

Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Area Coeliac Group

TALKABOUT

For all your gluten-free gossip, news and events

February 2022
Edition 56

Sevenoaks and
Tunbridge Wells
Local Group



Branch Committee

Group Organiser	Fiona Turnbull fi.turnbull@talktalk.net	07599 833092
Secretary	Daphne Paterson <u>dbpp68@gmail.com</u>	07717 471909
Treasurer	Mary Cunnington mary@june-cottage.com	01732 862925
Newsletter Editors	Andrew Pilcher Rosemarie Pilcher arpem321@hotmail.com	07802 423455 07928 280791
Refreshments	Joy Oliver roliver912@googlemail.com Sally Spike sally.spike214@btinternet.com	01732 460849 01689 828883
New Members Secretary	Susan Potts slpotts53@hotmail.co.uk	01892 613258
Eating out – Venue Guide	Tony Rowe tony.rowe@tandfrowe.uk	07738 754613

Note from the Editors

Dear Reader

Welcome to the 56th edition of Talkabout.

We hope that you have all managed to enjoy Christmas with your families and that you have stayed well.

For those who like to cook or bake themselves, we will again be listing more delicious recipes in the next edition.

We have introduced a '**Member's Page**' to Talkabout and invite you to write in and share your stories: whether that's of health journeys, frustrations, recovery, recipes, something else, or a question that needs answering. We are not allowed to give medical advice or discuss individual cases but we will endeavour to find answers and solutions to your problems.

Please email: fi.turnbull@talktalk.net

We thank Mike for his most informative article on food related matters which you can read in the Member's page.

We hope you can benefit from this edition of Talkabout and hope to see you at one of the forthcoming meetings.

Andrew and Rosemarie – The Editors

Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Area Coeliac Group

Your Help is still needed now that we are able to meet up again!

Do you enjoy Saturday coffee?

Have you benefitted from discussions at Saturday coffee?

Do you attend Saturday coffee when you can?

If the answer is yes, could you think about lending a hand?

There is no need to attend personally every month. We just need someone to make contact with other 'willing helpers' to ensure there is a welcoming face at each coffee morning.

Please get in contact if you can help - fi.turnbull@talktalk.net

COFFEE MORNING

Come and join us

WHERE?

This month we are meeting on Zoom. Visit our Sevenoaks & TW Local Group Facebook page for the link.

WHEN?

From 11am on the third Saturday of every month

WHY?

For a chat with fellow coeliacs



Forthcoming Actual or Virtual Events

Please come along to one of our actual or virtual events. We look forward to seeing you soon.

As you know, our last two AGMs had to be postponed and never materialised. Please see Fiona's message on page 5 regarding this year's AGM.

Coffee Mornings - Third Saturday of every month 11.00 – 12.00 noon

19th March 2022 – Zoom ~~

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82627270048?pwd=L2VIY0J6U1hBMWZEB2hna2hsTElyQT09>

Meeting ID: 826 2727 0048

Passcode: 407146

23rd April 2022 – Sevenoaks (moved to avoid Easter weekend)

21st May 2022 – Tunbridge Wells

18th June 2022 – Zoom

If you are newly diagnosed and want to find out more, this is a very relaxed way to meet with other coeliacs to share ideas and have a chat. We welcome everybody who is affected by this condition or is interested in finding out more about it.

We meet at alternate locations each month (or on Zoom). This month at Sainsbury's Café in Sevenoaks/Otford (Otford Road, TN14 5EG) and the next month in Sainsbury's Café in Tunbridge Wells (on Linden Park Road, TN2 5QL, just off the A26 Eridge Road).

We look forward to seeing you soon.

In the meantime,

How about a chuckle?

- This girl said she knew me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.
- When chemists die, they barium.
- I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

Member's Page

I've been informed by Coeliac UK head office that we will be required to hold a group AGM by the end of July 2022. I'm not prepared to make any arrangements at the moment, let's hope that things will be getting easier soon. Look out for details in our June Talkabout newsletter.

Spring 2023 will be the 20th Anniversary of the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Voluntary Support Group. I was at the first meeting arranged by Coeliac UK and went on to the first committee. Two years later, in 2005 I took over as Group Leader.

In November 2021, I attended a face-to-face meeting of Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust; this is Darent Valley Hospital. There were several very interesting presentations given.

A New Catering Company, Medirest, took over Patient Dining Services at the beginning of January. I was able to ask all our relevant Gluten Free questions. Steamplivity meals are plated up off site, sealed with a steam valve cover, and then cooked in the microwave on the ward kitchen. Patient meal orders are taken on a tablet daily, where all allergens are entered, and then a meal can be chosen from the suggestions on screen. The only group on the Allergy Menu is the Range which is free from all 14 major allergens including Gluten. Medirest will be working on a 4- week menu plan. Toaster bags are to be used and disposed of after use. It's still trusting that the correct meal arrives to the Coeliac patient.

Fiona Turnbull
Group Leader

What Coeliacs need to know about the Vegan Revolution

I don't know about you, but I have noticed a change at my local supermarket. The available range of Gluten Free (GF) food is rapidly being overtaken by Vegan friendly food. Now, I know why this is, GF food is no longer as popular with non-Coeliacs as it was (surprise, surprise it costs a lot to be completely GF!) and Vegetarian/Vegan is taking over as a popular regime to follow (after all Vegan is healthy, right?). It is obvious why this

trend is growing, because, to be blunt, supermarkets follow the money, and stock products they can sell in bulk for the most profit. So many supermarkets are reducing their range of GF foods and increasing Vegan products as the latest trend.

Don't get me wrong, I try very hard to eat healthily, and I do everything I can to save the planet. I really enjoy my veg, and have fruit every day. I even go without meat regularly – honest! But, as a Coeliac for the whole of my life (and believe me that is a long time now) I have watched advice about what we should, and should not eat evolve and change, and, for Coeliacs, at times, it can get really confusing. I also watch trends in the market and, in particular, how Coeliacs without access to prescription products have to pay through the nose just to eat basic foods, like bread or even fish fingers (and I do love a fish finger sandwich from time to time!). The fast growing range of vegan or vegetarian options are often displayed alongside GF and other specialist foods and supplements. Coeliacs therefore really need to know what some of these “healthy” vegan products contain so that we don't accidentally buy something that is not suitable for a strict GF diet, and could cause us serious problems.

I know the advice from dieticians and Coeliac UK is, “read the label”, but even that can sometimes be harder than you think. Coeliac UK have for years published pages and pages of great advice, and food directories, but for some ingredients I am now discovering on packets, even the Coeliac UK search engine draws a blank.

One that I now know to avoid like the plague is “*Seitan*”, which is pure gluten and sometimes listed as “*Fu*”. It apparently gives Vegan products (like burgers and sausages) a “chewy” texture, but really it's dangerous for Coeliacs. The search engine at Coeliac UK has no results for “*Seitan*”, and “*Fu*” comes up as a word in one of their helpful travel guides that we can take on holiday to help us tell restaurants we must eat GF. When I search more broadly for “*Seitan*” some sites do say “not suitable for a GF diet” but others simply list it as an ingredient in Vegan burgers, sausages, hot dogs and vegan pizzas. “*Seitan*” can also be listed as “*Fu*”, “*Mian Jin*”, “*Milgogi*”, and sometimes, “*Wheat Meat*”, so look out for it in dishes like “mock duck” and other vegan processed food. The confusing thing is of course when “*Fu*” or “*Seitan*” are mixed with other products, or when manufacturers decide to call them something even more esoteric like “*Vital Wheat*” which is basically gluten powder, and something to avoid.

There are some naturally GF products that are appearing more and more in Vegan and Vegetarian food that are really worth trying. *Tofu* (both regular and “*silken*”), for example, is really healthy and very versatile. I

often use it for stir fries, and I have even enjoyed a silken tofu chocolate mousse (*yes really!*), which I have to say was delicious. Alongside *Tofu*, *Tempeh* is finding its way into various products. *Tempeh* is basically fermented soya beans and again is naturally GF. It tastes a bit like mushrooms and can be used in stir fries, and, for those who find tofu a bit bland and lacking in texture, might be something to look out for.

While we are talking about soy based products let's just cover *Soy Sauce*. "Ordinary" soy sauce sold in the UK is often NOT GF. It is made from fermented soy and wheat and so something we should avoid. However, don't despair, there is a naturally brewed GF soy sauce, often sold as "*Tamari Soy Sauce*". This is made from pure soy beans and can be found in many stores. A little tip, the small bottles found in supermarkets are really expensive, so find your local Asian food store and ask if they keep or can get *Tamari Soy Sauce* for you – much cheaper! But as with everything, do check that it is real *Tamari* and does not contain wheat.

On the subject of labels, I have a particular bug bear about the phrase "*May contain traces of Gluten*", or "*Made in a factory also handling wheat*". These labels really do not help Coeliacs, and even Coeliac UK suggests you contact the manufacturer for more information about the risk of contamination. I tend to view any manufacturer who cannot say what is actually in their product as either too lazy to properly clean their machinery between production runs, or too frightened by their lawyers and wanting to avoid legal liability. Remember that to be classed as GF, food must contain less than 20 ppm (parts per million) of gluten. To put that in perspective, that means that even food labelled as GF can have 20 Grams of gluten in 1 tonne, and for many food processing factories 1 tonne is used in less than 10 minutes production time. Elsewhere in the world a term you might find used on food products is "*Very Low Gluten*", which is defined as having a gluten content of between 21 and 100 ppm. Some Coeliacs cannot tolerate even this slightly higher level of gluten so do look out for it on products imported from places like the USA, or when we finally go on holiday again.

Finally what about all these "alternative" flours, noodles and things that have grown in popularity in recent years? Most instant noodles contain wheat, but pure rice noodles are GF. "*Glass Noodles*" (also known as "*Cellophane*" or "*Bean Thread*" noodles) are actually made from a sort of bean so are naturally GF too. I use them in soups, or as an alternative to rice when I fancy making a Chinese meal. Again your local Asian food store can help here.

Flour can be a minefield. We all know to avoid wheat, barley and rye flour, but, don't forget that *Spelt*, *Triticale*, *Emmer*, *Einkorn*, and *Khorasan* (also sold as "*Kamut*") are older varieties of wheat and contain gluten. Some might be labelled as "low gluten" but they are NOT suitable for Coeliacs. On the other hand, *Buckwheat* is fine (it is NOT a wheat) and so too are other flours, like *Tapioca* (made from a root), *Rice flour*, including *Glutinous Rice flour* (which has no gluten despite its name), *Gram Flour* (also known as "*Besan*" or "*Garbanzo Bean*" Flour) is made from Chick peas, and, of course, *Corn Flour*, which is made from Maize. I have found lots of recipes that use a mixture of these flours that work really well, but do look out for commercial mixtures that are labelled as "healthy" they can often contain wheat or rye. I saw one sold in a supermarket recently just next to the GF Flours.

Couscous and *Semolina* are processed wheat and very high in gluten, and we must avoid them. However, *Quinoa* and *Millet* are great alternatives if you want a middle eastern style meal and they are naturally GF. Pure *Polenta* is GF (it is maize), but I have found some prepared polenta mixes containing wheat (probably because it is cheaper than pure corn and helps the polenta stick together).

So, is Vegan food healthy for Coeliacs? Yes it can be, but like all processed food we need to be alert to what manufacturers put in their products, and recognise that formulations can change as ingredient prices fluctuate. Read the labels, and don't be misled, just because something is sold from the same shelves as GF products and labelled "healthy" does not mean we can eat it.

My advice, for what it's worth, is to cook from raw ingredients whenever you can, that way you know what is in your food and it's likely to be much healthier than any processed food available anyway – enjoy!

Mike Wilcock

Mike has also found this excellent discussion on Coeliac (Celiac) from the Mayo Clinic in the US: https://youtu.be/_o-D6yrfnBg. I found it very interesting.

Daphne

TAKE-AWAY/DELIVERY SERVICES, TEA ROOMS, HOTELS etc.

Juliets – 54 High Street, Tunbridge Wells Daytime café with vintage china and mismatched furniture. Delicious food and fab cakes, including gluten-free.

Bartellas - A word from Ian Eldridge, Proprietor
Our takeaway / collection menu is available on Thursday to Sunday. Hot food (pizzas, fish and chips) and pre-prepared, chilled Bartellas dishes that are ready to cook at home. Order online or give us a call - 01474 812154

When collecting, please enter through the front door, pick up your order in the waiting area and exit through the back. We'll also be happy to bring your food to your car in the car park. meopham@bartellas.com

Costa Coffee

To support NHS staff and key workers we've re-opened some of our stores for Drive-Thru and Delivery only. <https://coteathome.co.uk/>
Looks good, please refer to website.

'Cook' Foods have an excellent web site with easy to find gluten free options and does click and collect. They also have limited delivery slots.

Nancy's Tea Room – 01732 300 401

Lamberts Yard, Tonbridge TN9 1ER

Just off Tonbridge High Street and near the river, a handy stop off point. This place has been recommended for a nice cup of tea/coffee and GF cake!

Middle House – 01435 872 146

High Street, Mayfield TN20 6AB

This hotel has an extensive menu and was recommended by several members at the last Zoom meeting. Their menu does not show the simple GF sign next to the meal but they have a full list of allergens in a chart which, I hope, you don't have to prod through when dining! I hope to try this place in the future.

The White Hart – 01732 452 022

Tonbridge Road, Sevenoaks TB13 1SG

This Restaurant has an interesting menu and even has a separate GF menu; I am most impressed. If it were not for COVID, I would be booking today! Companies which make every effort to offer GF food should be supported.

The Beefeater Group

They were recommended at our Zoom meeting. However, I am not impressed with the online menu and feel the small independents give a better GF choice.

Voakes Gluten Free – 01423 395 511

Whixley, York YO26 8AY www.voakesfreefrom.co.uk

Pies available to order online; they are supplied in special containers. I'm told their pork or chicken pies are delicious. I will try these sometime soon, despite the small carriage charge!

M & S Gluten Free

This company are now offering on line ordering or normal in store service. At present, I have not found any items on line which I have bought in store. Their scones have been recommended, along with their creamy chicken pie.

Neville Crest & Gun - 01892 864209

Eridge Road, Eridge, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9JR www.nevillcrestandgun.co.uk
Good gf menu, lovely sweets, nice setting with good walks nearby.

Borders Restaurant – 01892 515532

High Rocks, High Rocks Lane, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9JJ
Good gf menu, good service but not on Mother's Day, as it was extremely busy.

No. One Fish Shop – 01892 544020

1 Quarry Road, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2EY
Recommended for gf fish & chips with excellent reviews. Check which days gf is available.

Royal Fish Bar – 01732 672358

62 High Street, Borough Green, Sevenoaks TN15 8BJ
Gf fish & chips on Wednesdays. Phone to check. This shop has been recommended by members.

The Red Lion – 01233 740309

Ashford Road, Badlesmere, near Faversham ME13 0NX
Fully g/f meals. Mike commented on line that he thoroughly enjoyed his lunch. I am pleased to report that when we dined there, we had a similar experience and everybody loved the food, especially the sweet!



Talkabout

Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Area Coeliac Group

<https://www.coeliac.org.uk/local-groups/sevenoaks>

Please send your letters or enquiries to:

***Andrew and Rosemarie Pilcher
29 The Paddock, Pembury,
Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 4NR***

Email: arpem321@hotmail.com