

Newsletter

Editorial

Michelle Selinger

In the last newsletter we were waiting for summer to start—which it did, albeit very late. We had a lovely August and September, and it was warm well into October, but now we seem to have winter thrust upon us very early. However, we have two more events before Christmas to warm you up. We hope to see you at the talk at Greenwood Hall on November 19th and hope you enjoy all the cakes entered into the annual cake competition. And don't forget to book for the Christmas dinner at West Herts College, Watford. Every meal there has been amazing and they love having us there. It's great practice for the students, while also raising their awareness of food intolerance, and the need to take extra care in avoiding cross contamination.

Planning for 2017 events will take place in January. We always welcome new people onto the committee, so if you are interested in joining us, then please let me know. My details are below.

Please continue to send me articles, recipes, food, restaurant and hotel reviews for the next issue to glutenfreeherts@live.com or you can phone me on 07826 858533 with any ideas, questions or queries.

If you have any queries on membership or want to get a message out to members please contact Jackie Diamond. Her email is jackie.diamond@ntlworld.com.

Have a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2017

Michelle



Group Events 2016

Meeting and Talk from Gluten Greenwood Hall
 Free Foods, Elstree
 November 19th 2:45pm

Christmas Dinner West Herts College
 December 7th 6:30pm Watford

The committee will meet in January to design the programme for 2017 starting with the AGM in March.

News

MPs debate demise of gluten free prescribing

Transcript of email received from Isabel Ford, Coeliac UK

On 1st November, Kevan Jones MP led a debate in the House of Commons on coeliac disease and access to gluten-free prescriptions.

There was good attendance by MPs each armed with personal stories. These contributions made for a good debate and intervention on behalf of those with coeliac disease.

Kevan Jones MP described how the disease affects one in every 100 people in the UK, and he himself suffers from it. He then moved to criticise the decision of some clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to no longer prescribe gluten-free products. Around 40% of CCGs are now choosing to restrict or remove support for patients with coeliac disease. He highlighted there had been a lack of public consultations from CCGs, and the CCGs that have already removed access to prescriptions for gluten-free products have not outlined or implemented policies that offer alternatives to safeguard patients.

Jack Dromey MP and Jim Cunningham MP highlighted that this issue affected older people and younger people respectively, whilst Sir Gerald Howarth MP said the fact that many people inherited the disease from their parents meant costs were spiralling for young families. Kevin Foster MP suggested the provision of vouchers for gluten-free food as a halfway house solution, which the minister said he would consider.

Kevan Jones MP commented that it is the most vulnerable who will suffer from lack of prescriptions and called what some CCGs were doing a "false economy" because one hospital admission would cost more than the annual cost of prescriptions for an individual who adhered to a gluten-free diet. The NHS's existing procurement system was criticised and Kevan Jones MP further called for the return of pharmacy-led supply schemes.

Concluding his remarks, he said the issue required urgent intervention.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, David Mowat MP stated: *"The hon. Gentleman mentioned consultations. CCGs should not withdraw gluten-free products without a consultation. My understanding is that in all cases where that has happened, a consultation has taken place. If he can provide me with evidence of that not being so, I will follow up and take action. The information I have been given is that consultations should always have taken place.*

Finally, there is the issue of the postcode lottery. It is true that we give CCGs a lot of power in our system, in terms of making clinical decisions. The idea behind that is that they look at local considerations and balance the various options that they have. However, I will see to it that a review is done, hopefully within the next six months, of prescribing policies, and we will endeavour to come together with something that is more consistent, in a way that means we can actually make progress on this. I thank the hon. Gentleman for his contribution, and I thank everybody that has made an intervention in this debate. It has been a good debate, and a useful one for us to have had."

We will now be following up with the Minister and the MPs who attended and were invited by Members.

If you'd like to [read the full transcript](#), it is available online now.

If your CCG is restricting gluten-free prescribing, please get in touch with Coeliac UK or [visit our 'campaign with us on prescription' webpage](#).

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Please see the report by Tony Cartwright on the next page on our consultations with the Herts Valleys CCG

Gluten Free Food Prescribing Restrictions by the Herts Valleys CCG

Tony Cartwright

Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is responsible for the prescribing policy for the 70 GP practices in Hertsmere, Dacorum, St Albans, Harpenden, Watford and Three Rivers. If you live in the area covered by the CCG you will have received a letter or a text from your GP practice telling you about the restrictions that have been imposed on GP prescribing of gluten-free food. This said that the amount that could be prescribed is limited to 8 units a month for children and adults, 12 units for mothers who are breastfeeding and 9 units for women in the third trimester of pregnancy. The types of product that can be prescribed is now limited to fresh or long-life bread, bread/flour mix and pasta. If you need any more than the 8 units of these products or want any other product (pizza bases, rolls, crackers etc.) they will need to be purchased from the supermarket or health-food shop.

The Help Sheet from the CCG "Gluten-free support for patients/carers"

You should also have received a help-sheet from the CCG entitled "Gluten-free support for patients/carers". This tells you about foods that are naturally gluten-free, where to buy gluten-free products, gluten-free ingredients, useful tips and support.

Make sure you see your GP for a review each year

One thing which is very important is to see your GP every year for a review. Your GP should measure your height and weight, review your symptoms, consider whether you need any more assessment of your diet, and discuss vaccinations with you. They may arrange for you to have some blood tests. Your GP may not send you a request to make an appointment – it is up to you to ask for an appointment to see him or her.

Future restrictions on the brands of gluten-free product that can be prescribed?

We have been discussing with the Herts Valleys CCG a further restriction on gluten-free prescribing to a defined list of products – what is called a 'formulary'. We have now been told that they do not intend to introduce this until the spring of next year. We will remain in discussion

with the CCG to make sure that we try to include as far as possible all of the popular brands of gluten-free products with which you are familiar.

What should I do if I cannot afford to buy all of the gluten-free products I need?

If you are on a low income, on a zero-hours contract, on benefits, or disabled (and hence unable to get to a major supermarket to shop) and cannot afford to buy the extra gluten-free products you should make an appointment to see your GP. You should explain your circumstances to him/her. The Herts Valleys CCG restriction on prescribing is only guidance and an individual GP is able to prescribe what he feels an individual patient needs. If there is still difficulty, you should ring the Quality Team in the Herts Valleys CCG on 01442-898-865 and make a complaint. Ask for the complaint to be forwarded to the Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation team for them to contact you.

New Quality Standards for Coeliac Disease

The first ever Quality Standard on coeliac disease, published by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE), aims to drive standards in the diagnosis and care of people with coeliac disease.

The new standard sets out five key areas to improve diagnosis of coeliac disease and ensure that the support of patients with the condition improves their health and quality of life. One of the key themes of the standard is the need to address inequalities that might exist because of a patient's socioeconomic status, to ensure that those who need help most are being offered it.

Both offering annual review and having access to prescriptions for gluten-free food are noted as important levels of support for people with coeliac disease. In light of 10% of England's Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) removing gluten-free prescribing as a support for those with the condition, Coeliac UK is writing to all CCGs to make them aware of the new Quality Standard and to ask how they will plan to meet its criteria.

Event reviews



July saw our first home made traditional afternoon tea at Henderson Hall in Abbots Langley. My 89 year old mother suggested we had a piano player next time. A great idea! Thanks to all those who helped pull this together.

In September we had another fish and chip night at Godfreys and the summer party at Michelle West's house was another first. This time we had a barbecue which seemed to go down very well, and once again the weather held up. Again we thank Michelle and Jeff West for loaning us their home and we are all delighted Michelle has now fully recovered from her accident.

Food news

Sainsbury's

Anne Hodder

I have discovered a new range from Sainsbury's own label free from products. These include fish cakes with parsley sauce (pack of two) which are very good and a selection of quiches -cheese and onion and a bacon one which I also enjoyed.



There are also some savoury pies (currently untried). Their desserts include vanilla cheesecake ,chocolate tart, apple pie and lemon tart. I can recommend both the cheesecake and lemon tart.

There are also some cheeses available, although as far as I am aware cheese is gluten free anyway, but brownie points to Sainsbury's for some new products.

Eating out

Locally

Berkhamsted

Christine Smitten

I can recommend eating out in Berkhamsted . I am a Coeliac and I find most restaurants cater very well! **Zaza's** staff are very knowledgeable on the subject and have GF pasta and bread. They are very happy to adapt the menu if they can.

I must also mention **Bills** where there is a an excellent GF menu and a lovely young waiter there who is Coeliac himself so is really on the ball!

Even the latest high street Thai, **The Giggling Squid** has a good GF menu makes a very pleasant change.



The Gatsby is excellent and if it's brunch or dinner - pre cinema, I'm never disappointed.

For brunch, in fact any time of day, **Love Food** is a favourite. Then opposite them in lower Kings Road is Here who will also help where they can!

Obviously the regular chains are there too including **Ask, Carluccios, Pizza Express**, plus the pubs including **the Kings Arms, the Old Mill and the Boat!** So really spoilt for choice!

Ed's note: I hear **Porters** also do an excellent GF pie.

Whetstone

John Gardi

I would like to recommend a quality fish and chip restaurant. It has gluten free every Wednesday and it is absolutely fab. It is Oliver's Fish & Chips. 1366/68, High Road, Whetstone, London N20 9HJ, and also at 95 Haverstock Hill, London NW3 4RL.

REMEMBER IT ONLY SERVES GLUTEN FREE ON WEDNESDAYS

I enjoyed my cod and chips very much and have been back three times. www.oliversfishandchips.com

Stanmore

Shirley Slinger

I wanted to tell you about a recent visit to Lava Lanes in Stanmore (www.lavalanes.co.uk). You can bowl and/or eat and/or drink. The food was amazing and it was clearly labelled gluten free and other allergy foods. It was a great evening with friends, and I had no trouble ordering food. It was so nice not to feel awkward or different. The staff were lovely and the food was delicious. I would highly recommend it whether you bowl or just have a meal or drinks. After a certain time it's adults only but they also do children's parties earlier in the day. It's well worth taking a look at the website.

Leyburn, North Yorkshire

Michelle West



While in North Yorkshire I went to some lovely restaurants:

Thirteen, 13 Railway Street, Leyburn, DL8 5BB. The lady was Coeliac and had the best bread I have ever tasted.

The Sandpiper Inn, Market Place, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 5AT.

Berry's Farmshop and Cafe, Swinithwaite, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 4UH.

Campbell's supermarket also sold lovely baked gluten free bread.

Italy and Switzerland

Hotel Cristina, Sorrento, Italy

Michelle West

I booked this holiday from the Coeliac Crossed Grain magazine advertiser, Gill Holidays. The hotel was lovely with a three course meal every night. The hotel was a bit of a climb but lovely views, and a shuttle bus was free all day until late in the evening. Hope to visit more of Italy booking through her.

Lake Como, Italy and Wengen, Switzerland

Rosemary Barry

Grand Hotel Cadenabbia on the shore of Lake Como in Italy was almost excellent. Sometimes they bought pasta which wasn't GF, but which had been ordered. They quickly rectified the error and brought the correct dish. The food was excellent and the choices of anti-pasta were amazing. A very good hotel, with excellent service, situated in an ideal spot from which to get ferries north and south. I would go there again. My twin sister and I were highly satisfied with the hotel.



Lake Como

Wengen in Switzerland was another excellent area, but I couldn't find GF bread in the village anywhere. (I brought my own for the first few days), but the **Hotel Falcon** provided bread and other GF food and made sandwiches up for me for the last two days for a small charge.)

A good tip is to take flat bread to the hotel and store it in the fridge, making up a picnic daily, providing fillings from the local shops. Plenty of salad choices in Italy and Switzerland.

Recipes

Rum Chocolate Gateau

Jean Ivens

5oz (140g) Juvela white mix
1oz (25g) cocoa
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 level teaspoons baking powder
5oz (140g) soft brown sugar
2 eggs
6 tablespoons corn oil
1/2 teaspoon vanilla essence

Sift cocoa, flour, salt and baking powder into bowl, add soft brown sugar.

Put egg yolks into a small basin, whites in a larger basin.

Add oil, milk and essence to yolks and mix with a fork, pour into the centre of the dry ingredients and beat well.

Whisk whites until stiff and fold into the mixture. Pour into a lined 7" round cake tin and bake in a moderate oven for 40 - 45 minutes.

Syrup

Heat 4oz granulated sugar in 1/4 pint water until syrup dissolves and boil for 5 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons rum.

When the cake is cooked, leave in the tin and when cold pour over the syrup and allow to soak in overnight. Serve covered in whipped cream and decorated with chocolate flakes.

Warm Raspberry and Lemon Cake

From Nigella Lawson's book "Simply Nigella"

150ml light olive oil, plus more for greasing
Zest and juice of 1 unwaxed lemon
125g caster sugar
150g ground almonds
75g fine polenta
1 1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 tsp baking powder
3 large eggs
150 frozen raspberries (not thawed)

Preheat the oven to 180C (160C fan) and lightly grease a 20cm square tin with a dab of olive oil.

Beat the oil with the finely grated lemon zest, then add the sugar and mix together.

In a separate bowl, combine the ground almonds, polenta, bicarb and baking powder and fork together to mix well. Add a spoonful to the oil and sugar mixture, beating all the while, then add 1 egg, followed by about a third of the almond and polenta mixture, and so forth, until all the eggs and the almond and polenta mixture are used up and you have a smooth, sunny, yellow batter. Fold in the frozen raspberries by hand with a large spoon and smooth the mixture into the prepared tin.

Bake for 40 minutes, by which time the cake will start to come away from the edges of the tin, be brown on top, a cake tester will come out clean with all but a few golden crumbs. The minute the cake is out of the oven, pour or brush the lemon juice and leave until warm before eating.

Ed's note: This is even better cold and left a day or two before eating

