



AFMS NEWS

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AFMS Conference Montpellier 18th to the 21st of September 2019

Montpellier conference report

The Metropole hotel is an elegant 19th century building in the heart of Montpellier and it was here that the 36th Meeting of the joint societies took place between the 18th and 21st September. It is a short stroll from the historic centre, through largely pedestrianised spaces amidst honey-coloured stone buildings which overlook parks, gardens and ancient aqueducts. The only hazards to the unwary pedestrian are the smart modern trams and the students (there are 90,000 of these in Montpellier) on their trottinettes, both of which zip silently by.

Airport high jinks in Amsterdam left your reporter unable to give a first-hand account of the reception and welcome on the Wednesday night but he was there for the opening of the scientific sessions on Thursday, introduced with wit and charm by Camille Benfredj, the daughter of our sister society's president. She talked about Montpellier's beginnings and its place on the Camino del Santiago de Compostela. During a highly stimulating morning we were updated on multiple sclerosis (getting better), personalised genetic medicine (getting better), endocrine disruptors (getting worse), leprosy (still there) and on the anatomy of Michelangelo's bronzes (if the toes are in a straight line or the six-pack is not an eight-pack, it's not a Michelangelo).

In the evening we foregathered at the historic Faculty of Medicine and learnt about its beginnings as a beacon of mediaeval tolerance, where teachers from Jewish, Arab and Christian traditions came together in the 13th century, just across the cloister from the great cathedral church of St. Pierre. We imagined lords spiritual and learned doctors chatting to each other in Latin in their shared space.

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AFMS –Instagram.

We now have an Instagram account. Please visit us at

<https://www.instagram.com/anglofrenchmedicalsociety/>

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Meeting and Events

• **January / February 2020**

Winter Conference Chamonix.
30th Jan to the 2nd February 2020.

• **April 2020 Lille Medical Weekend**
3rd to 5th April 2020

• **September 2020**
AFMS Conference Manchester
23rd to 26th September 2020.

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It was a privilege then to dine in the courtyard, looking up at the floodlit walls of these two great institutions, our appetites sharpened by a pre-dinner tour of the college and its famous anatomy museum containing many wonders including Fontana's superb waxwork models, as much as by a delicious aperitif.

On Friday we learnt about the rewarding challenges of teaching psychiatry in Malawi and were then treated to three excellent presentations from our students competing for the James Tudor Prize, which went to the young woman who had been part of a team promoting sexual health in Togo. After coffee, we learnt about new treatments for migraine, a joint planning exercise with NATO from our own medical military expert and a French psychiatric view of the management of eating disorders.

Our final morning started with more French psychiatry, a talk on involuntary hospitalisation and continued with an excellent summary of the advances in immunotherapy for cancer. A disquisition followed on the lessons medicine can take from jazz, bravely delivered in French by an English doctor, perhaps inspired by Miles Davis ("Do not fear mistakes, there are none"), before the scientific programme was brought to a grandstand finale by 'Truth and lies in feminine sexuality', a barnstorming historical and practical discourse on feminine sexual health which, like the bride's outfit, contained something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.

Accompanying members had opportunities to explore more of Montpellier and its commercial and medical history, its atelier outlets where local produce and artefacts are still created on the premises and those who stayed on Saturday enjoyed a wonderful boat trip to the nearby Camargue for dancing, prancing and dining with a gitane flavour.

Old friendships were cemented, new ones forged and we left feeling that Brexit notwithstanding the entente cordiale is alive and well, at least in medical quarters. We look forward to Manchester 2020, where we must look to our laurels to emulate this superb meeting arranged by our French hosts.

If you would like to see any photos from the conference please can you email Joe Girgis at girgis7@aol.com

If you would like a copy of the minutes from the AGM, please email our administrative secretary.

Dr Tim Reilly





The next AFMS conference will take place in Manchester from the 23rd to the 26th of September 2020.

Manchester is one of the biggest cities in the United Kingdom with a diverse culture and history from the industrial revolution. We will be staying at the Crown Plaza hotel in the centre of Manchester with our gala dinner at the Lowry Theatre at Salford Quays. With an exciting scientific and social programme ahead, it is certain to be a fantastic conference. A booking form will be available on line and in the next newsletter in the spring. If you would like to present at the meeting please contact Tony Ridge in the first instance.

Did you Know?

It was in 1904 that Charles Rolls and Henry Royce first met in Manchester's city centre Midland Hotel. Two years later the company Rolls-Royce Ltd was formed. In 1948 Manchester University professors developed the first computer to have a stored programme and memory. Nicknamed 'Baby', it has made the computer what it is today.

The Duke of Wellington opened the world's first passenger railway in 1830. The success of this Manchester to Liverpool railway started the railway revolution. Manchester Airport is the largest regional airport in the UK serving over 26 million passengers every year.

Manchester was the birthplace of Vegetarianism. Inspired by the sermons of Reverend William Cowherd, the vegetarian movement began in 1809, in the borough of Salford



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Chamonix Winter Conference

January 30th to February 2nd 2020

The 20th AFMS Winter meeting will be in Chamonix, Haute Savoie, France at the Hotel de l'Aiguille du Midi from the 30th of January to the 3rd February 2020. The family run hotel is 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. If anyone would like to give a presentation at the meeting, please let the admin secretary know when returning the booking form, enclosed.

Paris Facing Meltdown By Strikes Over Macron Pension Reforms

President Macron was given his first taste of the threat of an autumn of strikes as transport staff brought Paris to near standstill in September over his plans to reform pensions. Ten of the city's 16 metro lines were closed, service was badly disrupted on the rest and bus services were significantly reduced, a day after the government announced a plan to bring the country's 48 different pension regimes into a "universal system". Utter chaos ensued. Unions warned of greater disruption if Macron goes ahead with his plans. French train workers retire at 56 compared to 62 for other workers. The French have more years in retirement than all of the 36 OECD rich nations.

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Did you know?

France, the home of 400 cheeses, the birthplace of Molière and Coco Chanel, is facing an unprecedented exodus. Up to 2.5 million French people now live abroad, and more are bidding "au revoir" each year.

Le Figaro reported that the young, the lifeblood of France, are leaving, as they feel it is practically impossible to succeed in their country.