

Alan Gordon Travelling Fellowship report submitted by Kausik Das

Last year I applied for the Diploma in the minimally invasive surgery course in the CICE in Clermont-Ferrand in France. I applied for the Alan Gordon Travelling Fellowship of the BSGE and was delighted to be granted the fellowship in 2014.

Centre International de Chirurgie Endoscopique, better known as CICE, is a centre of excellence and innovation in endoscopic surgery in France. It is based in the small provincial town of Clermont-Ferrand in the heart of France. The city's industry was for a long time linked to the French tyre manufacturer Michelin, which grew up from Clermont-Ferrand to become a worldwide leader in its industry.

The CICE was created in 1990 by Professor Maurice Antoine Bruhat to respond to the evolution of newer surgical and imaging technologies. The innovation in laparoscopic surgery also led to a strong demand for training. A dedicated simulation centre was created for training alongside its clinical activity. The CICE provides lectures and practical training through various courses and training programmes to about 1,500 delegates every year. Research and development, evaluation and design of new tools, basic research and the creation of multimedia teaching aids count among the CICE's many other activities.

One of the courses run by the CICE is the International Inter University Diploma of Operative Endoscopy in Gynaecology organised in collaboration with the University d'Auvergne. I applied to the diploma course in the 2014-15 sessions which was in its 30th year of running. It was divided into two separate weekly sessions in December and January. The whole course was very well organised with a combination of theoretical lectures and practical demonstration. The theoretical lectures were exhaustive and all aspects of gynaecological endoscopy were dealt with remarkable detail with emphasis on practical consideration. The lectures were delivered in French but for the non-French speaking delegates there was facility for real time translation in English. With my non-existent French language skill, I certainly had no problem in following the lectures. There was also ample opportunity for practising laparoscopic suturing as the labs were open till 8.00 in the evening. One whole afternoon was dedicated to practising nephrectomy on live pigs under anaesthesia which was very interesting. The written examination was held on the last day of the second week. Five long descriptive questions tested the knowledge from anatomy to clinical aspects. Submission of a thesis on a chosen topic by the end of April 2015 was an essential requirement. The whole course was very well organised with the right mixture of theoretical and practical aspects, written examination and submission of a thesis as required by a university course.

I enjoyed going to the university with the throngs of the student everyday in the morning. Mingling with the younger crowd in the tram and in the canteen, I had a déjà vu of my own long lost memories of those golden days in medical school!

Overall I enjoyed the course, the crisp wintry days in France and of course, lovely French foods. I thank the BSGE in supporting me through the Alan Gordon Travelling Fellowship.