



# AFMS NEWS

Spring 2024

**AFMS**

[www.anglofrenchmedical.com](http://www.anglofrenchmedical.com)

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## A Message From Our President.

There's a decent pub in Edinburgh's New Town (so-called because it was "new" in 1767) known as the Cumberland Bar. One evening in spring 1999, I was sharing a few beers there with my great friend Will Reynish and he asked me if I'd like to join him and his wife Emma at a meeting of an organisation which he referred to simply as the "Anglo French".



I found myself on a plane with them both, heading to Avignon, where I attended my first ever meeting, I learned several things there: the activities of Burke and Hare led to a positive boost in anatomical research in the UK, some Popes refused to move to Rome, and so based themselves in Avignon instead for 60-odd years from 1309, wine from that region is seriously underrated, and that the AFMS is a splendid organisation, made up of a first-class bunch of people. The location, the talks, the social activities, and the "Dîner du Gala" in the Palais des Papes were all fabulous. I signed up as a member.

A quarter of a century has passed since then. The Cumberland Bar is still there, but tragically Will is not, having been killed in a climbing accident in the Pyrenees just two years later. We continue to offer the "Will Reynish Prize" in his memory. But on a more cheerful note, the AFMS goes from strength to strength. We enjoyed a very successful meeting in Inverness, and we are now looking forwards to joining our French colleagues in Orléans in September.

As I write this, I am heading home to Scotland after a long weekend in the Loire Valley in the west of France. I was the guest of Ann-Claire Guyard-Pege and her family in the wonderful town of Angers. I was treated to an action-packed itinerary, with a mountain bike ride over disused railway lines, a look around the local art and artisan craft exhibitions, and a full day of fun at the "Parc Terra Botanica" in the north of the city.

Forming lasting international friendships like this is an incalculable bonus of being a member of the AFMS. We are truly lucky to be able to enjoy such convivial, entertaining and educational meetings once or twice every year. Long may it last. And where and when was it that I first met Ann-Claire? Err...if I remember correctly, that would have been in Avignon, in 1999.

**Dr Colin Mumford**

### Mailing List

We are updating our mailing list and need up to date emails for all members. Please send your current email to

[info@](mailto:info@anglofrenchmedical.com)

[anglofrenchmedical.com](http://anglofrenchmedical.com)

### AFMS Instagram

Please visit us on Instagram

[@anglofrenchmedicalsociety](https://www.instagram.com/anglofrenchmedicalsociety)

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### Meetings and Events

- September 2024.  
AFMS Conference  
Orleans, France;  
18th - 21st Sept.
- February 2025.  
Chamonix Meeting;  
30th Jan - 2nd Feb.
- April 2025.  
Medical French  
Meeting; Lille.
- September 2025.  
AFMS Conference.  
Manchester; 24th -  
27th September.

## AFMS Conference 2024 - Orléans



**Our next conference will be take place in Orléans, France from 18th – 21st September 2024.**

**Orléans is located on the river Loire nestled in the heart of the Loire Valley, where the river curves south towards the Massif Central. An important river trade port, it was the headquarters of the community of merchants frequenting the Loire. It was the capital of the Kingdom of France and played an important role in the Hundred Years' War, particularly known for the role of Joan of Arc during the siege of Orléans. Every first week of May since 1432, the city pays homage to the "Maid of Orléans", listed in the inventory of intangible cultural heritage in France. One of Europe's oldest universities was created in 1306 by Pope Clement V and re-founded in 1966 as the University of Orléans, hosting more than 20,000 students: one of the biggest in France.**

**To get to Orléans you can take the train from Gare d'Austerlitz in Paris. There are 37 trains a day. The hotel is situated in the south of the city, just off the tram line.**

**A booking form is enclosed in this newsletter.**

**If you would like to give a talk at the conference please contact Tony Ridge, our administrative secretary.**





## AFMS 30th Medical French Course - Lille



The 30th Medical French course took place in Lille from 3-5 April 2024. It was well attended with 33 students and 17 doctors booked. Teaching in small groups covered the topics of Dermatology, Respiratory, Cardiovascular, Psychiatry, Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Paediatrics. There were talks on working in France and the impact of Brexit. Workshops covered working in rural General Practice in France, The junior doctor/medical student experience, Humanitarian medicine and Psychiatry.



A gala dinner was enjoyed by all on the Saturday evening and the course closed with a guided tour of historic and beautiful vieux Lille. The course will run again in 2025 with provisional dates of 4-6 April. On the next two pages, you can read the abridged reports of the two student competition winners who will attend our annual conference in September in Orléans.

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### Medical Weekend in Lille.

**Julias Graszekiewicz.**

**4th year medical student.**

**University of Exeter.**

I first heard about the course from some 5th year friends who were wanting to brush up their medical French in preparation for their electives. As a 4th year, I was yet to start seriously planning my elective, but I knew it would likely involve going to a francophone country, a great way to put into to practice the hours I'd spent learning the language at A-level. A course in medical French seemed a productive use of a weekend; the fact that it would be spent against a backdrop of a beautiful French city, eating delicious food, absorbing the culture and meeting like-minded people had nothing to do with my decision to attend, whatsoever.

The first evening was very relaxed and informal - we met with our groups and tutors, an opportunity to get to know each other, discuss our backgrounds, our journeys through medicine so far, as well as our experiences of learning French and, in some cases, living/working in the francophone world. Saturday was our most activity-packed day - we had our first lessons, each of which covered a different medical specialty, ranging from cardiovascular medicine to psychiatry. We did a range of exercises, but the main focus was history taking, which got us speaking and using the vocabulary we had learned in the lesson. By the end of the day, I found I could fairly competently ask about chest pain, describe a skin lesion and perform a telephone handover. Bonus material included getting our heads around medical acronyms and navigating French hospitals! The learning environment was such that I felt no embarrassment at making mistakes or asking questions. The tutors made the lessons fun and engaging, so much so that the hour would go by in a flash. The sessions (punctuated by, in true French fashion, a two-and-a-half-hour break for lunch at a restaurant 20 minutes' stroll away from the University,) were followed by a short series of talks which included an interesting and thought-provoking discussion on the impacts of Brexit on working in France as a UK-trained doctor.

The day ended with a gala dinner, which for me was the highlight of the trip. Our last day in Lille was a little more slow-paced; we had our last two sessions and some further selection of talks/workshops. Topics included: life as a doctor in Switzerland, general practice in rural France, and the one I attended which was on humanitarian medicine in the francophone world. This was a great, interactive session delivered by a knowledgeable tutor with wide-ranging experiences of work abroad, which he ended with an impromptu 10-minute talk on informal ('cool') French, i.e., how to sound like a native!

I felt a little sadness at the weekend being over so quickly, but also a happy sort of tired that comes from having worked your brain, seen new places and met new people. It was incredible how much more fluent my French felt even after only two days of full immersion in the language. The course had equipped me with new skills, vocabulary and materials, but most importantly with the confidence that, given the chance to go on elective or other clinical placement in a francophone region, I could find my footing in a new, unfamiliar environment with greater ease than before. What I found most inspiring, however, was the people I met throughout, all of whom were equally passionate about French, as well as intercultural connectivity and the value of learning languages.



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### Medical Weekend in Lille.

**Marvin Duenger.**

**5th year medical student.**

**University College London.**

Writing in the afterglow of an exceptional weekend in a beautiful city, I realise how much the AFMS medical French course has changed my relationship to the French language and the thought of a future in France.

On the train to Lille, I stared at the language booklet to avoid thinking about the nervous feeling in the pit of my stomach. What if everyone spoke perfect French? And would I be able to converse in French, and if I couldn't, what did that mean for my plans? I had only interacted with this course via a laptop screen, so my imagination had begun to fill in the blanks. I wondered if it had been premature to have started looking at small chateaux on Leboncoin with wine cellars! Then as I stepped off the train in Lille, I had to leave my thoughts and enter the city around me: the smell of steak frites and coffee around the main square, knobby cobblestone underfoot and sumptuous old buildings overlooking a steady flow of Lillois. At the hotel, I met my lovely roommate, and we later made our way downstairs. After the initial briefing, a group of us headed to a local café and bar, where we enjoyed a beer and got our social bearings. I was surprised at the variety of motivations to learn medical French: humanitarian work, a childhood in France, or simple Francophilia among other reasons. Later that evening, we walked to another hotel where we mingled with delegates and tutors over dinner and apéritif.

On Saturday we benefitted from the nice weather and walked across town to the medical faculty. The day was packed with classes organised along a selection of medical disciplines including obstetrics & gynaecology, psychiatry, and respiratory medicine. It's a funny experience when you learn medical jargon in another language. Of course, the Latin- and Greek-origin words were familiar, but they didn't do much push back the flood of medical acronyms! Besides the technical words, I enjoyed the challenge of taking a history in French. I realised how much I used certain phrases in English, like "just in terms of your situation at home", which I had to relearn in French. Between our morning and afternoon classes, we tucked in to a hearty French lunch at a local restaurant. And before long, it was the gala dinner. All dressed up, we continued to speak a good amount of French at dinner in a way that felt pleasingly natural. I began to really appreciate being immersed in the language, place and food, feeling more and more confident (the wine may have helped) about the pipe dream of working in France. After a series of talks and workshops on Sunday morning spanning Brexit to Swiss residency applications, it was almost time to say goodbye.

Overall, my weekend in Lille has given my thoughts of working in France a new heft and texture, as well as the confidence to start navigating the French system (and the French). However, the best thing about the course was realising that an online form was in fact a gateway to a wonderful city with passionate people. With a new enthusiasm for the prize on the horizon, I am more determined than ever to crack on with the post-Brexit challenges of French bureaucracy. For me, that starts with deepening my connection to AFMS; I hope to see some familiar faces again soon!

## AFMS Winter Conference 2024 - Chamonix.



It was an unseasonably warm Chamonix that welcomed the AFMS Winter Scientific Meeting of 2024. Once again, we stayed at the wonderful Hotel Aiguille du Midi in Les Bossons. The scientific meeting had a strongly neurological flavour this year. Our first lecture was given by Professor Klaus Schmierer, Professor of Neurology at Queen Mary University of London and The Royal London Hospital. Professor Schmierer has a research interest in multiple sclerosis and he presented the “Attack MS” study which aims to reduce the delay from diagnosis to treatment for MS. The rationale for this is data showing the positive long-term outcomes for patients receiving early and aggressive treatment. In Attack MS, the feasibility of intervention with natalizumab within 14 days of symptom onset is being investigated, and whether this might facilitate brain lesion repair. This could create the concept of MS being treated acutely and urgently, similar to the approach used in hyper-acute stroke units.

Our second lecture was delivered by Professor Andrew Farrall, Professor of Neuroimaging and Education at the University of Edinburgh. Professor Farrall presented a fascinating overview of stroke imaging and discussed how artificial intelligence may in the future help radiologists improve the quality of patient care. Will radiologists’ jobs be in jeopardy because of AI, or should AI be embraced as a technology to empower radiologists by increasing efficiency and reducing errors? He also discussed how the sub-fields of AI, machine learning and deep learning, are rapidly advancing imaging technology to help early detection and outcome prediction for brain disorders.

The final lecture on ‘The Beautiful Brain’ was given by Dr Ingrid Kane, Consultant Stroke Physician at University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust. Dr Kane discussed the work of Camillo Golgi and Santiago Ramon y Cajal who shared the Nobel Prize in 1906 for their work on the histology of the nerve cell, but both held diametrically opposed views about how the brain worked. Golgi’s landmark invention was a silver staining technique, also known as the Golgi method, which allowed nerve cells, with their highly branched dendrites and axon, to be visualised. Golgi believed that the nervous system was a single continuous network, i.e. that axons entering the spinal cord fuse with other axons, but Cajal challenged this and presented what is now known to be correct regarding neural function.

Dr Jeremy Campbell.

### Committee

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( President )  
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Dr Andrew Hassan  
( Immediate past president )  
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Dr Clara Farque  
Dr Aimée Lawton  
Dr Nick McCarthy

### Did you Know?

Paris Match has marked its 75th birthday by publishing an 8 page fantasy issue that uses AI to imagine what our Royal Family will look like and be doing in 2054.

It speculates that Prince Harry will be ditched by Meghan for a senator who will become US President.

Prince Louis will run a cannabis shop on the Copacabana Beach in Brazil and William V will have abdicated in favour of George VII.