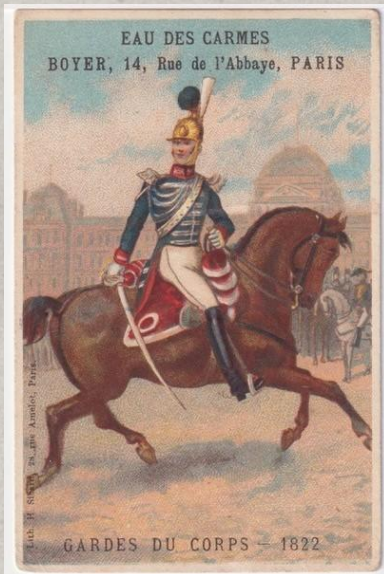




**You are warmly invited to attend
our April Talk at Millbank (and on Zoom),
1830hrs, Friday 24 April 2026**

Our guest speaker, Adrian Thomas, presents

Jacques Lisfranc de Saint-Martin (1787-1847), a Surgeon of the Napoleonic War



It is good to hark back to the Napoleonic Wars for a longer-term perspective on preparing for the next war of the 21st century. One has only to think of the fields of battle after the carnage of Austerlitz (1805), Leipzig (1813) and Waterloo (1815), where the very concept of triage arose, with their mass casualty scenarios and prolonged evacuation times, and ponder the challenges facing surgeons and medics of the day, to realise that there is nothing new about the nature of war and 'large scale combat operations', only the character changes.

The focus today is on an individual caught up in war, and on his lasting contributions to the care of casualties. Adrian Thomas will enlighten and entertain us in his inimitable style with his tale of a famous French military surgeon, Jacques Lisfranc de Saint-Martin, who recognised a specific pattern of midfoot injury amongst cavalrymen, and is now mainly remembered in medical lore through the eponymous 'Lisfranc fracture'. There is much more to Lisfranc than this.

Proceeds will support the Museum of Military Medicine

Prior registration required. Refreshments from 1730hrs; Supper at 2000hrs
Register [HERE](https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/programme-2026/) or via <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/programme-2026/>





Jacques Lisfranc de Saint-Martin (1787-1847)



Jacques Lisfranc was a French military surgeon active during the Napoleonic Era. He was born in 1787 in Saint Paul-en-Jarez in the Loire, and was the descendant of three generations of surgeons. After his Internship in Lyon, he became Guillaume Dupuytren's student in Paris. In his thesis Lisfranc described Dupuytren's operation for the removal of the lower jawbone. By 1813 Lisfranc was Médecin aux Armées (that is army surgeon) serving in Leipzig, at the Battle of Hanau and then at Metz. He was recorded as performing amputations and disarticulations with both speed and dexterity. He became well known for his novel techniques including amputation of the arm at the scapulohumeral level and for partial amputation of the foot through the tarso-metatarsal joint.¹ His partial amputation of the foot was of value in the treatment of the complications of frostbite of the foot which affected French soldiers following the infamous retreat from Moscow. His eponymous fracture dislocation was described following a stirrup injury in a cavalryman.

His career as a civilian surgeon was not without incident. He became interested in gastrointestinal surgery. For 22 years Lisfranc was surgeon at the Hôpital La Pitié in Paris. In 1830 he was the first to perform the ablation of rectum for carcinoma and became the most famous gynaecological surgeon. He was not able to become professor of the Faculty of Medicine in Paris because of his enmity with Dupuytren. His primary interest was surgery in the care of his patients.

His favourite maxim, which is recorded on his tomb, was "Surgery is bright when operating but it is still brighter when there is no blood and mutilation and yet leads to the patient's recovery".

¹ Lisfranc J. New operating method for partial amputation of the foot in the tarso-metatarsal joint. Nouvelle méthode opératoire pour l'amputation partielle du pied dans son articulation tarso-métatarsienne: méthode précédée des nombreuses modifications qu'a subies celle de Chopart. Paris: L'imprimerie de Feuguey, 1815:1-52.





Our Guest Speaker



Adrian Thomas

Adrian has been interested in history for as long as he can remember. At junior school he wrote a project on the hoplite infantry of Ancient Greece and their fighting in the tight phalanx formation. At secondary school Adrian was taught by the inspirational historian and novelist Glen Petrie, and developed an interest in biology through the Nuffield biology program which was part of the Nuffield Science Teaching Project. His interest in medical history was stimulated when he was taught by Jonathan Miller, Edwin Clarke and Bill Bynum at University College London medical school. On qualifying as a doctor, Adrian entered radiology and was a founder member of the UK radiology history group. During his career Adrian has seen all of the developments of modern radiology. He entered medical school in 1972, the year that the CT scanner was announced, and started his radiology training at Hammersmith Hospital in 1981 which coincided with the arrival of their MRI scanner.

Adrian has published and spoken extensively on the history of radiology. He was chair of the historical exhibition group for the 1995 Röntgen Centenary Congress. He has been president of the Section of Radiology of the Royal Society of Medicine, the British Society for the History of Medicine, and the International Society for the History of Radiology; chairman of the British Society for the History of Radiology, and edits its journal 'The Invisible Light'.

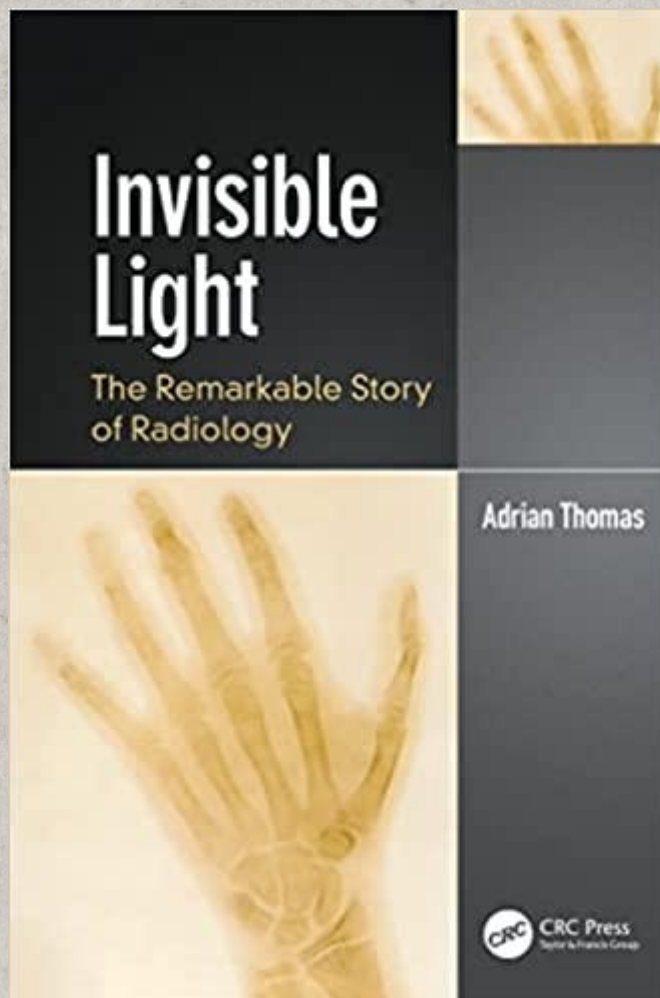
His research for his recent book '*Invisible Light*' led him to explore the history of military radiology, which is not surprising seeing that he was already deeply interested in the First World War and the years leading to that. The recording of his May 2023 talk to Friends of Millbank, on '*Invisible Light: The history of military radiology*', is on our [Members Area](#).

Adrian is currently visiting professor at Canterbury Christ Church University and has been deeply involved over many decades in developing radiology reporting programs for postgraduate radiographers. He teaches on the Diploma in Medical History of the Society of Apothecaries (DHMSA), and is Honorary Historian of the British Institute of Radiology.





Recommended Reading



Invisible Light: The Remarkable Story of Radiology
Adrian Thomas (CRC Press, 2022)

See also: van den Boom, N. A. C. (2024). *Exploring Lisfranc injuries: From surgical choices to patient perspectives and economic implications*. [Doctoral Thesis, Maastricht University].
Maastricht University. <https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20241001nb>
Available at <https://cris.maastrichtuniversity.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/240117197/c8393-embargo.pdf>



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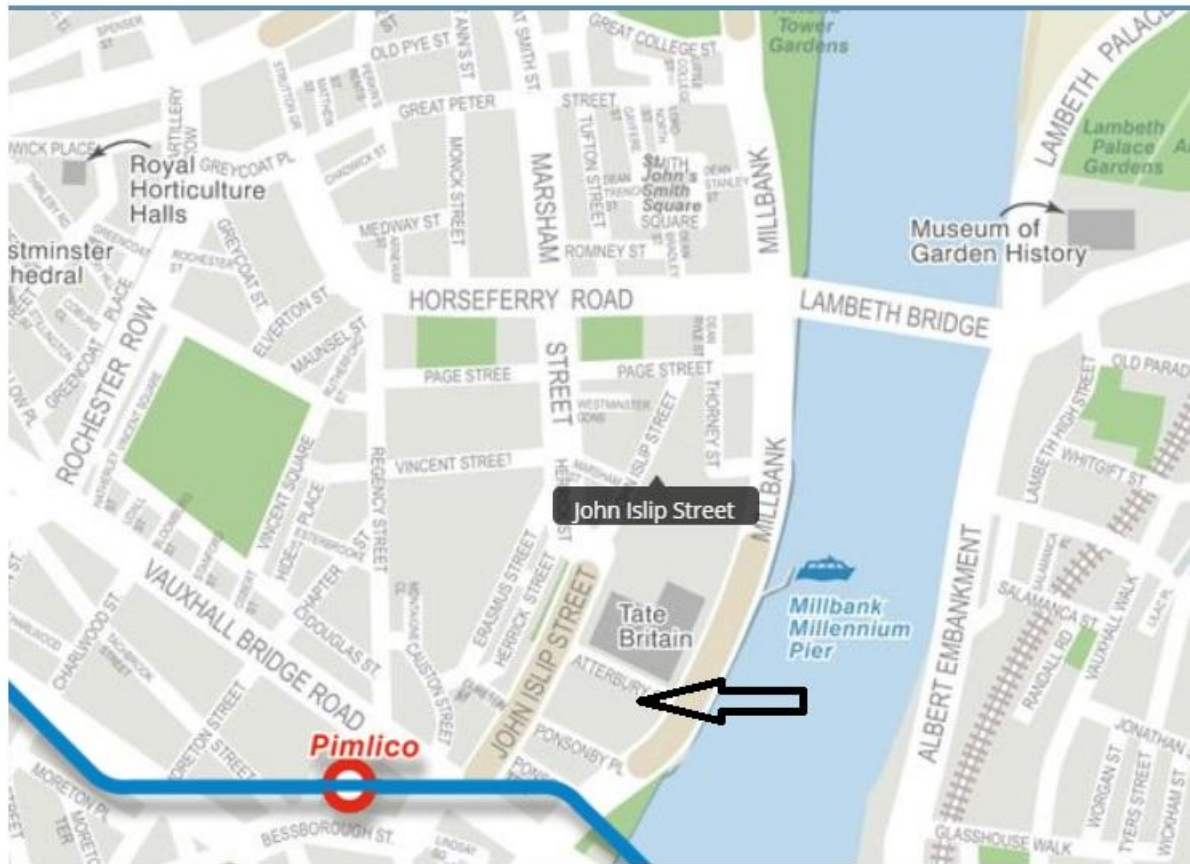
Directions for Millbank (Chelsea College of Arts, formerly the Royal Army Medical College)

The entrance to Reception is via Atterbury Street, opposite Tate Britain (arrowed on map below).

We meet for light refreshments at Reception from 1730hrs. The talk commences at 1830hrs.

Guests and non-members are always welcome. Everyone attending the talk, whether at Millbank or online via Zoom, is requested to register beforehand, see www.friendsofmillbank.org

LondonTown.com - John Islip Street Location Map



info@friendsofmillbank.org



www.friendsofmillbank.org