

**30 NOVEMBER 2016**

## Can diet *really* cure diabetes?

BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW

**Leading** experts who will be speaking at the Guild debate say it can but not everyone agrees.

Book your ticket now to find out which foods can make a real difference and if there's still time to halt the UK's fastest-growing health crisis that threatens the existence of the NHS.

- **Venue:** The King's Fund, No.11 Cavendish Square, 11-13 Cavendish Square, London, W1G 0AN
- **Time:** 6pm-9pm; **Cost:** £10 members, £15 non-members. Light refreshments will be served after the event. If you haven't received our flyer, please check our website ([www.healthwriters.com](http://www.healthwriters.com)) or email [admin@healthwriters.com](mailto:admin@healthwriters.com) for more details.

## Christmas Party 2016

**BOOK NOW! TICKETS ARE LIMITED**

We are delighted to announce that our fabulous Christmas Party will take place on Monday 12 December at Dukes Hotel, Mayfair, voted Europe's leading boutique hotel. The party, sponsored by FitFlop, costs £12 for members and £18.50 for non-members.



On behalf of the Guild, it is my pleasure to welcome Viridian Nutrition as the new sponsor of *The Health Writer*. Cheryl Thallon, MD and founder, said: "The Guild of Health Writers has a powerful role in ensuring the highest standards are met in the health sector, both allopathic and complementary.

"The Guild and its newsletter provide a unique platform for sharing good practice and for debating the big issues of the day. Viridian Nutrition is equally committed to the highest ethical standards and is honoured to be supporting the Guild newsletter."

I know that many of you, when asked, say you like to have a print version of your newsletter. We all receive so many emails – including the pdf of *The Health Writer*! –

### Letter from the Editor



that sometimes it's a relief to just pick up an old-fashioned paper publication to read on the way to the office, over coffee or even in bed. So I am delighted to announce that Viridian Nutrition has generously offered to produce a print version of the newsletter for all Guild members – landing on your doormat very soon.

Finally, I am really looking forward to the two exciting events which will close a busy year for the Guild. The committee has worked hard to attract some great speakers for our diet and diabetes event on 30 November, where we look at one of today's hot health topics in depth. And, of course, there is our Christmas party on 12 December once again in the glamorous surroundings of Dukes Hotel. See you there!

Susan

## a DAY in the LIFE of ...

**Heather Stephen** hates to admit it but she has been writing for nearly three decades! Starting out on local papers in Manchester she moved south 20 years ago and has worked on medical titles, national magazines and newspapers, specialising in health and nutrition. Her in-house posts have ranged from reporter on *Hospital Doctor* to health correspondent on *best* magazine and she has freelanced on everything from *Woman's Weekly* to *Top Santé*.

"I feel so lucky to make my living from writing," she says. "It is such a privilege to be given the opportunity to tell someone's story in your own way. I love being creative, and to have the chance to improve people's health and happiness is definitely an added bonus."

### What are you working on now?

I am writing two features for *Inspire* – the magazine sent out seasonally by the Arthritis Care charity. One gives tips on how to keep well this winter and the other is how friends are great for your health. The friends' piece was particularly interesting. I have always valued my mates but never realised they could help me live longer, reduce my risk of dementia and high blood pressure and help me slim!

### How has your work changed over the years?

I have done more work for charities in recent years, writing for their member



magazines and websites. There is less change in this sector so you don't have to keep re-introducing yourself to editors,

the people are very nice to deal with and you can build up quite a regular series of commissions.

### What achievement are you most proud of?

When working at *Hospital Doctor* a colleague and I put together a piece which uncovered fresh evidence on the Hillsborough tragedy. Campaigners presented the findings in an attempt to reopen the Hillsborough Inquiry. The article sparked a lot of national press interest and won a Medical Journalists' Association award.

### What are the best and worst things about being a freelance?

I've never been great at being told what to do so being my own boss suits me down to the ground. Setting my own

hours means I can go to the children's special assemblies and sports days and no commute saves money as well as my sanity! On the down side, I don't enjoy chasing work and spending lots of time trying to secure new clients, but I am hoping my forthcoming website will bring in more business by clarifying what I can offer and showcasing my work.

### What are your work-related ambitions?

I would really love to move into other areas of writing such as copywriting. I think there is a lot of untapped potential work out there. I just need to track it down. I would also like to do more voluntary work and am set to talk to a local charity about donating some of my time to take on their PR and marketing.

### What tips or insights could you share with Guild members?

A freelance life gives you flexibility and freedom but can be lonely. I connect with other writers through social events organised by fantastic organisations like the Guild. And forums can be a brilliant way of sharing contacts and advice.

### And, finally, what do you like to do to relax when you're not working?

Being a bit of a show off, I love singing and acting. Last year I entertained nursing home residents with a programme of Christmas classics. I even had a few up dancing! I am a member of my local amateur dramatic society which is great fun and I will be making a twit of myself in their annual panto. Oh, yes I will!

## Expand your work with Twitter

### Diane Shipley

Since 2006, Twitter has racked up 310 million monthly users. If you're unfamiliar, it's a platform where people post 140-character messages called tweets that can be read by anyone who follows them (or who looks at their page). You can ordinarily follow up to 5,000 people and reply to, 'like' or retweet (rebroadcast to your followers any of their tweets). It's typically used for chatting about TV, news, public transport and minor life events. The tendency for people to share personal anecdotes makes it a natural forum for storytelling.

Visakan Veerasamy (@visakanv) regularly writes Twitter essays (using sequential tweets) covering everything from his job to his experiences of racism. "I think of it as trying out a bunch of thoughts, like a stand-up comedian trying new ideas on the road," he says.

Fiction writers use Twitter too. In 2012, Pulitzer Prize winner Jennifer Egan

released a short story called 'Black box' over nine days on the New Yorker fiction Twitter account (@NYerFiction), while Nick Belardes (@nickbelardes) invested two years in @smallplaces, believed to be the first Twitter novel. Elliott Holt (@elliottholt) created multiple accounts which interacted to tell a murder mystery as part of the #TwitterFiction online festival. But the ultimate challenge is to squeeze an entire story into a single tweet.



Over the past three years, O Westin (@microSFF) has posted almost 2,000 fantasy and sci-fi stories ("We established universal human rights, covering anyone inhabiting space stations or planets. Then we built a detention centre on Pluto.") Westin says it's a way to write that doesn't demand too much time or mental energy, but still feels rewarding. The character limit means you can only share a snapshot suggesting a larger story. "But it must have some tension, even if it's just in the mind of the reader."

Chloe Garner is the Artistic Director of Ledbury Poetry Festival (@ledburyfest) and says that Twitter offers revolutionary new opportunities for poets, as they can respond to events in real time. "It's a great form of protest: less of a romantic form and more of a nitty-gritty one."

Award-winning poet Ian Duhig (@ianduhig) has embraced this challenge, as has Mick Twister (@twitmericks), who writes news-based limerics. Garner thinks penning a tweet-poem every day would improve any writer's skills. "One of the things we see over and over [in competitions] is that poems are not edited enough...A tweet demands that you look at every word."



Poet Melissa Broder used her experience of condensing intense emotions to create @sosadtoday, where she shares her experience of depression in darkly funny snippets ('it's over between us... me to sanity'). She soon gained 350,000



followers and her essay collection *So Sad Today* was published earlier this year. Helen Ellis began many of the short stories in her collection *American Housewife* on her account @WhatIDoAllDay. Whether you get a book deal or simply explore a new way to use your talent, it's clear that Twitter offers far more to writers than an opportunity to debate minutiae.



**How we use it**  
Kirsty Higginson (@KirstyHigginson) wanted to write fiction but found the blank page overwhelming so she challenged herself to write a line a day of a Young Adult sci-fi story, tagging each tweet

### How to:

- Sign up at [twitter.com](https://twitter.com) using your name or the name you write under. Change the default egg image to your own picture or people will assume you're a troll or a bot (an automated account). If you plan to tweet fiction, consider a separate account to avoid confusion.
- Add relevant hashtags so people who don't follow you can find your work – and vice versa. Try #twitterstory, #micropostery or

#cnftweet (for creative non-fiction).

- Beware of sharing poems or stories in the form of screenshots: it excludes blind and partially-sighted users who access the internet using screen readers.
- If there's a series of tweets you are particularly proud of, use storify.com to preserve them, so that you (or others) can find them more easily later. Or submit your best ultra-short stories to [nanoism.net](http://nanoism.net), which publishes Twitter fiction.

#alineadaystory to make it easy for people to follow along. She plans to use this as the basis of a novel.

Genia Blum (@geniblum) is a choreographer and former dancer currently working on a memoir. She shares autobiographical fragments on Twitter, but that doesn't mean creating something from scratch. "Look for the pearls of wisdom in

your best pieces, scour your notes and your discarded work," she advises. "Then edit until only the essence remains."

**Acknowledgement:** *This piece appeared originally in Mslexia, the magazine for women writers (www.mslexia.co.uk). Diane Shipley is available for commissions relating to health and technology, and is also on Twitter (@dianeshipley).*



## MEMBERS' NEWS

### BMA award for Colleen

**COLLEEN SHANNON'S** writing was recognised at the BMA Patient Information Awards, where two of her projects were highly commended:

*Relationships and sex* (Clic Sargent) and *What to expect at the end of someone's life* (Marie Curie).



### Nutritional talks for women

Join nutritionist **DR MARILYN**

**GLENVILLE** for talks on Balancing Your Hormones Naturally (3 November at 41 Riding House St, London W1W 7BE and 26 November at St James Church, Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL). She will also be speaking at The Fertility Show in Olympia over the

weekend of 5–6 November. For more details, visit:

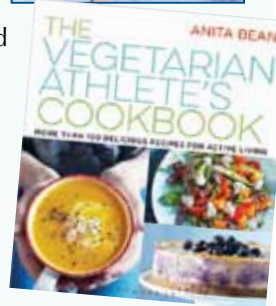
[www.marilynglenville.com/events/](http://www.marilynglenville.com/events/)



### The Vegetarian Athlete's Cookbook

This new book by registered nutritionist **ANITA BEAN** features more than 100 delicious, easy-to-prepare vegetarian and vegan recipes for healthy breakfasts, main meals, desserts, sweet and savoury snacks

and shakes. The book also includes expert advice on how to get the right nutrients to maximise your performance without meat. For review copies, please contact [anita@bean1.co.uk](mailto:anita@bean1.co.uk)



## GUILD COMMITTEE

**Janette Marshall**  
Honorary Co-chair

**Michele Simmons**  
Honorary Co-chair

**Janet Horwood**  
Honorary Secretary

**Susan Aldridge**  
Honorary Treasurer

**Lee Rodwell**  
Membership Secretary

**Charlotte Haigh McNeil**

**Sarah Stacey**

**Corinne Swainger**

ADMINISTRATOR  
**Jatinder Dua**

GUILD PRESIDENT  
**Dr Carol Cooper**

NEW FULL MEMBER  
**Edwina Revel**  
Programme manager for a wellbeing and nutrition team, registered nutritionist with the Association for Nutrition.

## FLASH NEWS

Don't forget to sign up for our diabetes event on 30 November 2016

## The Guild of Health Writers

**Administrator:** Jatinder Dua

**Address:** Dale Lodge, 88 Wensleydale Road, Hampton, Middlesex TW12 2LX.

**Guild office hours:** 9am-12pm Monday to Wednesday. **Tel:** +44 (0)20 8941 2977.

**Email:** [admin@healthwriters.com](mailto:admin@healthwriters.com).

Members are very welcome to send in contributions to Health Writer and to submit ideas for events and workshops. Copy deadline for next newsletter: 28 November, 2016.

This newsletter is sponsored by an educational grant from Viridian Nutrition, the vitamin company with an organic heart.

**viridian**  
Ethical vitamins with an organic heart

[www.viridian-nutrition.com](http://www.viridian-nutrition.com)

For further information on Members' News and forthcoming events visit: [www.healthwriters.com](http://www.healthwriters.com)