



AFMS NEWS

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Chamonix Conference February 1st –4th 2007.

The ninth winter meeting of the AFMS was held in the Hotel Les Aiglons in Chamonix Sud. The mist in the lower valley cleared as the road climbed past Les Houches revealing the Alps in their customary picture postcard mantle of dazzling snow. There had been a fresh fall of snow the previous week, but the lower slopes were still a little bare. I'm told that there was good skiing to be had, albeit at the edge of a crevasse or two. Raquetting (snow shoeing) has become less of a minority sport; we reached parts of Italy (Val Ferret), the Aiguillette des Houches and le Parion that skiers can only dream about. Picnics at abandoned refuges - or lunches at crowded restaurants?



Eighteen delegates met for evening drinks on Thursday, followed by a meal in the hotel. On Friday, the daytime was free for individual activities; the scientific meeting was held in the conference room from 6-8pm. Due to technical problems, ably sorted out by Nick and Andrew, the presentation started a little later than planned. They were given by Helen Sykes (Mental Health needs of Asylum Seekers in Middlesbrough), Nick McCarthy (Dr John Rae, GP and explorer), Liz Sheridan (two case presentations - Strep pneumonia meningitis and Amoebic liver abscess) and Mark Cottrill (the Frenchmen behind the Syndrome - a quiz on famous French Doctors). Prizes should have gone to Andrew Hassan and Nick McCarthy for their obviously superior knowledge; Mark also deserves a prize for finishing at exactly 8pm.

Technical problems also blighted the start of the meeting with the group from Annemasse, although the champagne went some way to alleviating our disappointment. The presentations were on the dangers of anticoagulation without strict follow up protocols and management, Obstetric and Gynaecology in Annemasse, and an update of M. Dupont, the gentleman with heart failure who still wants to climb into the rarefied atmosphere of the high Alps. (cont back page)



NEW AFMS NEWS

Welcome to the third edition of the new look AFMS news!!!

Please let us have your feedback on this new look or if there is anything you would like to be included in further editions. Please send an email to Tony Ridge at

tonyridge72yahoo.co.uk

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Course in Intermediate French. April 21st Stoke.

• May 2007

Manchester Regional Meeting. Alliance Francaise Building 18th May.

• September 2007

Scientific Meeting. Mont St Michel.

September 26th to 29th.

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The AFMS conference will take place from September 26th to September 29th 2007 at Mont St Michel France.

Along with an extensive scientific programme, superb social activities have been put together.

The long history of Mont Saint-Michel is thought to date back to 708, when Aubert, Bishop of Avranches had a sanctuary built on Mont-Tombe in honour of the Archangel. The Mount soon became a major focus of pilgrimage. In the 10th century, the Benedictines settled in the Abbey, while a village grew up below its walls. By the 14th century, it extended as far as the foot of the rock. An impregnable stronghold during the Hundred Years War, Mont Saint-Michel is also an example of military architecture.

Following the dissolution of the religious community during the revolution and until 1863, the Abbey was used as a prison. Classified as a historic monument in 1874, it underwent major restoration work. Mont Saint-Michel has been listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO since 1979.

Delegates are going to stay very near Mont Saint Michel(at 2 km from the site) and 50 kms from St Malo.

The Hotel

Rooms have been booked at the Hotel Mercure which is situated at the end of the causeway leading to Mont Saint-Michel. More information about the hotel can be found on www.hotelmercure-montsaintmichel.com. However in the event of high demand for places alternative accommodation may be offered nearby. Please note that it is anticipated that demand for places at the conference will be high and early booking is recommended. Please complete and return the application form as soon as possible.

How to get there

It is easy to reach Mont Saint Michel by car from St Malo, but also from other ports from England. There is a highway along the coast of Northern France to the west of Brittany called "route des Estuaires". So delegates can go from any of the Channel ports and easily drive to the venue.

If you decide to fly, you could travel to Paris and take the train. You could get to Rennes by TGV and then to get a bus or a taxi to Mont Saint Michel. Taxis are quite expensive in France but a small group could share the taxi.

You can even fly to Jersey and take a ferry to St Malo.

More closer are airports at Dinard (55 km from le Mont Saint Michel) or at Rennes. A lot of the low cost companies use these airports. It is of course possible to rent a car to get to Mont St Michel from the airport with easy access by main road to the venue. For people who are not coming by car, nor train, you could cross by ferry to Saint Malo and then find a taxi. Brittany Ferries have regular ferries from Portsmouth.

More information can be obtained on 0870 9081259 or visit their website on www.brittanyferries.com.

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Le paradoxe française.

En 1981, les Docteurs Richard, Cambien et Ducimetière publiaient dans la Nouvelle Presse Médicale (1981 ; 10 : 1111-4) un article intitulé *Caractéristiques épidémiologiques de la maladie coronaire en France*.

Dans cet article, ils rapportaient que, malgré une consommation élevée de graisses saturées, et un niveau comparable des autres facteurs de risque cardio-vasculaire, notamment le tabagisme, les taux de mortalité coronaire étaient, en comparaison aux autres pays européens, particulièrement bas en France. Il est maintenant probable qu'il y a deux éléments qui expliquent ce qui a longtemps été appelé le paradoxe français :

- 1) Le premier élément est la qualité médiocre des informations portées sur les certificats de décès (les morts coronaires n'étant pas répertoriées parce que diagnostiquées autrement !),
- 2) Enfin, les études comparées des taux de mortalité coronaires dans les différents pays du monde, notamment en Europe, avec les mêmes règles pour tout le monde et bien entendu la même façon de comptabiliser les événements ont rapporté que, certes la France est située dans les pays ayant le taux de mortalité coronaire le plus bas mais elle n'était pas pour autant différente de ses voisins (Espagne pour la partie sud, Allemagne et Belgique pour les parties nord et est). Elle s'inscrivait dans un gradient nord-sud européen des maladies coronaires ; plus un pays est proche de la méditerranée et plus son taux de mortalité coronaire est faible.

Il restait à expliquer les raisons de ce gradient nord-sud et plusieurs hypothèses ont été émises ; les aspects environnementaux et comportementaux semblent au jour d'aujourd'hui plus importants que les aspects génétiques. Le bénéfice est-il dû à une plus grande consommation de fruits et de légumes autour de la Méditerranée, à une moindre consommation d'acides gras saturés, à une plus grande consommation de poisson, à une consommation quotidienne fréquente d'alcool (notamment du vin) ? Toutes ces hypothèses proviennent d'analyses scrupuleuses de données expérimentales, physiopathologiques, observationnelles ; néanmoins, au jour d'aujourd'hui, il semble difficile de juger de la part respective de l'imputabilité de chacun de ces facteurs.

Manchester Meeting—18th May 2007

The 11th North West Regional Meeting will take place on Friday 18th May. Cost to delegates is only £5 per head with students free of charge.

The venue is the Alliance Francaise office in central Manchester

Registration at 6.00pm to 6.30pm

Meeting starts at 6.30pm

Presentation by Julie Petitou

Presentation by students

Buffet 8.30pm to 9.30pm with a fine selection of cheeses and wine.

9.30pm Meeting Finishes.

Please complete the enclosed application form and send it to the address on the form.



Back page Notes

Chamonix conference - (continued from front page)

Farewells were said after breakfast on Sunday morning; some delegates had to return to work, some stayed for an extra day's ski-ing or raquetting while some were able to extend their vacancies well into the following week.

The meeting was attended by most of the usual core of delegates, but we were supplemented and improved by the presence of several new members. Thanks to Olivia and Nick for their contributions, and best wishes to Pauline for her forthcoming trip to Everest; this was just a training weekend.



The AFMS will be holding another Winter Conference early next year. Watch this space for more details.

Intermediate French Conversation

There is a French Conversation class (although this is not organised by the AFMS) with Martine Nichols, which will take place on Saturday 21st April at Wedgwood Memorial College , Barlaston Village, STOKE.

Interested parties should call the college on 01782 372105/ 373427 or email the college Wedgwood.memorial@stoke.gov.uk (www.sgfl.org.uk/wmc).

Please note that this course is organised by the college itself.

Message from Helene Decun—A medical Student from Toulouse.

My name is Helene Decun. I'm a French third-year medical student in Toulouse. I am contacting you because I'm interested in going to England and visiting a general practitioner for one or two weeks.

I'd like to gain basic knowledge about the English health system and have a first real contact with the English practice of medicine. I think it would also enable me to improve my English as English is essential in a doctor's career today.

I went to Ireland during last summer to improve my English, and had general English classes more particularly on everyday life English. I feel I need above all to learn what will be useful for my future job. I'd be very grateful if you could help me to get in contact with a physician in the UK.

Interesting But True

An exceptionally rare condition which has only ever affected four Britons has struck again. Susac's syndrome, in which a sufferer's memories can get scrambled and lead them to think that they are in a foreign country, hit a recruitment consultant from Bath. Louise Clarke, who once spent four years in Franc, suddenly became convinced she was French and living in Paris. She told a newspaper: "It started with migraines and hallucinations. I eventually got so confused that my sister took me to Accident and Emergency. I was gabbling away in French at my hospital bed. At one point my sister discovered I had phoned all my fiends and told them to come and visit me in Paris. Steroids and other drugs are now helping, but Louise has been told the condition may last up to 5 years!!!

Committee

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Dr Andrew Leitch

Student Representatives

Laurie Hanna

Petites Annonces

Timeshare—Loch Lomond—Scotland

Cameron House Hotel. Luxury Lodge with two double rooms en suite but can sleep six. Held in perpetuity. Free use of all facilities at Cameron House Hotel. Own Parking Space. Security Barrier to complex. Golfing, Fishing, Boating facilities. Shops and supermarket locally. Lodge No 17. Saturday to Saturday. Annual Charge £385. PRICE £7,500. Contact — FAX 0117 973 7360 for info.

Administrative Secretary

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

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