



THE OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

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

IN THIS ISSUE

DR. ANAND DATE HAS HAD a long-time interest in Sir William Osler, among other publications having published excerpts of Osler's letters to Grace during his trip to Egypt, (OLN no. 74) work that included transcribing the letters in their entirety. In this lead article, Dr. Date carries out painstaking detective work, bringing to light new information about how and from whom Osler acquired his first Arabic manuscripts. In so doing he reveals Lady Osler's role in our acquisition of the famous herbal by the 12th century Andalusian herbalist and botanist Abu Dja'far Ahmad al Ghafiqi.

Dr. Date is Professor of Pathology and Head of the Department of Pathology at Sultan Al Qaboos University in Oman.

In addition, this issue brings you our annual report and appeal, and a special seasonal greeting from William Osler, recently purchased by the Osler Library. ❀

THE STORY OF OSLER'S FIRST FOUR ARABIC MANUSCRIPT ACQUISITIONS

William Osler became interested in acquiring Arabic medical manuscripts for his library towards the end of 1910, when he was Regius Professor of Medicine in Oxford. Harvey Cushing describes^[1] how this interest developed as follows: "His November 25th entry – the cold room at the Examiners' meeting, which put him to bed for a week....But, even when laid up with bronchitis, pleasant things may happen to pass the time; and Bodley's (then) sub-librarian^[2] saw fit to inoculate him with a desire for some ancient manuscripts which ultimately found their way into his library and served, furthermore, to introduce him to a Dr. Sa'eed of Teheran, Persia."^[3] Cushing's comment implies, though it does not explicitly state, that the manuscripts were purchased from Dr M. Sa'eed, who became Osler's friend and from whom he later acquired many more Arabic manuscripts. The manuscripts mentioned included an Arabic translation of a work of Dioscorides^[4] and another volume wrongly identified as also being by Dioscorides.

Subsequent commentators including Ellen Wells, in her excellent study of Osler's book purchases^[5], Charlotte Gray, in her fine description of the Osler Library^[6], Adam Gacek, in his masterful survey of Arabic manuscripts at

McGill University^[7]; and even the beautiful Osler Library booklet^[8], follow Cushing, and state quite categorically, that the manuscripts were purchased from Sa'eed.

It would therefore, be reasonable to expect, the correspondence between Sa'eed and Osler to begin with letters concerning these

by
Dr. Anand Date

B.O. 463
Avicenna.
Kānūn. Book I



... it is clear that Osler's purchase of the first Arabic manuscripts for his library preceded his correspondence with Sa'eed.



manuscripts. But when their letters are assembled and examined in chronological order, it is clear that Osler's purchase of the first Arabic manuscripts for his library preceded his correspondence with Sa'eed. The vendor must therefore have been another, as yet unidentified Persian. The reason why Cushing presumed that the MSS had come from Sa'eed – 'Cushing's curious Persian puzzle' as I have termed it earlier^[9], becomes clear when the intertwined strands of events concerning Osler's early purchases of Arabic MSS are unravelled and examined.

Continuing the story, Cushing then quotes with minor alterations, the letter from Osler to the sub-librarian Dr Cowley, given in its original form, below:

Dec. 1st (in Bed!)
13, Norham Gardens.

Dear Cowley^[10],
Luke IV. 8^[11] Is not this December, the leanest month of the year? Are not the times very hard? Is not the voice of LI— G— heard in the land?^[12] Is this, think you a time for MSS? What a heartless brute to mention them! But – I do love Dioscorides – even in Arabic! Did he not 'peep & botanize'^[13] up & down the Thames valley? Is he not said to have gathered Digitalis where the Radcliffe Camera (or the Infirmary) now stands?^[14] Considering these things I would like to see the MS. – but I am in bed, with a mild Bronchitis. Could you send it to me by my fraülein & say if you think it a good example of an Arabic MS, & also if the price (the December price!) asked by the son of the Prophet is reasonable.
Yours sincerely
W Osler

Presumably Grace Osler carried the note to Cowley who seems to have written a hurried reply, ab-

breviating many words, and gave it to her with the MSS for Osler.

1.12.10

Dear Dr Osler^[15],
The MS is a very good specimen of Arabic writing – especially vol. I, but the pictures make it specially valuable. The Arabs did not run to such things much. The portrait of Dioscorides himself has been partly erased by a pious owner (as being idolatrous) & then restored, with the halo turned into a turban – So typical of modern progress!

The vols. belong to a Persian, they have been brought to England by a man (New College) who was Brit. Consul in Shîrâz.^[16] He has offered them, on behalf of the Persian, to the Brit: Mus: who have named a price. He has not told me what it is. I think £ 20 wd be cheap – & it is what I shd offer if I cd – but I shd hardly expect to get it for that.

I am very sorry to hear that you are laid up – but I don't wonder. I hope the sight of your ancient predecessor will really do you good.

Will you let me have him back in the morning?

Yours sincerely
A Cowley

Two brief notes from Osler to Cowley follow, possibly on the same day; the hand-written date is difficult to decipher.

13 Norham Gardens

Dear Cowley^[17]
Excellent text book! just the work for the Mat. Medica class. If you can get it for anything under £ 20., the price named by my fraülein, I will take it – and chip the household bills.
Yours sincerely
Wm Osler

13 Norham Gardens

Dear Cowley^[18]

It would be interesting to see if the pictures have any resemblance to those of the famous Wien Dioscorides, which has arabic glosses.^[19] Offer £ 20 – if refused, I might go a bit higher – and take to porridge for a month

Yours
Wm Osler

Osler's offer was not accepted but some two months later, another letter about the MSS was received.

Burbush,
Burley,
Hants.
24/2/11

Dear Mr Cowley^[20]

I took the Arabic MS. to Cambridge, and subsequently to Quaritch,^[21] who refused to consider the matter unless I could quote him a definite price. Not being empowered to do this, and knowing that the owner's expectations were rather exalted, I wrote to our Consul at Shiraz asking him to get a definite price limit fixed. I ought by now to have had a reply, and as my accounts from that part of the world are very bad,^[22] I am rather afraid that it or my letter may have miscarried. But I will certainly let you know before deciding anything.

Yours sincerely,
J H Bill

From the Regius Professor of
Medicine, Oxford
13 Norham Gardens
November 2nd [1911]

Dear 'Diascorides,'[sic]^[23]
Have you the address of the man who has that manuscript? If so, please give it to my secretary.

Sincerely yours
Wm Osler

Osler apparently wrote to Bill offering £ 25 for the MSS, and in the New Year, Bill wrote to Cowley accepting the offer.

Bodleian library
Oxford
27-1-1912

My dear Professor,^[24]

The enclosed has just come. I am so glad you will now be able to carry out your generous intention of presenting Dioscorides to Bodley^[25].

The rather illegible signature is meant to represent 'J. H. Bill.'

As to Syriac medicine, I see there is a short, but good, account in Duval's history of Syr. Lit.^[26] I will keep the book in my study for a few days, in case you like to look at it.

Yours sincerely

A. Cowley

Will you let me know if you do not wish to buy?

Enclosed was Bill's letter of acceptance of the price offered.^[27]

British Residency^[28]
Bushire
Persia
7 / 1 / 11 [sic12, ref 29]

Dear Dr Cowley

Do you remember the two Arabic MSS I brought you last year, for which Prof. Osler was willing to go to £ 25? I have now communicated with the owner, who sadly accepts. Please let me know whether the offer holds good; if so I will send the books. They can be paid for by cheque on the Imperial Bank of Persia. It would probably be simpler to make it out to me.

Yours sincerely

J H Bill I.C.S.^[30] P.S. Please put via Bombay on your envelope, also a 2 1/2 d stamp.

Osler added the following note at the top of this letter: "Sent Feb 1st 1912 received in about 3 mos." Shortly after sending the payment, Osler would have received



B.O. 478 Avicenna. Kitāb al-iṣārāt

another letter about Arabic MSS, which introduces two new dramatic personae to this story, Dr. A.R. Neligan and Dr. Mirza Sa'eed.

62, Park Lane,
Croydon.

February 25 1912.

Dear Sir,^[31]

My friend & teacher Dr. Garrod^[32] tells me that you are anxious to obtain 1. an old manuscript of Avicenna's^[33] works 2. a modern edition of his poems 3. a photograph of his tomb.

With regard to 1. & 2. I shall be very pleased to do my best to obtain the books for you – and will ask some of my native friends at Tehran to look out for a really old copy of Avicenna's writings. I understand that you are willing to pay from £20-£30 for it.

As to the photograph I am able to send you two – for I was at Hamadan myself in the summer of 1910 – and got an excellent flash light photograph of the

tomb inside the little mausoleum – as well as photographs of the outside of the latter.

I am not returning to Tehran until the autumn. If you have therefore anything to add to what Dr. Garrod has told me I shall be glad to hear it. It will be a pleasure to help you to obtain what you wish for.

I am

Yours very truly

A. R. Neligan

P.S. I take it that the modern edition of the Poems is to be in native characters. A.R.N.

Osler's reply does not survive, but two months later Neligan writes again:

62, Park Lane,
Croydon.

April 29, 1912

Dear Professor Osler,^[34]

I have just received the accompanying book from Tehran. It is a copy of Avicenna's "Qanoon" or

Do you remember the two Arabic MSS I brought you last year, for which Prof. Osler was willing to go to £ 25? I have now communicated with the owner, who sadly accepts.

System of Medicine literally "Rule". It is said by experts in Tehran to be 5-600 years old. It is perfect but for the fact that a few leaves have been rewritten in a bad hand. Lithograph copies were made as recently as 45 years ago – and it was (and is no doubt by some) considered as an excellent book of reference for students and practitioners in Turkey, Arabia and India as well as in Persia. Of course you will submit it to the experts at Oxford. I took it to show to Professor Browne^[35] after his lecture on Persian Literature but unfortunately he was besieged by people and I had only a few words with him. There is of course the big "Qanoon" of Avicenna in five volumes. If you do not care for this smaller work – I will ask my native friend to look out for the bigger – but of course it would be difficult and take time to find all five volumes. He is on the look [sic] for the poems. The price is £3-15. A European buyer would of course have to pay more if he had done the bargaining.

I shall not fail to avail myself of your invitation when I am next at Oxford.

Believe me,
Yours v. truly,
A. R. NELIGAN.

That these manuscripts had been received within a short time of each other, had come from the same country, Persia; and through intermediaries, both of whom were British officials on furlough in England, confused Cushing into believing that they came from the same source.

It was more than a year later that Osler received his first letter from Sa'eed:

Hamadan,
Persia.

July 17, 1913.

To Sir William Osler,^[36]

Dear Sir,

Dr. Neligan wrote me that you liked the Kanoun of the Avicenna which I procured for you while I was in Teheran. Since my return to my old haunts I have been searching to find something worthy of you. I obtained at the house of an old physician & philosopher whose family had had great reputations as men of learning, an old MS which is remarkably well preserved and the notes in it proves that it has been well studied by many. I hope you will graciously accept it from me, as a token of my indebtedness to your teach-

ings in your Principle [sic] and Practice of Medicine, which has been my companion & help since 1895.^[37]

Dr. Neligan also mentioned your desire to have the Avicenna's poetical works. What remains of him in this line are scattered here & there, and I am trying to collect as much as possible. I came across a MS of his Arabic lines on Hygein [sic] (hygiene) and treatment, which I believe, judging by the learned professor Browne's works, has not found its way yet into Europe, it is being copied for you.

The gentleman who owned the present vol of *Ishârât* pointed out to me a building not far from the Avicenna's grave, "a house was standing here which belonged to the Avicenna where he dwelt, it was standing in the lifetime of my grandfather."

I remain,
Dear Sir,
Ever your grateful servant,
M. SAEED

From the Regius Professor of
Medicine, Oxford

1st August 1913

Dear Dr. Sa'eed:^[38]

It is exceedingly kind in you to send me that beautiful Avicenna manuscript. I have just shown it to Mr. Cowley at the Bodleian, who is delighted with it, and says it is in an unusually good state of preservation. Let me know, please, at any time, of others that may be offered for sale, and I would particularly like a manuscript of Avicenna's poems. Mr. Cowley tells me that he thinks modern volumes of his poems have been issued. I would like very much if you could have some one take a good photograph of the tomb of Avicenna, and send me a memorandum of the cost. I am interested also in Rhazes.

How long shall you be staying in Hamadan? I should like to send



Avicenna's tomb in Persia Past and Present, by A.V.W. Jackson, New York 1906, taken by the author

you a copy of the new edition of my text-book (1912).

Sincerely yours,
Wm Osler

The letters quoted above are clearly the beginning of the correspondence between Sa'eed and Osler and occur two years after the "Dioscorides MSS" were brought to Oxford for sale. Dioscorides is not mentioned but instead the *Kanun* that Sa'eed sent to Neligan, for Osler, is mentioned. Nor is Dioscorides mentioned anywhere in their correspondence which continued till Osler's death, or the subsequent letters that Sa'eed wrote to the widowed Lady Osler, while many other Arabic manuscripts are mentioned. Most importantly, if the "Dioscorides manuscripts" had passed through Sa'eed's hands these would have been correctly identified since Sa'eed was well versed in Arabic and had a profound knowledge of Arabic medical manuscripts.

Later that year while on a visit to England, Sa'eed accepted Osler's invitation to visit 13 Norham Gardens, although no record of the visit has been found. Cushing speculates that during the visit: "it is certain that all the Arabic MSS. in the Bodleian were got out for inspection and there was much talk about Avicenna." [39] If this did happen and Osler had shown Sa'eed the "Dioscorides MS" the time available may not have been sufficient for Sa'eed to make a detailed examination that would have revealed its true nature. Cowley's failure to identify the manuscripts correctly was also probably due to lack of time. But after Osler's death, when he was helping to catalogue Osler's manuscripts in 1920 he realised what he had missed earlier, namely that only one of the manuscripts in question was of Dioscorides, and the other was a rare and precious al-Ghafiki. [40]



B.O. 7508
al-Ghāfīkī On
simples

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Cowley's scholarship allowed Francis to retain the latter for the Osler Library, while transferring only the former to the Bodleian, as directed by Osler's bequest. WW Francis's side of the story concerning the al-Ghafiki MS is related in letters that he wrote many years later, to Max Meyerhof an historian of Arabic Medicine. [41]

24 September, 1937

Dr. Max Meyerhof
Sharia Fuad El-Auwal,
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Dr. Meyerhof: [42]

... [The Al-Ghafiki manuscript] was bought from a Persian who sent it to Oxford 1912 as one of two volumes of an illustrated Arabic Dioscorides, and it was not identified as Al-G.'s work until 1920, after Osler's death, when Cowley of the Bodleian catalogued it for us....owing to the rarity of illustrated copies of Dioscorides in Arabic, Osler left it to the Bodleian. Since the companion volume was not D.'s, but

al-G.'s, I succeeded in retaining it (no. 7508) for the Osler Library.

Yours sincerely
W. W. Francis, M.D.,
Librarian

8 February, 1938

Dr. M. Meyerhof,
9 Sharia Fuad 1,
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Dr. Meyerhof^[43]

... I have always had a fondness for that Ghafiki MS. and am very gratified to learn that it has so much more importance than we suspected. It nearly went to the Bodleian Library with the Dioscorides, but after Osler's death, when we discovered that this volume was not Dioscorides, I had a friendly debate with Bodley's librarian as to whether I could conscientiously keep this one for the Osler Library, and Lady Osler decided in my favour.

With kind regards,
Sincerely yours,
W.W.F.

We wonder how "friendly" the debate was. When the Dioscorides MS was delivered to Cowley, he made an unsuccessful attempt to get the al-Ghafiki as well. Did Cowley ever regret his scholarship?

Bodleian Library
Oxford
25.8.1926

Dear Lady Osler,^[44]

Please accept my best thanks for sending to this Library the volume of the Arabic Dioscorides – It is interesting in itself & a valuable addition to our collections, but I am specially glad to have it here as a memorial of Sir William – I remember so well the circumstances of our getting this & the other volume, & how delighted he was with them.

I hope you will not think me ungracious if I say that I feel quite sure Sir William meant both vol-

umes to come to the Bodleian – We negotiated the purchase as one work, not knowing that the second volume was not Dioscorides. & we always referred to the two volumes under that name – The other volume wd be in very suitable company if you decide to send it to us.

With many thanks again, believe me

Yours very sincerely
A.Cowley

Bodleian Library
Oxford
8.9.26

Dear Lady Osler,^[45]

Thank you for your note. I ought perhaps not to have mentioned the other volume – but it seemed to me a pity to separate the two, as they complete one another. However we are very grateful for what you have sent us.

Yours very sincerely
A.Cowley.

The *Bibliotheca Osleriana* notes regarding the origin of these manuscripts bring this story to an end. The Dioscorides (346) is recorded as having been "procured from Persia" and the al-Ghafiki (7508) as coming "from a Persian." The notes for the Kanun (403) mention "Dr. Neligan, through whom the MS, was bought from Persia." and for the Isharat (478) "the donor, Dr. M. Sa'eed" is acknowledged. ❀

Notes

1. Cushing H: *The Life of Sir William Osler* vol. ii, London, Oxford University Press, 1925, 255-256.
2. Dr Arthur Ernest Cowley (1861-1931) Scholar in modern Middle Eastern languages and ancient ones such as early Hebrew and Aramaic that predated Arabic. He was an authority on the Samaritans and Hittites. In 1899 he became sub-librarian at the Bodleian, and in 1919 the Bodleian Librarian. He died on October 13, 1931. The *Times* obituary mentions that he had

been "Knighthood in the Birthday Honours of last June"

3. Mirza Sa'eed Kurdistani (1863-1945) was a Kurd from northwestern Iran, or Persia as Europeans at that time preferred to call it. He converted to Christianity and was later trained informally in western medicine by medical missionaries. Even before his contacts with Osler began, he stayed on two occasions in England updating his medical knowledge and training in ophthalmology. He resided most frequently in Hamadan and Tehran, where he was renowned for his skills as a physician.
4. Dioscorides (AD 40 – c90) also known as Pedanos Dioscorides of Anazarbus. A Greek surgeon about whom little is known although he was thought to have served as a medical officer in the Roman Army. He compiled the first herbal in which he described 600 plants and 35 animal products. Although written in Greek it is usually known as *De materia Medica* (its Latin title). The *Bibliotheca Osleriana* entry is as follows: "BO 346 Dioscorides. MS. in Arabic, on oriental paper: illustrated: written in 637 A.H. [=1239 A.D.]: 9 3/4 x 6 3/4 in., v + 211 leaves. 3rd Makala (i.e. 'Discourse', book) of Dioscorides in Arabic translation made (? in Spain) by Stephanus ibn Masail; copied at Bagdad by Al-Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Nasawi. The writing is very good; there are numerous coloured drawings of plants (a number rather rubbed), and a portrait of Dioscorides (partly erased and then restored, with the halo turned into a turban) on fol. 2v." (*Bibliotheca Osleriana: A Catalogue of Books Illustrating the History of Medicine and Science Collected, Arranged and Annotated by Sir William Osler, Bt. And Bequeathed to McGill University*. Editors: W. W. Francis (Librarian, Osler Library), R. H. Hill (Bodleian Library), Archibald Malloch (Librarian, New York Academy of Medicine) Oxford at the Clarendon Press 1929.
5. Wells EB: *Books for the Bibliotheca: A study of Sir William Osler's Book Bills*. *Osler Library Newsletter* 1977, No. 26, 1-4 (p 3) Montreal: Osler Library, McGill University. Ellen Wells, the found-

... he realised what he had missed earlier, namely that only one of the manuscripts in question was of Dioscorides, and the other was a rare and precious al-Ghafiki.



- ing editor of the *Osler Library Newsletter*.
6. Gray C: The Osler Library: A collection that represents the mind of its collector. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. 1978; 119: 1442 – 1445. (p 1443)
 7. Gacek A. Arabic calligraphy and the "Herbal" of al-Ghafiqi: A survey of Arabic manuscripts at McGill University. *Fontanus* 1989; ii: 37-53 (p 53, note 8)
 8. *The Osler Library*. McGill University, Montreal, 1979, p 35.
 9. "Cushing's Curious Persian Puzzle or the Adventure of the Missing Persian" Presentation at the 35th Annual Meeting of the American Osler Society, Pasadena, CA. April 11, 2005.
 10. Osler to Cowley 1-12-1910 Bodleian Library Records, d. 351, folios 272-273.
 11. "Get thee behind me, Satan"
 12. Not: 'The Lord thy God,' but Lloyd George the Chancellor of the Exchequer who had just begun to impose a series of new taxes.
 13. "Physician art thou? – one, all eyes, / Philosopher! – a fingering slave, / One that would peep and botanize / Upon his mother's grave" from: *A Poet's Epitaph* by William Wordsworth.
 14. This is not as it first seems - entirely an example of Oslerian whimsy: Dioscorides did travel extensively with the Roman legions while making observations for his *Materia Medica* and four Roman legions were stationed at that time in southern Britain where the foxglove grew.
 15. Cowley to Osler 1-12-1910, Bodleian Library Letters with MS Arab d. 138.
 16. This was Mr John Hugo Hepburn Bill I.C.S.; Wellington College 1891-5; B.A. New College, Oxford; entered Indian Civil Service 1900; from 1906 was posted to the Political Department that dealt with the semi-autonomous Indian States. He was posted from July 30th 1906 as Assistant to the Political Resident, Persian Gulf at Bushire, where the native rulers were also in the orbit of the Indian Political Department. Next, he was deputed to act as British Consul at Shiraz from 30th April 1908 to 4th April 1910. And from: 21st July 1910 to 17th Nov 1911 he was on furlough in the U.K.
 17. Bodleian Library Records, d. 351, folio 271.
 18. Bodleian Library Records, d. 351, folio 270.
 19. Osler described this manuscript as follows: "From Byzantium we have the earliest known complete medical manuscript, dating from the sixth century – a work of Dioscorides – one of the most beautiful in existence. It was prepared in the fifth century for Anicia Juliana, daughter of the Emperor of the East, and is now one of the great treasures of the Imperial Library at Vienna." (Osler W., *The Evolution of Modern Medicine*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1921, p 91.)
 20. Bill to Cowley 24-2-1911. Bodleian Library Records, d. 352, folio 19.
 21. Bernard Alfred Quaritch, London, son of antiquarian bookseller Bernard Quaritch, who founded the firm in 1847.
 22. Bill's description of the conditions in the yearly *Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency* states: "In fact, the old theatrical direction "Confused noise without" is the most adequate expression to the effect produced on a student of Shiraz politics during this troubled year." (April 1st 1907 – May 31st 1908, p20) "The history of the period (April 1st to December 31st 1908) falls naturally into three parts which may be entitled respectively, Government, Mis-government and No-government. (p19)" An attack on Mr. Bill as he was leaving on furlough, and probably carrying the manuscripts, is described in the report for the year 1910 (p4): "Mr. J. H. Bill, I.C.S., of the Political Department of India, made over charge of the Consulate [at Shiraz] to Mr. Smart of the Levant Consular Service [part of the Consular Service of the British Foreign Office dealing with Middle Eastern countries], on 4th of April. Mr. Smart had arrived from the north, via Ispahan, travelling with a strong Sowar [Indian cavalry] escort, which again escorted Mr. Bill back to Tehran. The latter was attacked between Abadeh and Shulgistan by a party of Kuhgelu [tribesmen], on the 15th of April. Mr. Bill, realising that his caravan was about to be attacked, determined to try conclusions with the party while they were yet in an open country; he and his sowars came into contact with the robbers and succeeded in putting them to flight. Three of the gang however, having been rounded up, showed fight, and two Indian sowars were killed in the skirmish which ensued. Mr. Bill himself fortunately escaped unhurt."
 23. Osler to Cowley 2-11-1911. Bodleian Library Records, d. 352, folio 281.
 24. Cowley to Osler 27-1-1912. Osler Library Archives P100 Sir William Osler Collection Box 103 – file "Osler William – Letter – Cowley A."
 25. Osler had apparently already told Cowley of his intention to bequeath the Dioscorides MSS. to the Bodleian Library. This intention is recorded in Appendix II of the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* (op. cit. ref 1c. p xxx) that deals with: "Distribution of special books to other libraries... To Bodley – The illustrated Arab Dioscorides A.D. 1239 – which will comfort the heart of Dr. Cowley – one of, I believe, the three illustrated MSS of this author in Arabic."
 26. Duval R.: *Anciennes Littératures Chrétiennes II La Littérature Syriaque*. Paris: Libraire Victor Lecoffre. 1899: pp 273 –277.
 27. Bill to Cowley 7-1-1911(sic12). Bodleian Library. Letters with MS Arab d. 138.
 28. Bill is no longer British Consul in Shiraz from whence he came with the manuscripts to England. As recorded on page 9 of the *Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the year 1911*: "Mr. J.H.H. Bill, I.C.S., on return from leave in November, was appointed First Assistant Resident" at Bushire, the port from where British gunboats ruled the Gulf.
 29. Obviously a lapse of memory on Bill's part - forgetting that the New Year had started. In January 1911 he was still on furlough in England.
 30. Bill always made it a point to mention his status as an Indian Civil Service officer. Page 13 of the *Administration Report of the Persian Gulf*

- Political Residency for the year 1912* carries this note: "Mr. J.H.H. Bill, I.C.S., held the appointment of First Assistant Resident until July when he was transferred to India." He returned to Persia in December 1917 during the "Great War" as First Assistant Resident in the Persian Gulf, and was murdered in Iraq by Kurdish insurrectionists in September 1919. (Wilson A.T.: *Mesopotamia 1917-1920: a clash of loyalties. A personal and historical record.* London, Oxford University Press, 1931, pp152-153.)
31. Holograph from Dr. Neligan to W.O. dated February 25, 1912. Cushing Papers P417, Folder 39. Anthony Richard Neligan, M.D. Lond. 1905, Physician British Legation, Tehran, formerly of St. Bartholomew's and Great Ormond St. & East London Hospitals for Children. He went to Tehran in 1906, stayed in Persia for 20 years.
 32. Garrod, Sir Archibald Edward (1857-1936) British physician and teacher at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London.
 33. Avicenna, a Latinized version of the name: Abu-Ali al-Husayn ibn-Abd-Allah ibn-Sina. 980-1037 A. D. "The first of the Arabians, known throughout the Middle Ages as The Prince, the rival, indeed, of Galen, was the Persian Ibn Sina, better known as Avicenna, one of the greatest names in the history of medicine...he is the author of the most famous medical text-book ever written. It is safe to say that the 'Canon' was a medical bible for a longer period than any other work." (Osler W, op. cit. ref 19 p98.) The name of the book is spelt in different ways e.g.: Qanoun, Qanoon, Kanun etc.
 34. The MS is the *Bibliotheca Osleriana*, No. 463, the entry is as follows: AVICENNA Kanun Book I. Inserted in the MS is a "letter from Dr. Neligan, through whom the MS. was bought in Persia."
 35. Edward Granville Browne (1862 – 1926) Professor of Arabic at Cambridge where he had graduated MB. Osler considered him to be the only Arabian scholar in the profession. (Cushing H, op. cit. ref. 1: 377)
 36. Enclosed in the copy of Avicenna's 'ISHARAT' (Hints or Allusions) with commentaries by Razi. Bib Os. 478: AVICENNA MS. in Arabic, Kitab al-Ishârât
 - The end flyleaves bear notes and an inscription by the donor, Dr. M. Sa'eed, and notes by Sir W. Osler. Cushing (ii, op cit., p 368) mentions the arrival of this book at 13 Norham Gardens as a "pleasant happening" in his record of the events of July–August 1913.
 37. Most probably one of the British first editions of the book: 1892 or 1894.
 38. Typed letter from W.O. to Dr. Sa'eed, Teheran, Persia. August 1, 1913. Cushing Papers P417, Folder 39. Also given in full, in Cushing ii, p368 where "[Ishârât]" is inserted after the word: manuscript.
 39. Cushing has incorrectly placed this in the pages devoted to events in September 1913, a month earlier than Osler's letter to Neligan. (Cushing H, op. cit. ref 1, p376-377)
 40. Abu Dja'far Ahmad al-Ghafiki, Spanish-Arabic pharmaco-botanist, native of the fortress Ghafik near Cordova. His dates are not known, but he may have died around the middle of the 12th century. He was considered to be the best expert on drugs of his time; he elaborated thoroughly the material transmitted from Dioscorides and Galen and presented it in a concise, but apparently complete form in his *Kitab al-Adwiya al-mufrada*. (The Encyclopaedia of Islam (New Edition) vi, s313b)
 - The *Bibliotheca Osleriana* entry is as follows:
BO 7508. Al-Ghafiki [Abu Jafar Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Ghafiki] –1165. In Arabic on paper: written AH 654 i.e. AD 1256: 10x7in., iii+284 leaves: illustrated in oriental binding.
 - On *Simples*, al-adwiya al-mufrada, by al-Ghafiki, a Spanish physician, arranged alphabetically. Vol.I (A-K) only. With 367 coloured drawings of plants and 6 of animals. (Osler W, op. cit. ref 4)
 41. Max Meyerhof was a German Jewish physician who practised in Egypt for thirty years. He first visited Egypt in 1900-1901, and subsequently decided to practise ophthalmology there. He did so first during the years: 1903 – 1914
 - when he also studied and researched the history of Arabic Ophthalmology. His second period in Egypt was from 1923 till his death in 1945, during which time his interests broadened to include the history of Arabic medicine in general. (Johnstone P. editorial preface in Meyerhof, M: *Studies in Arabic Medicine, Theory and Practice.* Variorum Reprints, London 1948. pp ix–xii.)
 42. W.W. Francis to Max Meyerhof 4-9-1937 (From WW Francis. Correspondence, P155, Box 132, "Meyerhof" folder Osler Library Archives)
 43. W.W. Francis to Max Meyerhof 8-2-1938 (ibid.)
 44. Cowley to Lady Osler 25-8-1926 (Osler Library Archives P100 Sir William Osler Collections. Box 101, file "Osler, Grace Revere letters – Cowley A.")
 45. Cowley to Lady Osler 8-9-1926 (ibid.)

Acknowledgements

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the kind help of Doris Nicholson of the Bodleian Library with the Dioscorides manuscript and other related bibliographic material, and of her colleague Steven Tomlinson for copies of the Osler – Cowley, and Bill – Cowley correspondence; the assistance of Dorian Leveque of the British Library, London, and Paul Rich, Professor of International Relations & History at the University of the Americas, Puebla, Mexico, in locating material about Mr. J.H.H. Bill; the help of John Gurney of the Oriental Institute, Oxford with the unpublished E.G. Browne correspondence; the answers Richard Golden provided to questions about Osler's Textbook; the unstinting help of Pamela Miller and Lily Szczygiel of the Osler Library, Montreal; and the enthusiastic encouragement of Charles Ambrose.

ANNUAL APPEAL 2006

by Pamela Miller
History of Medicine Librarian

A good Library is an on-going seminar, in the Osler Library's case, one that lasts for years on end. Researchers, Osler family members, clinicians, students, professors, staff and international conference attendees all bring their particular perspective to our collections. When they leave, we hope that they have found new knowledge and even inspiration from our collections and projects. They in turn invariably bring fresh ideas to the Library through their enthusiasm for their work. Close contact with the visitor/researcher often generates additions to our collections and ideas for exhibitions. Exhibitions bring more discoveries. This year two outstanding exhibitions prove the point.

Dr. Rolando Del Maestro, as reported in the last *Newsletter*, no. 105, produced a magnificent display entitled *The History of Neuro-Oncology*, using books selected from our collection as well as many from his own collection. In addition he produced a superbly illustrated catalogue, writing the text and choosing the illustrations, given to delegates to the Canadian Congress of Neurology last June. The stunning volume, bearing the same title as the exhibition, is on display and for sale, in the Osler Library (\$20, please visit <http://www.mcgill.ca/osler-library/about/introduction/sales/>). There was an unexpected bonus for the Osler to Dr. Del Maestro's research. One of the works he selected was Robert Hooper's *The Morbid Anatomy of the Human Brain*

published in London in 1828, plate XIII entitled "Encysted Tumour of the Brain" appearing on the cover of the book. We recalled that six volumes of plates, only

when they were placed (still grubby and somewhat frayed) in stronger boxes. Dr. Del Maestro chose one plate for display but by the sheerest of coincidences, at



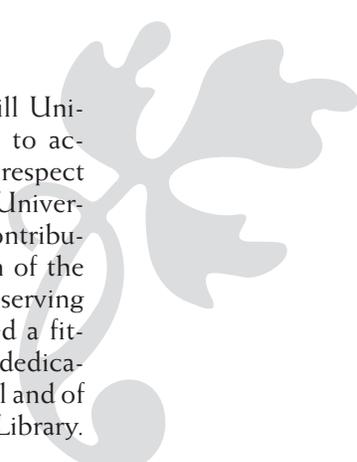
Close contact with the visitor/researcher often generates additions to our collections and ideas for exhibitions. Exhibitions bring more discoveries.



Hooper portfolios, before and after treatment

two volumes of which were ever published, had been given to Sir William Osler by Dr. Greenfield of Edinburgh. Osler added them to his collection (B.O. 7574) suggesting that some of the finer plates be framed and displayed in the medical museum. As far as we know, this never happened and the plates lay, dirty and badly protected until our recent renovation

that very moment, McGill University expressed a wish to acknowledge the enormous respect and appreciation of the University community for the contributions of Dr. Fuks as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. Conserving the Hooper plates seemed a fitting recognition of Abe's dedication to medicine at McGill and of his support for the Osler Library.



Thanks to your support, the conservator Terry Rutherford already happened to be on the spot restoring books that your generosity allows us to treat. Her pre-

tem, the Respiratory System, Circulatory and Urinary Systems remain unpublished, but are now impeccably conserved, on our shelves.

thing that will be of lasting benefit to the Library.

While researching his exhibitions and re-editing Maude Abbott's



Undated snapshot of Mary Bell Eastlake in her studio



Dr. Richard Fraser and portrait by Mary Bell Eastlake of Maude Abbott

Dr. Fraser discovered a draft of Maude Abbott's letter of application to McGill's Faculty of Medicine...



sence here meant that she could evaluate the condition of the plates and begin work immediately. As a result of the University's imaginative and generous initiative, we now have the works beautifully restored, housed and easily accessible for study. The works consist of Hoopers' manuscript notes, and the lithographs in every state from watercolour to final production. In describing the illustrations found in *The Morbid Anatomy of the Human Brain*, Hooper attests to the accuracy of the drawing and the faithfulness of the colouring so that those who do not have the opportunity of seeing diseased parts, may learn about them. According to the author, no expense was spared. Hooper is known to have had a lucrative practice in London and for his collection of specimens acquired for his students to study. Osler noted that Hooper published a number of text-books and that *The Morbid Anatomy of the Human Uterus* published in 1832 was the only other volume of our collection of plates that was ever published. The Alimentary Sys-

tem, the Respiratory System, Circulatory and Urinary Systems remain unpublished, but are now impeccably conserved, on our shelves. Following Dr. Del Maestro's exhibition, Dr. Richard Fraser produced a display entitled, *William Osler and the Pathologic Specimen: McGill University – Montreal General Hospital 1870-1884*. This too, was mounted in conjunction with a congress being held in Montreal, the International Academy of Pathology at which 2,600 delegates were registered for the celebration of their 100th anniversary, Maude Abbott being one of the founders. In addition to the above exhibition held at the Osler, Dr. Fraser produced a larger exhibition at the conference centre in the Palais des Congrès using 150 specimens from McGill's pathology collection. Four of Maude Abbott's posters on congenital cardiac disease, which she displayed on four separate occasions including the 1932 meeting of the British Medical Association in London, were chosen for the display. This involved conserving the posters, the cost being shared between the Osler and the exhibition. The posters were conserved in such a way as to be easily stored once the conference ended some-

1936 *Atlas of Congenital Cardiac Disease*, McGill-Queen's University Press 2006 (and serving as local arrangements chairman of the centennial anniversary congress of the IAP) Dr. Fraser discovered a draft of Maude Abbott's letter of application to McGill's Faculty of Medicine, dated the 11th of February, 1889. Thanks to Dr. Fred Silva, President of United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology, the letter is now in our collection. As we all know, Maude Abbott's unsuccessful application did not keep her from obtaining her medical degree. Less well known, is that Maude's friend the renowned Canadian artist Mary Bell Eastlake was the first to plant the idea of medicine as a career in Maude's mind. The artist also painted the well-known portrait of Maude in her bright red doctoral robes that hangs in the Strathcona Anatomy and Dentistry Building. What we did not know is that she also produced another portrait of Abbott. Dr. Fraser, on learning that this portrait was up for sale, arranged for its purchase and donation to the Osler Library. This

very fine study will be placed in our post-1840 research room. We are more than grateful to Dr. Fraser and to Dr. Fuks for this magnificent acquisition.

Another example of close work with our public has resulted in a donation to the Osler Library of funds to be used to reproduce an unpublished manuscript (and its transcription) of the address that Osler delivered to students at the University of Pennsylvania in 1885. Dr. Gail Beck Medicine '75 and her husband Andrew Fenus have recently funded this publication entitled *From William Osler to Osler Fellows*, which will be presented to Osler Fellows at the annual white coat ceremony every October. This is our contribution to the Faculty of Medicine's new Physicianship Programme, led by Dr. Don Boudreau, dedicated to inspiring medical students to understand the role of the doctor as healer and professional. In his speech, Osler outlined systematically the steps in acquiring a medical education, explaining in very clear terms what the student would expect to learn during the course of his studies and how to do so. He finishes by saying:

The knowledge which a man can use is the only real knowledge, the only knowledge that has life and growth in it and converts itself into practical power. The rest hangs like dust about the brain or dries like rain drops off the stones.

We have made good use of your help in other areas as well. While attending a conference at Cambridge University, Professor Robin Yates of the Department of East Asian Studies was shown images from a Chinese herbal from the late 16th century which had been rediscovered in the Rare Book Room of the Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Beijing, China. The herbal, dated 1591 has been reproduced in exact facsimile in the old-style

thread-bound format in 14 volumes or rolls contained in four boxes. There are 1,128 images, outstanding sources for the study of traditional Chinese medicine.

Thanks to your generosity, we purchased the herbal giving Professor Yates' students a rare opportunity to consult this glorious work.



Prof. Robin Yates and Margaret Wee-siang Ng, Ph.D. student in the History Department examining the Chinese herbal



Penfield argued that neurology was close to the brink of extinction as a medical specialty...



At the opposite end of the scale is our purchase of a number of e-books, including *The Cambridge Historical Dictionary of Disease*. It is available to McGill users either through the McGill on-line catalogue or from the Osler Library web page under "on-line resources", "encyclopaedias and dictionaries". This is an excellent source for concise information on the history of 161 diseases and is a condensed version of *The Cambridge World History of Human Disease*, edited by Kenneth F. Kiple, which we have on our shelf.

In between these two extremes we have added some quite unusual rare works including the third edition, 1681 of François Mauriceau's *Traité des maladies des femmes grosses... pour bien aider les femmes en leurs accouchemens naturels...* with several plates. Regarded as the foremost textbook of its time, this work is seen as establishing obstetrics as a science, (Garrison & Morton, 5th ed., 6147). We have also purchased Sébastien Guillié's *Essai sur l'instruction des aveugles...* published in Paris in 1817, George Simpson's *The Anatomy of the Bones and Muscles... designed for the use of artists and members of the artists' anatomical society*, with lithographed illustrations, published in London in 1825 and to add to our collection of material on nursing and the Crimean War, *Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses: the narrative of twelve months experience in the hospitals of Koulali and Scutari*, by a Lady Volunteer, London, 1856, a two volume work describing the wretchedness of hospital care for the injured and ill during that miserable war. The author, Mary Magdalen Taylor, calls on her readers to learn from grim experience and to begin the systematic training of qualified nursing staff.

We continue to purchase an astonishing array of contemporary books. Among the many hundreds is Michael Bliss' splendid biography of Harvey Cushing, published in 2005. The author has delighted a wide range of readers, from those interested in Cushing as Osler's biographer to those interested in knowing more about the life and work of this highly visible neurosurgeon. Ancient medicine is explored in Jo Ann Scurlock's *Magico-Medical Means of Treating Ghost-Induced Illnesses in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Boston, 2006. And to prove that many topics in medical history continue to be relevant today, James Dickerson's *Yellow Fever: a Deadly Disease Poised to Kill Again*, New York 2006 reminds us that the struggle against disease is far from over.

This brief report launches our annual appeal. At the time of writing, our most recent Travel Grant recipient is finishing pouring over the Penfield Archive as she begins her doctoral work at the University of Toronto's Department of History. Next year's candidates are already inquiring about the 2007 award. Another researcher is at work on our historical anatomical atlases, including the above-mentioned work by Simpson, recently acquired thanks to you. Thank you. It is because of your help that these researchers are here. Our numbers are growing. Your help ensures that our on-going seminar will continue to meet the needs of those interested in Osler and the history of medicine. ❀

DELIA GAVRUS, OSLER LIBRARY RESEARCH TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENT 2006

I visited the Osler Library in September 2006 to conduct research on the history of neurology and neurosurgery in the first half of the 20th century. For this purpose, I consulted the Wilder Penfield collection and the William Cone papers.

My research focus was twofold: first, I looked at material related to the founding of the Montreal Neurological Institute. I was interested in the strategies that Wilder Penfield (1891-1976) employed to sell the idea of a Neurological Institute to potential funders, and I wanted to identify the critical factors that contributed to the success of the project at this particular time (1934). After all, a much more influential neurosurgeon, Harvey Cushing (1869-1939), had attempted to establish a similar institution – a National Institute of Neurology – immediately after World War I, and he failed to get sufficient support from the United States Government and from private foundations. This past summer I visited the Rockefeller Archives in New York State to understand the reasons why the Rockefeller Foundation was interested in contributing such a large sum of money (\$1,232,000) to the Montreal project. After looking at the Penfield papers, I began to understand how the specific local conditions in Montreal contributed to the Foundation's decision. However, a much more interesting

critical factor appears to have been Penfield's attempt to draw attention to a supposed crisis in neurology. Penfield argued that neurology was close to the brink of extinction as a medical specialty due to a variety of reasons, and that the only course of action was a different (i.e. surgical) approach to the diseases of the nervous system and a drastic change in the education of neurologists and neurosurgeons, an argument that the Rockefeller Foundation was particularly interested in given a recent change in policy. In essence, Penfield endeavored to redraw the boundaries between the closely related fields of neurology, neurosurgery, and psychiatry at a time when these disciplines were in flux and had not established more or less strict boundaries. At the same time, Penfield pointed out the danger of overspecialization and of losing touch with general medicine. This rhetoric of holism was common in the interwar period, as historical scholarship has shown, and proved to be a successful technique in lobbying for the establishment of an institute that promised, to put it anachronistically, a multidisciplinary approach to diseases of the nervous system.

My second research focus was on Penfield's correspondence with other neurosurgeons and neurologists in order to understand the ways in which the purview of these disciplines was negotiated and shaped. For instance, Penfield insisted in his letters to other physicians on using the term 'neurosurgeon' to the more commonly used 'neurological surgeon,' and he made an effort to induce others to use this term. This constitutes one of the less dramatic, but nonetheless effective strategies that he used to carve out a broader and more secure place for his medical specialty. Unlike

Cushing, who saw neurological surgery as primarily concerned with tumor removal, Penfield was very much interested in extending the authority of this medical branch to other illnesses, such as epilepsy. Penfield's correspondence with his colleagues also reveals points of contention that shaped twentieth-century neuroscience discourse, for example Penfield's argument with the British neurologist Francis Walshe (1885-1973) over the "homunculus" and with the Harvard neurologist Stanley Cobb (1887-1968) over the mind-brain problem.

The Penfield and Cone papers at the Osler Library are an invaluable resource for historians interested in twentieth-century neurology and neurosurgery. I am very grateful for the wonderful opportunity to visit the Osler Library that the Research Travel Grant has afforded me, and I am indebted to Pamela Miller and her wonderful staff for all their help. ❁

NOTES FROM THE OSLER LIBRARY

History of Medicine Meetings

Last Spring in Halifax, amid bagpipes, musical medical students, a lobster feed and some of the best presentations ever, Dr. Jock Murray was named President of the American Osler Society. A neurologist, well-known for his roll in promoting the medical humanities and former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Dalhousie University, Dr. Murray will preside over the next meeting of the AOS, from the 30th of April to the 3rd of May, here in Montreal. The meetings are timed to overlap with the American Association of the His-

tory of Medicine and the Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences. Eager researchers are already planning their visits to the Osler Library.



Revere Osler's Christening Cup

Revere Osler's Christening Cup

The late Professor Archie Malloch's sister, Mrs. Joan Lord, has presented the Osler Library with Revere Osler's christening cup. Revere was born in Baltimore on December 28th, 1895. Michael Bliss, in his recent biography of Osler, reports that Grace Osler insisted that the baptismal water from the River Jordan be sterilized for health reasons, leaving very little for the ceremony. Later, his Afro-American nurse, unimpressed with the ceremony, carried out her own rite in the nursery with a full cup of water. (Bliss p. 240) The cup was given to Georgina Osler Abbott following Revere's tragic death. She added a spout. It then passed to Katherine Abbott Malloch, the wife of Dr. T.A. Malloch and then to Joan Lord, Grace Revere Osler's goddaughter. The cup is a delight-

Eager researchers are already planning their visits to the Osler Library.

ful but poignant addition to our Oslerian silver, which ranges from family items to elaborate presentation pieces.

Worthington Watch

Dr. Ronald Bayne, Med. '47 presented us with an unusual gold watch. The inscribed watch was presented to Dr. E.D. Worthington (1820-1895) by his friends in recognition of his service in Sherbrooke, Quebec, for helping to control an outbreak of smallpox. Dr. Worthington was loved and respected for his work among the citizens of that town, rich and poor alike, serving the community for 50 years. The watch is a welcome supplement to our Worthington archival fonds that documents the activities of Dr. Worthington and his family. Of particular interest is the apprenticeship of young Worthington to the famous surgeon Dr. James Douglas of Quebec City in 1833 at the age of 13. ❀

The watch is a welcome supplement to our Worthington archival fonds...



Worthington watch



Margaret Ridley Charleton

Unveiling ceremony of a plaque of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada commemorating the national historic significance of Margaret Ridley Charleton, Osler Library, May 1, 2006. l. to r. Mr. David Crawford, Emeritus Librarian and originator of the dedication (see OLN 100); Mrs. Francine Émond, Director, Western Quebec Field Unit, Parks Canada; Mrs. Janine Schmidt, Trenholme Director of Libraries; Mrs. Frances Groen, Emeritus Librarian; Mr. Jean-Claude Marsan, Representative of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada



Dr. Ronald Bayne and family presenting the gold watch given to Dr. Worthington by grateful citizens

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The Library gratefully acknowledges the support it has received from Friends, both old and new, who have responded to the appeal for funds for the 2005-2006 academic year. Over the year, 205 Friends have given a total of approximately \$26,600 and they are listed below. Most of the contributions have come from Friends in Canada and the United States of America. However, very welcome contributions have also come from several other continents.

The appeal to the Friends for the 2005-2006 academic year concluded on May 31, 2006. Contributions received after May 31, 2006 will be recorded in the 2007 fall issue of the *Osler Library Newsletter*.

The appeal for the 2006-2007 academic year is made in this issue, No. 106-2006.

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Your help ensures that our on-going seminar will continue to meet the needs of those interested in Osler and the history of medicine.



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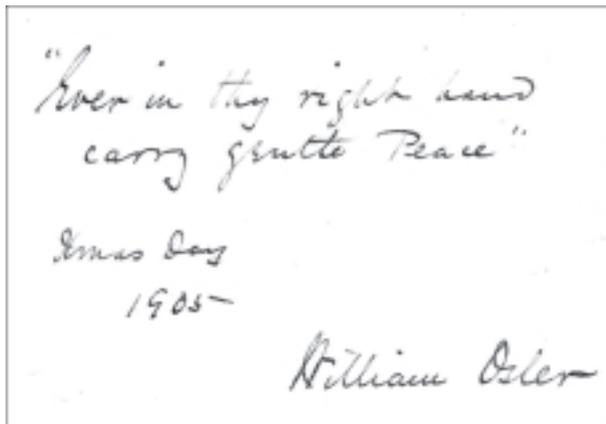


A New Neighbour. This photograph, taken earlier this year by Alan Forster, shows the groundwork for our new next door neighbour to the east of us, the Francesco Bellini Life Sciences Building and the new Cancer Research Pavilion

Editorial Committee for the *Newsletter*: Faith Wallis, Editor; Pamela Miller, History of Medicine Librarian and Assistant Editor; Lily Szczygiel, Editorial Assistant.

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Christmas wishes sent by Osler to an unknown correspondent, adapted from Henry VIII, Act. iii, Sc. 2 (P100 Sir William Osler Collection Addenda)