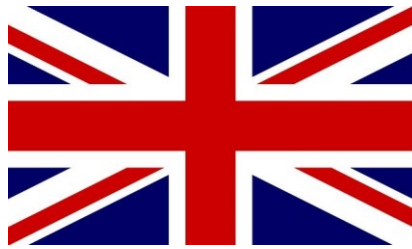


Friends of Millbank

Chairman's Newsletter – VE-Day special, 8 May 2020



We'll meet again

It's time to celebrate, to remember Victory in Europe Day, VE-Day, 75 years ago. In the words of the Royal British Legion, we pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of the entire Second World War generation, from British, Commonwealth and Allied Forces to evacuees and those who served on the home front. As we face some of the most challenging times since the end of the Second World War, now more than ever it is important to unite in recognition of service to the nation, just as communities did 75 years ago. While meetings may have been cancelled, there are other ways for us to mark this special anniversary from home, see: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/ve-day-75>

VE Day timetable

- **11am** — Two-minute national silence to remember the declaration of victory and the end of the Second World War in Europe.
- **2.45pm - 3.45pm** — First of two special BBC One programmes to mark VE75, including extract from Sir Winston Churchill's victory speech delivered at 3pm on VE Day.
- **Afternoon** — Britons encouraged to hold 1940s-style afternoon tea parties at home rather than street parties, including homemade bunting and recipes from the era.
- **9pm** — Address by the Queen followed by national doorstep rendition of Dame Vera Lynn's "We'll Meet Again".

What's happened since....

Well, hasn't a lot changed in the space of only three months since my first newsletter on 31 January! Then, we were still looking forward to a full year's programme, since when we've seen a coronavirus pandemic circle the globe and affect every single person on earth in one way or another. So far, it appears to be not quite as lethal and hopefully will not kill as many people as the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918 – 1920, but there have already been over 30,000 COVID-19 deaths in the UK alone. Now we all better understand what our forebears must have felt and gone through in 1918 - 1920 and in every other plague in history.

For some it's more than that.

Well done to everyone for your kindness towards others and your support for the NHS, saving lives in big ways or small, according to personal circumstances. Do stay safe, stay well, keep a sense of humour, and look after one another.

Coronavirus and our Programme for 2020

Our life President, Dr John Blair, and Emeritus Chairman Colonel Frank Davies have given me unstintingly of their support in adapting to circumstances. So have the Committee members, Friends of Millbank, our webmaster, our speakers and others, I thank you all.

Our programme for 2020 inevitably took a hit, though our first lecture, that on 21 February, did go ahead. With lockdown in UK commencing on 23 March, Chelsea College of Arts closed soon after and will remain so for an indefinite period; our three lectures scheduled for March, May and June have been postponed to next year; our May tour of the Medal Room at HQ AMS, our outing to Trooping the Colour and the Polish Club lunch thereafter, our August garden party, and our September tour of Millbank, have all been cancelled. I uploaded our amended programme on 20 March to our website www.friendsofmillbank.org where you can access it from the home page. The next scheduled event at Millbank will hopefully be the George Blair Memorial Lecture by Richard Villar at the end of October, subject to confirmation nearer the time.

First lecture, 'Taking Blood Transfusion Forward', Heidi Doughty

We commenced this year's lecture series with the talk on 21 February by Dr Heidi Doughty PhD OBE TD (her biography is in the January newsletter). In the space of an hour she eloquently covered the history of military transfusion since the First World War, reviewing recent lessons from the frontline after a decade of transformation (2006-2016) (this also being the subject of her PhD).¹ She highlighted the challenges and benefits of pre-hospital transfusion and how lessons from conflict are rapidly transferring across to civilian trauma practice. She ended with reflections on 'good medicine in bad places', how transfusion has re-emerged as a key military medical capability.

Thirty people were in attendance, from very different medical, nursing, arts and other backgrounds ranging from a final year medical student and a foundation year doctor attending their first Friends of Millbank talk, through to our recently retired Surgeon General, Professor Martin Bricknell, who very kindly delivered words of thanks to the speaker after her talk. The feature common to everyone was their keen interest in military medicine and history.

In order to share Heidi's excellent talk with those members who could not attend on the day, and to inform and inspire an even larger audience, an online presentation of her talk

¹ Heidi Doughty PhD thesis:

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/288c/d12bdf885a839a0e885e70fea210db1827c2.pdf>

has now been made available, see <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/archive>. This is the first of our talks to be published online for wider distribution, there will be more.

Let's hope that this will not go down in our history as 'our only 2020 lecture'. We'll meet again.²

The inaugural Haywood lecture

The inaugural lecture in honour of Brigadier Ian Haywood and his contribution to military and civilian trauma practice, 'Rebuilding limbs, rebuilding lives', originally scheduled to be delivered on 27 March by Lt Col Sarah Phillips, has been postponed to next year.

In the meantime, do have a look at the tribute to Ian Haywood in the new College Personalities section on our website <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/college-personalities>. On this section, more further on.

Next year's programme, 2021

We now have a full set of lectures for next year's programme, including the postponed lectures from this year, though exact dates will only be finalised once Chelsea College re-opens. I shall mention only one to whet your appetite, the George Blair Memorial Lecture for October 2021, which will be by Paul Watkins, author of 'From Hell Island to Hay Fever', the biography of Dr Bill Frankland, former FEPOW, who died recently at 108 years of age. There are tributes to Bill Frankland on our website, in the new Archive section.

Membership benefits

If you're simply on our mailing list, please consider enrolling as a full member (only £20 pa). This would be greatly appreciated, as your subscription helps fund speakers' expenses and enhancements to our website, which will benefit both you and others. Have a look within www.friendsofmillbank.org if you have not done so for a while, to appreciate the recent changes (there will be more to come), and share this with friends. You can enrol by post or electronically, simply email info@friendsofmillbank.org. Other benefits include free attendance at all lectures (otherwise £5 each), free registration with the BSHM as a member of an affiliated society (saving you the £15 registration fee), and book discounts.

Affiliation with the British Society for the History of Medicine

We are now officially affiliated with the British Society for the History of Medicine, www.bshm.org.uk. Edward Wawrzynczak (BSHM Treasurer) kindly gave a short presentation about the BSHM and the many benefits of affiliation to our members immediately preceding Heidi Doughty's talk on 21 February. His presentation accompanies this mailing and will also appear shortly on our website. There are links to the BSHM registration page on our home page.

² Vera Lynn <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTWy9jim7Mw>

Several Friends of Millbank who had registered with the BSHM attended its free conducted tour of the new Medical Galleries at the Science Museum on 5 February, led by the director Natasha McEnroe. I aim to organise a visit for Friends of Millbank next year.



BSHM visit to Medical Galleries, 5 February 2020

The biggest BSHM event is its Biennial Conference – the next one will be in Sheffield, 15 – 18 September 2021. It is probable that the one thereafter will be in Cardiff in 2023, timed to celebrate the opening of the Museum of Military Medicine in its new location, should that move not be delayed too long by restrictions during this coronavirus pandemic.

Members' recommendations

New books:

1. **Endell Street** (about the trailblazing women who ran World War One's most remarkable Military Hospital) by Wendy Moore – highly recommended by Pete Starling.

Available from Amazon: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Endell-Street-Trailblazing-Remarkable-Military/dp/1786495848/ref=sr_1_1?crid=30JRJSN9WHWXJ&dchild=1&keywords=endell+street&qid=1584353651&srefix=endell%2Caps%2C162&sr=8-1

Also from Waterstone's: <https://www.waterstones.com/book/endell-street/wendy-moore/9781786495846>

2. **Epidemics and Society: From the Black Death to the Present** by Frank Snowden. Timely indeed, the title says it all. Frank Snowden is Emeritus Professor of Medicine, Yale University. (Hardback November 2019; paperback due out 26 May) (Chairman's choice)

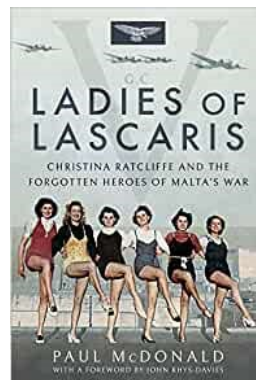
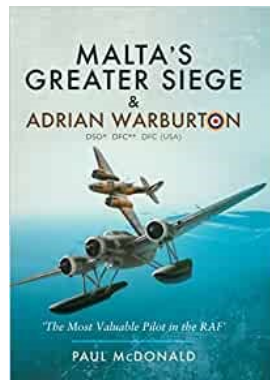
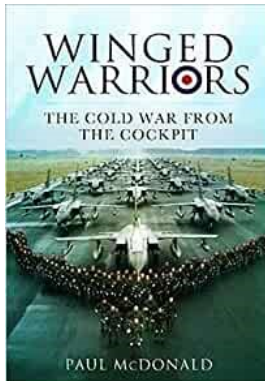
Available from Amazon: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Epidemics-Society-Black-Death-Present/dp/0300192215>

You can link to an interview with Professor Snowden (and Dr Anthony Fauci) here:

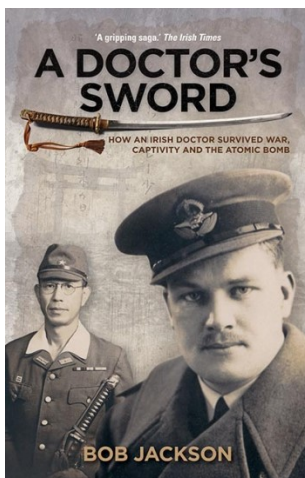
https://blogs.plos.org/dnascience/2020/04/09/a-brief-history-of-plagues-and-pandemics-from-the-black-death-to-covid-19/?_cldee=ZGp2YXNzYWxs0Bhb2wuY29t&recipientid=contact-d9760bbffc22e911a8a4002248005489-85afaa8a79f743e098f51922b0990019&utm_source=ClickDimensions&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=HSenews&esid=a078b904-858f-ea11-a811-000d3a86ad25

Other books:

1. *Malta's Greater Siege & Adrian Warburton* by Gp Capt Paul McDonald OBE. Paul was due to speak to Friends of Millbank on 19 June, but his lecture *A Malta Story: untold bravery on an island under siege* has had to be postponed to next year. He has kindly arranged with Pen & Sword to give Friends of Millbank a very generous 25% discount on this and his other two books, discount code available to paid-up members on application, via info@friendsofmillbank.org



2. *A Doctor's Sword* by Bob Jackson (<https://www.gillbooks.ie/biography/a-doctors-sword1>). Bob has very kindly accepted my invitation to deliver the George Blair Memorial Lecture for October 2022 (not a typo), to enlighten us about the remarkable story of Aidan MacCarthy, RAF doctor and FEPOW. Aidan MacCarthy's own book, *A Doctor's War*, is featured in our new book review section at <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/archive>. This review is by a newly enrolled Friend of Millbank, Surgeon Lieutenant Nathaniel Roocroft RN, who also introduced me to 'A Doctor's Sword'. Bob Jackson has very kindly negotiated a book discount for Friends of Millbank with his publishers, the code for which is available to paid-up members on application, via info@friendsofmillbank.org.



There followed a blue flash accompanied by a very bright magnesium-type flare ... Then came a frighteningly loud but rather flat explosion, which was followed by a blast of hot air ... All this was followed by eerie silence.' This was Cork doctor Aidan MacCarthy's description of the atomic bomb explosion above Nagasaki in August 1945, just over a mile from where he was trembling in a makeshift bomb shelter in the Mitsubishi POW camp. At the end of the war, a Japanese officer did the unthinkable: he surrendered his samurai sword to MacCarthy, his enemy and former prisoner. This is the astonishing story of the wartime adventures of Dr Aidan MacCarthy, who survived the evacuation at Dunkirk, burning planes, sinking ships, jungle warfare and appalling privation as a Japanese prisoner of war. It is a story of survival, forgiveness and humanity at its most admirable.

Online Courses by FutureLearn:

Friends of Millbank may be interested in these free short courses:

1. [From Waterloo to the Rhine: The British Army 1815-1945](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/waterloo-to-the-rhine/2/register?return=ddemplc1) (University of Kent)
<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/waterloo-to-the-rhine/2/register?return=ddemplc1>
2. COVID-19: Tackling the Novel Coronavirus (LSHTM & UK Public Health Rapid Support Team) <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/covid19-novel-coronavirus> Highly recommended
3. Health in Humanitarian Crises (LSHTM) <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/health-crises>

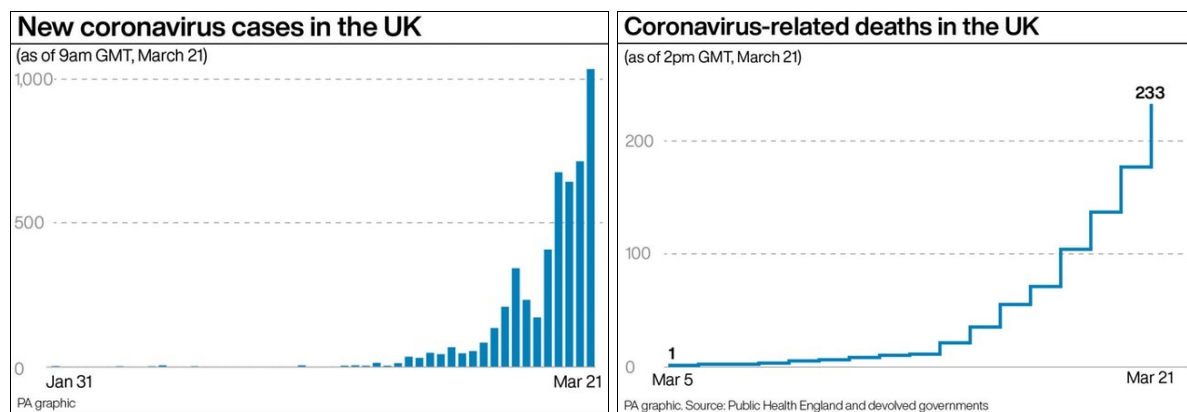
And a member's request:

Captain Tom Moore

Ruth Richardson has asked me to publicise the following petition to the Government Honours Committee for Captain Tom Moore to be considered for knighthood because of his fundraising efforts for the NHS: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/a-knighthood-for-tom-moore>

There is another petition at: https://www.change.org/p/war-hero-tom-moore-aged-99-to-be-knighted-captaintommoore?utm_source=grow_gb&utm_medium=media

Memories of a pandemic – 1



14 March

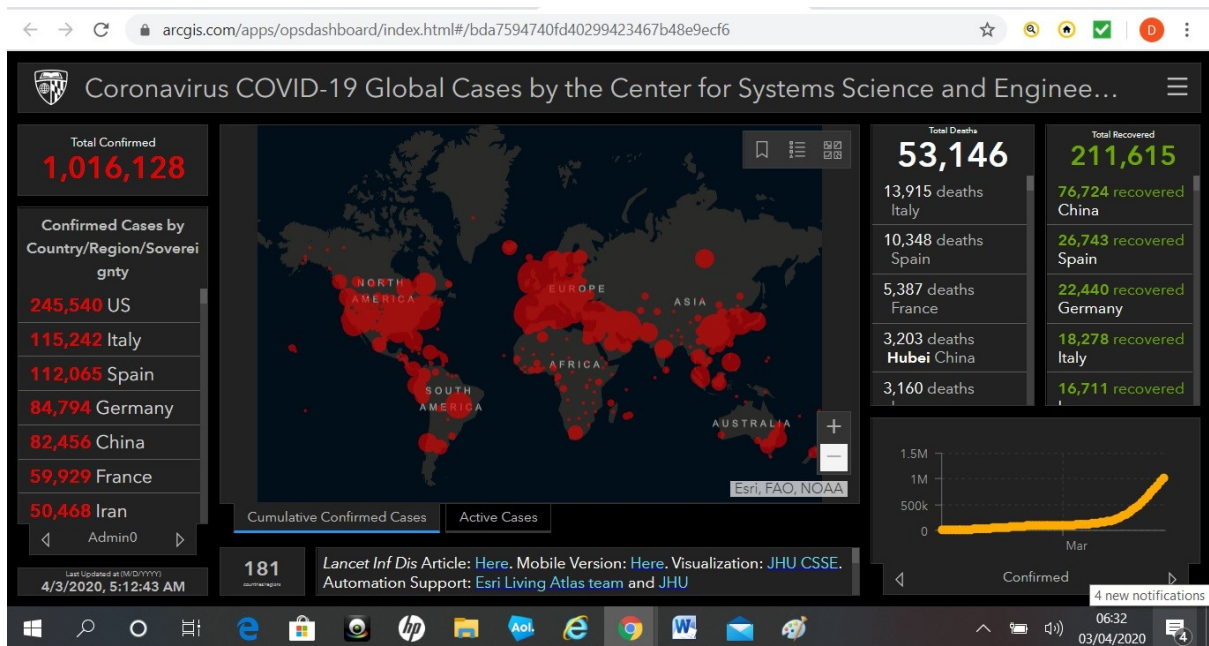


17 March

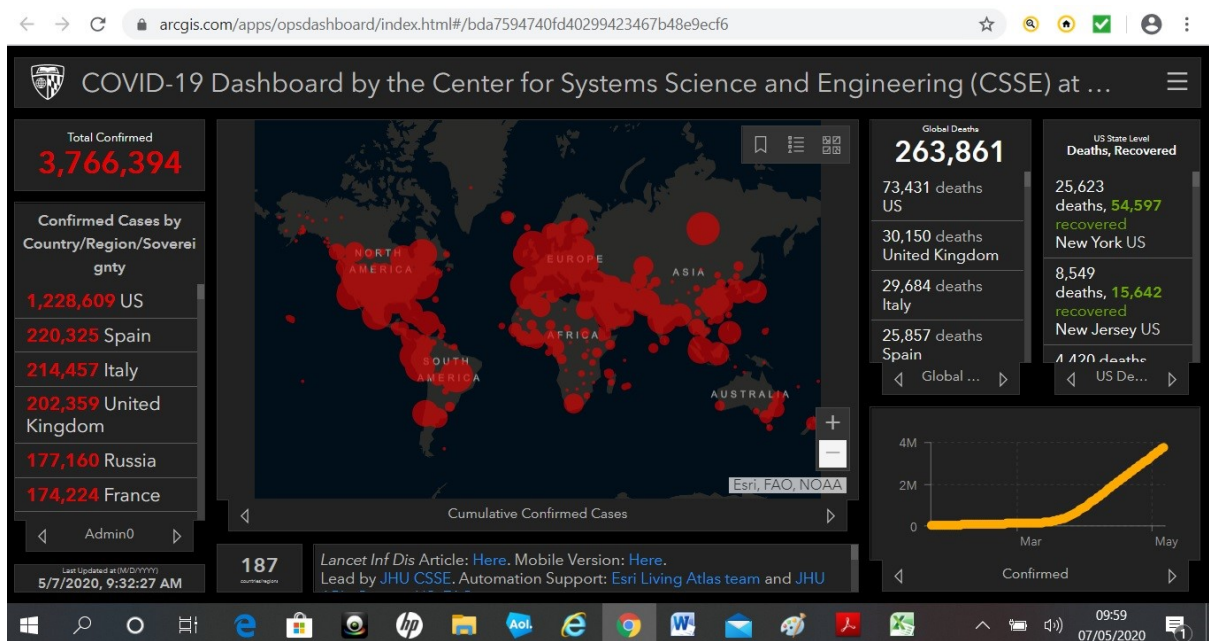


21 March

Memories of a pandemic – 2



Confirmed global cases pass one million, global deaths over 50,000 – 3 April 2020



Confirmed global cases over 3.7M, global deaths over 260,000; UK deaths over 30,000 – 7 May 2020

Not a time for complacency

But hope remains

Memories of a pandemic - 3

A tribute to NHS Nightingale and coronavirus hospitals by Friends of Millbank

(Sent to Colonel Ashleigh Boreham, NHS Nightingale Hospital London, 31 March 2020, and later incorporated into 'Laughter – still the best medicine', a mailing by your Chairman)



A tribute to NHS Nightingale Hospitals

Print by Andrew Wing, Stoke Gallery Gosport www.stokegallery.co.uk (detail below)



Memories of a pandemic – 4

(From 'Laughter – still the best medicine')



College Personalities

I briefly mentioned earlier the tribute to Ian Haywood in the new College Personalities section on our website <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/college-personalities>. There are other biographical tributes there, currently to Colonels Jim Ryan (still with us!) and Wally Vella, and to Sir Alfred Keogh and Sir David Bruce. It is my intention to continue adding to this section to commemorate renowned Personalities who have been associated with the Royal Army Medical College, especially those who have contributed greatly to military medicine. Members are welcome to send me contributions for potential inclusion.

A tribute to a College Personality

I mentioned Mary Kerslake, former Officers Mess Manager at the College, in my January newsletter. She died shortly after the AGM, and is fondly remembered by many of us.

I am currently drafting a combined tribute to Mary Kerslake and Matthew Dooley (Mess Steward), see extract below. I would be most grateful to receive further personal recollections to add to this.

Mary Kerslake commenced her connection with the Royal Army Medical College, the HQ Army Medical Services in the early seventies alongside her husband John Kerslake. She was the Officers Mess Manager until the College closed in 1999, before it was sold to the University of London. All told, she served here for some 26 years. She renewed her connection as a founder member of Friends of Millbank in 2006, and was active on the committee, primarily as wines member, for many years until illness intervened. She was unanimously elected as Life Member.

Her daughter Val O'Connell has very kindly sent me a photograph and a personal tribute to share with you all in memory of her mother.



Mary Kerslake, Officers Mess Manager

A daughter's tribute

During her time as mess manager, she was involved in all aspects of the running of the mess, from bookings, the overall housekeeping, overseeing the numerous functions and regimental dinner nights, ladies' nights, Royal visits, and much more besides.

These evenings ran like clockwork, she oversaw the running of the kitchens and the waiting staff, also making sure the Corps band was looked after on these occasions. Mum would also be front of house on these nights. We have at least a hundred letters from numerous Naval, Army and RAF Unit representatives who praise mum for all the work she put in to make these evenings memorable.

The lovely people I have spoken to since mum's passing have all said how kind, generous, funny and caring she was, all saying she was like a mother to them whilst staying at the mess, she made friends of the officers and the staff that helped her run it for all those years. If anyone knew Mathew Dooley (a steward at the mess) she was friends with him right up to his passing.



With thanks, to Mary Kerslake

Stay safe, stay well, and keep a sense of humour.

We will meet again.

In Arduis Fidelis

David Vassallo

Chairman, Friends of Millbank