



# AFMS NEWS

Spring 2022

**AFMS**

[www.anglofrenchmedical.com](http://www.anglofrenchmedical.com)

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## A Word from the President.

Spring has arrived in Edinburgh. The flowers are out and arctic-style clothing is being returned to the wardrobe. There are also now queues building up at security in Edinburgh airport, which are a curiously-welcome sight after two years during which there has been no international travel at all. Sadly, we had to cancel our winter meeting in Chamonix for the second time this year but our French colleagues are moving at speed towards this year's autumn meeting in Strasbourg, which promises to be really excellent. A registration form is included in this newsletter. On the British side we have also made a successful fact-finding visit to Inverness and are looking forward to entertaining our French colleagues to a Highland-themed meeting in October 2023. We're aiming to include a boat trip on Loch Ness, a tour around a well-known distillery and – of course – there will be a ceilidh as part of the gala dinner.



The warmer weather and the easing of Covid restrictions, have permitted more outdoor activity. In my case, this has meant getting the motorbike out of the garage and getting into the hills of the Scottish Borders. There is an aphorism that says “most doctors don't ride motorbikes”, but some of us do – in my case near continuously since student days - and after a busy day at work it can be immensely therapeutic. I wonder how many other AFMS members engage in this slightly high-risk but immensely-fun pastime. I am aware that one member of the Committee on the British side has recently gained his licence but are there others? I suspect we are outnumbered by biking colleagues on the French side. Something for discussion over a beer in Strasbourg perhaps.

As always, I need to thank Tony and the other members of the Committee who do so much behind the scenes to keep our Society running smoothly. We have just had a really successful medical French weekend in Lille, and this couldn't happen without huge input from Zara, Clara and others. James keeps the website up to scratch, and John and Izhar do all the letter-writing and account-keeping. They, and the rest of the Committee, make a great team and deserve a big vote of thanks from us all. See you in Strasbourg.

**Dr Colin Mumford - PRESIDENT**

## Mailing List

We are updating our mailing list and need up to date emails for all members. Please send your current email to

[info@anglofrenchmedical.com](mailto:info@anglofrenchmedical.com)

## AFMS Instagram

Please visit us at Instagram

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

## In This Issue

Message from our President.

AFMS Strasbourg meeting and booking form.

Lille Medical Weekend Review

Back Page Notes.

Who's who in the AFMS.

Wills.

## Meeting and Events

### • September 2022

Strasbourg Annual Meeting.  
28th Sept to 1st October 2022.

### • January 2023

Chamonix Meeting.

### • April 2023

Medical French Meeting.

### • September 2023

Scientific Conference Inverness.

## AFMS NEWS

### **Anglo French Medical Weekend.** **Lille: April 2022.**

The AFMS weekend Medical French Course took place in Lille in early April after 2 years of Covid enforced cancellations. There was huge demand for the course and bookings had to be closed early. We had 34 doctors and 24 medical students take part, all very enthusiastic.

The course tutors deserve a huge thanks along with Christine Greenwood who works tirelessly as course administrator, keeping in touch with all the delegates. Our thoughts are with tutor Dr Mireille Sweeney who was unable to attend due to the loss of her father a few days prior to the course.

Topics covered included respiratory by Dr Margaret Toolan, Obs and Gynae by Dr Clara Farque, Tropical medicine and Infectious Diseases by Dr Nico Swetenham, Cardiovascular by Dr Ralph Hurley-O'Dwyer, Emergency medicine by Dr Anna Furse, Locomotor by Dr Anne-Lise Aeberhardt and Psychiatry by Dr Zara Bieler.

Workshops were very popular and highly rated and covered:

Working as a GP in France

Working with Asylum Seekers in France

The junior doctor/medical student experience

Humanitarian Medicine beyond France

Feedback was hugely positive and 100% backed the course continuing to run in France. Two students delegates, Anna Chiara Corriero and Eve Miller, have been awarded places at the annual conference in Strasbourg in September.



### **Anna**

What I loved the most about the course was the breadth of topics we covered, from cardiology to obstetrics, to emergency medicine and psychiatry. Every tutor would let us take notes in French and provide us with the words we were missing. We also took part in workshops that engaged in a discussion on elective tips and working as a junior doctor in France. I felt like my mind was being opened to a universe that, unfortunately, is not much examined in my university.

Saturday night was also extremely amusing! It was then that I could sincerely appreciate the bonds that were established during the course: we had all just met the day before, attended different universities, or worked in various trusts throughout the UK, with some participants joining us from Ireland, Bulgaria, or as far as the United States! Yet, we were conversing as old friends do, all brought together by the shared passion of wanting to expand our horizons. Sunday was my favourite day of the course - apart from finishing the planned lectures, we had the chance to attend one of the four workshops offered by the course's faculty. While I was interested in many of the offered workshops, I chose to get involved in the discussion about working in humanitarian missions - I was particularly interested in exchanging views about the ethical considerations one must make when working for organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières.

## AFMS NEWS

I was delighted to see that many other attendees had similar concerns to mine and I learnt a lot from the experiences of Ralph and Nico, our tutors, in that workshop. They specified how often medical missions benefit the professionals more than the local communities and gave us tips to avoid these situations, including only working abroad after having accrued enough clinical experience in our home countries. This gave me lots of food for thought and helped me refine ideas and objectives for my elective and future career. I was not expecting this when I started the course, but I benefited from it in more ways than just sharpening my French! The course was overall very challenging: I believe I learnt much more than I would expect, in such a short amount of time. This feeling of being tested and stepping out of my comfort zone has been energising for me. I also loved exploring Lille with our French tour guide, as we were able to understand more about the beautiful city that hosted us and French culture in general. This weekend gave me much more than I could ever imagine; I recommend it to any medical student or doctor who wishes to expand the boundary of their clinical knowledge. You will never know the possibilities that this course will open to you!



### Eve

Saturday was a whistle-stop tour of medical specialities. I was reminded that medicine itself used to be a foreign language. In my first year, I thought I'd never understand all those pesky acronyms. Perhaps there lies hope, that one day I'll conquer medical French just like I (mostly) conquered medical English.

I especially enjoyed a short snippet of Ralph's session, where we read out a fictional informal conversation between two "internes", featuring words that aren't taught at school.

This represented an important function of the course, contextualizing our language skills and daring us to imagine a

life in France. The value of the weekend went beyond what was taught. It was the "anything is possible" attitude, the expectation, rather than far-away dream, that we could translate our new vocab into real life.

The gala dinner on Saturday night was another wonderful opportunity to share wisdom and experiences. Afterwards, I wandered around the Old Town, absorbing the party-atmosphere and chilly spring air. I reflected on the privilege of stepping into another culture, after two years locked away. Of being on the outside looking in – walking and listening for snippets of drunken French from bars. In "La Biche et le Renard", it was someone's birthday and the whole bar joined in to sing and share mysterious blue shots. Simultaneously it could have been anywhere in the world but was also quintessentially French. I can't put my finger on why, but that's the point really – the intangible culture. The nuances you can't pick up over Zoom.

Sunday and the edges felt softened, heads floating through the tiredness. We spoke in French all day, disjointedly in the sleepy haze of breakfast, but easing throughout the blossom-filled walk to the Ecole Catholique de Lille and becoming almost natural by lunchtime. Later that afternoon, once people had started to leave and I wandered around the Old Town with some other students, we slipped back into English and for a while it felt wrong, clunky, unpoetic. My reflexes were French. This was the feeling I had been searching for. How hopeful to imagine how good it could feel after weeks, months, years in France.



## Back Page Notes



The long awaited next AFMS conference will take place from Wednesday the 28th of September to Saturday the 1st of October 2022 in Strasbourg.

The conference will take place in a boutique style hotel in the centre of Strasbourg called the Hannong Hotel.

Strasbourg is the second most popular tourist city in France.

Strasbourg is one of the great historic cities of Europe. Alsace, and with it Strasbourg, only became French in the 17th century. Alsace was French from 1648 to 1871, but during this time it remained German - speaking. From 1871 until 1919 and again from 1940 to 1944, Alsace was annexed by Germany.

While today the people of Alsace all speak French, the historic Germanic culture of the city of Strasbourg is tangible and indeed part of the city's identity. Many signs are written up in both French and Alsatian (a dialect of German), or sometimes just in Alsatian; and signs on many historic buildings are written up using the classically German Gothic script.

A tour of the city and its main sights will be included in the conference as well as a comprehensive scientific programme.

If you would like to attend our conference, please complete the enclosed booking form and send it to Tony Ridge as soon as possible.

Also if you would like to give a presentation at the conference, please also inform Tony, in the first instance. See you all in Strasbourg.



### Committee

Dr Colin Mumford

( President )

Dr Izhar Khan

( Treasurer )

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Dr Tim Reilly

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Dr Zara Bieler

Dr Clara Farque

Dr Jacqueline Emery

Dr Byran Dunsmore

### Remember us in your Will!

Don't forget that a legacy in your will can provide great assistance to societies like ours. There are taxation benefits in leaving part of your estate to charity. Clearly we don't want to lose any members, but none of us is getting any younger. Next time you review your legacy plans, maybe think about adding a codicil giving a small amount to the AMFS. We would be hugely grateful!