



AFMS NEWS

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Durham Conference 2014

We were delighted to attend the 2014 Joint meeting of the AFMS and the AMFB in Durham, historic seat of the Prince Bishops. It is a city that only a minority of delegates knew and we thank John Wilkinson for organising the meeting. The hotel was well chosen, central and welcoming, and the social programme was delightful with visits to ancient buildings, gardens and Hadrian's Wall on the Saturday. The locals were without exception friendly and helpful.

Thursday We started with a lecture on loco-regional anaesthesia of the eye with Emile CALEND. Some found the pictures a little alarming first thing in the morning, with fantastic views of retro-bulbar infiltrations of anaesthetic. The large number of eye operations done in France and also in the UK, shows the value of skilled anaesthetists with a very low complication rate. The methods with sharp instruments were less comfortable to watch, with tiny margins for error around the optic nerve. John ALTRIP talked about our ageing membership and sought ways to recruit younger doctors and students to join and remain in the organisation. Even students who attend and present in our prize competitions rarely become active members subsequently. Colleagues from France including Solveig LELEU, confirmed the benefits of E-Tandem, a method of linking anglophone and francophone students via Skype over several weeks. There were few dropouts (perhaps aided by an upfront charge reimbursable on completion of 8 sessions.) There have been 88 pairs since 2009, although again, few are now in the societies. Anne-Claire GUYARD PEGE told us about the changes in contraceptive use in France subsequent to the most recent health scare around third and fourth generation pills. Apparently vasectomy is still barely used in France, for reasons unclear to the Anglo-Saxon part of the audience. The later pills are no longer reimbursed in France so usage has dropped further. There is now an increasing number of abortions performed which is perhaps



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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 address.

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- January 2015
Winter Meeting
Chamonix 29th January
to the 1st Feb.
- March 2015
French Medical
Weekend, Warwick.
27th to 29th March.
- September 2015
Scientific Conference
Nantes France
23rd to the 26th
September.

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more risky and certainly less acceptable. Highly educated women are avoiding chemical methods and less well educated ones are using no effective method at all. Bruno **MAGNIN** introduced his daughter-in-law Marina **MAGNIN**, an Italian pharmacist now working in Paris, who told us about a short study she undertook among elderly users of anticoagulants. She offered education sessions and then reviewed levels of knowledge of the drugs. Due to time and financing constraints she could not easily report on any changes in compliance.

John **ALTRIP**, Solveig **LELEU**, Caroline **TRAN VAN**, Colin **MUMFORD**, Martine **CHAUFFETE**, and Phillipe **PERSIAUX** reported on their various involvements with teaching English to French students at Caen, Angers and several Paris schools.

Without exception the courses were well received by the students, and to a lesser extent by administrators, who still seem loath to support financially the efforts of the anglophone visitors, even though in some schools the input is now intrinsic to the coursework, and is examinable. We will continue to support the work and try to recruit more visitors.

Zara **BIELER** updated us on the progress of the website. Wordpress has been chosen for the **AFMS** site and we will suggest that the **AMFB** tries to develop a site that ties in and looks similar so that access to either will be seamless and effective.

Friday

Friday started with a wonderful session from junior colleagues. Vincent **GUION** who was with us last year, and who won the Jacques Foray prize, told us about his experiences in palliative care and telemedicine in Nottingham and in Stornaway. I suspect his most unexpected comments to many of us were the non-existence of third-sector involvement in health care in France. We are used to Macmillan, Age Concern etc being deeply integrated in the UK. His presentation sparkled and his English is now perfect.

Erwin **TSE SAK KWUN** (pneumonia), Gavish **MUNBAUHAL** (robotic surgery in GU), Alexandre **TENDRON** and Benjamin **DEBUC** (clinical cases from Sydney), Lucille Van De **MEERSCHÉ** (quality of life enhancement in dementia in California), Lucinda **WINGATE PAUL** (cleft lip and palate) and Sanaa **ZAYYAN** (cervical incompetence and Shirodkar sutures in Nice) gave us excellent talks on the very varied topics mentioned after their names. We found scoring harder than ever this time, and awarded cash from the James Tudor prize fund to each of them, with Sanaa coming out first among equals. There was an innovation on Friday with the delivery of the inaugural James Tudor Foundation lecture by Richard **GRUNDY**. ”

We were thrilled by his talk “Childhood brain tumours, a multidisciplinary approach,” in which he described the extraordinary developments in primary diagnosis, tissue classification and therapy of this most distressing of maladies. The details are too many to discuss here but anyone who wishes can request copies of Richard's slides from Tony Ridge. In brief, however, survival is improving but at the expense of lifelong disability in 2/3 of cases (motor and intellectual), and with an increased risk of later cancers as with any aggressive therapy regime. 10,000 life-years are lost, with a calculated 12,000 years of suboptimal survival.

The majority are posterior fossa germ line cancers, and diagnosis is often delayed. Headache is not predominant but head tilting, loss of balance and loss of developmental markers commonest. Team working is the key to treatment, and the arguments for centralisation of expertise versus the difficulties for patient and family were key themes also. I will not try to précis any further at this stage!

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Saturday

Claire DELVAL had the task of starting off the final day after the Gala Dinner. She presented cases of food intolerance and food allergy from her Paris practice and gave us a clear explanation of the immunological differences between the two. It appears that many conditions may benefit from dietary change: skin, gynaecological, gut, behavioural problems, for example. Rex MELVILLE gave his usual dramatic presentation of HIV, the skin and the mouth, with vivid pictures and even more vivid descriptions. We should be aware of persistent and more extreme presentations of common skin conditions, particularly where the response is less than normally anticipated. Molluscum contagiosum, psoriasis, seborrhoeic dermatitis and zoster are but some of the conditions we should observe carefully if they are atypical, as early diagnosis and treatment of the virus is the key to treatment of the skin and of course to long-term healthy survival. It was noted by one of our more perspicacious (older) members that the presentation of HIV now mirrors in many ways the protean presentation of syphilis that we were warned about as students.

Julian SEMPERE and Aurore CARTIER gave a most interesting talk on the sociology of medical students at Paris Descartes over several hundred years. There are social/drinking clubs where special clothes are worn, notably the “Faluche” a cap from Bologna; and there are traditions that go back a long way, of course involving les événements in 1968. We heard about the “monome” with demonstrations or end of term celebrations take to the streets. Our last session was a master-class from Michel DUBUISSON about the discovery of insulin, and the infighting that occurred. Once again I will not rehearse the whole lecture, but point out that the input from the Scottish Prof. Macleod was neither supportive or professional until he could get his name on the papers and collect his share of the Nobel Prize money. The AGM was also held on the Saturday. If there is any member who would like to see the minutes, please request a copy from Tony Ridge.

Overall this was another remarkably erudite, informative and eclectic few days. I worry that the increasing demands of a learning plan and a portfolio explaining every detail of learning might restrict attendance from specialists. It would be a great shame and more than that, a disgrace, if learning were to be constrained to a narrow field deemed relevant by appraisers. The variety and the cross-fertilisation of ideas, not to mention the language gain, is too important to lose, and seems difficult for some educationalists within medicine to cope with.

On the social side of the meeting the group enjoyed a buffet dinner at Durham castle accompanied by a local brass band. On Thursday morning we took a short walk to Crook Gardens and after lunch we all immersed ourselves in by gone times, with a wonderful trip to the living museum of Beamish. Our guides provided a fascinating walking tour of Durham which revealed the true heritage of this wonderful city. Our gala dinner was at Beamish Hall and grateful thanks were given to our organiser John Wilkinson who excelled in every department, arranging a truly amazing conference. Special thanks were also given to Dr James Taylor, retiring from his position as treasurer after many years. For those who stayed on the Saturday a full coach journeyed up to the Roman Fort at Housteads . A short walk around the market town of Corbridge was then complimented with a cosy meal at Oldfields, one of Durham’s finest eateries. A truly excellent meeting and all seems set fair for our next meeting in Nantes in 2015. See you there!

Dr David Bell

If you would like to see more photographs from our conference, please email Joe Girgis at girgis7@aol.com and he will provide you with a link to view the photographs that were taken.



Back Page Notes

Medical French

Weekend 27th to the 29th March 2015.

The 23rd French Medical Weekend Course 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.

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. 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: £220 for students and £420 for doctors and other professionals. 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



Chamonix Winter Meeting.

The 17th AFMS Winter meeting is scheduled to take place in Chamonix, Haute Savoie, France at the Hotel de l'Aiguille du Midi from the 29th of January to the 1st February 2015.

The hotel is Michelin recommended 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 airport and various companies offer transfers with a drop off and collection to and from the hotel. One company, called Chamexpress, 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.



Committee

Dr Andrew Hassan

(President)

Dr James Taylor

(Treasurer)

Dr John Altrip

(Hon Secretary)

Dr Helen Sykes

(Membership Secretary)

Robyn Wittersheim

(Webmaster)

Dr Mark Cottrill

(co-opted member)

Dr Colin Mumford

Dr Rex Melville

Dr Carol Barton

Dr Mark Savage

Dr David Bell

Dr Andrew Leitch

France is Number One

It is official! France is the most popular country in the world for tourists. Almost 85 million people visited France in 2013. The USA saw 69 million visitors while the UK had 34 million visitors.



If you want to keep up with friends and other members, please visit us at Facebook.