



# AFMS NEWS

Autumn 2008

AFMS  
www.anglofrenchmedical.org

Issue number 54  
Charity Number 327706

## AFMS Conference Plymouth October 1st to 4th 2008



The 25th Meeting of the AFMS and AMFB took place between the 1st and 4<sup>th</sup> October in Plymouth, Devon.

The conference started with an update by Noritza Torossian from Toulouse, on the teaching of medical English to French medical students. English has been compulsory in French Medical Schools since 1992 but many students are not happy with lessons despite there being more than 180 hours of tuition per year which includes reading and writing papers in English. There are formal English examinations in consultation skills with both patients and colleagues. Developments continue with a meeting of interested parties which was held in Paris on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2008 in Paris (AFMB and AFMS were participants).



Christopher Turnbull discussed the use of a type of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanning in the diagnosis of different types of Parkinson's disease/syndromes entitled "Une évaluation de DaTSCAN dans le diagnostic de la maladie de Parkinson". There is clinical overlap between different types of Parkinson's disease; there is a 67% diagnostic error rate in primary care and even specialists make about 20% errors. Main clinical criteria are the encapsulated in the "UKPDS Brain Bank". In order to address the diagnostic issues in difficult cases one can use a DaTSCAN which uses a cocaine analogue which adheres to the pre-synaptic dopamine transporters in the caudate and putamen nuclei; if uptake is absent or reduced, Idiopathic Parkinson's is the diagnosis. An audit in Merseyside showed that this scanning modality altered management in 71% of patients in whom the diagnosis was difficult.

The next four presentations were fascinating insights into the lives of famous doctors from the past, both French and English. John Murray discussed John Snow "the first epidemiologist". However, it turns out that he was famous for the wrong thing, i.e. for establishing that Cholera was a water-borne disease. He was in fact one of the first anaesthetists who, remarkably, did not kill one person with chloroform. Despite this he was credited for describing the 1852 cholera epidemic around Golden Square when there were 5000 deaths surrounding the water pump in Broad Street; most of the work was done by one of his colleagues.

Saltram House

Gala Dinner



## 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)

## In This Issue

Plymouth 2008—News and Views

The James Tudor Prize  
Chamonix - Winter  
Conference 2009  
French Restaurant  
Crisis

Medical French Week-  
end Burton Manor.

Back Page Notes.

### • Meeting and Events

#### • November 2008

Advanced French  
Course Stoke.  
22nd November.

#### • January 2009

Medical French Week-  
end Burton Manor.

#### • Jan / February 2009

AFMS Winter Confer-  
ence Chamonix. January  
29th to February 1st .

#### • May 2009

Manchester meeting.  
Date TBC

#### • September 2009

AFMS Conference in  
Lyon France . Date TBC

## AFMS NEWS

### France's restaurants feel the pinch

Nearly 3,000 restaurants and cafes in France have closed this year as the credit crunch begins to bite. A report from "The Independent" says that suddenly, the only people with any time for long lunches across the Channel, are the English. Once upon a time, you had to eat your lunch early in Paris or not at all. By 12.30pm, the tables in all the decent, affordable restaurants were taken. If you were late, you had the choice between the doubtful, unswept brasserie on the corner, a McDonald's or something even more un-French, a sandwich at your desk. No longer. All over Paris – all over France – restaurant tables are standing empty. The takings of French restaurants and cafes have plunged by 20 per cent this year. Nearly 3,000 restaurants and cafes have gone bust in the first half of 2008 – a 30 per cent increase on the same period last year.

Alarm bells are ringing in the French restaurant industry, but also in the French government. Bernard Picolet, 59, is the patron of an excellent corner restaurant, Les Amis du Beaujolais, a couple of hundred yards from the Champs Elysées in the 8th arrondissement of Paris.

"I have been here for more than 20 years, and my father and uncle before me. I have never known custom to be so poor," he said. "People will tell you that it's because of the economic crisis or it's because of the smoking ban [which came into effect in cafes and restaurants in February] or because there are no Americans around. Yes, of course, it is partly the fault of those things but it is also something much worse than that and, I fear, it's not going to get better. The French, these days, are no longer eating like the French. They are eating like the English.

"Younger French people today don't understand or care about food. They are happy to gobble a sandwich or chips, rather than go to a restaurant. They will spend a lot of money going to a nightclub but not to eat a good meal. They have the most sophisticated kinds of mobile telephone but they have no idea what a courgette is. They know all about the internet but they don't know where to start to eat a fish."

M. Picolet, whose restaurant is recommended by most Paris food guides, says that he has lost one in five of his customers since the start of the year. At one time, you had to wait for a table to eat at Les Amis on the Rue du Berri. Now, every lunchtime, there are swaths of empty white tablecloths.

"If it weren't for my faithful, regular customers, I would be dead," M. Picolet said. "And do you know who my most faithful customers are? The English. There are many English people who work around here and they still like to eat a good lunch. The French? The younger French, at any rate. Pah!"

According to a report yesterday by the French financial insurance company Euler Hermes SFAC, no fewer than 1,782 "traditional" French restaurants went bankrupt in the first six months of this year – a 25 per cent increase on 2007. The victims are mostly low or middle-range neighbourhood restaurants, rather than the gastronomically ambitious and high-priced.

There has been a gradual movement away from the French tradition of restaurant-eating towards buying sandwiches or bringing them from home. Even at the seaside this summer, restaurants have been complaining that the tourists – French and foreign – have been eating a sandwich or picnic on the beach rather than sitting down for a proper meal."

Another phenomenon was also identified yesterday by François Simon, the much-feared restaurant critic of the French newspaper Le Figaro. Simon said there was also a typically French war of nerves going on between suffering restaurants and their more "careful" customers. Those people who do still frequent restaurants, he said, are being more restrained about what they order. Some are finding themselves harassed – even ejected – by angry waiters or restaurateurs. At the Aux Lyonnais restaurant in Paris, owned by the celebrity chef Alain Ducasse, diners who decline to order an aperitif are told that their meals "will take a long time to prepare". "This is a classic ploy," Simon said. French bloggers, reacting to news of the restaurant crisis, have accused restaurateurs of "spitting in their own soup" by taking advantage of another European fact of life – the euro. French restaurant prices had risen out of proportion to inflation, they complain, because owners have exploited the switch from francs to euros.

"With high prices, rude waiters and no cigarettes allowed... people prefer to invite a few friends to eat and drink at home. It's cheaper and more fun," one contributor wrote.

M. Picolet is convinced that deeper forces are at work. "It starts in the home," he said. "French people are going American, eating snacks in front of the TV. How can you expect them to appreciate a good meal? My uncle and father ran this restaurant before me and my son is working with me now, but he and his wife, seeing how things are going, want to do something else. When I retire, this place will probably close too. "One day, we will look around and ask what happened to all our restaurants but by then it will be too late."

Printed with kind permission by The Independent Newspaper

# AFMS NEWS

Continued from front page.....

Paul Benfredj gave us an insight into the life of Jean Arnous, "Founder of Proctology" who established the first specialised gastroenterology service in France. He revolutionized the surgery of haemorrhoids, as well as anal fissures and fistulas.

Jean Louis Large spoke on « Le Baron Larrey, chirurgien des armées ». A great humanitarian and fast amputator of limbs, famous for being an egalitarian many years before Political Correctness and anti-racist legislation; he conceived the flying ambulance and front line surgery. Napoleon's great doctor, he was recognised by both Napoleon and the enemies of France as a great man.

We have all heard of Nissen's fundoplication and Walford Gillison talked about Rudolf Nissen, a pioneer in oesophageal surgery. His mother was Jewish which meant he had to leave Nazi Germany and, via Turkey and the USA, he eventually settled in Switzerland. The operation was initially used for penetrating injury of the stomach and when he met an old patient whom he had treated for this who, by chance, had his reflux cured; he started to use "fundoplication" to treat oesophageal reflux.

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>:** Friday kicked off with Nicola Strickland illustrating her presentation with many excellent pictures. "The contribution of MRI to Oncology", much discussion followed.

There are clearly many facial surgery experts in France and we were treated to a Tour de Force by Lauront Guyot from Marseille. He discussed newer ways to address abnormalities of facial structure that require surgical correction as well as those changes associated with ageing; addressing not only the skin, but also the skeletal structure and the teeth. Functional assessment of the whole facial structure is key to this approach in order to ensure a good cosmetic result.

Being a Diabetologist myself I was like a rabbit in headlights listening to Prof. Terry Wilkin from the Peninsula Medical School treating us to probably the most fascinating series of figures and statistics that this author has heard for some time. He spoke about a type 2 pre-diabetic study in children looking at physical activity (measured electronically), gas exchange and blood flow as well as bone density. There were many non-intuitive findings that politicians (and the profession) will have to inwardly digest: e.g. children taken to school by car expend have the same energy, when other activities are measured, as those who walk. Another observation is that poorer children compensate for less physical activity at school by increasing it outside. Importantly, excessive weight gain occurs between birth and 5 years of age and then tends to flatten out. So, the anti-obesity boat has been missed by the time children start school! Moreover, the median Body Mass Index (BMI) has not changed since 1990, whereas the top quartile has, suggesting that there is not an epidemic of obesity and insulin resistance, but rather a problem with a sub-group of the population. This seems to be a relationship between the obesity of mothers and obesity within their daughters; AND between fathers and sons.....

Six students competed for the James Tudor Prize of £800, this was a closely-run race, won by Thomas Kelly from Manchester, see separate report on the back page of this newsletter.

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October.** After a fantastic Gala Dinner in the Officers' Mess at the home of the Royal Marines hosted by "Colours" (a Royal Marine Colour Sergeant) with many delegates retiring "tired and emotional" the last session was, rather amazingly perhaps, attended by a large majority of delegates.....

Paul Ward (Plymouth) updated us on childhood cancers with many excellent photographs and images. He also outlined the issues faced due to nearest Specialist Centre being in Bristol, 2 hours drive away.

This was, appropriately, followed by another keynote address by Prof. Bertrand Macé facing up to the problems faced by childhood cancer survivors who often have problems with fertility due to the success of the selective poisons used to cure them of their previous cancers. Ongoing developments include trying to generate spermatozoa from pre-pubertal testicular tissue which can then be used for Intra-Cytoplasmic Spermatozoa Injection (ICSI). Research continues in mice and now is starting in humans.

The last session was an HIV/AIDS session led by Annie Van De Wielle and Rex Melville. After a detailed tour of the virology of HIV from Annie Van De Wielle, Rex Melville spoke about his clinical experiences in Burundi, Africa. Some anti-retroviral drugs are now free whereas almost all non-HIV related illnesses still demand payment from (poor) African patients (at least in Burundi). Point of care testing is now becoming available and this will allow cheaper and so, more, testing for HIV. Essentially there are now local guidelines which are being implemented by local Health Care Staff, this permits "buy in"; and after diagnosis even second-line therapy is available. Nevertheless, this is precarious and slow progress. Overall the 25<sup>th</sup> conference was a great success and many thanks are due to the local organisers, Paul Ward and Sean Bennett. **Dr Mark Savage**

**If you wish to see over 200 photographs from the conference email [girgis7@aol.com](mailto:girgis7@aol.com). A blank email with subject "AFMS Plymouth" will guarantee you a personalised invitation from Jo Girgis to view his pictures on the Kodak gallery website.**



# Back Page Notes

## The James Tudor Prize Plymouth 2008

**The James Tudor Foundation** ([www.jamestudor.org.uk](http://www.jamestudor.org.uk)) is a charitable trust that supports medical research and education projects. It supports the AFMS/AMFB and permits us to give financial aid to 6 students (or recent students) to attend the annual meeting and to provide a large prize of £800 to the winner of the best presentation, voted on by the delegates.

On this occasion all the students were British, but we would also encourage French students to partake in future years.

The presentations were a mixture of medical information and also a résumé of the elective.

Katherine Murnal, from Peninsula Medical School, now working in Birmingham as an FY1 doctor, spoke on her time in Martinique in the Caribbean. She studied Obstetrics and Gynaecology split with Paediatrics. She encountered many local diseases such as Dengue fever and also saw several cases of Kawasaki disease.

Marc Bailey, an FY1 in Leeds talked enthusiastically on Laparoscopic Aortic Aneurysm Repair which he experienced in Poitiers. He was able to assist in operations as well as practice his own surgical skills on pigs, primarily renal transplantation experiments. With regard to Laparoscopic Aortic Aneurysm repair, the results seem to be no worse than traditional open operations. His French colleagues were impressed with British approach to clinical medicine and Marc, conversely, was "blown away" by their junior surgeons' skills

Ruth Dodwell, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student from Liverpool, went to Lyon. Her main aim was to improve her French (successfully achieved). She undertook a paediatric attachment and found a different approach to examining children, unlike the UK, parents not required to be present. In neonatology she was in charge of 4 children, but thankfully (she said!) prescriptions of food and medicines were checked by doctors, this ensured a rapid, and steep, learning curve. Ruth found the French hygiene approach much better than the British with much more hand cleaning in evidence. Everyone ate a fantastic €3 lunch together which was a fantastic social event. Rebecca Grossman, who could be described as a "World citizen", being born in Africa, and being half Swiss, studied Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Lille on an elective from King's College London. There are of course many things that are identical, but she noted that breast disease is treated by gynaecologists in France and that epidural anaesthetic is used much more commonly in France. Isla Wormwald travelled from Chamonix to Plymouth to present. She is presently a Leeds 5<sup>th</sup> year student presently in Chamonix (Ifremmont) doing an elective in mountain medicine. At l'Ifremmon they provide advice, and perform research into mountain medicine. L'Ifremmont is led by dynamic chap (Manu) who is an advisory to the makers of James Bond films and a contributor to many journals. She has been asked, and has undertaken, to translate "Petit Manuel de Médecine de Montagne" written by the Chef de Service de l'Ifremmont.

Thomas Kelly, a student in Manchester, presently in the 4<sup>th</sup> year talked on peripheral vascular disease, very well illustrated advances using photographs and using real case reports that he encountered in Paris. For example "How to treat carotid stenosis?" in Paris one uses local anaesthetic and this permits the surgeon to check the patients neurological status whilst operating.

The winner was Thomas Kelly who was presented with a plaque and a cheque for £800 by Rod Shaw from the James Tudor Foundation in the Officer's Mess at the base of the Royal Marines at the Gala Dinner.



## AFMS—Course in Medical French, Burton Manor College Hotel, The Wirral

**Friday 23rd – 25th January 2009.** This established course, now in its 17th year, provides an invaluable background for doctors and medical students intending to work or study in French-speaking countries. Teaching is in small groups, by native French speakers, including doctors. All grades of linguistic ability accommodated. There are places for 50 doctors and 30 students. Previous courses were highly successful, great fun and heavily over-subscribed; early application is advised. Contact: Christine Greenwood, School of Clinical Sciences, Clinical Sciences Centre, University Hospital Aintree, Longmoor Lane, Liverpool L9 7AL. (Tel: 0151 529 5885; Fax: 0151 529 5888).

### Committee

Dr Andrew Hassan

( President )

Dr James Taylor

( Treasurer )

Dr Helen Sykes

( Membership Secretary)

( [helen.sykes@nhs.net](mailto:helen.sykes@nhs.net) )

Robyn Hughes

( Webmaster )

Dr Mark Savage

( Hon Secretary )

Dr Nicola Strickland

Dr Mark Cottrill

( co-opted member)

Dr Colin Mumford

Dr Helen Mackay

Dr Rex Melville

Dr Emma Reynish

Dr Andrew Leitch

**Student Representatives**

Emilia Holland

Laurie Hanna

### GP Work in France

Neil Metcalfe, a GP registrar in York, is looking for a 2 to 6 month post in France from October onwards. If anyone can help Neil please contact him at the following address

[neilmetcalfe@doctors.org.uk](mailto:neilmetcalfe@doctors.org.uk)

### Administrative Secretary

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

Tony Ridge

Admin Sec AFMS

9 Babbacombe Road

Childwall

Liverpool L16 9JN

[tonyridge72@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tonyridge72@yahoo.co.uk)