



AFMS NEWS

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AFMS Conference October 1st to 4th 2008

There is only just over two months to go before the Society's 25th anniversary conference takes place in Plymouth from October 1st to October 4th. We have chosen the Jurys Inn in Plymouth for our conference. The hotel is situated quite centrally and within easy access by foot to the historic Barbican area. Plymouth City centre and local restaurants are all within easy walking distance. Plymouth nestles in an area of outstanding natural beauty, with the Dartmoor National Park to the north, the natural harbour of Plymouth Sound to the south and the rivers Plym and Tamar on either side. Its rich history and maritime heritage combine the advantages of city living with the benefits of having the countryside and coastline of Devon and Cornwall on its doorstep.

As well as an extensive scientific programme, a full social programme is planned to include trips to the Dockyard museum and Saltram House (Nat Trust) house and gardens that houses many Sir Joshua Reynolds and some Angelica Kaufman paintings. Visits to the National Aquarium and sightseeing in the Barbican are included as well as a boat trip around the Harbour from the Mayflower steps. The post conference programme on Saturday afternoon allows for a visit to the Eden Project. A lunch is planned at a local yacht club on one of the days (great views etc) while the Gala Friday Night Dinner is planned for the Royal Marine Barracks.

There are a very few number of places left so if you would like to attend please complete the application form enclosed in this newsletter. The 25th Anniversary conference will surely be a fantastic event for all who are present! The AFMS is also very interested to hear from any member who would like to give a presentation at the conference on any medically related topic. Presentations should be made in the speaker's first language with powerpoint visuals or overheads in the opposing language. Please contact the administrative secretary if you would like to make a presentation.



AFMS NEWS

Welcome to the latest edition of the AFMS news!!! If there is anything you would like to have included in future editions, please send an email to the administrative secretary at

tonyridge72@yahoo.co.uk

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• Meeting and Events

• October 2008

Scientific Meeting Plymouth. October 1st to 4th.

• November 2008

Advanced French Course Stoke. 22nd November.

• January 2009

Medical French Weekend Burton Manor.

• Jan / February 2009

AFMS Winter Conference Chamonix. January 29th to February 1st 2009.

AFMS News

Freelance Freedom in France and Wales

Zara Bieler tells the AFMS of her time in France as a locum GP...

Lambing in Wales, harvesting grapes in France, being a GP, mutually exclusive? Maybe not. A big plus of being a locum GP is being free to organise your time. I am currently a Locum GP in Monmouthshire on the Welsh –English border. From January to end of August I am in Wales where I locum for semi-rural practices within a half hour drive of the sheep farm where I live. From September to the end of December I swap the green fields of Wales for the blue skies of Provence. “How do you do that?” I am constantly asked. Being a freelance allows me to enjoy an amazingly varied life with a foot in 2 countries and cultures. It certainly stops burn out and almost gives the feeling of always being off on holiday.

When we moved to Wales in 2005 we also bought a small farm house in the Vaucluse area of Southern France, just north east of Avignon, in a tiny village called Suzette. In 2007 we decided to go out for a part of the school year to give our little daughter a chance to become bilingual. I contacted a few local GPs in the neighbouring villages and soon picked up some work in Malaucene at the foot of the Mont Ventoux mountain which the brave Tour de France cyclists battle up on many a hot summer. I was careful not to cast my net too widely as locums in France are as sought after as in the UK. I wanted some medicine on my doorstep and time to enjoy Provence. Working for a local GP certainly is certainly a fast-track method of getting inside the French way of life and is a big plus in helping the locals accept that you are not just a passing tourist. A morning surgery in French keeps the grey matter active. Home visits could involve negotiating tiny cobbled streets of the mountain hamlets or driving out to remote farms through vineyards and apricot groves. Getting lost was almost a pleasure.

We doctors feel guilty taking time off, so finding some work in Provence gave me “permission” to enjoy France during those four months. It was hilarious to teach English to the nursery school class. Puppets came in very useful and my imagination was stretched. I had time to take walks in the Dentelles de Montmirail mountains which stand in the view like a huge open air organ pipes. We got to know our village neighbours and soon found out the politics of who gets on with whom. The pleasure of sourcing ingredients for dinners from the local markets and vineyards goes without saying. Autumn colours faded and December rolled around. My husband amusedly accepted the invitation to be Pere Noel for village children and our daughter chatted excitedly in her new language, beating me hands down. The time to go home to Wales had come. We packed the car on the only day of torrential rain we had seen.

I returned in January to a small amount of steady GP work in Wales which I had set up via email. Extra work quickly followed and I made sure to reserve some days to help out with lambing and to attack our overgrown garden. I’m originally from Northern Ireland and Wales feels like a home from home. Getting to work in March can involve driving along lanes with daffodils bobbing and the fast growing lambs bouncing in the fields. My work diary is booked for a busy summer then on 31 August off we go again, swapping the green for the blue. My home is in Wales but locuming has given me the chance to be part of another wonderful community. I’ll be sad to miss my Welsh apple harvest but then there are always the grapes.

Members Forum—Requests for Information

Hello My name is Fiona Barr and I am a journalist with the General Practitioner newspaper in the UK. I am researching an article about changes to the way primary care is organised in France and in particular the switch to GPs now acting as gatekeepers to state health care. I wondered whether you might be able to put me in touch with any French GPs via your organisation (who speak English) and also whether you have any English GP members who are familiar with the French medical system and would be willing to talk to me about both systems here in the UK and in France. The article is for a series called Valuing General Practice which we are running at the moment to support general practice in the UK and the gatekeeper role. Many thanks Fiona Barr GP fiona.barr@dsl.pipex.com

My name is Neil Metcalfe. I am a GP registrar in York hoping to complete my VTS training in August 2008. I am very interested in working as a GP or in a post suitable for a recently qualified GP (eg minor injuries) for 2-6 months (exact length dependent on my by then wife!) in France from August 2009 onwards. Do any members have any contacts or even posts that may be suitable? Many thanks for looking at this request and I look forward to hearing from you. Many thanks in advance. Dr Neil Metcalfe York neilmetcalfe@doctors.org.uk

Hi, I was interested to read about the French student attachment on the back page of AFMS News. Our practice has taken many students from Europe over the past couple of decades and I'd love to start taking French students. I see that she encouraged students not to hesitate going to England .(I hope that extends to Ecosse too, as my practice is on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides) Please feel free to pass on my email address to any students who might be interested in an attachment in a semi-rural practice. Regards. Dr Robert Dickie. Stornoway. robertdickie@doctors.org.uk

My name is Miroslawa Tandyrak and I am the European Option Programme Coordinator within Manchester Medical School. You may be aware of our 'European Option (EUO)' programme, in which selected medical students receive 4 years tuition in either French, German or Spanish and then go to one of our partner Universities in Europe, usually for 1 or 2 SSCs and 16 week placement in Year 5. Since its initiation by David Thompson in about 1995 this programme has been a great success and we have over 40 students in the current year 1, i.e. more than 10% of our total intake. In exchange, we take a similar number of 'student months' from our partners (Currently Rennes, Paris/Bichat, Paris Salpetriere, Lyon, Lausanne, Homburg/Saar, Hanover, Madrid, Alicante). We have decided to strengthen our language tuition further by expanding our 'Master Class' programme, which has been a great success. The term refers to ½ or 1 day of tuition by doctors who are either native French, German, or Spanish speakers or are bilingual (or extremely fluent in one of those languages). They teach our students simple practical medical language, e.g. a complete history taking for 'breathlessness' and then give a short overview on which investigations to request etc. The whole is very interactive and of course the teachers are completely free to organize it they way they wish. We will also be able to pay a small emolument. If this is of interest to any French speaking doctor please can you contact Miroslawa Tandyrak, Programme Support Coordinator, Manchester Medical School Undergraduate Office, Stopford Building G, 11 Oxford Road, The University of Manchester, Manchester. M13 9PL Tel + 44 (0)161 306 0464 | Fax: + 44 (0)161 275 5584

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AFMS Winter Conference Chamonix January 29th - Feb 1st 2009

The Society has decided to return to last year's hotel for the eleventh winter conference. The 3 star hotel is located 2 miles south of Chamonix town centre at Bossons and enjoys marvellous views over the glacier of the same name, the largest glacier in Europe. Ski areas and the town can be accessed by the frequent (and free) bus service. The hotel is a "Bib Hôtel" in the Michelin Guide (2007) representing good accommodation at moderate prices. The entry in the Guide is as follows ;

"Des fresques à la mode tyrolienne égayent l'exterieur de cet hôtel bâti en 1908. Chambres diversement meublées, bons équipements de loisirs et parc face au glacier des Bossons. Restaurant en rotonde, jolie terrasse côté jardin, plats traditionnels et savoyards".

The evening meal is a 5-course dinner with wine included (1/4 bottle pp) as well as water and coffee. Information on the hotel (including a map) can be found on their website - www.hotel-aiguilledumidi.com . We have secured 16 (of 40) rooms and, being a very popular choice, early booking is recommended. Please complete the booking form enclosed in the newsletter.

The Conference

Delegates arrive on Thursday 29th January for a welcome evening.

The Scientific Session will take place in the hotel's conference room on Friday January 30th from 6 – 8pm followed by a meal in the hotel. On Saturday evening there is the possibility to join our colleagues from Annemasse for a further scientific session followed by a meal in a local hotel or restaurant. The conference ends after breakfast on Sunday morning, but delegates will be able to book extra nights before or after the conference if they wish to extend their stay.

Delegates are encouraged to give a short presentation at the meeting on Friday evening; powerpoint facilities will be available. Each presentation should be of approximately twenty minutes duration, allowing another ten minutes for questions and discussion. Please contact Tony Ridge (Administrative Secretary) if you are interested in giving a talk; it can be on any medically related topic (and need not be in French). Chamonix is approximately 80km from Geneva airport which is served by many budget airlines; early booking is recommended for the cheapest fares. There is an bus service from the airport to Chamonix; the hotel is a short taxi ride away. Apart from raquetting (walking with snow shoes), cross country and downhill skiing are widely available; parapenting can also be arranged from the centre of the town. A train journey to the Glace de Mer or a trip on the téléphérique to the Aiguille du Midi (with superb views of Mont Blanc as well as the whole Chamonix valley) as well as coach trips to Annecy and Italy are options for those who prefer the gentler approach to seeing the local sights.

Advanced French Conversation

There is a French Conversation class (although this is not organised by the AFMS) with Dounie Evans which will take place on Saturday 22nd November at Wedgwood Memorial College , Barlaston Village, STOKE. Interested parties should call the college on 01782 372105/ 373427 or email the college at Wedgwood.memorial@stoke.gov.uk. Please note that this course is organised by the college itself.



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Dr Andrew Leitch
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Emilia Holland
Laurie Hanna

Strange But True

You're not allowed to die in Sarpourenx, a small village in SW France. The Mayor told his 260 residents that due to a lack of space "all persons not having a plot in the cemetery and wishing to be buried in Sarpourenx are forbidden from dying in the parish." If they break the new law they will be "severely punished."

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

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