



# AFMS NEWS

Winter 2013

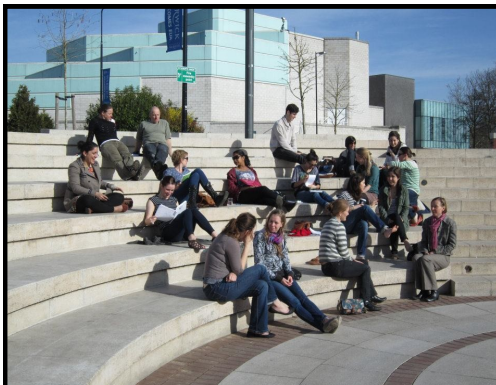
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## 20th Medical French Course Friday evening 5th April to Sunday 7th April 2013

This long-established and highly-regarded course has an excellent new venue in the Conference Park on the Warwick University campus, just outside Coventry. The facilities, general environment and accommodation are all first-class. All the standard rooms have an en-suite bathroom. The campus is easily accessible by car, train, car, bus and air. Teaching is given in small tutorial groups (up to 8), each made up of students or doctors whose command of spoken French is similar. Teaching is carefully tailored to the standard of the group, which means that we can accommodate a wide range of capability in French – everything from rudimentary (GCSE/O-Level) to fluent. The tutors are all experienced teachers, who bring a variety of skills and backgrounds to the Course. They include doctors and other native French speakers, professional linguists, and UK-trained doctors who have worked clinically in a French-speaking setting. Participants at all levels find the Course extremely of great value, including students preparing for an Erasmus exchange or an elective in a Francophone country, or doctors planning to work in France, Switzerland or for organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières. Topics to be covered include: • How to take a history and examine a patient in French, • How to survive on ward rounds and in clinics • Talking to patients, relatives and colleagues • Investigations: ECG, X-rays, blood tests, etc. The cost of the course is £375 for doctors and £175 for students.

**To Book - Contact Christine Greenwood, School of Clinical Sciences, Clinical Sciences Centre, University Hospital Aintree, Longmoor Lane, Liverpool L9 7AL. Email: [c.greenwood@liv.ac.uk](mailto:c.greenwood@liv.ac.uk) Tel:0151 529 5885 Fax: 0151 529 588**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WARWICK

## 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 \(at\) yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tonyridge72@yahoo.co.uk)

## In This Issue

French Medical Weekend 2013.

A GP in France.

Manchester Meeting 2013.

Chamonix 2013; Overview.

Biarritz 2013.

Who's Who.

Did you Know?

## • Meeting and Events.

### • April 2013

French Medical Weekend. Warwick University  
5th April to 7th April.

### • May 2013

Manchester Meeting  
TBC.

### • October 2013

Scientific Conference  
Biarritz, France  
2nd October to the 5th  
October.

## Being a GP in the UK and France

**Dr Zara Bieler, a GP in Monmouthshire, Wales, spends part of each year working in France.**

### How did you start working for part of the year in France?

**As a child, I spent many summers in France with my penpal, Maud. I became quite fluent in French.**

**My decision to head to France as a junior doctor was also motivated by affairs of the heart. I met my French husband-to-be while on holiday in France just after taking my finals.**

**I spent my junior house officer year in Belfast and once I had my GMC registration under my belt, I moved to France.**

**My husband had a vineyard in Provence and many letters and calls later, I was offered a six-month post in orthopaedics and A&E at Aix en Provence hospital.**

**I continued my training between France and London, finally presenting 18 months of French posts to the UK for validation. In 2003, I took the MRCGP examination.**

### How does your dual role work in day-to-day practice?

**I first worked as a freelance GP in the Var area of Provence. We then sold the vineyard in 2005 and moved to a sheep farm on the Monmouthshire-Herefordshire border. Our first child was 13 months old at that point.**

**The cooler summers here were a relief, as was working in English for a change. Freelance GP work was plentiful in the English and Welsh practices in the area.**

**We bought a small property in the Vaucluse area of Provence and travelled there in the holidays.**

**We then purchased a small vineyard near the house and as our little one became ready for nursery school, we hatched a plan: September to Christmas in France, January to August in Wales.**

**And so the pattern continues.**

**I arrive in France for the start of school in September, help out with the grape harvest and then pick up some locum work with local village GPs. As January rolls around, we arrive back to the green of Wales.**

**Our daughters, aged three and eight, are bilingual and completely at ease with both cultures.**

**My eldest now corrects my French.**

**I take advantage of my flexible schedule to teach English once a week to French children in the village school and vice versa in Wales.**

**We have to be organised, we keep track of how the children are coping with school, but at present, I can say the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.**

### How does practice in the UK differ from working in France?

**Many GPs in France work single handed. Some group practices exist, in towns. I have never met a practice manager or practice nurse there, and health visitors do not exist.**

**Nurses and physiotherapists work out of their own premises and patients make their own appointments. The doctor writes a referral, which is handed to the patient.**

**Specialists have their own offices and waiting lists are rare. There was open access to specialists until recently, but the government is bringing in more of a gatekeeper role.**

**GPs are paid on an item per service basis, so the patient will get out cash or a chequebook at the end of the consultation. You need to keep change in your top drawer.**

**Patients are refunded a percentage by the state and most have social insurance to cover the rest. Those on a low income or with certain chronic diseases are covered by the state.**

**The same applies to prescriptions as doctors are paid per consultation, so few offer repeat prescribing. Patients attend for repeats and expect a BP and general health check.**

**Access to testing is quick and easy. This is a relief, but can lead to over-consumption and patients arriving with a shopping list of tests.**

# AFMS NEWS

## What is your role in the Anglo French Medical Society?

Two years ago, I started teaching on the Anglo French Medical Society (AFMS) medical French weekend course, which has run for 20 years. This year I became its organiser. The course runs once a year near Easter. All levels of French can be accommodated. Teaching is in small groups with a variety of styles and a relaxed atmosphere. Participants come from all specialties. Tutors are a mix of doctors who have worked in France, language teachers and French medics. There are talks by doctors with experience of working in France and plenty of opportunities to pick up practical information on everything from registering as a doctor in France to coping with referrals and emergencies.

## How would you advise GPs thinking of working in France?

First, make yourself as comfortable with the French language as you can. The weekend course run by AFMS is ideal and there are other courses available. Practise by using Skype or conversational exchange with a French speaker, or better still, spend some time in France.

GPs in France earn less than in the UK, so you need to plan for that.

Sit in with a friendly GP to get an idea of how things work. Locuming at a group practice gives you the back-up of colleagues. Working as a GP in A&E is another good way to start, as there is a team around you.

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## Manchester Meeting May 2013

The 18th Manchester Meeting is in the process of being planned to take place in May 2013. Cost to delegates will be only £10 a head with students free of charge. ( Students will be asked to pay £10 with their booking forms but will be refunded the fee on arrival at the meeting). The venue will be

Alliance Francaise Office, 3rd Floor, 55 Portland Street  
Manchester M1 3HP

Details

Registration 6pm to 6.30pm, Meeting starts at 6.30pm

Presentations, Buffet 8.00pm to 9.00pm with a selection of French wines.

9.00pm Meeting finishes.

Details are still being finalised but if you would like to attend could you please email your interest to the administrative secretary, Tony Ridge at [tonyridge72@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tonyridge72@yahoo.co.uk)



## Biarritz Conference 2013

This year's scientific conference will take place from the 2nd to the 5th October in Biarritz, France.

Biarritz is located in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques department in the Aquitaine region. It is adjacent to Bayonne and Anglet and 11 miles (18 kilometres) from the border with Spain. It is in the traditional province of Labourd in the French Basque Country. Biarritz is easily accessible from Paris by France's high-speed train, the TGV, and more regionally from Bordeaux, by TGV. Trains are also available to travel east towards Nice. Night trains regularly depart from Irun, south of Biarritz and pass through the city before heading to Paris during an overnight trip. The Biarritz – Anglet – Bayonne Airport is located about four kilometres from the city. It is served by airlines such as Ryan Air from the UK.

A booking form will be available with the next newsletter in May 2013.



# Back Page Notes

## Chamonix Conference

**31st Jan to 3rd February 2013.**

The Winter meeting of the AFMS was held in Chamonix, at what has become the regular venue at the Hotel du Aiguille du Midi in Les Bossons, a few kilometers from the main centre.



We had four varied presentations of excellent standard that promoted much discussion. Andrew Farrall from Edinburgh described the management of stroke patients through the eyes of a neuroradiologist, and showing how modern technology is applied to make the critical distinction between a thrombotic cerebral event and an acute bleed indistinguishable clinically. Rupert Harris, a paediatric anaesthetist from Bristol, took us through the rare but serious condition of toxic shock in burns, we were all surprised to learn that such a devastating event can be the sequelae of what at first may appear to be a relatively trivial burn. Jim Whittaker valiantly stood in at the last moment for Colin Mumford who unfortunately was unable to be present for personal reasons. Jim, an engineer by background, gave a stimulating talk about the application of computerized solutions for enhanced patient monitoring 'the digital plaster'. It was a great example of a development at the interface between medicine and engineering.

John Wilkinson concluded the scientific meeting with a presentation of the epidemiology of the rare but increasingly prevalent condition of anal cancer. In the past 20 years there has been an almost three fold increase in the condition in England, in certain types of malignancy associated with the human papilloma virus. The meeting also heard proposals for the 2014 summer meeting that is to be held in the Cathedral city of Durham in the North East of England. In Chamonix, weather was mixed for those venturing outside, with rain on the first day, and heavy mist reducing visibility. Nevertheless a very comfortable event as enjoyable as ever and a great opportunity from a wide variety of specialties and backgrounds.

John Wilkinson

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 visit us on the site.



## Committee

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Dr Colin Mumford  
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Dr David Bell  
Dr Andrew Leitch

## Did you know?

On January 31, France's minister of women's rights, made it officially impossible to arrest a woman for wearing trousers in the French capital. The 200 year old law required women to ask police for special permission to "dress as men" in Paris, or risk

## Administrative Secretary

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

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