

**Minutes from Wales regional meeting held**  
**16<sup>th</sup> April 2008**  
**At Vale of Glamorgan Hotel.**

**Attended by:**

John Bennett – ABM Group Ltd  
Jacquie Spence – Rhondda Cynon Taff C.B.C  
Sandra Evans – Carmarthenshire C.C.  
Sandra Weigel – Carmarthenshire C.C.  
Jerry Pearson – Robot Coupe UK  
Paul Bayer – Falcon Foodservice  
Helen Davies – Powys C.C.  
Huw Davies – Rational UK Ltd.  
Janet Slade-Jones – Rhondda Cynon Taff C.B.C  
Simon Ellis – First in Service Ltd  
Miguel Nunes – Hobart UK

**Apologies:**

Chris Miles – Electrolux Foodservice  
Mike McDonald - Moffat

**1.0 Introduction and Welcome**

1.1 Jacqui Spence the Wales region Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions of all present took place around the table.

**2.0 Ron Hedicker – Falcon Foodservice**

Ron is the Business Development Manager for the Eloma brand of combination ovens. Ron started his presentation outlining his background in catering. He started his career in 1971 at the age of 16 as a Royal Marines Commando Chef and stayed with them for 24 years. After leaving the regiment he went on the work at the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital for the NHS and then move on to Falcon. He gave a good insight and interesting talk on the Eloma range of ovens.

### **3.0 Business Meeting**

- 3.1 Jacqui briefly went through the minutes of the last regional meeting at Cardiff in December 2007.
- 3.2 The minutes of the last National Executive meeting were also read through.
- 3.3 The recent changes to the NACC constitution were outlined.
- 3.4 Jacqui informed the meeting that £1000 was available for the region to dispose of and attendees were asked to provide ideas for what they would like to see done with the money. Email ideas to Jacqui Spence, Paul Bayer or John Bennett.
- 3.5 The next meeting are:  
**June 26<sup>th</sup> 2008** at Franks Ice Cream Factory, Cross Hands.  
**October 9<sup>th</sup> 2008** at Falcons Factory, Scotland. This would be an overnight stay and is provisional subject to numbers attending.  
**December 11<sup>th</sup> 2008** at Brains Brewery, Cardiff. Hic !

### **4.0 Lindsey Kearton – Welsh Consumer Council**

Lindsey is a Senior Policy Officer for the Welsh Consumer Council. The WCC was formerly the DTI and is funded by DBERR. Lindsey gave a presentation on 'Older People & Food Poverty' The current strategy priorities are, ensuring markets work for the consumer and putting users at the heart of public services.

Changes to consumer advocacy in Wales.

- Consumer redress
- Merging advisory and policy roles of 3 organisations
- New roles from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008

Older people and food poverty research issues covered.

- Current eating habits
- Potential barriers to accessing healthy diet
- Awareness / use of local initiatives/schemes
- Improvements needed

Shopping barriers for the elderly (+75 years of age)

- Low income
- Lack of local shops selling healthy foods
- Lack of transport
- Lack of motivation to go shopping

Policy recommendations

- Community transport services
- Promotion of integration activities
- Recognise signs of malnutrition
- Roles for supermarkets/food industry & CSR agenda

Jacqui thanked Lindsey for a very interesting presentation.

## **5.0 Lahiru Jayasekara – AKA Larry**

Larry is the Young Executive Chef of The Year.

During Larry's presentation, you could hear a pin drop! It was very emotional and enthralling.

Larry came to Britain from Sri Lanka just before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. He struggled to find work but his recently married wife's sister was able to find him his first job, as a kitchen porter. He spent his early years in catering learning from chefs working in the kitchens in Torquay.

He applied for a job with **Gordon Ramsey** who **interviewed him personally** and offered him a job working for Gordon. He eventually declined this offer of employment but took up the opportunity with Gordon a year later. He moved to London and worked very long hours, some up to 21 hours a day and stayed at a back packers lodge. He worked at the Savoy and worked his way up eventually working with Gordon on Friday nights.

Larry's parents were running their beach café in Sri Lanka when the Tsunami of Boxing day 2004 struck. They lost everything and Larry's father was missing for 3 days.

Larry returned briefly to Sri Lanka and when he returned to Britain he and South Devon College held an event that raised £2500 for Larry's village back in Sri Lanka.

He cooked for Michel Roux at Gordon's restaurant and was impressed with what he saw so offered him a job immediately with him at **Michel Roux's 'The Waterside Inn'**. Gordon didn't want Larry to go but had to accept he was leaving.

Falcon sponsored him for the Craft Chefs Competition for which he came second. At the 2008 Hotelympia show at London's Excel he won 2 Silver and 1 Bronze medals for his culinary skills.

By 2009 Larry hopes to achieve his first Michelin Star.

Jacqui thanked everyone for attending and the presenters for their presentations.

Meeting closed at 3.00pm.