



# AFMS NEWS

Winter 2009

**AFMS**  
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## Chamonix Conference 2009

The 11<sup>th</sup> AFMS Winter meeting took place in Chamonix, Haute Savoie, France at the Hotel de l'Aiguille du Midi between the 30<sup>th</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> February.

20 delegates enjoyed 4 presentations, the theme of which was the teaching of medical French. There was strong representation from Bristol, with our ex-President Gareth Williams and Miss Olivia Lucy (Bristol Medical Student), talking on modern DVD-based teaching modalities.

French is not the only language that is being developed as Prof Williams hopes to eventually have a 4-way teaching modular system using English, French, Spanish and German.

Miss Faith Dyer discussed the training systems of doctors in France and the UK. In light of recent French and English doctors' protests, she also talked about the right of French and English doctors to take industrial action.

After Dr Janet Hall's talk on obesity, there was an interesting discussion about a very modern disease "Diabesity." This followed on nicely from the evidence presented at the Plymouth meeting by Prof Terry Wilkin concerning obesity and children (now published in the BMJ).

We also had time to do a little winter sports including walking



## AFMS NEWS

Welcome to the latest edition of the AFMS news!!! If there is anything you would wish to have included in future editions, please send an email to the administrative secretary at [tonyridge72@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tonyridge72@yahoo.co.uk)

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## • Meeting and Events

- **March 2009**  
Advanced French course. March 28th Wedgewood Memorial College. Stoke on Tent.
- **May 2009**  
Manchester Meeting. 15th May.
- **September 2009**  
AFMS Conference in Lyon France . 23rd to 26th September.
- **November 2009**  
Intermediate French course. Date TBC Wedgewood Memorial College. Stoke on Tent.



# AFMS NEWS

## A Message from our President – Dr Andrew Hassan

Following a meeting at the Hopital Cochin, I have been able to secure intense interest from French medical schools in a programme of visiting lecturers, to enable French medical students and graduates to be immersed in mother tongue medical English.

A number of possibilities have been identified:

- A day of lectures in English on current medical subjects, perhaps involving three lecturers visiting from the UK. Perhaps there would also be the opportunity to be involved in small group tutorials with French students and recent graduates.
- A structured day of tutorials for small groups of French students
- Exchanges between French and English students. These would be short attachments similar to electives, but of between 4 and 8 weeks.

I am therefore writing to all members of the society to establish a database of what the society might offer.

Initially I have secured agreement from the French side that reasonable travel expenses will be met, however until we see how it goes, there will be no fees involved for this activity. After an initial pilot phase to gauge success, we will be in a position to perhaps approach the French deans for reasonable funding beyond this. I believe some of you may find the prospect of a day or two in France an attractive proposition.

To enable this to move forward I would be grateful if members could offer the following information.

- Are you willing to take part in the visiting lecturer scheme in principle?
- Is English your mother tongue?
- What is your area of medical expertise?
- Have you lecturing experience to medical students, or more senior colleagues?
- Have you material for lectures ready to use (e.g. PowerPoint presentations), and if so on what subjects? (up to an hour in length including questions)
- Can we make your CV available to French colleagues?
- Do you know anyone else who might be interested? They need to join the AFMS to take part!!!
- Your email address. This will not be released to French colleagues without your consent.
- Do you know any senior staff (e.g. the Dean) at any medical school in the UK who could be approached about the possibility of short exchanges for French students?

I have definite interest from Angers, Toulouse and Paris and some interest from medical schools across France. I shall be suggesting a pilot in Angers, Toulouse and Paris to assess the success of this. Angers wish to move forward with this suggestion from February onwards. Paris are keen to go ahead as soon as possible. As you can see, time is pressing on so an early response would be appreciated.

If you are interested, email our admin secretary at [tonyridge72@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tonyridge72@yahoo.co.uk) to declare your interest and provide the information as requested.

Andrew Hassan

## **AFMS NEWS**

### **French holidays in Crisis ? Pas du Tout!**

Are the Brits losing their love for France? Ryan Air has recently cancelled some of its flights to rural France, for example flights from Stansted to the fine cities of Reims and Clermont-Ferrand have been cut from its schedule. The ever decreasing rate of the pound against the euro and credit crunch blues have made holiday go-ers think hard about where to spend their hard earned cash. Have we fallen out of love with French beaches, countryside or food? No, but the British have always been promiscuous travellers. If the price is right (as it was more recently in Spain), les plages en France may be forsaken by the Brits for for las costas in Spain or for fields outside of the euro currency zone. A recent report has shown that superb countryside in Austria and Italy is now extremely easy to reach thanks to no-frills airlines and British palates are seeking stimulation in Turkey, Thailand and all points east. In one respect, France can do very nicely without the British. Even without the help of the 12 million UK travellers who took French leave last year, the nation was still the most popular tourist destination on the planet for international visitors: 63million arrive from elsewhere around the globe.

Who are the most assiduous Francophiles of all? The French themselves, who know bonnes vacances when they see them. Many millions stay within their frontiers for the month of August. But there are reports that the demise of the British visitor to France are even wider of the mark than premature notices of Mark Twain's death. For every minute of every hour of every day in 2008, an average of 20 British travellers visited France. The main attractions are as, well, attractive as ever: the beaches of Brittany and Gascony, the Alps, the towns of Provence and the Dordogne. The British will always have Paris as their numéro un city, not least because of the acceleration in Eurostar services to the capital. At just 155 minutes by rail from central London, Paris Gare du Nord is closer than Durham, Manchester and Swansea. But increasingly, British travellers are discovering their own versions of la vraie France: great cathedral cities such as Chartres and Troyes, spectacular mountain scenery speckled with medieval villages in the Pyrénées, even the absurdly accessible Côte d'Opale between Calais and Boulogne. We are seeking out regional cuisine and wine - and in the process discovering that Alsace-Lorraine and France's Basque Country are gastronomic laws unto themselves. "It has been said that every man has two countries - his own and France," wrote E Hope Samson in Everybody's Pocket Travel Guide to France, a book published so long ago that the nation attracted only three million visitors a year, some of whom travelled third class from London via Newhaven and Dieppe to Paris. This journey took about four times as long as the present Eurostar service. This year, from the cultural thrills of Lille in the far north to the sultry climes of southern Corsica, France is more accessible - and seductive - than ever.

### **Membership fees**

There have been problems with some banks not paying membership fees this year despite standing orders being set up, in some cases, for many years. I have tried to contact the affected individuals by email or letter and have been able to re-instate most memberships without any problems. However, if I do not have your correct postal or email address, I may not have been able to contact you and therefore your membership will have lapsed.

If you are reading this on the website, or have borrowed a friend's copy, and wish to contact me, please email me at [helen.sykes@nhs.net](mailto:helen.sykes@nhs.net) – or write to me at 20 Dunelm Road, Elm Tree Farm, Stockton on Tees, TS19 0TS.

Reminder – we would like all members to pay by standing order from this July, so I will be contacting those (apart from our overseas members) who traditionally have paid by cheque.

Helen Sykes, Membership Secretary



# Back Page Notes

## Lyon Conference 23rd September to 26th September

The AFMS is pleased to announce that its 26th Annual Conference will take place in Lyon, France from the 23rd September to the 26th September 2009. Lyon is France's third largest city, situated at the confluence of the Rhone and Saone rivers. A hub of transportation and commerce since Roman times, the modern city was built primarily on the silk trade. Today, it is a bustling modern metropolis with a beautiful old city (called Vieux Lyon) in the centre. One immediately recognizes the cityscape by the striking basilica that overlooks the city from on top of the hill called "La Fourviere."

Lyon was an important centre for literature during the French renaissance, giving its name to a circle of poets including Maurice Scève and Louise Labé. Lyon is also nestled between two of France's most important wine regions; the Beaujolais and the Cote du Rhone regions and we are hoping to include a visit to one of these regions during the meeting. More details and a booking form will be included in the next newsletter.



Lyon cityscape



The village of Beaujolais

## Manchester Meeting—15th May 2009

The 13th North West Regional Meeting will take place on Friday 15th May at the Alliance Francaise building in Manchester. It will start at about 7pm and finish about 9.30pm. A booking form is included in this newsletter. It is only £10 per person and free for students. The AFMS would welcome any members who would like to make a presentation / or from students who would like to present on a medically related topic. Two £50 prizes will be made available to two students who deliver the best presentations on the day and these students may have the chance to be invited to Lyon for our annual conference.

Please complete the booking form enclosed if you would like to attend.

### Information Request—Are you a British GP living in France?

Pierre Radice, Secretary of the AMFB, is looking for any AFMS British colleagues who are working and exercising medicine in France. He is looking for assistance to help with a study on this subject, by Pr CANTIN, lecturer of the Biostatistic and Medical Information technology of the Medical University of Dijon. If anyone could help Pierre please could you contact him at [pierre.radice@wanadoo.fr](mailto:pierre.radice@wanadoo.fr)

### Committee

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Student Representatives  
Emilia Holland  
Laurie Hanna

### British GP in France

Victor Smith is a GP in Edinburgh. He will be taking a sabbatical in France from Jan to June 2010. He is keen to learn about the French medical system and would welcome any contacts with GP's in or around Paris. If you can help please contact him on email

[victorsmith@hotmail.com](mailto:victorsmith@hotmail.com)

### Administrative Secretary

Please send details of any change of address, incorrect addresses, subscriptions and changes in email to

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