

Report - EFORT Travelling Fellowship

Germany
15 - 21 May 2011

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EFORT Travelling Fellowship May 2011 - Germany

The EFORT Travelling Fellowships are organised by the National Orthopaedic Societies and the European Federation of National Associations of Orthopaedics and Traumatology. Surgeons from European countries are selected by their national association to build links between the travelling fellows and the surgeons of the hosting country. The Spring 2011 Fellowship (15-20 May) was held in Germany and a scientific programme was organised in Dresden, Berlin, Erlangen and Bonn on behalf of the German Association of Orthopaedics and Orthopaedic Surgery (DGOOC) and Professional Association of Orthopaedics and Traumatologic Surgeons (BVOU) by Prof. Dr. med. Klaus-Peter Günther and Dr. Jan Mettelsiefen.

Dresden

15 May 2011

I met up with 14 other European Fellows, having individually arrived, and Prof. Günther and Dr. Mettelsiefen in the lobby of Hotel am Blauen Wunder at 17.00 for a refreshing bicycle tour along the scenic river Elbe into the historical city centre of Dresden. We were formally welcomed during dinner at restaurant "Augustiner" near the world famous Lady's Church and the fellows gave introductions to themselves and their country of origin.

16 May

After breakfast, we arrived at Universitätsklinikum Carl Gustav Carus Dresden where we discussed the current trends in knee arthroplasty and the merits of using navigation for high tibial osteotomy. After lunch, I joined Prof. Günther in theatre and observed a revision total hip replacement. This was followed by talks on foot and ankle trauma and I was impressed with the Dresden technique for percutaneous TA repair.

That evening, we had a guided tour into the historic city centre of Dresden. Dresden city suffered extensive damage during the second world war. Our guide showed us photographs of many destroyed and restored sites which reminded us of the value of history, the power of reconciliation and the determination of the German people. We had dinner at restaurant "Schillergarten" and enjoyed the warm German hospitality.

Berlin

17 May 2011

We left Dresden via coach at 07:30 and carried out planned case discussions en-route to Berlin. We were welcomed by Prof. Perka and Prof. Haas at Zentrum Muskuloskeletale Chirurgie Charite before splitting into 4 groups to observe long bone, articular and pelvic reconstruction being performed in severely injured patients in efficient well-organised trauma theatres. Lunch was accompanied by talks on polytrauma care in Berlin and resection/reconstructive strategies for pelvic/acetabular/sacral tumors. In the evening, we met up with the host surgeons for dinner at restaurant "12 Apostel" Berlin-Mitte and explored Berlin city centre after dinner.

Erlangen

18 May 2011

We left Berlin at 08:00 by coach with case-based discussions en-route to Erlangen where we were greeted with lunch by Dr. Heppt and colleagues, followed by talks on National differences in European orthopaedic health care and national trends in German orthopaedic practice. There was concern over future shortages of German orthopaedic surgeons as less

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than 10% presently are female and the large majority of medical students are female. We adjourned to the largest Siemens factory for MRI scanners for musculoskeletal imaging and were introduced to the MR-PET scanning system. The factory highlight was holding a spanner in front of a 3 Tesla scanner to feel the pull on it. Later we were given a guided tour of the historic city before we shared benches with our hosts for a Frankonian dinner at a traditional German beer garden, Steinbach brewery, where I tasted the best local brew-Bavarian beef combo.

19 May 2011

We arrived at Fachklinik Herzogenaurach by 08:00 where we had talks on current trends in musculoskeletal rehabilitation in Europe, osteoporosis and low back pain by Prof. Kladny and colleagues followed by a guided tour to the German rehabilitation hospital which felt like a luxury spa hotel surrounded by unspoiled Saxonian countryside. Lunch at the hospital canteen was actually a 4 course gourmet meal served in a restaurant setting.

Bonn

After lunch, we left for Bonn on our trusty coach to enter into a 4 mile autobahn jam from a road traffic accident. Five hours later, we checked into our hotel and were greeted by Prof. Wirtz and team for dinner at restaurant Rietbrocks Weinhaus.

20 May 2011

We set off at 07:00 to Universitätsklinikum Bonn to join Prof. Wirtz's team for the daily trauma meeting, followed by talks on hip arthroplasty and prosthetic infections, a guided tour of the hospital, a visit to operating theatres and sawbone workshop with various implants. Lunch was followed by more talks on spine surgery, osteoporotic fractures, degenerative spine disorders and minimal invasive endoscopic nucleotomy. We adjourned to the beer garden "Biergarten Alter Zoll" for the rest of the afternoon. We were given a mini tour around the city of Bonn before we met up with Prof. Wirtz and team for a farewell party at restaurant 'Bönnsch'. We said our goodbyes and well wishes to each other well into the night and individually left Germany the next morning on the 21 May 2011.

The Spring EFORT Fellowship was very well organised. Our German hosts were most hospitable and friendly. They were highly skilled surgeons and the theatres ran on German efficiency. The cities we visited were beautiful. The Germans are public spirited and take pride in caring for their environment. The trip provided me with a better appreciation of orthopaedic training and service setups in Germany and other parts of Europe.

Our group of travelling fellows got on really well and we knew each other well by the end of the trip; the quiet ones became the loudest and those who were apparently hesitant in speaking English initially became fairly eloquent at the end, especially after a few drinks. I enjoyed the different cultures, expressions and accents among my European colleagues. We enjoyed our time together and developed friendships during the week. I'm sure our paths will cross again.

I am grateful to EFORT and the BOA for the opportunity to learn from each other in such a stimulating environment and would strongly recommend the Traveling Fellowship to others.

Mr Paul TH Lee MB MA FRCS (Eng) FRCS (T&O)
Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon
The Royal London Hospital, Barts and the London NHS Trust