



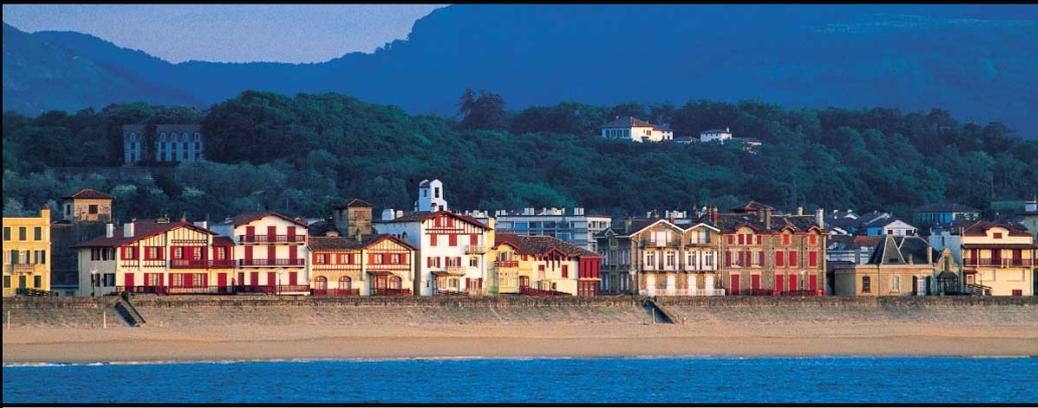
AFMS NEWS

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Biarritz Conference 2nd October to the 5th October 2013



Our recent conference in Biarritz gave us a memorable insight to this wonderful area of France and the Basque way of life.

Pascale MACE started the conference in her usual well-organised and clear style with a presentation on protein HER2 and the potential for much more targeted treatment of cancers as our understanding of the fine detail improves. She concentrated on breast and bowel cancer with a review of normal and abnormal cellular mechanisms and the scope for ...imab and ...inab drugs to be tailored to the specific abnormalities in individual disease. She reminded us of the present lack of specificity and sensitivity of tests and therapy as well as the potential for novel side-effects.

John ALTRIP showed us the other end of medicine, far from the laboratory in relating his experiences as a volunteer at a visiting cleft lip and palate surgical unit in the Philippines provided by the charity 'Saving Faces'. He acted as pre assessment for the surgical teams and had to make hard decisions to refuse individuals not suitable for surgery the same day who might have travelled for several days for their one chance of a normal life. He showed the etiology of mid facial deficits and harrowing pictures of local people of all ages with these socially damaging conditions. The surgical results in the short time the teams were present were astonishing. Follow up is clearly impossible in almost all cases.

Paul BENFREDJ tried to put us off our lunches with pictures of ano-rectal lesions in Crohn's disease! His lucid presentation of the differences between the different types of IBD and the rapid advance in treating the more distressing symptoms such as incontinence and pain specific to anal lesions was very informative. As ever, taking the patient's wishes into account, but not rushing into treatment that cannot be reversed and might have serious consequences, is key. Jean-Louis LARGE told us about the use of PRP, platelet rich plasma, in the treatment of sports injuries.

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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 (at) yahoo.co.uk Please also can you inform Tony of any changes in either home or email.

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Warwick Medical weekend April 2014
Who's Who.
Did you Know?

• Meeting and Events.

- February 2014
AFMS Winter Meeting Chamonix - 30th January to the 2nd February,
- April 2014
French Medical Weekend, Warwick. 4th to the 6th April,
- September 2014
Scientific Conference Durham UK - 17th to the 20th September.

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Mike KELLY and **Patrice METAYER** gave presentations on their experiences of complaints work and the various regulatory and civil systems in England and in France. It is safe to say that both countries have incredibly complex systems that take a very long time to resolution. I will make no attempt to describe the algorithms they showed and the tortuous routes that complainants take in the two jurisdictions. In brief, most of the money in settlement cases goes to lawyers; no-fault compensation is fraught with difficulties. Expert witnesses have an extraordinary amount of work to do in even quite simple cases, but fortunately, on both sides, settlements are almost always agreed without a full court appearance. The cascade of acronyms from both speakers demonstrated the depth of knowledge required to undertake this work, but also suggested that attempting to progress a claim must be very difficult for an individual. (Try for example to understand **ONIAM**, **CRCI**, **CRUQPC** on the French side!)

Helen MACKAY gave us a personal view of her attempt to have some period of her past **FRCS** training in France. Taking time out meant a delay in her completion of training and no income. Getting adequate cover to work in France seemed extremely difficult and she spent an unpaid period acting well below her level of competence. The bureaucracy on both sides of *la Manche* almost defeated her, but Liverpool folk are resilient, particularly red-haired orthopaedic surgeons. **Vincent GUION** from *Midi-Pyrénées* presented to us his bid for the **Prix J Foray**. He wishes to study the potential for telemedicine in the care of patients requiring palliative care in nursing homes, in French, **EHPAD**, établissements hospitaliers pour personnes âgées dépendantes. His fluent English presentation about the need for palliative care and the requirement to provide it in more homely situations was impressive. He plans to spend an extended period with Scottish experts. (We fear the quality of his English might be adversely affected by going to Dundee, however.) One point of vocabulary for the British. *Le bassin de santé* means a mobile multidisciplinary team. Vincent is going to be a very important member of the international GP community in due course, it appears.

No fewer than 6 students presented their experiences in the **James Tudor** prize competition. **Lorna CLEMENS**, **Bryony HOPKINSHAW**, **Colm MCALINDEN**, **James MCDONALD**, **Gordon MCKENZIE** and **Sonia SADHEURA**

The presentations were very varied from a case report of dengue fever to the problems of doctor and patient not sharing a language, to a quite technical review of a case of eye trauma. The quality overall was good, with audience participation being requested from the students, and being enjoyed by the audience. There has to be a winner, and **Sonia Sadheura** was awarded first prize at the gala evening. The others shared second place.

We always feel a little sorry for the person who has to start on Saturday morning, but **Julia GROSSAC**'s report of her study for the **J Foray** prize in 2011 was truly a great way to commence. She studied advanced imaging of traumatic brain injury at Cambridge, showing that, like in stroke, there is an area of impairment in the volume around the damage visible on conventional imaging. These pericontusional regions seem to match the clinical deficit noted by patients, and there may well be a suitable approach, like thrombolysis in stroke, that can rescue more useful function. **John BEAVAN** teased us with his title '*La Petite Reine et la Santé*'. He presented the evidence for increased exercise in middle and even old age, with particular reference to cycling. The world champion time trialist for persons over 100 years started his cycling at 68!

Janet HALL and more importantly **Sophie TATE**, perhaps the first patient to present at our meetings, gave a salutary lesson to us about the need to consider what the patient tells us, and not what our prejudices from our specialist practice suggests. She has a rare condition indeed, but was badly handled for 5 years until **Dr Google** gave her the answer of **Hughes syndrome** (seronegative anti phospholipid alpha). Treatment subsequently has transformed her life, but at the great loss of those years of her early 20s. Psychiatric diagnoses should be made for positive reasons and not by default. Her blog of a hypochondriac should be compulsory reading for doctors, particularly those she suggests are 'arrogant pricks'. (Janet translated this very elegantly.) Our profound thanks to **Sophie**, and I think we would all like to add our apologies on behalf of our colleagues, while remembering that we are none of us free of hubris. A very necessary and salutary lesson.

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Michel BISMUTH and Marie-Françoise CHATELET told us about the new national structure for continuing professional development in France. Not completely surprisingly the system has been organised from the centre with administrative, political and then scientific oversight groups. Courses have to be signed off as fulfilling educative criteria. Reflective practice with audit cycles seem to be the core, and Mme Chatelet described one such programme on common ophthalmological conditions. There was a baseline questionnaire, a study day with specialist input, then a second mini-audit with a follow up meeting. The structure sounded excellent, but there were some questions raised about the costs involved for GPs, and also the practicability of such an approach to cover all the areas of learning required. Certainly the preliminary sessions were well received by participants with defined learning outcomes. The French members were not a little surprised by the appraisal and reaccreditation requirements in UK where the licence to practice can be lost if CPD is not undertaken. We might return to this topic fruitfully in future years.

The conference was rounded off in fine style by Marie-Eve ROUGE BUGAT who demonstrated a new way go involving GPs in the care of patients undergoing chemotherapy. In this work the GP is sent information prepared by specialists and GPs about side effects of chemo protocols. This permits a much greater involvement and potentially is therapeutically valuable. Certainly most participant GPs welcomed the data sheets and made use of the information. There was a lot of discussion about tailoring the information and keeping the data current.

As always the social programme added greatly to the enjoyment of all participants at this year's meeting. We were introduced to a part of France many of us had not visited before, with its mixture of French and Spanish culture, but above all its Basque character.

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On Wednesday evening we were given a presentation on the culture, language and geography of the seven counties which span the present border and the western edge of the Pyrenees. A proud nation with a history of mountain farming and deep sea fishing, including the whale hunts until last century.

The accompagnants enjoyed morning visits to Bayonne, Fontarabie and Hendaye.

In the afternoons we went far and wide, visiting Basque villages and monuments such as the palatial home of the author of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Our opportunity to try chocolate with added piment d' Espelette was not to everybody's taste.

I think we all felt that providing a son et lumière for us on Thursday night was a touch of genius. The lightning across the bay as we ate on the waterfront was quite mesmerising, (except for Belinda whose dish of langoustines filled to the top with water before she could get under cover. She was equally wet!).

The gala evening was quite different this year, with everyone sporting red scarves as we enjoyed songs in three languages in an old church before watching pelote basque au Fronton:

Jeu de paume (English: "palm game") is a ball-and-court game that originated in France. It was an indoor precursor of tennis played without racquets, though these were eventually introduced. It is a former Olympic sport, and has the oldest ongoing annual world championship in sport, first established over 250 years ago. Originally spelled *jeu de paulme*, it is sometimes called *courte paume*. Dinner was taken overlooking the court in the restaurant du trinquet, the trinquet being the back wall of the pelote court.

It was a shame that Saturday brought clouds as the afternoon trip up la Rhune, the mountain overshadowing Biarritz promised majestic views across the bay and into the mountains. However, the rack and pinion train (train à crémaillère) trip was special in itself, with wild ponies and wilder scenery, and the final trip through the very varied countryside with the typical Basque architecture was stunning and sunny.

Altogether an excellent introduction to the Basque way of life in this beautiful part of France. We thank the French side for their organisation and the many surprises they produced for us. If you would like to see photographs from the conference please visit either our Facebook page, the AMFB website or send an email to Joe Girgis who will send you a link. (girgis7(at)aol.com)

DAVID BELL



Back Page Notes

Chamonix Winter Meeting.

The 16th AFMS Winter meeting is scheduled to take place in Chamonix, Haute Savoie, France at the Hotel de l'Aiguille du Midi from the 30th

January to the 2nd February 2014.

The hotel is a Michelin recommended hotel for value and comfort and is 3km from the centre of Chamonix.

It has 40 comfortable rooms and a restaurant, offering a traditional quality cuisine, a wide variety of dishes and Savoy specialities. Travelling to Chamonix is very easy. Geneva is the closest air port and various companies offer transfers with a drop off and collection to and from the hotel. One company is called Chamexpress and it offers 30 departures a day (www.chamexpress.com). If anyone would like to give a presentation at the meeting, please let the admin secretary know when returning the booking form, enclosed in this newsletter.



Medical French.

Weekend 4th to the 6th April 2014.

The 22nd French Medical Weekend Course 4-6th April 2014 will take place at Warwick University Campus. This established and highly regarded course provides essential medical French and the confidence to use it. It is invaluable for doctors and medical students intending to study or work clinically in French speaking countries or with organisations such as Médecins sans Frontières.

Teaching is in small groups, according to the level of spoken French-speaking; All levels from basic (GCSE/O-Level) to fluent are accommodated. Tutors are experienced teachers, including French-speaking doctors, professional linguists and UK-trained doctors who have worked in France and you can read more about the tutors in the insert in this newsletter.

Founded in 1992, the course continues to prove a popular springboard for those wishing to work in French. In 2012, Zara Bieler, a British GP with experience both training and working in France and UK, became course organiser.

The course fees include en suite accommodation, all meals, tea and coffee, and a comprehensive course handbook covering general vocabulary, the systems of the body, primary care, medical emergencies, prescribing, etc.

Standard fee: £195 for students and £395 for doctors and other professionals.

The 2014 course has places for 40 doctors and 30 students. Recent courses were heavily over-subscribed; early application is advised. For registration or further information, contact: Christine Greenwood, School of Clinical Sciences, Clinical Sciences Centre, University Hospital Aintree, Longmoor Lane, Liverpool L9 7AL. Tel: 0151 529 5885 email: c.greenwood@liverpool.ac.uk



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Facebook is a social network that connects people with friends and others who work , study and live around the world. The AFMS is now has a up and running Facebook page.

So if you want to keep up with friends and other members, please