

# OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL, CANADA

No. 48 - February 1985

The leading article in this issue is a memorandum prepared last October for the Osler Library Board of Curators by Philip M. Teigen. This is much more than a mere "farewell message". It provides an excellent overview, not only of Dr. Teigen's stewardship, but also of the affairs of the Osler Library from 1974, when Philip Teigen took charge, to the end of 1984 when he left for Bethesda. Indeed the memorandum forms an important part of the history of the

library. I believe it deserves a wider circulation than has been provided by sending it to our curators, and as Editor of the *Newsletter*, I am happy to reproduce it here as a leading article.

Readers should note that Dr. Teigen's new address is Deputy Chief, History of Medicine Division, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland, 20209.

## MEMORANDUM TO THE OSLER LIBRARY BOARD OF CURATORS FROM PHILIP M. TEIGEN

**T**HIS PAST WEEK I have resigned the position of Osler Librarian and Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Studies in Medicine in order to become the Deputy Chief of the History of Medicine Division at the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland. The change will take effect at the end of the current calendar year. Since I will have spent more than ten years in the Osler Library — a large part of my professional career — I thought it might be useful for me, and perhaps for you, to reflect briefly on that decade.

For me the most important events were the construction of the W.W. Francis Wing and the H. Rocke Robertson Rare Book Room; the 50th Anniversary Symposium and the book that resulted therefrom, *Books, Manuscripts, and the History of Medicine: Essays on the 50th Anniversary of the Osler Library* (1982); the publication of the picture-book *The Osler Library* (1979); the establishment of the Friends of the Osler Library Endowment; the creation (on an experimental basis) of Osler Library Fellowships; and the numerical growth of the Friends.

The most sustained effort I have had to make has been to define the nature and function of the Osler Library as it neared the beginning of the 21st century. This entailed the integration of the needs of historical scholarship and the opportunities of 20th century librarianship with the potential inherent in the Library's foundation and the traditions of its 55 years of existence. This included, for example, building a collection of materials for such diverse groups as professional historians, physicians, and students; paying close heed to the aesthetics of the interior decoration of the Library and using library technology effectively but unobtrusively. The process took place each year in hundreds of minor decisions, many recorded in my annual reports, but also at a more conceptual level, which has been recorded in "The Osler Library at Fifty," *Osler Library Newsletter*, 33, February 1980, in the review of the Library's collection at last April's Curators meeting, and in an article, "Medical Libraries and History of Medicine Libraries," *Watermark*, 1982, 6(1):1-5.

Being the Osler Librarian has provided generous opportunities for professional development, as it should for anyone who becomes the History of Medicine Librarian or the Osler Librarian. I have had time, ample material, and resources of technology and personnel to undertake sustained research efforts in both history of medicine and librarianship. Equally important has been my appointment in the Department of Humanities and Social Studies in Medicine. This rigorous and wide-ranging department has encouraged, broadened, and invigorated my scholarship. In seminars and in almost daily conversation this particular — and I might say peculiar — mixture of historians with a sociologist and an anthropologist has been a rich matrix within which to reflect and write about not only the history of medicine but also about librarianship and the inter-relationships between the two.

That the Osler Library is a self-contained library performing all the functions including public services, technical services, etc., has also been important both for the Library's effectiveness and for my professional development. Multiplicity of tasks and the necessity of integrating them not only within a single library but also within the larger structures of the Life Sciences Area Library and the University Library System has provided valuable experience in librarianship. Finally, the dual roles of the Library as an advanced research collection and as a symbol of an approach to medical practice and medical science as well as the Library's complicated governance encouraged the development of useful social and political skills. I should note here the necessity of balancing the demands made upon the Library to become exclusively a library for librarians, a library for professional historians, or one for physicians. To survive as an effective library, the Osler Library must acknowledge and serve multiple purposes and multiple constituents without being subject to the imperialism of any one.

Among the most important features of the Osler Library is the institution of the curators themselves. Not only have they guided the direction of the library from its founding, but they have also balanced the demands of its many constituents and undertaken extensive fund-raising activity. Their annual meetings provide a discipline and an opportunity to address a widely-based and interested audience. The meetings have been invigorating, for I learned soon that not only were the curators' expectations of the Osler Librarian high, but also that they appreciated and respected sound performance. The faithful attendance of the curators and their persistent and probing questions I have taken as a mark of their interest in the Library and the Osler Librarian. Between the

annual meetings, individual curators offered me advice and counsel whenever I asked for it. Chief among these have been Don G. Bates, E.H. Bensley, and H. Rocke Robertson. At a greater distance, other curators have served as models and exemplars for me.

Earlier I mentioned some of what I thought were the accomplishments of the past decade, but I should not leave the impression that there has been nothing but success. There are four intractable problems which I must leave in the hands of my successors: a) improving the physical environment, specifically by controlling the drastic changes in humidity and temperature, in which the Library's collection is kept; b) improving the security of the Library's rare book collections; c) clarifying the governance of the Library, specifically the inter-relationship of curators, University Library System, and Osler Librarian; and d) obtaining money through the university appropriation in order to fully catalogue all books purchased or received by gift and transfer. All four remain farther from solution than I would like to leave them.

What success I achieve in my new post at the National Library of Medicine will come in large measure from the rigor and richness of my experience here at McGill University. I shall always retain an interest in the fortunes of the Osler Library, albeit from afar, and an affection for it and for my many friends in Montreal.

### NEW STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS IN THE OSLER LIBRARY

When the Wellcome Camera was designed, the windows in the first floor of the Camera were provided with stained-glass coats-of-arms of the twelve Canadian universities which then had medical faculties. It was a fortunate coincidence that there were exactly twelve windows on the first floor, a coincidence which no doubt favoured the project. These decorated windows have elicited favourable comments from many visitors.

However, since then, four additional Canadian universities have acquired medical faculties — Memorial University of Newfoundland (St. John's, Newfoundland), Université de Sherbrooke (Sherbrooke, Québec), McMaster University (Hamilton, Ontario), and the University of Calgary (Calgary, Alberta). We have been anxious to recognize these four universities by installing their coats-of-arms in windows on the second floor of the Wellcome Camera. Such installation is expensive but has now been made possible by a generous gift from Dr. C. James F. Parsons of Bridgeport, Connecticut. This gift of the required funds was made by Dr. Parsons in memory of his parents, Edward and Elizabeth Burden Parsons.

In his earlier years, Dr. Parsons was befriended by Dr. T. Archibald Malloch,\* and Mrs. Malloch. Recalling this, he informed their son, Professor A.E. Malloch of McGill University, that he wished to make a substantial gift to the Osler Library. This is how it came about that we acquired the funds to commission the four additional windows from stained-glass craftsman Theo Lubbers. It is especially appropriate that one of them bears the coat-of-arms of Memorial University. Dr. Parsons' connection with Newfoundland is particularly close; he was born there.

\*There are many references in previous *Osler Library Newsletters* to Dr. Malloch, a disciple of Sir William Osler and staunch friend of the Osler Library. Indeed the last issue of the Newsletter (No. 47) had as its leading article Malloch's account of Osler's last illness.

### A WELCOME ADDITION TO "THE LIBRARY'S OSLER"

In the book *The Osler Library*,\* one section is entitled "The Library's Osler". This is devoted to Osler memorabilia other than books and manuscripts, memorabilia which may be described as more personal artifacts. They include such items as Sir William Osler's desk, brought to the Library from his Oxford home; a gold watch presented to him by his McGill medical students when he left Montreal; photographs of Osler and his family; and the Grant of Arms Osler received when he was made a Baronet. These constitute valued personal links with Osler.



On January 8th last, the Osler Library received a most attractive addition to "The Library's Osler". This is a desk set, comprised of a silver tray with pen-rest and two glass ink-wells, a silver étui for stamps, and a blotter pad with silver corners. The initials "W.O." appear on the étui, the ink-well caps, and one of the blotter corners. This set was presented to Osler in May 1905 by the nurses of The Johns Hopkins Hospital Alumnae Association when he departed for Oxford. It later graced his desk in the Open Arms.

This set was presented as a gift to the Osler Library by Mrs. Ursula C. Paterson, formerly Mrs. John Gwyn Osler, on behalf of her family and the John Gwyn Osler Estate. John Gwyn Osler was the second son of Marion and Britton Osler and a grand-nephew of Sir William Osler. The set was given to Mrs. John Gwyn Osler and her husband in 1938 by Britton Osler as a wedding present and has been in Mrs. Paterson's possession since then.

The story of how the set came to Britton Osler is not known in all its details. Apparently the set was given to Thomas McCrae and his wife at the time of Sir William's death or perhaps Lady Osler's death. Thomas McCrae's wife was a sister of Britton Osler's wife and when Mrs. McCrae died, the set went to Britton Osler. In any event, through the kindness of Mrs. Paterson, the set has now come home to Sir William's desk.

A photograph of this beautiful set, laid out on Osler's desk in the Osler Library and surrounded by other items of "The Library's Osler", accompanies this article.

\*(D.G. Bates, E.H. Bensley and P.M. Teigen), *The Osler Library*. Osler Library, McGill University, Montreal, 1979.

## OSLER DAY - 1985

Osler Day this spring falls on Wednesday, April 24th. The Osler Lecturer is to be Dr. June Goodfield, who has taught in English and American universities on the wider aspects of science and medicine and has been actively concerned with the interface between science and society and the relationships between individual scientists and the ideas they hold. The title of her lecture will be "A gauntlet in our faces: some aspects of contemporary medicine and Third World health problems."

As is customary, the Osler Banquet will be held on the evening of Osler Day. Dr. Goodfield will be the honoured guest at the banquet and will respond to questions from the floor about her Osler Lecture delivered that afternoon.

During 1985, Osler Day is being shifted from the spring to the autumn. As a consequence, there will be a second Osler Day in 1985. This will fall on Wednesday, November 20th. Further details of this Osler Day will appear in the June *Osler Library Newsletter*.

## TRIBUTE TO ROBERT A. CLEGHORN

On September 21, 1984, McGill University and the Royal Victoria Hospital paid tribute to Robert A. Cleghorn, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at McGill, as part of the celebration of his 80th birthday. On this occasion, a cheque for \$500 was presented in his honour to the Osler Library for the purchase of a work or works deemed important to the history of psychiatry or endocrinology, fields to which Dr. Cleghorn has made important contributions.

## WILLIAM OSLER AND COMPARATIVE MEDICINE

An article by Philip M. Teigen entitled "William Osler and Comparative Medicine" has been published in the *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, 1984, 25:400-405. A limited supply of reprints is available. Those wishing a reprint should send their requests to: Dr. E.H. Bensley, Room 421, 3655 Drummond Street, Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1Y6.

## FIRST OSLER LIBRARY RESEARCH FELLOWS NAMED

Mimi Cazort, Curator of Drawings at the National Gallery in Ottawa, and J.D. Rayner, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Lakehead University, are the first recipients of Osler Library Research Fellowships. Miss Cazort will spend a month in the Osler Library studying the interconnection between artists' and anatomists' understanding and portrayal of the human body during the 15th through the 19th century. Professor Rayner will spend a month in the Library studying the sources of medical metaphors and analogies used in 17th century political writing.

The Osler Library Research Fellowships for 1985 are funded by gifts from Dr. Harold N. Segall, the Friends of the Osler Library, and an anonymous donor. They have been established in order to bring to the Osler Library scholars who would not otherwise be able to conduct research there because of their distance from it (see *Osler Library Newsletter*, No. 45, February 1984). Miss Cazort and Professor Rayner are the first winners in this Fellowship Program.

## CHINESE EDITIONS OF OSLER'S THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE

A very thorough study of the history of the Chinese translations of Sir William Osler's famous textbook has been published by Richard L. Golden and George V. Summers in the *Hong Kong Library Association Journal*, No. 8, 1984. Attention is drawn to this in the *Newsletter* because many Oslerians are unlikely to be familiar with the journal. Those who wish reprints of this useful and interesting article should communicate with Dr. Golden, 554 Larkfield Road, East Northport, N.Y., 11731.

## 1984-85 CONTRIBUTORS TO THE FRIENDS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY

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 1984-85 academic year. To date 180 Friends have given a total of approximately \$9,000. Most of the contributions have come from Friends in Canada and the United States of America. However, very welcome contributions have come also from Australia, Britain, Chile, Hong Kong, Japan, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland, and West Germany.

The names of Friends whose contributions are received after January 31, 1985 will be listed in the June issue of the *Newsletter*.

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Editorial Committee for the *Newsletter*: Edward H. Bensley, Honorary Osler Librarian and Editor; Frances Groen, Life Sciences Area Librarian and Acting History of Medicine Librarian; Faith Wallis, Assistant History of Medicine Librarian; Lorraine Hicks and Elizabeth Ricci, Editorial Assistants.

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