



# THE OSLER • LIBRARY • NEWSLETTER •

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*Osler Library of the History of Medicine, McGill University, Montréal (Québec) Canada*

## IN THIS ISSUE

**T**his issue opens with a retrospective of the career of Mrs. Pamela Miller by Professor Faith Wallis. Pam began working with the Osler Library in 1996, and rose to the position of History of Medicine Librarian in 1999. As such, she led the Library through a period of profound change in the way in which rare books and special collections libraries operate. Pam's staff, both past and present, are grateful to have worked with someone who was always gracious, kind, encouraging and supportive. She is irreplaceable in many ways and will be very much missed.

The other major article is by Redpath Museum Curator Barbara Lawson about the career of Dr. John Lancelot Todd (1876-1949), a notable medical researcher in tropical medicine and parasitology, whose work took him to Senegambia and The Congo Free State to study trypanosomes and sleeping sickness. There are also articles by frequent contributors Dr. Richard Golden and Mr. David S. Crawford on lesser known aspects of Osleriana, namely the supposed spiritual communications of William Osler and medical shorthand. There is also news about a generous donation to the Library by Dr. Gail Beck and Mr. Andrew Fenus, recent and current exhibitions, new Library Curators and the mystery of the Osler spoon.



## PAM MILLER: A GENIUS FOR CONNECTIONS

BY FAITH WALLIS

**I**n the last number of the *Osler Library Newsletter* (No. 114, Fall 2010), Pamela Miller penned her final Appeal to the Friends of the Osler Library. Uncharacteristically, she signed it, because the closing sentences of the Appeal announced her impending retirement in May of 2011. Thus she turns a page in her life, and the Library says farewell to a History of Medicine Librarian who has initiated some of the most transformative changes in its long history. But it is the penultimate paragraph of that last Appeal which captures best what makes Pam Miller special, and what has marked most indelibly her direction of the Osler Library. Pam focuses not on dramatic architectural renovations or technological achievements, not on purchases of rare volumes or ambitious restoration projects. Instead, she tells of the donation to the Library of a small Bible presented by Revere Osler to his godson Bruce Futchter in 1911. This was a fitting *adieu* from a Librarian who, perhaps as none other since W.W. Francis, has understood that the soul of the Osler Library is the great memory of Sir William Osler himself. And it came from a Librarian who, to an exceptional degree, possessed Osler's distinctive talent for making connections.



Pamela Miller May 2011

Osler, of course, was an instinctive and superlative networker who exercised his talent very mindfully. Wherever he went, he aimed to "stir up the brethren", by which he meant to galvanize professional associations, foster journals and libraries, lobby for the cause of scientific medical education and public health, and bring together the people whose energies could make these things happen. He had clear principles, but seems to have operated less by grand strategy than by adroitly catching hold of the forelock of opportunity. Osler had an eye open for sympathetic collaborators. He knew how to multiply the momentum of his projects by persuading others that their goals and his could converge to everyone's profit. Finally, he was happy to let others take the helm, and take the credit.

Pam Miller's genius for connections is partly genetic. She is the daughter of Lorne Gales, long-serving Executive Director of the Graduates' Society, legendary fund-raiser, and a man with a talent for knitting McGill's alumni, staff and students together. But Pam's flair for synergy is also

entirely her own. It springs from her professional character as an archivist and her long association with historians. It unfolded in the unique environment of the Osler Library.

Pam came to the Osler Library from the McCord Museum in 1996 as an archivist to work on the Library's long-neglected collections of manuscripts and papers. Then head of the Osler Library June Schachter also had her prepare a major exhibition for the 175th anniversary of the University. During this time Pam also published her first article in the *Newsletter*; significantly it was about a letter from Osler that had recently been donated to the Library. The keynotes of her career at the Library had already sounded: expertise with historical archives, inventive public outreach, and genuine interest in individual donors and their collections.

By 1998, Pam was busily organizing the Osler Library archives into proper fonds, with descriptions and finding aids. Her progress reports reveal her ability to draw in capable people and work with them. Caroline Cholette, hired through a Young Canada Works International Internship, helped to produce descriptions of the archival fonds and collections as well as creating an index to the Osler letters copied by Harvey Cushing when writing his biography of Sir William.

Steve Watt, another Young Canada Works intern, worked on a finding aid and web presentation of the Boris Babkin papers. But Pam, true chip off Lorne Gales' block, also began to recruit eager and knowledgeable volunteers, including Dr Shena Rosenblatt Sourkes. In 1999, June Schachter retired as History of Medicine Librarian and Pam was named Acting History of Medicine Librarian. "Act" she certainly did, staging a notable exhibition on "Osler's McGill" for the Osler Sesquicentennial and the meeting of the American Osler Society in Montreal.



Pamela Miller as Acting Head of the Osler Library. June 2001

In *Osler Library Newsletter* 92 (2000) Pam published her first major report on Marjorie Howard Futcher's photograph albums, with their intimate portraits of the Oslers and their interlocking circles of family and friends. The eventual digitization of this extraordinary

visual archive would be one of the crowning achievements of her regime, but even at this early stage, it is plain that Pam's deep but unostentatious personal knowledge of Montreal society and McGill history gave her a real "feel" for this material. She would continue to write a significant amount of the copy for the *Newsletter* for the next decade. Typically, the articles were often unsigned, but the reader could always hear her clear, unaffected, enthusiastic voice. Most of these articles silently display her talent for connecting other people's interests and projects to the life of the Library. In the same year, Pam's involvement in the Heritage Canada plaque commemorating Maude Abbott drew in Dr Richard Fraser of the Department of Pathology. Richard Fraser would remain a firm fan of the Library, as we shall see. But Pam also reeled in Dr Susan Kelen, granddaughter of W.W. Francis to speak as representative of the Canadian Federation of University Women. Pam always knew how to make new friends, and keep the old. In 2001, she attended the first of many meetings of the American Osler Society in Charleston, North Carolina; the bonds she forged with the AOS would bring many friends, new and old, to the Library.

In 2001, plans were unveiled for major physical renovations of the Osler Library, funded by the generosity of Dr John McGovern, long a pillar of the American Osler Society and a Friend of the Osler Library. Pam worked with architect Julia Gersovitz to develop plans which would respect the architectural integrity of the Library while incorporating state-of-the-art climate controls. Every item in the Library, from the most precious incunabulum down to the pencils and paper clips, had to be stored. The renovations began in the following year. Pam oversaw the whole operation, reporting on the web page and through the *Newsletter* on the process. Her principal focus was the preparation of the historic collection for storage, finding suitable facilities while maintaining accessibility, and engaging museology technicians to prepare special boxes and to wrap the volumes. Her reports in the *Newsletter* with their lively photographs stress the heroic contributions of everyone on the team... except herself. In 2003, the Library re-opened with more access to the circulating collection, enhanced climate control, and better space for the historic collections. Pam organized a truly magnificent celebration, with herself discreetly in the background. It would have taken sharp eyes for a reader of the *Newsletter* to notice that Pam's title in the editorial box had changed from Acting History of Medicine Librarian to History of Medicine Librarian in 2002.

Throughout the renovations, Pam continued her signature project of enhancing the Library's archival collections and their public accessibility. She got a grant from the Canadian Council of Archives to prepare a guide to the Arthur Vineberg papers, and took advantage of the closing of the Canadian Museum of Health and Medicine in Toronto to acquire a Hartnack microscope used by Osler, as well as slides prepared by him. In 2002, Pam was interviewed for a televised biography of Osler, aired on The History Channel. The *Newsletter* itself began increasingly to reflect her flair for attractive images, and she transformed the once dry Appeal to the Friends into a visual showcase of striking new acquisitions. This sense of graphic style came into full bloom in 2004, when

Pam co-edited *75 Books from the Osler Library* to celebrate the Library's 75th anniversary. She organized a symposium for the occasion, "Medical Books and Medical Libraries in Historical Perspective" with addresses by scholarly luminaries John Harley Warner and Nancy Siraisi, physician-historian Richard Fraser, and book conservator Terry Rutherford.

The anniversary was also marked by the installation of new display cases. This inaugurated a new era of ambitious guest-curated exhibitions at the Library, starting with Dr Richard Fraser's "War, Bones and Books: the McGill Medical Museum and the American Civil War." In 2006, Dr Rolando Del Maestro's exhibit on the history of neuro-oncology resulted in the Library's first venture into collaborative publication of exhibition catalogues. With her usual instinct for synergy, Pam used the opportunity to land a major donation for the restoration of one of the works featured in the exhibition, Robert Hooper's *Morbid Anatomy of the Human Brain*, as a gesture of appreciation to outgoing Dean of Medicine Abe Fuks. But the big catch of 2006, and of her career, was undoubtedly the Crabtree Foundation's endowment of a major fund for purchasing rare books. The arrival of Chris Lyons as Assistant History of Medicine Librarian in 2005 allowed Pam to realize her vision to make the unique archival collections of the Library more widely known and accessible through the Internet. Chris and Pam launched a searchable database that year, the Osler Library Archives Collection; this was followed by the William Osler Photo Collection in 2008 and the Marjorie Howard Fatcher Photo Collection in 2010. Next in line is the Library's rich collection of medical engravings and prints.

Pam Miller had a way of getting others to do the talking on the pages of the *Newsletter*, and she was enormously generous in her encouragement to her staff to write, give talks, attend conferences, and use their talents to the fullest. But those of us who had the privilege of working closely with her knew well how much of the drive came from her. Behind the fledgling al-Ghāfiqī project (reported in the no. 114, Fall 2010 *Newsletter*) was Pam's infectious confidence in the importance of this unique book, and the need to make it accessible to scholars. This energy comes not only from her brains, her organizational ability, and her high professional competence, but from her genius for making connections. As I write these lines, Pam has just returned from a short vacation, where she took time to make contact with a scholar working on al-Ghāfiqī; typically, the encounter unfolded over a relaxed lunch. Pam is an artist of opportunities. Out of the corner of her eye, she catches a glimpse of an opportunity to bring people into the orbit of the Osler Library, to everyone's benefit. Whatever is going on in the wider world is potentially an opportunity to open up the wealth of the Library: one need only recall her charming article in 2009, timed to coincide with the 150th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth, about Osler's encounter with Darwin and his family. Hers is a genius for connection comparable to Osler's own. All of her colleagues at McGill, the members of the Board of Curators of the Library, the readers and researchers she has welcomed and assisted, and the wider circle of admirers of William Osler around the world, wish her health and joy in her retirement, but also insist that she stay connected.



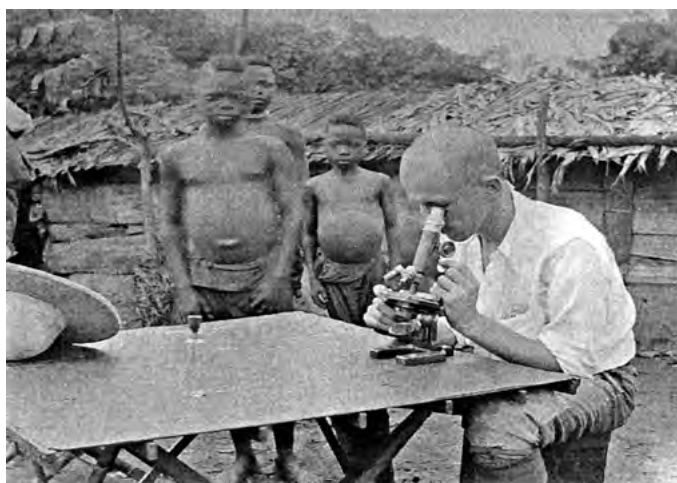
Pamela Miller and Dr. William Feindel, Honourary Osler Librarian.



# DR. JOHN LANCELOT TODD 1876-1949

BY BARBARA LAWSON

Several McGill collections relating to Dr. J. L. Todd have been a source of fascination for Osler History of Medicine Librarian Pam Miller and the Redpath Museum's Curator of World Cultures, Barbara Lawson. Miller has pursued information related to Todd's medical career and his association with McGill and William Osler, while Lawson has focused attention on his participation in the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine 1903-05 expedition to the Congo Free State and his collection of close to 500 ethnographic objects made at that time, now at the Redpath Museum along with related photographic images. Both individuals have been in contact with Todd family members and have carried out research related to this material, near and afar, for a period of more than twenty years. Todd's work in Montreal, Liverpool, Africa, and abroad was well documented in weekly letters home to his mother in Victoria, British Columbia. This correspondence, providing insight into his life and distinctive career, has been an invaluable resource for these investigations.<sup>1</sup>

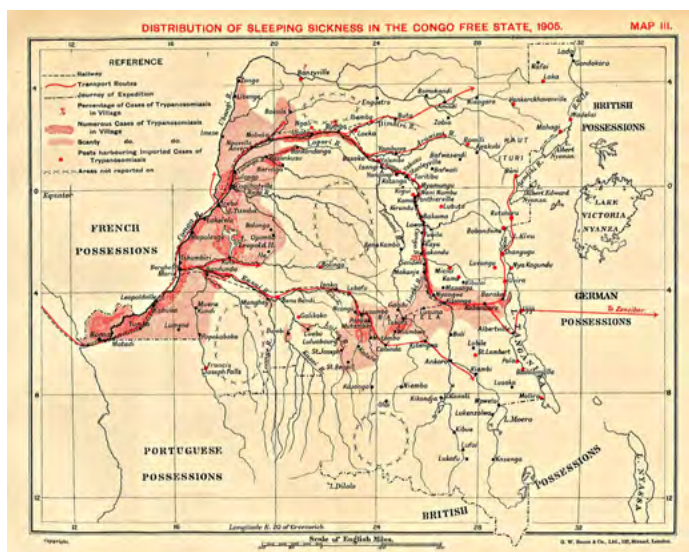


Dr. J.L. Todd at Yakusu, Congo, September 1904. [Fialkowski personal papers]

John Lancelot Todd graduated from McGill with a BA in 1898 and a degree in Medicine in 1900. During his time at the University, he attracted the attention of Dr. George Adami, McGill's first Professor of Pathology. Upon completing his studies, he began work in the laboratories of the Royal Victoria Hospital examining bacteriological and pathological specimens. It is probably through Professor Adami that William Osler first became aware of Todd's outstanding work, beginning an association that continued through the years. In 1901, Todd gained the distinction of being the first Canadian to be awarded a fellowship to attend the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM). One year later, he accompanied Dr. Joseph Everett Dutton, who had just recently identified the first trypanosome found in human blood, *Trypanosoma gambiense duttoni*, on the LSTM's 10th Expedition to Senegambia. The purpose of the expedition was to study trypanosomes and their

effect on the local population as well as survey sanitary conditions of the principal towns.

Shortly after their return from Senegambia, Dutton and Todd set forth in 1903 on a new LSTM expedition, this time to the Congo Free State, the present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo. This project with an objective of carrying out intensive research on trypanosomes and their relation to sleeping sickness was instigated upon special request from King Leopold II of Belgium. The expedition members also reported on sanitation along the Congo River and on other tropical diseases in men and animals, and also demonstrated the cause of relapsing fever in man. The two-year medical journey began in Boma near the coast and continued by way of the Congo River to Tanganyika. During their stay at Kasongo both Dutton and Todd suffered bouts of tick fever. Dutton, seriously weakened after several recurrences of the fever, eventually died in February 1905. Todd was determined to carry out their program as a memorial to Dutton and stayed at Kasongo until the expedition parted for its overland homeward journey in April 1905.



The Distribution and Spread of Sleeping Sickness in the Congo Free State circa 1905. [Dutton, J. & Todd, J., LSTM Memoir 18 (1905): map insert pp. 32-33].

The Congo expedition was undoubtedly Todd's greatest achievement. The scope of its scientific work has been summarized from Dutton and Todd's published works as follows:

A history of the spread of sleeping sickness in the Congo was attempted and riverine people were shown to be the most severely affected. The speed of the natural spread of the disease was also shown to be increased by carriers so that quarantine measures were suggested based on the examination of the population for enlarged glands. Gland puncture was proposed as the routine method of seeking the parasite. The technique was not infallible, but was the best method for live patients.

Several other parasites were described, including *Spirochaeta duttoni*, which was brought back to

Liverpool in monkeys and ticks. It was differentiated from *Spirochaeta obermeieri*, with which it had formerly been considered identical. Each species of spirochaete was found to convey immunity only against itself.

Trypanosome transmission experiments with *Glossina palpalis* under field conditions were inconclusive and it was suggested that other agents might also be involved. The proboscis of the fly was more fully described than previously.

Further experiments in the treatment of trypanosomiasis were carried out, but no cure was found, the most favourable results being obtained after treatment with atoxyl followed by mercury salts. (Smith 321)<sup>2</sup>

On his return to England in 1905, Todd was appointed assistant lecturer at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and in the following year became director of tropical diseases at the LSTM's Runcorn Research Centre. He returned to McGill in 1907 as Associate Professor of Parasitology, Canada's first professor in that field<sup>3</sup> and set up his laboratory at Macdonald College in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue.

In the fall of 1910, Todd approached McGill with the offer of a donation to the University's Redpath Museum. This selection of African artefacts collected during his work in the Congo River



Hospital built by expedition for sleeping sickness patients, Léopoldville 1904 [Redpath Museum, McGill University / RM2008.02.03]

basin was the first of several donations made to the Redpath and included household objects, textiles, metalwork, musical instruments, and wooden figures; artefacts ranging from the most utilitarian of manufactures to works of extraordinary design and significance. Todd's brief jottings in an accompanying catalogue, describing the manner in which this material was acquired by barter, purchase, or in exchange for medical services, tell a story of their own. Photographic material, mostly glass lantern slides, donated to the Redpath Museum in later years by his daughter Bridget Todd Fialkowski are largely related to the Congo expedition and were no doubt originally used by Todd for lectures on the subject.

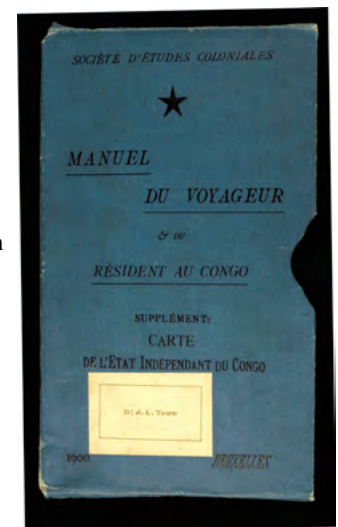


Typical type of canoe used for river travel. Kasongo, 1905. J.L.T, 3rd from right. [Redpath Museum, McGill University RM2008.02.86]

Todd returned to Africa in 1911 with Dr. S. B. Wolbach of Harvard as members of the 27th LSTM expedition to the Colony and Protectorate of the Gambia where they charted the amount and distribution of human trypanosomiasis, assessed various diagnostic measures employed in its study and made recommendations for the control of the disease. They were accompanied on this trip by Todd's nephew, Ernest. One unanticipated aspect of this journey was their encounter with several ancient stone circles which they reported on in the leading anthropological publication of the day.<sup>4</sup>

With the outbreak of the First World War, Todd enlisted and served in the Canadian Army Medical Corps, eventually reaching the rank of major. He was Canadian Pension Commissioner from 1916 to 1919.<sup>5</sup> Following the war, he engaged in research with his colleague S. B. Wolbach, leading an expedition for the American Red Cross to stem the devastating outbreak of typhus fever that followed the departure of the Russian troops and was elected in 1921 as an executive member of the Canadian Red Cross. By 1925, due to health concerns and frustrations with administrative matters at the University, Todd resigned his position at McGill.

J.L. Todd's field maps [Redpath Museum, McGill University]







Fording a river in the Gambia in 1911 with nephew Ernest Todd [Fialkowski (ed.) 1977, n. p.]

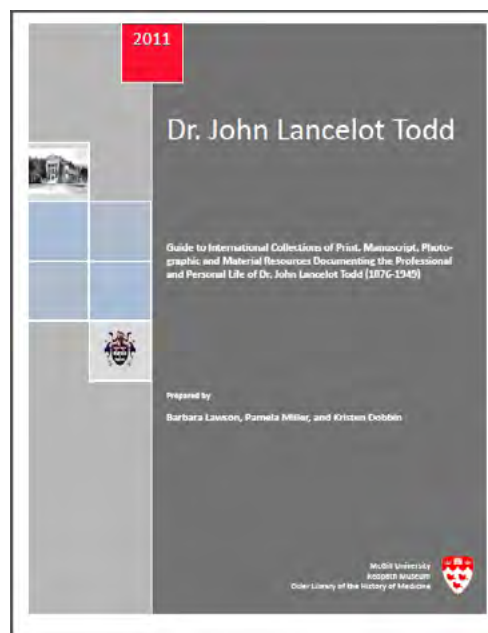
Following his retirement, he served on the Associate Committee of the National Research Council, which was responsible for supervising the Institute of Parasitology at Macdonald College, established in 1932.

The Todd family lived in France and England between 1934 and 1939 until the outbreak of the Second World War, when they returned to Canada to try and make their farm in Senneville self-supporting. The years that followed were filled with challenges brought about by wife Marjory's poor health and eventual death. The decade came to a close with Todd being killed in a car accident in 1949, on the way home from a fishing trip in the Gaspé.

**J. L. Todd resources on Osler web site and at Redpath Museum**  
Research on Dr. J. L. Todd was funded by a one-year Hannah development grant for the History of Medicine from Associated Medical Services (AMS). Highlights of this research including a selection of archival materials and images relating to Todd



J. L. Todd at McGill University, 1922 [McCord Museum II-299705.0.2]



Thematic Guide to archival sources on J. L. Todd online at Osler Library web site <http://www.mcgill.ca/files/library/osler-toddbibliography.pdf>

and his contribution to the history of medicine have now been integrated on the web site of the Osler Library of the History of Medicine in the "Guide to International Collections of Print, Manuscript, Photographic and Material Resources Documenting the Professional and Personal Life of Dr. John Lancelot Todd (1876-1949)" by Barbara Lawson, Pam Miller, and Kristen Dobbin (<http://www.mcgill.ca/files/library/osler-toddbibliography.pdf>). The thematic guide is the first such research resource dedicated to this important figure in Canadian medical history, who was Canada's first professor of Parasitology and a noted pioneer in the subject.<sup>6</sup> The guide consolidates holdings information about all known collections relating to Todd's medical career as well as his personal papers and includes institutions in Canada, the United States, and England.

In addition to the online material, AMS funding provided support for approximately 140 images (glass lantern slides, negatives, and prints) photographed during the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine expeditions to the Congo Free State and Gambia, to be identified, accessioned, cleaned, stored according to archival standards, and scanned to assist in their preservation. As mentioned above, the glass lantern slides were likely originally used by Todd for lectures about the Congo expedition and his work in Africa. Unfortunately, most of the images were unidentified and out of their original order when donated to the Redpath, so much effort has been spent in trying to place them in the context of more formal accounts of the expedition's work. Although Todd is known to be the photographer in most instances, research of other photographic collections has raised concern about the attribution of about 17 images assembled by Todd. These tangles have yet to be resolved and are still under scrutiny. An album of prints and an electronic version of the images are now available upon appointment for on-site research at the Redpath Museum. The thematic guide and

archival materials will be of interest to scholars of Canadian medical history, to those involved with the sociology and anthropology of medicine and African studies, and possibly also to those involved in studies of present day epidemiology in Africa.

### References

1. These letters were edited and privately printed in 1977 by his daughter Bridget Todd Fialkowski.
2. Smith, Joan. "The Work of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine Expedition to the Congo, 1903-05, as revealed in the letters of Dr. J. L. Todd", *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, 72 (4) 1978: 305-322. [Note: Smith was archivist at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in the mid-seventies.]
3. Fallis, A. Murray. Pioneers in Parasitology: 1900-1929 [chapter re. Todd] in *Parasites, People and Progress: Historical Recollections*. Toronto: Wall & Emerson, 1993: 32-44.
4. Todd, J. L. and Wolbach, G. [sic] B. "Stone Circles in the Gambia", *Man*, 11 (11) 1911: 161-164.
5. For more information on Todd's important contribution to the Commission please see, Morton, Desmond and Glen Wright, *Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
6. *Op. cit.*, Fallis.



Redpath Museum circa 1925 [McGill University Archives, PR002681]

### Acknowledgments

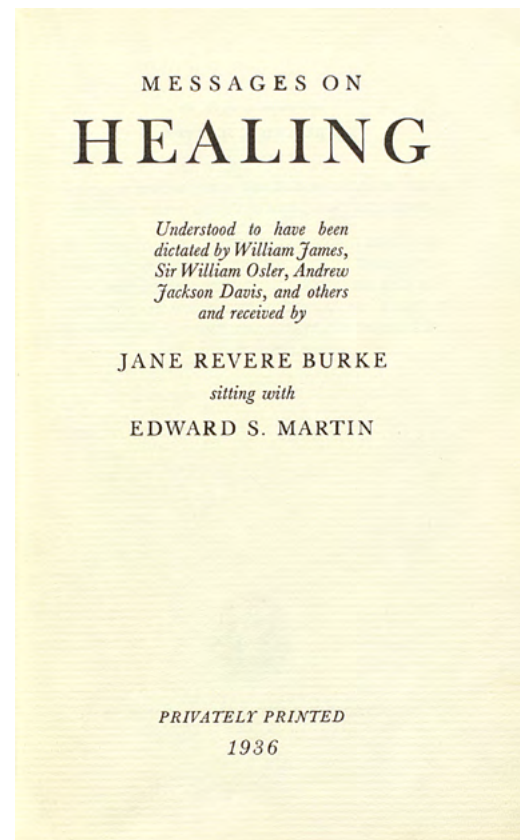
The author gratefully acknowledges support from Associated Medical Services in 2008 for funding research, the preparation of a thematic guide, and assistance with the preservation of photographic materials related to Dr. J. L. Todd



## OSLER REDUX

BY RICHARD L. GOLDEN

In 1936 a curious privately printed slender volume, *Messages on Healing*,<sup>1</sup> was issued, said to be dictated by William James, Sir William Osler, and Andrew Jackson Davis and "recorded" by the well known medium Jane Revere Burke (1871-1965) ("sitting with Edward S. Martin.")



Spiritualism is a theistic religion or philosophy based in part on the concepts of the Swedish scientist, theologian and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) that has a core belief that the spirits of the dead can be communicated with, generally through the intervention of mediums. By the mid-nineteenth century spiritualism had millions of followers in the United States and Europe, but by the early twentieth century, following accusations of fraud, its numbers diminished considerably, particularly through the efforts of professional debunkers such as famed magician Harry Houdini (1874-1926). There was a brief revival during World War I. The movement persists in modern times through the establishment of Spiritualist churches, particularly in the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Brazil.<sup>2,3</sup> Many eminent physicians and scientists were believers, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir William Crookes, Alfred Russel Wallace, William James and Nobel laureate Charles Richet. Physician-writer A. Conan Doyle (1859-1930) was a leading proponent of spiritualism who wrote several related books, such as *The Edge of the Unknown*,<sup>4</sup> and *The Case*

for *Spirit Photography*<sup>5</sup> and even professed a belief in fairies. The well-known English writer Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936) (the creator of the priest-detective Father Brown) noted: "...it has long seemed to me that Sir Arthur's mentality is much more that of Watson than it is of Holmes."<sup>6</sup> Sir William Crookes (1831-1919), English chemist and physicist, discovered the element thallium and was a pioneer investigator of cathode rays and radioactivity. He studied spiritualism and became a believer, invoking the wrath of many fellow scientists.<sup>7</sup> Another champion of spiritualism was Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), British naturalist, explorer, and co-discoverer (with Charles Darwin) of the theory of natural selection. Wallace's advocacy of spiritualism did not enhance his relationships with his colleagues.<sup>8</sup> Charles Robert Richet (1850-1935) was a French physiologist who was awarded the Nobel prize in 1913 for his investigation of anaphylaxis. He served as president of the Society for Psychical Research, coined the term ectoplasm, proposed extra-sensory perception and wrote *Traité de Métaphysique (Thirty Years of Psychical Research)*.<sup>9,10</sup>

There is a much longer list of eminent skeptics and disbelievers including Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. and William A. Hammond. Holmes (1809-1894), an American physician, educator, author and poet, was a renaissance man remembered for his seminal essay "The Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever"<sup>11</sup> that preceded Semmelweis' findings by several years as well as his literary achievements in which strong, outspoken opinions were expressed, as in his diatribe *Homeopathy and Its Kindred Delusions* (1842).<sup>12</sup> In a dialogue with a divinity student in his popular *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* Holmes exhorts:

You don't know what plague has fallen on the practitioners of theology? I will tell you then. It is SPIRITUALISM. While some are crying out against it as a delusion of the devil, and some are laughing at it as an hysteric folly, and some are getting angry at it as a mere trick of interested or mischievous persons, Spiritualism is quietly undermining the traditional ideas of the future state which has been and are still accepted — not merely in those who believe in it, but in the general sentiment of the community ... It needn't be true to do this, any more than homeopathy need to do its work.<sup>13</sup>

William Alexander Hammond (1828-1900) was a highly regarded American neurologist, a founder of the American Neurological Association and the thirteenth Surgeon General of the United States Army.<sup>14</sup> He regarded all manifestations of spiritualism as "symptoms of psychopathology" and sought physiological explanations as evidenced in his book *The Physics and Physiology of Spiritualism* in which he stated:

The real and fraudulent nature of what is called spiritualism are of such a nature as to make a profound impression on the credulous and the ignorant; and both these classes have been active in spreading the most exaggerated ideas relative to matters that are absurdly false or not so very astonishing when viewed by the cold light of science.<sup>15</sup>

The general theme of the "messages" received by Mrs. Burke is that of religion inextricably bound to medicine and healing delivered with a copious admixture of pseudoscience. In an Appendix Burke relates two case histories of persons who came to her for help with serious illnesses and are cured through the spiritual intervention of Dr. Edward Hickling Bradford (1848-1926) of Boston who, in the course of a séance, greets her as: "My good friend, Jane Burke."<sup>16</sup> Bradford was professor of orthopedic surgery at Harvard and the third president of the American Orthopedic Association (1889); a descendant of Governor William Bradford who came over on the *Mayflower*<sup>17</sup>. Dr. Bradford was an old friend of Osler's who first met him in Vienna in 1874 at the Riedhof, a large, well-known dining establishment of the imperial city.<sup>18,19</sup> Burke's case histories are anecdotal and without documentation or medical evidence.

For most readers the attraction of this book will be its many interesting Oslerian associations. Jane Revere Burke, daughter of a physician, was Grace Revere Osler's cousin. Both were Bostonians and great granddaughters of Paul Revere of Revolutionary War fame. Mrs. Burke's husband, Nicholas Philip Trist Burke, who makes a cameo appearance in the text, was the great grandson of Thomas Jefferson.<sup>1</sup> Edward Sanford Martin (1856-1939) appears on the title page in the guise of a "co-author" noted to be "sitting with" Mrs. Burke and on the verso as the copyright holder. Martin, a longtime friend of Osler's, was a well-known writer of short stories, poetry, articles, and books on a variety of topics. He was a founder of the *Harvard Lampoon*, the founder and first editor of *Life*, and an editor and editorial writer for *Harper's Weekly*. He wrote "The Editor's Easy Chair," a series of informal essays for *Harper's Monthly*.<sup>20</sup> In his sprightly travel book, *Abroad With Jane*, he describes a 1913 voyage to England where he encounters Sir Richard Horton, a thinly disguised incognito for Sir William Osler.<sup>21</sup> *Jane* is a pseudonym or possibly a moniker for his wife Julia (d. 1918) who also makes a brief appearance during a séance. Edward Martin is the "Uncle Ned" of the Brewster letters in Harvey Cushing's biography of Osler.<sup>22</sup>

William James (1842-1910), brother of the novelist Henry James, was an eminent American psychologist, philosopher and physician whose entire academic career was spent at Harvard University.<sup>23</sup> Among his many interests was spiritualism, about which he authored a book in 1909.<sup>24</sup> William James was a friend and patient of Osler's<sup>25</sup> for many years and served as a mentor to Gertrude Stein during her undergraduate days at Radcliffe where she published two papers on motor automatism (automatic writing).<sup>26,27</sup> Mrs. Burke published other books purportedly being messages from William James, including *The One Way*<sup>28</sup> in 1922.

Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910) is the only major interlocutor in the book who apparently has no Osler association. Davis, considered to be a founder of modern spiritualism, is a figure of some mystery. Frequently called "the Poughkeepsie seer", he allegedly had little education, but is said to have dictated many learned books while in a trance-like state. In what some consider to be his magnum opus, *The Principles of Nature*, he predicts the modern spiritualist movement.<sup>29</sup> Later in life he obtained a medical license in Massachusetts supposedly without the usual



medical license in Massachusetts supposedly without the usual formal preparation.<sup>30,31</sup>

In the text Osler, in the course of channeling, refers to Mrs. Burke as “my wife’s cousin” and reportedly says: “I am a doctor still.” He speaks of the death of Revere confessing that “My heart was broken... but it is healed now by love” and further notes: “I still love a joke and my fellow men.” The remarks attributed to Osler are of little consequence.

Osler had imagined a role in the hereafter, presumably only with poetic license, when he envisioned the future of his library:

I like to think of my few books in an alcove of a fire-proof library in some institution that I love; at the end of the alcove an open fire place and a few easy chairs, and over the mantel piece an urn with my ashes and my bust or my portrait through which my astral self, like the bishop of St. Praxed could peek at the books I have loved and enjoy the delight in which kindred souls still in the flesh would handle them.<sup>32</sup>

The Osler Library today fulfills this vision and indeed has a shrine-like quality, but its “messages” come only from the archival document and the printed page; Osler’s immortality arising from “the transmission through generations of the beneficent influence of a noble life.”<sup>33,34</sup>

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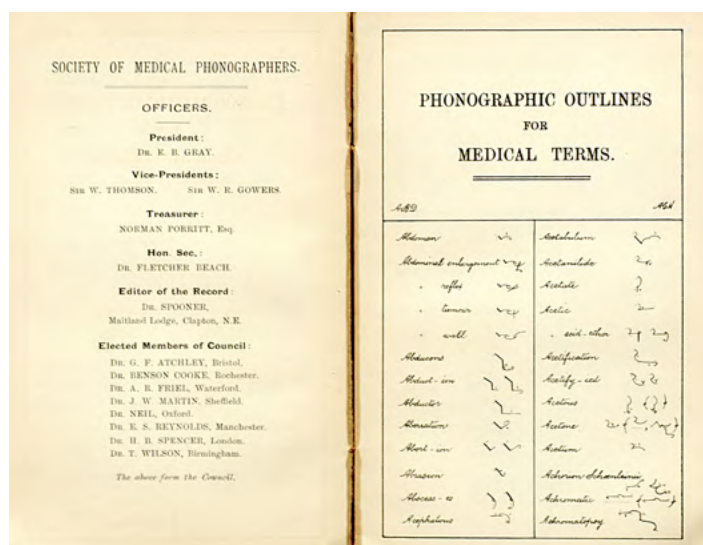
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# MEDICAL SHORTHAND AND THE OSLER LIBRARY

BY DAVID S. CRAWFORD

*The Oxford English Dictionary* defines shorthand as “a method of speedy writing by means of the substitution of contractions or arbitrary signs or symbols for letters, words, etc.”<sup>1</sup> Shorthand has existed, in one form or another, for many centuries; the ancient Egyptians used several simplified scripts, and Samuel Pepys’ diary was written in his own version of shorthand. In 1837 the well-known Pitman system was devised by Sir Isaac Pitman, and in 1888 John Gregg published the first edition of his system.



In addition to the more general Pitman and Gregg systems, there were also specialised forms of shorthand, usually based on one of the major systems. The *Bibliotheca Osleriana* lists three items on medical shorthand (BO 2790, 6450 and 6451). The McGill Library owns a partial set of *Phonographic Record of Clinical Teaching and Medical Science*, the official journal of the Society of Medical Phonographers,<sup>2</sup> which was printed almost entirely in shorthand, and the Osler Library also owns a copy of the third edition of the Society’s publication, *Phonographic Outlines of Medical Terms*.<sup>3</sup>

All of these publications are connected with the Society of Medical Phonographers, a society formed by Sir William Richard Gowers who, to quote Tyler, “developed an almost obsessive interest in Pitman shorthand.”<sup>4</sup> One of Gowers’ friends, Rudyard Kipling, who attended at least two of the Society’s dinners, described him as “a crank on shorthand,”<sup>5</sup> and his biographer notes, “Undoubtedly Gowers devoted more time and attention to this hobby-horse than it really deserved.”<sup>6</sup>

Gowers, an eminent neurologist, edited and published the first issue of the journal in June 1894; in December, having obviously found others interested in the subject, he founded the Society of Medical

Phonographers and became its first President. Initially it had sixty members, but by the time the Society held its first annual meeting in September 1895, Gowers could report that it had 175, and by 1896 membership had reached almost 250. In July 1895 Gowers published a short pamphlet, *The Origin of the Society of Medical Phonographers*,<sup>7</sup> written entirely in shorthand. The Society’s journal, *Phonographic Record of Clinical Teaching and Medical Science*, appeared from June 1894 to December 1911, edited for several years by Gowers and his colleague and collaborator on the influential *Manual of Diseases of the Nervous System*, James Taylor. William Osler actually subscribed to the journal; his set is now in the library of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia<sup>8</sup>

Gowers’ address to the Society’s inaugural annual meeting in September 1895 was published (not in shorthand) in the *British Medical Journal*.<sup>9</sup> Between the years 1894 and 1912 Gowers published almost all of his neurological articles (nearly 100) in the Society’s journal - they have recently been transcribed<sup>4</sup>

The Society dissolved around the end of 1912 and the beginning of 1913. Gowers died in 1915.

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## NEW MEMBERS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY BOARD OF CURATORS

**T**he Osler Library is pleased to announce the arrival of two new members of the Board of Curators. Dr. C. Colleen Cook is an ex-officio member by virtue of her position as Trenholme Dean of Libraries, which she assumed in January. Dr. Jonathan L. Meakins was elected to the Board at the annual meeting in November.



Dr. Cook comes to McGill University from Texas A&M University, where she was Dean of Libraries and holder of the Sterling C. Evans Endowed Chair. Dr. Cook helped to develop and promote LibQUAL+®, the premier assessment tool for measuring library service quality internationally. She serves on the American Library Association (ALA) committee on research and statistics and is very active in library assessment, chairing both the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Statistics and Assessment Committee and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Statistics and Evaluation Section Standing Committee. She earned her PhD in Higher Education Administration at Texas A&M and holds BA and MLS degrees from the University of Texas at Austin and an MA from Texas A&M University.

Jonathan L. Meakins qualified MD at the University of Western Ontario in 1966, DSc (Cincinnati) in 1972 in Surgical Infection and Immunobiology with Drs. Wes Alexander and W.A. Altemeier, and obtained his FRCS (Canada) in 1973 and FACS in 1976. He completed his postgraduate training at the Royal Victoria Hospital and McGill University in 1974 and was appointed Assistant Professor of Surgery and Microbiology at McGill University in the same year. In 1984, he became Professor of Surgery and Microbiology and was Chairman of the Department of Surgery from 1988-1993. He was Surgeon in Chief at the Royal Victoria Hospital from 1988-1998. Since 1993, he has held the Edward W. Archibald Chair of Surgery at McGill and has been the Surgeon-

in-Chief at the McGill University Health Centre, and Professor and Chair of Surgery at McGill University (1998-2002) until his appointment at Oxford in November 2002 as the Nuffield Professor of Surgery and Head of Department. Research into the immunobiology, epidemiology and management of surgical infection was funded by the MRC (1975-1990) which subsequently supported evaluative studies in laparoscopy (1991-1993). That work evolved into the process of how to evaluate new techniques and technology with credible evidence-based principles and their responsible introduction of into hospital practice.

He has had three sabbaticals: in 1980-1981 in critical care as a Professeur Associé at the Université de Paris XII with Profs. Lemaire and Rapin, and in 1987-1988 in hepatobiliary surgery in Paris with Prof. Franco as a Fellow of La Fondation pour la recherche médicale. The summer of 2001 was spent in the Nuffield Department of Surgery with Sir Peter Morris and Sir Muir Gray involved in evidence-based surgery and knowledge management. Presently these interests have expanded into the Rules of Evidence for introduction of new techniques and technology and patient safety.



A member of a large number of learned societies both regional and international, he has played an executive role in many of them, including the Surgical Infection Society of which he was President in 1989. He also served on the Board of Regents of the American College of Surgeons (1993-2002) and was Vice-chair 2000-2002, was President of the International Federation of Surgical Colleges (2000-2003) and was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2000.

Dr. Meakins was co-editor of the Canadian Journal of Surgery for 10 years and has served on the editorial board of 14 journals and been a Reviewer for 16 other journals. His own journal publication list numbers over 225; he has contributed chapters and proceedings to 85 surgical texts and been editor or co-editor of 6 books.



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## DR. GAIL BECK AND MR. ANDREW FENUS SUPPORT THE OSLER LIBRARY'S EXHIBITIONS

The Osler Library is pleased to announce that its exhibition programme is the beneficiary of a long term gift from Dr. Gail Beck, O. Ont (Medicine '78) and Mr. Andrew Fenus (Master of Library Science '74). Mr. Fenus stated that both he and his wife "wished to donate something special to McGill. Stemming from our different experiences at McGill, we found a natural consensus that appealed to both of our interests --- a medical library." The couple initially supported the publication of *William Osler to Osler Fellows* a previously unpublished address given by Dr. Osler in 1885. Satisfaction with this experience led them to offer additional support to the Osler Library, this time on an on-going basis.

Both Dr. Beck and Mr. Fenus are graduates of McGill. Dr. Beck, better known as Gail Yenta to her classmates in Med '78, is an adolescent psychiatrist both in private practice and at the Royal Ottawa Hospital as the Director of Out Patients in the Youth Program. She is also very involved in her community and profession. Amongst other activities, she is currently an elected director of both the Ontario Medical Association and Canadian Medical Association. She has been past president of the Academy of Medicine of Ottawa and the Federation of Medical Women of Canada [FMWC]. This year Dr. Beck was awarded Ontario's highest honour, the Order of Ontario, in recognition of her ongoing work on behalf of youth and her involvement in medical associations and voluntary activities, including championing the HPV public immunization program and securing \$300 million in funding to support it nationwide.

Mr. Fenus graduated from McGill's Library Science programme in 1974. He worked at the National Library of Canada during the summers and after graduation before entering the Master of Public Administration programme at Queen's University. Upon graduating in 1977 with an MPA, he was awarded a Shastri Indo-Canadian Summer Fellowship, basically a travelling fellowship to visit India and subsequently large parts of East Asia. He then worked on a federal public service task force and in the House of Commons for a former Speaker of the House. Since 1988 he has acted as a federal and provincial quasi-judicial adjudicator and Order in Council appointment to the Ontario Rent Review Hearings Board [6 years], the Copyright Board of Canada [10 years], and currently the Assessment Review Board of Ontario [since 2007]. Mr. Fenus believes that "though I worked as a librarian for only a short period of my professional life, I can satisfactorily say that the MLS opened many opportunities for me. The MLS has indeed given me the capacity and solid ground to be a jack of all trades." Dr. Beck and Mr. Fenus' gift has so far supported the filming of lectures given by the curators of our two most recent exhibitions: Dr. Rolando Del Maestro's *A Relationship Etched in Time: Leonardo da Vinci, The Earl of Arundel and Wenceslaus Hollar*

<http://bcooltv.mcgill.ca/Viewer2/?RecordingID=60650>; and Dr. Tania Anne Woloshyn's *Our Friend, the Sun: Images of Light Therapeutics from the Osler Library Collection, c.1901-1944* <http://bcooltv.mcgill.ca/Viewer2/?RecordingID=62431>. We have also been able to produce a catalogue for Dr. Woloshyn's exhibition which is available both in print at the Osler Library and online at <http://www.mcgill.ca/files/library/osler-ourfriendsun.pdf>. We are planning future activities too, thanks to the generosity of Dr. Beck and Mr. Fenus.



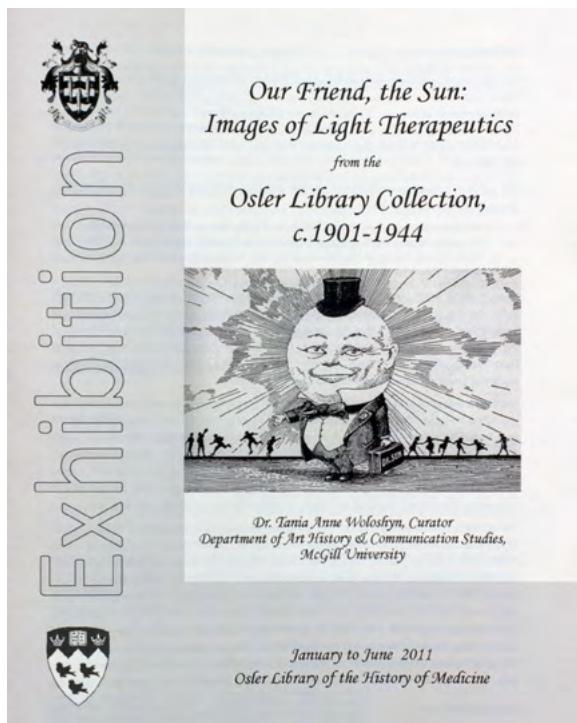
Christopher Lyons and Dr. Rolando Del Maestro



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## RECENT EXHIBITION: “OUR FRIEND, THE SUN: IMAGES OF LIGHT THERAPEUTICS FROM THE OSLER LIBRARY COLLECTION, c.1901-1944”

The current exhibition at the Osler Library explores the international visual culture of light therapies during the early twentieth century, considering both natural light – cure by sunlight or heliotherapy – and artificial light – cure by electrically-manufactured light or phototherapy. Heliotherapy, an ancient practice of total bodily exposure to sunlight, and phototherapy, pioneered in the 1890s, were considered to be revolutionary therapies by c.1900 for sufferers of tuberculosis, smallpox, lupus as well as chronic conditions such as arthritis.



With rare illustrated texts and objects from the Osler collection, themes of pleasure and discomfort, ancient and modern, and natural and artificial amongst the history and visual culture of light therapeutics drive this exhibition. So too does it consider how heliotherapeutic and phototherapeutic practices were disseminated and popularized by that visual culture. The exhibition catalogue is freely available in print at the Osler Library and online as a pdf on the Osler Library website at (<http://www.mcgill.ca/library/library-findinfo/subjects/health/oslerexhibits/>).

The guest curator for this exhibition is Dr. Tania Anne Woloshyn, a post-doctoral fellow with the Department of Art History &

Communication Studies, McGill University. Her current research focuses on shared interests amongst artists, physicists and doctors in sunlight, c.1880-1940. She completed her Ph.D. in 2008 in England at the University of Nottingham; her dissertation is entitled “Vers la lumière: Painters and Patients on the Côte d’Azur”. A recording of her lecture inaugurating the exhibition on January 24th can be viewed online at <http://bcooltv.mcgill.ca/Viewer2/?RecordingID=62431>.

The exhibition runs to June 30, 2011 and is accessible during the Library’s opening hours. Admission is free. For more information please contact the Osler Library at 514-398-4475, ext 09873, or via email at [osler.library@mcgill.ca](mailto:osler.library@mcgill.ca).



Hanau “Sollux” Quartz Lamp, c.1920-1925. Donated to the Osler Library, McGill University, by Dr. Shena Rosenblatt Sourkes and Dr. Theodore Sourkes.



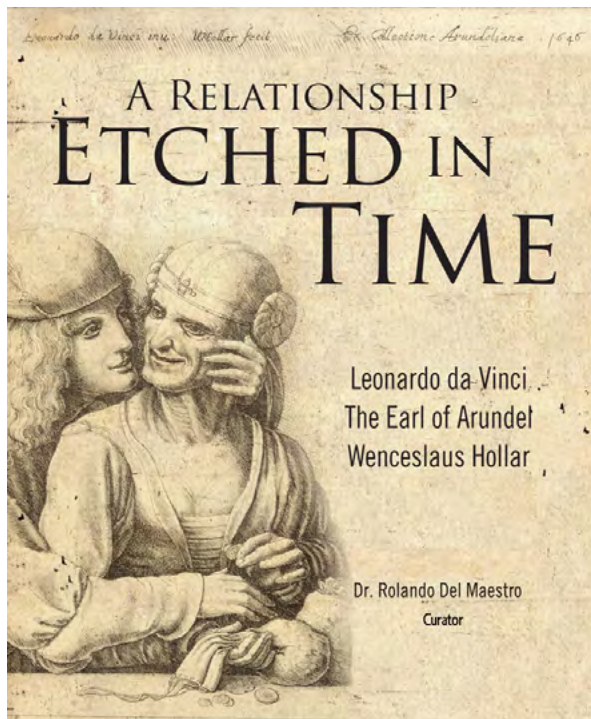


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# A RELATIONSHIP ETCHED IN TIME: LEONARDO DA VINCI, THE EARL OF ARUNDEL AND WENCESLAUS HOLLAR

## A WINTER EXHIBITION AT THE OSLER LIBRARY

Dr. Rolando Del Maestro, William Feindel Chair in Neuro-Oncology, Director of the Brain Tumour Research Centre of the Montreal Neurological Institute and member of the Board of Curators of the Osler Library, curated a popular exhibition at the Osler Library last winter. Drawing on his extensive collection and life-long research into the work and world of Leonardo da Vinci, Dr. Del Maestro's exhibition elucidated the dynamic interplay between Thomas Howard, the 21st Earl of Arundel and the engraver Wenceslaus Hollar, which resulted in the etching of over 60 plates after the works of Leonardo da Vinci. Although many of the original drawings can still be found in various collections, some cannot so the Hollar etchings are the only remaining evidence of Leonardo's work.



relationships of the Earl of Arundel, who possessed Leonardo's manuscripts, Wenceslaus Hollar, the etcher of the Earl's drawings and the intellectual environment which made such an enterprise possible.

Dr. Del Maestro generously gave talks and guided tours of the exhibition, and also hosted a musical afternoon at the Osler Library to celebrate the exhibition on Friday, December 17. A quartet of two violinists, a violist and a cellist from the I Musici de Montreal Chamber Orchestra played two pieces from the Baroque and early Classical period; Mozart's String Quartet in C Major and Arcangelo Corelli's seasonal Concerto Fatto per la Notte di Natale (made for the night of Christmas). In addition to the music, the audience enjoyed a discussion and guided tour of the exhibition by Dr. Del Maestro as well as refreshments. Everyone was pleased with the event, and the musicians were impressed by the quality of the Library's acoustics, which suggests that music at the Osler deserves an encore. For those who didn't have a chance to see the exhibition, a catalogue is forthcoming. One can also view Dr. Del Maestro's talk on the exhibition online at <http://bcooltv.mcgill.ca/Viewer2/?RecordingID=60650>.



Quartet from the I Musici de Montreal Chamber Orchestra



The goal of the exhibition was to explore the etchings completed by Hollar after the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci and his students as a window into the history of 17th century etching, and also as a living link to a number of Leonardo da Vinci drawings that have been lost in the ashes of time. The exhibition also delved into the



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## UNSOLVED OSLER SPOON MYSTERY

Sarah Stevenson is the proud possessor of a piece of Osleriana. When Sir William Osler's mother, Mrs. Ellen Free Pickton Osler, turned 100 years old on December 14th, 1906, she distributed an interesting memento to commemorate the event: souvenir spoons. The use of spoons to commemorate events or as souvenirs is well known. These were particularly attractive examples. As the first illustration shows, each spoon bears a Celtic cross at the top, under which the date December 14th is inscribed. On the reverse of this cross appears the inscription "Meor Ras dhe Dheu," which may be a variant spelling of the Cornish "meur ras dhe Dhyw" (I am thankful to God),<sup>1</sup> which is appropriate given the family's roots in Cornwall and Mrs. Osler's status as the wife of an Anglican minister. "One and all" is engraved on the front of the spoon's handle, while the name of each recipient is inscribed on the back.



Mrs. Osler had three types of spoons made, which corresponded to the generational distance of the recipient from her. Table spoons were given to each of her six living children, 26 dessert spoons were made for the grandchildren, and the 21 great-grandchildren received tea spoons. The tea spoon pictured here is inscribed to "Lily Osler."



If there is only a bit known about the spoons (Harvey Cushing and Michael Bliss each mention them briefly in their Osler biographies), even less is known about the recipient of this specific tea spoon. No information can be found about her or her relationship to Mrs. Ellen Free Pickton Osler. Sarah Stevenson inherited the spoon from her mother, Mrs. Phyllis Osler Aitken, who was the granddaughter of Sir Edmund Boyd Osler, William's brother. Mrs. Aitken's own tea spoon, inscribed to "Phyllis Osler," currently belongs to Sarah's brother Allan O. Aitken. A search through some of the reference material in the Osler Library failed to turn up a positive identification, nor does the family have any information. If any of our readers can shed some light on this mystery we would be grateful to hear from you.

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## NOTES FROM THE OSLER LIBRARY

### 2010 Osler Library Research Travel Grant Winners

Dr. Galina Kichigina, one of our 2010 Osler Library Research Travel Grant winners, visited the Osler Library last December to carry out two projects. She is an Associated Scholar at the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology at the University of Toronto interested in writing a biography on Boris Babkin for a book on Russian *émigré* scientists. Boris Babkin (1877-1950) was a Russian born physiologist who was the assistant to the great Russian physiologist Ivan P. Pavlov who later came to McGill's Faculty of Medicine in 1928. This inaugurated an active period of research and publishing, particularly on glandular secretions and the nervous system. After his retirement, in 1942, Babkin continued at McGill as a research fellow in physiology and neurology, and as an associate of the Montreal Neurological Institute. The Osler Library has a relatively large Boris Babkin Fonds (P99) and other material. Her other topic was to research another brilliant but forgotten physiologist, George Ralph Mines (1886 – 1914), who worked at McGill for the last two years of his short life.

As was noted in the last issue of the Newsletter, the other Research Travel Grant winner was Dr. Jane Yeats, Curator of the University of Cape Town Medical Museum. She carried out research with the goal of revising Dr. Maude Abbott's classification system for pathology museums, which she sees as a system with potential international use today. Dr. Yeats not only mined our Abbott papers but also visited McGill's pathology collections to appreciate Abbott's work first hand.

### Osler Library Medical Prints Digitisation Project Update

A great deal of progress has been made in our project to digitise some 2,500 medical prints held in our collection and announced in the last issue of the Osler Library Newsletter. This material is made up of portraits, medical scenes, posters, advertisements, cartoons and caricatures dating from the 17th to the 20th centuries that we received from a variety of sources over the years, including

donations from Dr. Frederick Kalz and Mr. William Helfand. All the prints were scanned during the fall and early winter by Alice Hayward and Claire Stewart, two very capable and efficient students. Ms. Chelsea Clarke has done an excellent job cataloguing and describing these prints. Ms. Clarke will also be curating an exhibition at the Osler Library highlighting some of the prints. The website and exhibition will be launched later this year.

### Book2net Kiosk Scanner

The Osler Library recently acquired a new book and image scanner. The Book2net Kiosk scanner is an improvement over our old flatbed scanner in that it scans from above, so books do not need to be pressed down to be scanned. There is also an adjustable cradle which holds the book so there is much less pressure on the spine or boards that can result in weakening or damaging the binding. A third benefit is that the scanner light is much less intense than traditional scanners, thus avoiding the potential for light induced damage of older material.

### Former Osler Librarian Dr. Philip Teigen Honoured

Dr. Philip Teigen, Osler Librarian from 1974 to 1984, was recently awarded the Lisabeth M. Holloway Award by the Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences at the organisation's annual meeting in Philadelphia. The award is given in recognition of significant achievements through leadership and service to the profession. In presenting the award, Dr. Teigen's contributions to the library and history of medicine communities, his respected publications and his strong "sense of and devotion to the spirit of collegiality" were noted. He retired as Deputy Director of the History of Medicine Division of the National Library of Medicine in 2009.

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter by email please let us know at [osler.library@mcgill.ca](mailto:osler.library@mcgill.ca)

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