



**You are warmly invited to attend
our first autumn Talk at Millbank (and on Zoom),
1830hrs, Friday 2 October 2026**

**Our guest speaker, Alec Hurley, presents
'Icarus - the First Air Accident Investigation'**



Site
of
crash

This Talk is our chance to celebrate aviation medicine and man's indomitable efforts to conquer gravity.

Icarus is the figure on the RAF Centre of Aviation Medicine crest. He is shown with two electrons circling him, representing the Helium atom, from the Greek Helios – the Sun.

Icarus tragically fell to his death in the Icarian Sea, near the island of Icaria (in that part of the Aegean Sea, named after him, between the Cyclades and Asia Minor, arrowed on far right of map) after flying too close to the Sun when escaping King Minos of Crete. The Sun's heat melted the wax binding his feathers together, causing his wings to fall apart mid-air. His ingenious father Daedalus, whose bronze statue graces the striking Fleet Air Arm memorial at Whitehall, flew at a safer height. Hence the RAF Crest 'Ut Secure Volent' (That they may Fly Safely); if only the intrepid successors of young Icarus would but heed the advice of the Centre of Aviation Medicine.

The exact date of this First Air Accident is lost in the mists of time, but is thought to be around 1325 BC (record-keeping was not so precise before the RAF came on the scene). Nonetheless, our speaker seeks to challenge the findings of the 'Court of enquiry' that blamed the accident upon flying too close to the Sun, by introducing other factors that need to be considered before drawing a conclusion. The original Greek 'accident report' was drawn up by the Head of the Cretan Civil Aviation Authority at the time, the somewhat biased King Minos, so is suspect.

The speaker offers his own translation of this faux Greek report. All will become clearer during the talk.

Proceeds will support the [David Nott Foundation](#)

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



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Our Guest Speaker



Wing Commander Alec Hurley RAF

Wing Commander Alec Hurley was RAF Senior Medical Officer at numerous flying stations within the UK and Italy as well as Bosnia and Iraq.

He spent twelve years at the RAF Centre of Aviation Medicine (RAF CAM) as Chief Instructor in Aviation Medicine and OC Altitude Medicine and Clinical Support.

Alec has conducted over 800 explosive decompression training sessions with Aircrew, Physicians and clinical staff to altitudes from 25,000 to over 35,000 feet to give them experience of the signs and symptoms of hypoxia, and training them in the use and reliance of aircrew oxygen equipment.

This presentation on '*Icarus - the First Air Accident Investigation*' was initially developed by Wg Cdr Gus Cabre,¹ during his time as Instructor and then Chief Instructor at RAF CAM, and further developed and expanded by Alec Hurley. It will examine the causes of the fatal loss of Icarus in this tragic flying accident and discuss the conclusions reached by the board of inquiry. It will cover most aspects examined following a flying incident to determine possible causes as an aid to better education of aircrew and prevention of future accidents.

¹ SQNLDR Gus Cabre.

Council Member, Australasian Military Medicine Association. <https://www.amma.asn.au/members/gus-cabre/>
Also Officer Commanding Aerospace Medicine Unit - Whenuapai, RNZAF Auckland ([LinkedIn](#))



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The Icarian Sea, site of the First Air Accident (arrowed)



Map by Rostislav Botev - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2548733>

Reference

(spoiler alert: read this only after listening to the talk)

ACCIDENT REPORT ON "ICARUS - THE FIRST FLIGHT" by P. D. Rieden ([link](#))



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The Lament for Icarus (Tate Britain, Millbank – do visit this before Alec Hurley's talk)



Bronze statue of Daedalus, father of Icarus, atop the [Fleet Air Arm Memorial](#), Whitehall (Commemorating over 6,000 individuals who have lost their lives while serving in the Royal Navy Air Service since WW1 – including 1,925 who have no grave but the sea)



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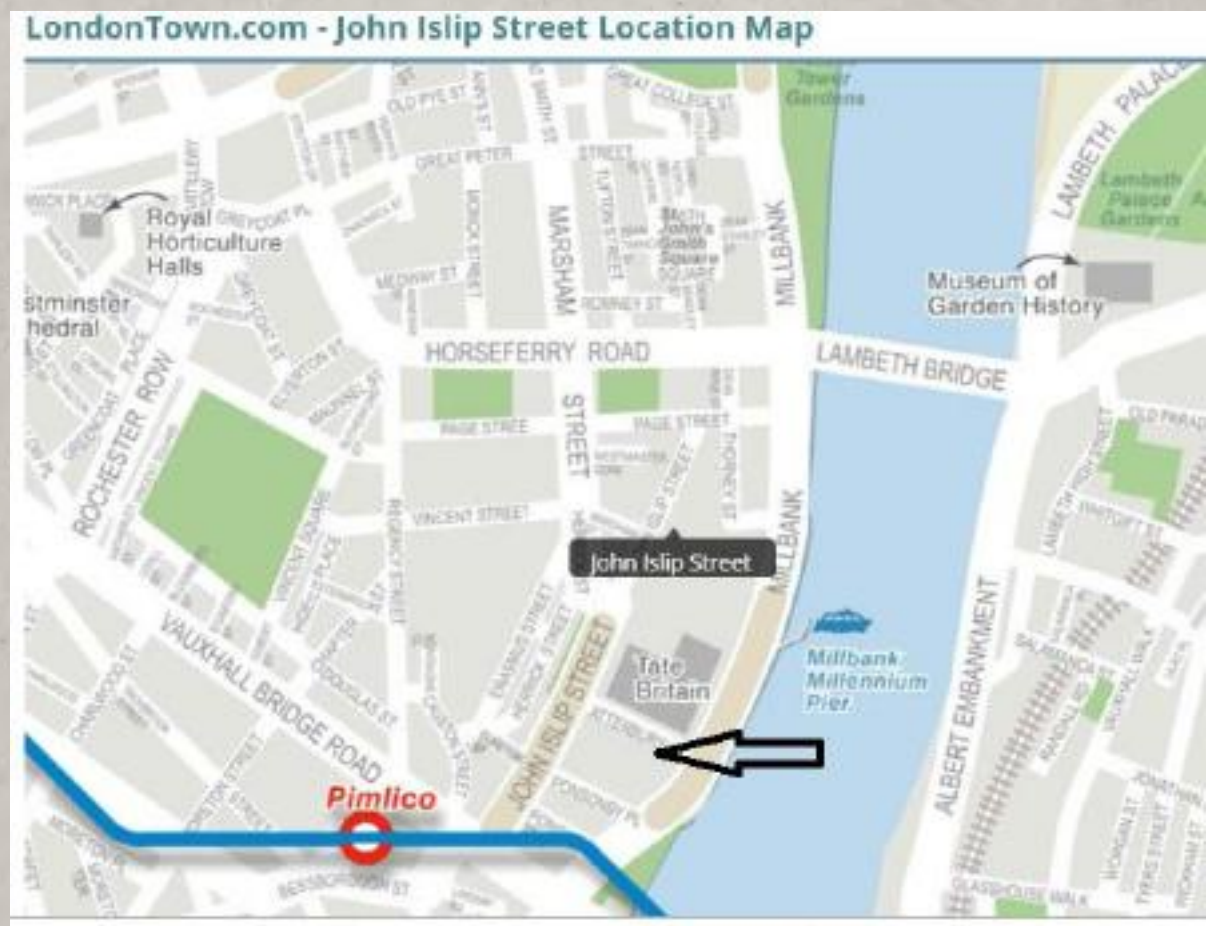
Directions for Millbank

(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



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