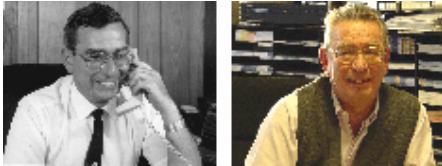


35 YEARS PROVIDING GLUTEN FREE FOODS

35 Years Providing Gluten Free Foods For people with coeliac condition or other food intolerances, variety, quality and stringent manufacturing practices are vital factors when selecting gluten- and wheat-free food products. The new EU regulations governing labelling of allergens on food packaging go some way in assisting anyone trawling through the maze of shopping for special dietary needs. However, another important factor is to buy from a trusted and reputable manufacturer that knows what's involved in caring for people with coeliac condition and other food intolerances. Gluten Free Foods Ltd is such a company, but add the fact that heading the firm is 'The godfather' of the free-from industry and nothing could be better!



Richard Ward Celebrates 35 Years

During 2004, Richard Ward Managing Director of Gluten Free Foods Ltd, celebrates 35 years in the 'special dietary needs' industry. He almost single-handedly started the UK's gluten- and wheat-free food market all those years ago and remains a driving force in its development, today. In fact, many refer to him affectionately as the 'godfather'!

How It All Started

35 years ago, Richard's daughter Janine was born. A personal celebration yes, but Janine was born with coeliac condition, at a time when very little was known about the life-threatening illness. The birth of Janine sparked a chain of events that led to the 'free-from' food industry, as we know it today.

In 1969, Richard had no experience of food manufacturing but had to learn fast to safeguard his daughter's health. Janine was born into a world that referred to coeliac condition as a 'disease', where ignorance abounded, there was no legislation for labelling on food packaging, no products available on prescription, no Coeliac society advice and when the medical fraternity concentrated more on telling people what they couldn't eat rather than what they should.

Consequently, Richard contacted food manufacturers to obtain ingredient listings for their foods. With the help of Dietitians, Richard commenced an 'at home' manufacturing process to make foods that excluded ingredients detrimental to his daughter's life. He reported regularly to hospital Dietitians at Great Ormond Street Hospital, about his home cooking efforts, his successes and his disasters! This regular feedback led to other families enquiring how they could help their children. This is when the gluten-free industry started!

It also marked the start of the Coeliac Society, the forerunner for Coeliac UK, as a small group of parents in the same position, joined Richard to form an organisation, intent on spreading the word via an A4 newsletter.

He began importing special gluten-free biscuits from Switzerland and passed vital information to parents via hospital Dietitians about the foods available abroad and how to purchase them. In 1972, Richard's second child, Ellis, who is now Sales & Marketing Director at Gluten Free Foods Ltd, was also born with coeliac condition.

By 1973, Richard had started manufacturing, and supplying gluten-free products by mail order. A major breakthrough came in home baking when he launched alternatives to the gluten-based flour-, bread-, and cake-mixes. Gluten-free pastas were introduced in 1979 and ready-made breads followed soon after. On 5th November 1982, Richard opened the world's first gluten-free bakery and the Master Baker at that time still works for Gluten Free Foods today.

At this time, there was still little or no information produced by doctors or pharmacists and there was no prescription service for people with coeliac condition. In fact, for the first 25 years since his encounter with the coeliac condition Richard has spent the majority of the time educating people from all occupations, from doctors to Dietitians, from individuals to manufacturers, an initiative that continues to this day.

It is only in the last ten years or so that the market has come to provide more foods for people on a gluten- and wheat-free diet. Today there are more and more manufacturers and suppliers than ever and this is not likely to stop as people become increasingly aware of food intolerances.

Gluten Free Foods Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Gluten Free Foods Limited established in 1994, is the modern-day version of Richard's earlier company and celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, as do its brands Barkat and Glutano. Today, Gluten Free Foods Ltd manufactures and supplies over 60 different everyday foods including staples like bread, pastas and cereals and snack-foods such as biscuits, chocolate-covered wafer bars and pretzels under the Barkat, Glutano, Glutano Organics and Valpiform labels, 30 of which are on prescription and, markets its products to 47 countries around the world.

Gluten Free Foods' products are widely available in leading supermarkets, pharmacies and health food stores, and have certification from the Vegetarian Society, Coeliac UK and are Kosher. All through his career, Richard has stood by his policy of adding no artificial colouring, flavourings, preservatives or synthetically produced gluten-free ingredients to his products a major difference between Gluten Free Foods Ltd and its competition. This single-mindedness has set in place stringent manufacturing processes creating a yardstick other companies measure quality by and aspire to.

In 2004, thirty-five years later, Richard Ward looks back and realises how far the industry has come and how much it has matured. Although thirty-five years is something to be proud of and celebrate, he humbles his achievements by celebrating the health of both his children and the service that others with coeliac condition now receive. The wealth of information available from the medical fraternity, Dietitians, Coeliac UK and gluten- and wheat-free manufacturers and suppliers, products available on prescription, ingredient labelling and the variety of foods available, mean no one should have to do without. **The 'godfather' of the gluten- and wheat-free market is delighted he managed to 'spread the word'!**

For further information regarding Gluten Free Foods Ltd and the company's product ranges, **telephone 020 8953 4444**