

## **Friends of Millbank**

### **Chairman's Newsletter 31 January 2020**

#### **Keeping alive the spirit of Millbank and celebrating the achievements of military medicine (past, present and future)**

In this first newsletter by your newly elected chairman, I would like to start by paying tribute to my two inimitable predecessors, Pat Higgins (founder of Friends of Millbank and chairman 2005 – 2010), and Frank Davies, (programme organiser since 2008, and chairman 2010 – 2020). I would also like to thank our life President, Colonel Dr John Blair, for his unremitting support, inspiration and philanthropy. It is thanks to these three huge personalities, to the committee members who have supported them so ably over these years, and to you all as members, that Friends of Millbank has thrived and become so special to us all, both for its annual series of lectures and social events, and for its camaraderie. I am confident that with your support and that of our speakers Friends of Millbank will grow and continue to thrive for many years to come. I would also like to thank here the Dean of Chelsea College of Arts for permission to continue to use the College as a venue.

#### **Programme of lectures 2020**

We have another excellent programme of lectures for 2020, with stimulating and world class speakers lined up by Frank Davis, as well as visits and social events, see attached. The programme can be downloaded from the front page of our website [www.friendsofmillbank.org](http://www.friendsofmillbank.org), as can flyers for individual talks the month beforehand.

#### **First lecture of the year**

This will be 'Taking Blood Transfusion Forward', by Colonel Heidi Doughty OBE TD, on Friday 21 February 2020, at Millbank.<sup>1</sup> I have attached a flyer, which can also be downloaded from [www.friendsofmillbank.org](http://www.friendsofmillbank.org) Please distribute this flyer to potential new members and encourage them to attend. Some of Heidi's talks are online and really worth listening to, including a TEDx talk 'Blood Brothers'.<sup>2</sup> Heidi Doughty is a consultant in Transfusion Medicine

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<sup>1</sup> Taking Blood Transfusion Forward <https://www.arts.ac.uk/whats-on/taking-blood-transfusion-forward>

<sup>2</sup> Heidi Doughty, TEDx Talk 'Blood Brothers' [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxaYzFAJY\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxaYzFAJY_0)

working for NHS Blood and Transplant based in Birmingham. Current national roles include component development and emergency preparedness. She completed her PhD on 'Recent developments in military transfusion practice and their impact on civilian healthcare' in 2018.<sup>3</sup> I can email a copy to anyone interested. She was appointed president of the British Blood Transfusion Society in 2019. As a former army reservist, she commanded 202 Field Hospital (V) and served as Defence Consultant Adviser Transfusion and Colonel Commandant. Professional interests include military-civilian health partnership and transfusion in the pre-hospital environment – the topic of her talk.

### **The inaugural Haywood lecture, 27 March 2020**

An innovation this year is the introduction of an annual Haywood lecture in honour of Brigadier Ian Haywood and his tremendous contribution to military and civilian trauma practice,<sup>4</sup> by kind permission of his widow. The inaugural lecture will be by Lt Col Sarah Phillips, 'Rebuilding limbs, rebuilding lives', on Friday 27 March. Sarah is a Consultant Orthopaedic & Trauma Surgeon at King's College Hospital and is one of the Consultants in charge of the Limb Reconstruction Unit at King's. She has a considerable volunteer experience in Sudan, Gaza and the West Bank. She supports two charities, [www.ideals.org.uk](http://www.ideals.org.uk) (founded by John Beavis after the Bosnian war)<sup>5</sup> and [www.rebuildcharity.org](http://www.rebuildcharity.org).

### **Next year's programme, 2021**

I am responsible for organising next year's programme. Several key speakers have already accepted to give talks in 2021, and more are in the offing. I would be very happy to receive recommendations for new speakers.

### **Membership**

Please renew your membership for 2020 if you have not already done so. You can do this in person when attending a lecture, by post or electronically. Details are on the attached AGM Minutes. The subscription remains a modest £20 per annum, and life membership £200, enabling free attendance at all meetings. Potential members pay £5 to attend individual lectures.

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<sup>3</sup> Doughty PhD thesis <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/288c/d12bdf885a839a0e885e70fea210db1827c2.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Immediate Care Greats – Brigadier Ian Haywood <https://www.basics.org.uk/immediate-care-greats/>

<sup>5</sup> IDEALS - Celebrating the life of John Beavis (d. 5 December 2019) <https://www.ideals.org.uk/articles/celebrating-the-life-of-john-beavis>

## **Co-operation and extended benefits of membership**

I am very keen that we should continue to co-operate closely with associations or societies whose aims resonate with Friends of Millbank, and to establish new links. We already have a close relationship with the Haywood Club ([www.haywoodclub.org.uk](http://www.haywoodclub.org.uk)) and the Museum of Military Medicine ([www.museumofmilitarymedicine.org.uk](http://www.museumofmilitarymedicine.org.uk)). We link to each other's websites, invite members to each other's events, and collaborate whenever possible. I now have news about two further societies:

### **The George Cross Island Association ([www.georgecrossisland.org.uk](http://www.georgecrossisland.org.uk))**

One of the aims of the George Cross Island Association (GCIA) is "To honour the People of Malta, and those who fought on their behalf". GCIA membership is open to all British, Maltese, Commonwealth and Allied Services, Merchant Navy, Nursing & Civil Defence personnel who took part in operations in the defence of Malta during the Siege of 1940 to 1943, and to anyone who served in Malta at any time and to the families and heirs of anyone who served.

At my request, the GCIA now 'extends membership to anyone who has an interest in the history of Malta particularly during WWII' – which covers the many FOM members who are already aware of the richness of Malta's military and medical history, and who can now apply for membership.

An immediate benefit is the opportunity to participate in this year's Malta Reunion (14-27 April) with its many commemorations, commencing with the 15 April anniversary of the award in 1942 of the George Cross, and ending with an ANZAC Day service and a commemorative service at St Paul's Anglican Cathedral for HMS Urge, a submarine lost at sea in April 1942. I shall be participating and shall be delighted to see other FOM members there as well.

### **British Society for the History of Medicine ([www.bshh.org.uk](http://www.bshh.org.uk))**

This is an excellent resource for everyone interested in the history of medicine. Some 30 societies nationwide already hold affiliate membership with the BSHM, enabling their own members to participate fully in BSHM activities. I am negotiating to obtain affiliate membership for Friends of Millbank, and have invited a senior BSHM representative to address us at one of our next lectures.

## In memoriam

Many of you will already know of the recent death of Major General Brian Mayes and some will have attended his funeral. I have happy memories of sharing a yacht with him and other RAMC personnel in the Baltic on my first adventurous training expedition in the early 1990s. As a personal tribute, and remembering his connection with Millbank, I photographed his portrait below.



*Major General F B Mayes. This portrait was formerly displayed at the Royal Army Medical College, Millbank, and now graces the walls of Robertson House (Former Army Staff College), Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, together with portraits of other Director Generals.*

A very recently deceased member is the much-beloved Mary Kerslake, former Officers Mess Manager at the College, who has been ill for some time and died shortly after the AGM. Mary served on our committee for several years. Many of us knew her well and shall miss her. Her daughter Val O'Connell has written to inform us that her mother's funeral will take place on Wednesday 19 February 2020 at Putney Vale Crematorium, Wimbledon, SW15 3DZ at 11.30 am, followed by a reception at Brook Kingston Lodge Hotel, 94 Kingston Hill, KT2 7NP. Anyone who knew her is welcome to attend.

I would be very happy to publish a photograph in memory of Mary in my next newsletter should anyone have a suitable one that they are willing to share.

I look forward to seeing you at the talk by Heidi Doughty on 21 February.

David Vassallo

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