

OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL, CANADA

No. 49 - June 1985

OSLER SOCIETY OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Report for the Academic Year 1984-85



THE ACADEMIC year 1984-85 was one of revitalization for the Osler Society. Our sixty-third year saw the adaptation of the old "constitution" into a useful guide-line for future years. Its introduction reads:

The Osler Society was founded in 1921 to perpetuate the memory and teaching of Sir William Osler, the most illustrious graduate and later professor of the Faculty of Medicine at McGill. Through the presentation of papers, organization of seminars and lectures the Society strives to uphold his ideals of a liberal medical education. Subjects of particular interest to the Society include the history of medicine, social issues in medicine, the literature and cultural anthropology of medicine, and medical ethics.

For the first time in 15 years the Society has also revived a membership and mailing list — this year we have a total of 42 members coming from all years of medicine. There are also 17 Friends of the Osler Society, those individuals who have given their long-standing support to the Society. Membership continues to remain open to all interested students of the faculty. As well the Society has welcomed into its ranks honorary members from three other faculties within the university during the year.

Osler's desire that a medical education encompass an awareness of the philosophical, historical, and social context in which medicine exists was reflected by the activities of the Society again this year. We began our year in September with an evening appropriately entitled "An Introduction to Sir William Osler and his Library." We were fortunate to have as our host Dr. Philip Teigen, the current Osler Librarian. Dr. Teigen took the Society on both a lecture tour of Osler's life and times as well as a walking tour of Osler's Library. Members present were given the opportunity to see many of the rare books that make up the library as well as a warm invitation by Dr. Teigen to use the resources of the Osler Library. The evening was brought to a close with the distribution of Osler's "Bed-side Library for Medical Students."

In October, the Society presented "Art as Interpretation of Life" a lively lecture and discussion with Dr. Rigas Bertos, the Chairman of the Department of the History of Art at McGill. Dr. Bertos discussed the different ways life has been viewed and portrayed over the centuries through the works of Giotto, Titian, Brunelleschi, Goya, Van Gogh, and Munch. Dr. Bertos, always an animated speaker, generated much participation from the audience.

The initial letter on this page is by Daniel T. Ames, New York, 1879 and is reproduced from Alexander Nesbitt (ed.), *Decorative alphabets and initials*, Dover Publications, Inc., 1959.

In November the discussion turned to "Women in Medicine — Past, Present and Future Challenges" with a panel of guests consisting of Dr. Dawn Johansson, Dr. Sandra Richardson and Dr. Trish Perl, all of the Royal Victoria Hospital. The spectrum of ages and experience in the panelists helped to give an historical perspective to the various questions raised. The evening was well attended by medical students of all years as well as house staff from the McGill teaching hospitals. Dr. Jessie Boyd Scriver, one of the first woman graduates of McGill (MDCM 1922) and a Friend of the Osler Society was also present. We were honoured to have her close the meeting which she did by asking us to remember foremost our duties and responsibilities to the patient as physicians, a sentiment with which William Osler would certainly concur.

The Society's December meeting was perhaps the most memorable of the year. Dr. Martin Entin, a long-time Friend of the Osler Society and enthusiastic supporter, opened his home to the members of the Society for a lecture entitled "Edward Archibald, Surgical Scientist." The lecture centered upon the history of the surgical treatment of tuberculosis and was followed by dinner and conversation. The evening was particularly special to the Society since it was truly a re-enactment of the first Osler Society meetings when gatherings most frequently occurred in the home of a professor. The evening was also reflective of Osler's own philosophy of "Open Arms" between medical students and their faculty.

In January, Dr. H.E. Lehmann, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at McGill University, gave us an informative lecture entitled "The History of Psychiatry". The lecture dealt with not only the history of the field and the impact of the antipsychotic group of medications, but also the horizons of psychiatry.

February brought the Osler Society's largest effort of the year — Medicine in Developing Areas Week. With the sponsorship of McGill International and the Dean of Medicine the Society presented a week-long series of films, lectures and a panel discussion on Third World health issues. The keynote speaker of the week was Dr. C.W.L. Jeanes, Chief, Health and Population Sector, Canadian International Development Agency (C.I.D.A.) who gave his address on "Health and Population in Developing Areas." Other speakers who graciously donated their time and expertise included Dr. W.F. Hitschfeld, Director of McGill International; Dr. J. Harrington, Head, Population Division, C.I.D.A.; Dr. B. Negnesha, Montreal General Hospital Ethiopian Fellow; Dr. K. Flegel, Royal Victoria Hospital; Dr. Y. Bergevin, Coordonateur à l'accès aux soins en régions périphériques, Gouvernement du Québec, and Dr. J.D. MacLean, Professor of Tropical Medicine, McGill. The week was highly informative and was designed to help answer many students' questions about Third World health needs. Practical offshoots of the week included the production of a brochure containing addresses to contact for those wishing to work in the Third World and the creation of the Osler Fund, intended to help support a rural African community health clinic.

The highlight of the year, however, was the Annual Osler Lectureship and Banquet. Our Osler Lecturer this year was Dr. June Goodfield. Trained in the History and Philosophy of Science, Dr. Goodfield has held many positions in Great Britain and the United States, most recently at the Rockefeller University and Cornell Medical School in New York City. She is the author of many books and is especially oriented to bringing medical and scientific issues to the general public. Her latest endeavour, "From the Face of the Earth", is a film which will be shown on Public Television in the United States this fall. The body of the Osler Lecture, entitled "A Gauntlet in Our Faces — Aspects of Contemporary Medicine and Third World Health Problems" was taken from her experiences in producing this film. Her message was one of careful optimism and long-term solutions — that there is no "quick fix".

The sixty-second Osler Banquet was one filled with traditions. The passing of the loving cup and cigar box, and the toasts to Osler brought us together for another year of fellowship. The evening ended on a high note (literally) with the singing of "Our Regius Prof".

We hope next year to continue in our current spirit. The Osler Society has a rich history of student-faculty association in pursuit of Oslerian ideals. We are honoured to be one of the facets of the history of the Faculty of Medicine at McGill.

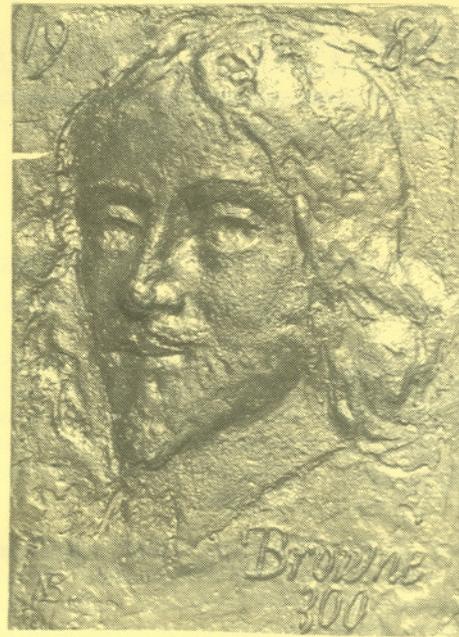
Joel A. Wirth, MDCM III
 Anthony Garami MDCM III
 Co-Chairmen, Osler Society, 1984-85

SIR WILLIAM OSLER, SIR THOMAS BROWNE AND NORFOLK, ENGLAND

Among the counties of England, Norfolk had a special place in the heart of Sir William Osler for in the 17th century its capital of Norwich was the home of his lifelong hero Sir Thomas Browne. For this reason he paid six visits to Norfolk during his lifetime, of which five are recorded by Cushing in *The Life of Sir William Osler*, mostly with necessary brevity. Cushing's accounts therefore left unanswered many questions that are of interest to Oslerians and that have been answered in a recent study which has also revealed some hitherto unrecorded Oslerian-Brunonian associations. The study was the subject of two lectures given to the Osler Club of London in 1982 and to *Osler Revisited*, a conference organized by Nicholas Dewey at Merton College, Oxford in 1984 that was followed by a tour of *Osler's Norfolk*.

Copies of the manuscript on which these lectures were based have been deposited in the Osler Library, McGill University, the Library of the Osler Club of London at the Royal College of Physicians of London, and in the Sir Thomas Browne Library, Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. A limited number of copies is also available to individual recipients of the *Osler Library Newsletter*, subject to the payment of postage, by writing to the author at the address given below.

Anthony Batty Shaw
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Bronze medallion of Sir Thomas Browne modelled by Nigel Boonham to commemorate *Browne 300*, the festival held in Norwich to mark the tercentenary of Browne's death, (see *Osler Library Newsletter*, no. 38). The complete edition comprised 25 medallions and this is the medallion's first published reproduction.

THE 13 NORHAM GARDENS (OPEN ARMS) APPEAL

Readers of the *Newsletter* will no doubt remember the interesting article entitled "The Open Arms Revisited and Renewed", written by Dr. William C. Gibson and published in Issue No. 42 of February 1983. In that article, Dr. Gibson described the way in which Sir William Osler's former home in Oxford had been taken over by the university and eventually by Oxford's newest college, Green College. Since that article was written, there have been significant further developments. The refurbished apartment which will be made available in the building to future Regius Professors of Medicine in Oxford is at present occupied by a Senior Visiting Research Fellow of Green College, Dr. Philippe Shubik, and his wife. He, in collaboration with the Warden of Green College, Sir John Walton, and Dr. Nicholas Dewey, a long-standing Osler admirer and antiquarian bookseller, are proposing in future to produce a half-yearly *13 Norham Gardens Newsletter* describing developments and new initiatives which are at present under consideration. Readers of the *British Medical Journal* may have seen the article in the Christmas 1984 issue which described the way in which Sir William's Oxford D.M. gown had eventually returned to Norham Gardens where it is now housed in an attractive display cabinet along with other Osleriana.

Dr. Dewey organized a week-long conference entitled "Osler Revisited" in Oxford in September 1984 (see *Osler Library Newsletter*, No. 45, February 1984) and this was attended by many members of the American Osler Society and others interested in Osler and in medical history and bibliography. Following upon that visit, Dr. George Harrell donated a set of etchings by Revere Osler to Green College and these have now been framed and are to be suitably displayed in 13 Norham Gardens.

It is hoped that it will prove possible to send the first issue of the *13 Norham Gardens Newsletter* to readers of the *Osler Library Newsletter* in the near future. In the meantime, anyone wishing to have further information should write to Sir John Walton, Warden, Green College, at the Radcliffe Observatory, Oxford OX2 6HG, England.

John Walton

OSLER DAY — 1985

As explained in the February 1985 *Newsletter*, two Osler Days have been planned for this year. The first was on April 24th. The second is scheduled for November 20th. The person chosen as Osler Lecturer in November had accepted our invitation but has now had to withdraw for personal reasons. As a consequence, plans for a second Osler Day in November are uncertain.

A WELCOME BEQUEST

Earlier this year, the Osler Library received a bequest of funds from the Estate of Dr. Kathleen Belton, late of Oxnard, California, who died in 1980. Originally a native of Saskatchewan, she obtained her B.A. from the University of Saskatchewan and then spent two years in the College of Medicine there. She transferred to McGill University in 1938 to complete her medical course here, receiving the McGill M.D., C.M. in 1941. It has been suggested that income from her bequest be devoted, at least in part, to purchases of historical works in Dr. Belton's speciality of anaesthesiology. This suggestion is particularly welcome in view of the richness of our earlier holdings in anaesthesiology, resulting from Osler's enthusiasm for works in this field.

DESNOYERS COLLECTION ARRIVES AT OSLER LIBRARY

Mr. Sarto Desnoyers, the former mayor of Dorval, Quebec, has recently donated some 100 items from his collection of rare books to the Osler Library. A number of these are medical classics, ranging from Nicolaus Falcutius' *Sermones medicales IV*, printed in Venice in 1491, to Hans Selye's *Encyclopedia of Endocrinology* (1943). However, the main emphasis of the collection is on drugs and *materia medica*, and this reflects Mr. Desnoyer's own training in pharmacy. Drug addiction is highlighted in books like Benjamin Ball's *La morphinomanie* (1888), P.-J. Bergeron de Vasselange's *De l'opium et de ses effets* (1815), Alonzo Calkin's *Opium and the Opium-Appetite* (1871), and Jean Cocteau's beautifully illustrated *Opium: journal d'une désintoxication* (1930). Works by Faraday, Linnaeus and Darwin underscore the close connection between *materia medica* and the sciences of botany and chemistry, while the writings of Edward Klein, Koch and Pasteur indicate the enormous importance of bacteriology in the development of modern pharmacology. Mr. Desnoyers' welcome gift was the subject of a special exhibition at the Library last winter, and is now housed in the H. Rocke Robertson Room.

Faith Wallis

SAWS, SCALPELS AND SUTURES IN THE OSLER LIBRARY

When participants in the meeting of the Central Surgical Association, held at McGill this spring, came to visit the Osler Library, they were greeted at the doorway by a most pertinent exhibition of Library treasures. The display was entitled *The Arsenal of Surgery: Saws, Scalpels and Sutures in the Osler Library*, and featured illustrations of surgical instruments in rare medical works as well as examples of nineteenth and early twentieth century equipment from our artifacts collection. The title *Arsenal of Surgery* is inspired by the *Armamentarium Chirurgicum* of the German military surgeon Johannes Scultetus (1595-1645), an encyclopaedia of ingenious surgical gadgetry. Scultetus' "arsenal" metaphor is ambiguous, applicable both to his book and to the array of tools which it illustrates: it is thus a fitting rubric to an exhibition where book and artifact play equally prominent roles.

The theme of "form and function" underlies the choice of books for the display, for they show the stability of the classic design of surgical equipment, as well as the rise and fall of complex and heavily decorated equipment in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. A case devoted to forceps juxtaposes modern vulsella and uterine forceps with illustrations such as those in the Lyon 1585 edition of Guy de Chauliac's *Chirurgia magna* to demonstrate an essential conservatism of form. By contrast, woodcuts of the inventions of Renaissance practitioners, such as Fabricius of Aquapendente's lithotomy forceps or Ambroise Paré's elevator, embody a new spirit of innovation. On the pages of Scultetus or of Lorenz Heister, this spirit of innovation mutates into a passion for highly specialized, elaborate and even fanciful instruments, a trend denounced by writers like Percival Pott (1714-1788), who ruled that "in all chirurgic operations, the instrument made use of cannot be too simple, nor too keen . . ." The chaste copper engravings in the surgical works of Pott or of Benjamin Bell are strikingly different from the illustrations in Renaissance treatises, with their theatrical settings and incongruous ornament; they herald the new functionalism of nineteenth century illustration, where the instrument is almost always shown in use. Nonetheless, the Renaissance woodcuts are both splendid and touching, for their formality bespeaks the new-found dignity and prestige of the surgeon's craft.

The Arsenal of Surgery gave the Osler Library an opportunity to display a little-known side of its collections: surgical artifacts. A number of ingeniously compact nineteenth century fitted instrument cases are shown, including one belonging to William Wagner, who graduated from McGill in medicine in 1844. Specialized kits, such as a chest of trephining instruments owned by Charles Ludlow Ogden (McGill, M.D., C.M. 1894), and a set of steel amputation equipment manufactured in Budapest in 1855, are also on view. Ivory handles and the tortoise-shell fittings are relics of a pre-Listerian age before sterilization banished these elegant materials; the impact of this innovation can be seen in a collection of sutures with their metal sterilizing pouch.

The instruments described here are only a few of those displayed in *The Arsenal of Surgery*, and these in turn are but a fraction of the surgical artifacts in the Osler Library. The Library hopes that a detailed catalogue of these can be prepared in the future. In the meantime, readers of the *Newsletter* who study or collect old surgical instruments are invited to view our "arsenal" whenever they visit the Library. Their experience is sure to add to our growing store of information.

Faith Wallis

FRIENDS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY

The appeal to the Friends for the 1984-85 academic year concluded at the end of May and the Library is grateful to have received about \$11,500 contributed by 290 Friends. 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, Brazil, Chile, England, Hong Kong, Japan, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland, and West Germany. The Library acknowledges with thanks the support of all its Friends. The following have been added to the list since the publication of the February *Newsletter*.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Anne G. Abel † Associated Medical Services, Inc. * H.D. Attwood * Samuel C. Ballon <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Crawford F. Barnett, Jr. * Ronald Barr * William B. Bean <li style="padding-left: 20px;">William K. Beatty † Bell Canada Ltd. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Abel E. Berland <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Andrew C. Bott <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Bracken Library <li style="padding-left: 20px;">British Library <li style="padding-left: 20px;">S.R. Bruesch <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Howard B. Burchell <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Antonio Cantero <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Richard M. Caplan <li style="padding-left: 20px;">T.W. Challis * Elizabeth Clark † Dykes Cordell <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Stephane Corriveau * Richard A. Currie <li style="padding-left: 20px;">L. Dabich <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Charles S. Davidson <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Claude E. Dolman <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Frederick E. Dugdale <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Clara Dunleavy * Charlotte Ferencz <li style="padding-left: 20px;">John P. Finley <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Bryne W. Forister * Robert Fortuine * Claire and Stuart Fox † W. Bruce Fye † Richard R. Gaplin <li style="padding-left: 20px;">George Washington University <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Pierre Gloor * Richard L. Golden <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Willard E. Goodwin <li style="padding-left: 20px;">R. Guest-Gornall | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * B.F. Graham † Milton Greenberg * Eve Hampson * G.T. Harrell <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Theodore J. Haywood * H. Alexander Heggveit <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Jack W. Hickman † John R. Hogle † R. Palmer Howard * K. Garth Huston † J. William Ibbott * Mark Ivey, Jr. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">D. Geraint James <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Jeremy Norman & Co. Inc. * Richard J. Kahn * R.J. Kimmerly * Donald Lawrence * Sidney S. Lee † Robert L. Leslie <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Los Angeles County Medical <li style="padding-left: 40px;">Association: The Library <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Frederick Lowy <li style="padding-left: 20px;">E. Lozinski † Edward L. Margetts <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Raul Marino, Jr. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Mayo Clinic Library † John P. McGovern <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Lawrence C. McHenry, Jr. † Catriona MacLean <li style="padding-left: 20px;">H. Edward MacMahon <li style="padding-left: 20px;">William K. MacMillan <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Wayne McShane <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Medizinhistorisches Institut der <li style="padding-left: 40px;">Universitat Bern † R.E. Mitchell * Robert Moes <li style="padding-left: 20px;">S. Morgenstern † J. Fraser Muirhead <li style="padding-left: 20px;">National Museums of Canada | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">John A. Newsom <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Dental School Library <li style="padding-left: 40px;">Northwestern University <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Dr. & Mrs. Peter D. Olch † Ursula C. Paterson * John W. Patrick * Alan S. Peck <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Edmund E. Pellegrino <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Pennsylvania Hospital <li style="padding-left: 40px;">Medical Library † Robert Z. Perkins * Irwin J. Pincus <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Hugh A. Raphael <li style="padding-left: 20px;">M.A. Revere * F.B. Rogers <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Morris H. Saffron * Ralph Schlaeger * Roy Selby <li style="padding-left: 20px;">A. Batty Shaw * E. Kenneth Smith † Ralph F. Sortor, Jr. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Southern Illinois University <li style="padding-left: 40px;">School of Medicine <li style="padding-left: 20px;">William G. Stein † Peter J. Stephens <li style="padding-left: 20px;">J.A.F. Stevenson (in memoriam) † L. Ramsay Straub <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Suffolk Academy of Medicine <li style="padding-left: 20px;">G.T. Tanselle <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Harry Taube * Thomas Jefferson University <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Warren W. Tucker <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Barbara R. Tunis <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Stuart Wachter <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Lester Wallman * Elizabeth Borst White <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Frederick Wiglesworth † Donald R. Wilson <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Leonhard S. Wolfe |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> † Patron * Supporting Friend |

The appeal for the 1985-86 academic year will be made in the October *Newsletter*.

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; Elizabeth Ricci, Editorial Assistant.

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