazing too. We shared a salted caramel and chocolate tart for dessert and that was amazing too. I highly recommend Niche. www.nichefoodanddrink.com/

Zizis, Watford and St Albans

Samantha Neale

Zizis in Watford or St Albans are wonderful for gluten free. They have a huge allergen menu with nice sized GF section, and the gluten free pizza is amazing. Much better than Pizza Express

(who give you a smaller one than everyone else, from the stock of GF frozen pizza bases, and charge you the same price as the non-GF people). Zizis make their GF pizzas from scratch, which means they are deliciously the right consistency, just like a normal pizza should be. Thin, crispy round edges, the doughy base I've been missing. The



zucca pizza is amazing - butternut squash, spinach and goats cheese with balsamic vinegar. The pizza comes out with a sticker on the side of the plate assuring you this is a non-gluten ingredient containing pizza.

It was so delicious we went there on both 30th December (Watford) and three days later 2nd January (St Albans)!!

Eating out Hertford way

Lara Couling

Lussmans in Hertford's menu is clearly marked.

George and Dragon in Watton at Stone and **the Golden Fleece in Braughing** are still excellent.

The Three Horseshoes at Hooks Cross (between Watton and Stevenage) has a GF menu

Mudlarks café in Hertford has GF cakes and lunches.

Serendipity in Hertford does GF sandwiches

Arnold's American Diner, Hoddesdon

Shanelle Brown

Amazing food and outstanding knowledge of gf requirements. Great for a splurge (I had nachos, burger and chips, and strawberry ice cream), affordable and great for kids.

Loch Fyne, Hertford

Shanelle Brown



This is a fish restaurant that is part of a chain a chain. A fab GF menu been introduced,. The chef came out and spoke to me to find out how sensitive I was. When I said I was coeliac he pretty much went through the whole stock cupboard to check for any ingredients that had a cross contamination risk. Amazing!!!

Eating In

Cakes

Claire Lucy

I have a few recommendations of decent cakes that actually taste like cake!



Tesco Free From Lemon Drizzle Cake (it's a loaf cake) tastes like a nice sponge, not dry or crumbly at all.

Marks and Spencer Made Without Coffee and Walnut cake is delightful and does not taste like its gluten free, lovely moist sponge, not at all dry or crumbly and the icing is divine. As is the Marks and Spencer Lemon Drizzle Sponge cake. This is much sweeter than the Tesco one and again moist sponge and not dry.

Pizzas

Jackie Diamond

Goodfellas, the popular frozen pizzas sold in most supermarkets, have introduced 2 gluten free pizzas to their range. One is cheese and tomato and the other is pepperoni, mushroom and ham.

Kellogg's

Anne Hodder

Kellogg's have just added gluten free organic corn puff cereal to their range. I found them to be quite tasty - light and not too sweet. The box contains enough for ten servings.

Recipes

Here are some of the cake recipes from November's meeting including Judi's prizewinning coffee cake.

Coffee Cake

Judi Holmes

5oz (150g) margarine
3oz (85g) golden caster sugar
3 medium eggs
5oz (150g) gluten free self raising flour
1 tsp GF baking powder
2 tbsp Camp chicory and coffee essence

Filling

4oz (115g) margarine
1 1/2 oz (45g) icing sugar
2 tbsp Camp chicory and coffee essence

Blend all the ingredients together in a mixer and divide into two 7in sandwich tins. Bake for 20 minutes at 180°C / Fan 160°C / Gas 4. Sprinkle with icing sugar.

Chocolate and Apricot Brownies

No name given - adapted from a Slimming World recipe

110g low fat spread
45g low calorie drinking chocolate powder
4 level tsp sweetener
60g caster sugar
3 eggs
110g gluten free self raising flour
1 level tsp baking powder

1/2 tsp xanthan gum
200g dried apricots
1 tsp vanilla essence
Icing sugar to dust

Preheat oven to 180°C / Fan 160°C / Gas 4 and line a baking tin with greaseproof paper. Melt the spread in a pan, remove from heat and add to a bowl with the drinking chocolate, sweetener and sugar. Add the eggs and whisk well until combined.

Sift in the flour and baking powder and stir. Add the apricots to the mixture with the vanilla essence and mix well. Pour into the tin and bake for around 20 minutes until just set (it will firm as it cools). Cut into about 24 chunks.

These are delicious straight from the oven or cooled and dusted with icing sugar.

Apple, Rum and Pistachio Loaf

Mary Lovett

125 ml (4 1/2 fl oz) groundnut oil
150g (5oz) golden caster sugar
2 medium eggs, separated
2 tbsp dark rum
90g (3 3/4oz) coarsely grated cooking apple
50g (2oz) dried apricots, coarsely chopped
60g (2 1/2 oz) pistachios, coarsely chopped
125 g (4 1/2 oz) gluten free plain flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp each ground ginger and cinnamon
Icing sugar for dusting

Place the rum and chopped apricots into a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Simmer for about 5 minutes until most of the liquid is absorbed. Leave to cool. Heat oven to 190°C / Fan 170°C / Gas 5 and line and butter a 1.3 litre (2 1/4 pint), 22cm (8 1/2 in) long loaf tin. Whisk the oil and caster sugar in a large bowl, then whisk in the egg yolks. Fold in the apple, apricots and any rum, and two thirds of the pistachio nuts. Sift the flour, baking powder, xanthan gum and spices together, and stir into the mixture.

Whisk the egg whites in another bowl until they are stiff, and fold into the cake mixture in two goes. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and scatter over the remaining nuts. Bake for 45-50 minutes or



until golden and risen and a skewer inserted at the centre comes out clean. Run a knife around the edge, leave to stand for 10 minutes and then turn out onto a wire rack to cool the right way up.

Dust with icing sugar if wished.

News

The postcode lottery in the supply of gluten-free foods on prescription in England

Tony Cartwright

This is a summary of an article I wrote for the Pharmaceutical Journal of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of October 2015

There has been some considerable controversy in the last few months about prescribing gluten-free foods with reports in the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Independent*. The *Daily Mail* asserted that the cost was £116 million per year when only £26.8 million was actually spent on food for coeliac patients in 2014.

In 2004 a group of NHS clinicians developed a prescribing guideline for Coeliac UK on the amounts of gluten-free food which should be available on prescription. This was based on National Diet and Nutrition Surveys and included a consideration of the amounts needed for a balanced diet. This is the National Prescribing Guideline. This is used in Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland the amounts of food which are allowed are also in line with the National Guideline. In England most of the Clinical Commissioning Groups who decide prescribing policy at a local level for groups of GP practices also support the National Guideline. However, about 33% of the CCGs have introduced restrictions on the amount or range of products that are allowed to be prescribed. Some CCGs have even banned the prescribing of gluten-free foods.

Why are some CCGs restricting supply of foods which are essential to keep coeliac patients healthy and improve our lives? The main reason is clearly financial – pressure on NHS budgets. Some of the CCGs argue that the variety and accessibility of gluten-free foods in the supermarkets has improved and patients can just be told to buy some or all of what they need. However two large surveys have been carried out into the availability of gluten-free foods in a range of supermarkets by independent academic groups – the first by investigators from Kings College in 2011 and the latest by a group from Sheffield University in 2015..

Sticky Toffee Tray Bake

Lynda Trembling

200g dairy free spread
200g golden syrup
200g light muscovado sugar
200g gluten free self raising flour
1 tsp xanthan gum
100g ground almonds
1 tsp salt
3 large eggs beaten
2 tbsp. milk (or dairy free alternative)

Preheat oven to 160°C /Fan 140°C/Gas 3. Grease and line an 18cm x 27 cm (7 x 10 1/2 in) shallow baking tray. Melt spread and golden syrup in a heavy based saucepan over a low heat. Leave to cool. Sieve the dry ingredients and add the sugar in a large bowl. Using a large balloon whisk, beat in the syrup mixture until combined. Stir in the beaten eggs and milk and whisk until the mixture resembles a heavy batter. Pour into baking tin and bake for 50 minutes until the sponge has risen and a metal skewer/cocktail stick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Cool in tin. Cut into squares and decorate as you desire e.g. icing, toffee butter cream, toffee pieces, fudge pieces.

Valerie Allen also sent us this recipe

Almond and Polenta Cake

250g (8oz) caster sugar
250g(8oz) ground almonds
250g(8oz) quick-cook polenta
250g(8oz)butter, softened
18cm(7in) loose-bottomed fluted flan tin, buttered

Set oven to moderately hot Gas Mark5 or
190°C/375°F

Mix all ingredients together then transfer to the flan tin and press evenly. Bake cake above the centre of oven for 40mins,until golden brown and firm to touch

Cuts into 12 small slices. Serve with a chilled dessert wine or a cup of coffee.

They concluded that many budget supermarkets and small stores stocked no gluten-free items and there was limited availability even in many of the larger stores. In 2013 a survey of 1,000 patients commissioned by the British Specialist Nutrition Association (the major gluten-free product manufacturers) into restrictions in the supply of gluten-free foods found that this made it harder for patients to obtain gluten-free products to help them manage their diet. Any restrictions obviously affect the most vulnerable, those on benefits or low incomes, and those with limited mobility.



Coeliac UK is continuing to battle to try to keep up the availability of gluten-free foods on prescription. If patients cannot access the foods they need this risks an increase in gastrointestinal cancers, osteoporosis, infertility and anaemia as well as gastrointestinal problems. The postcode lottery needs to end, as all patients deserve equal access to the foods which are the only treatment for their condition.

Meeting with other Local Groups

This networking meeting was held on 17th November with some of our committee and committee members from Beds and Mid-Herts and Bucks in order to understand and explore things like challenges each group faces, how other groups work, to explore changes in some of the group boundaries, CCG policy and GF prescribing, swap information on local restaurants and shops, share speaker details newsletters, events and food fairs. It was a useful meeting and it was agreed to convene another in the near future.

One idea we took away was the idea of a traditional tea which we are going to hold this year instead of going to a garden centre. We will serve sandwiches, a range of home made cakes and scones with clotted cream and jam.

Book Review

Simply Nigella

Michelle Selinger

Having watched the recent TV program, I asked for this book for Christmas. It was great to see that in the index all the gluten free recipes are marked with a pink dot and there are a lot of them. So far I have made the lemon pavlova, the triple chocolate buckwheat cookies, the Asian flavoured short ribs and the slow-cooked black treacle ham—all of which were delicious.



Your reviews, recipes and comments?

Please write a short review and send it to me for the next newsletter. The email address is glutenfreeherts@live.com