

OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

No. 90-1999

"VESTURE IN HARMONY WITH THE SUBSTANCE WITHIN"

Friends of the Osler Library and Newsletters readers will recall that in 1991 Dr. Faith Wallis inaugurated a scheme to restore some of the deteriorating volumes in the collection, if not to their original condition, then at least to a "vesture in harmony with the substance within" (Sir William's own words). Her plan was brilliantly simple: she produced a list of battered titles, with a book-conservator's evaluation of the condition of each one and an estimate of costs involved, and invited book-lovers to adopt a book of particular interest to themselves and to pay for its restoration. Preliminary results of this campaign were described by Dr. Wallis in issue no. 69 of the Newsletter (February 1992). In September of the following year when I became History of Medicine Librarian, the campaign hit a snag: the conservator who had done all the work up to then had developed allergies to the materials used and was forced to give it up. After some delay, and much consultation with other rare book librarians, we were fortunate to secure the services first of Louise Genest, a Montreal-based book conservator and binder whose work has lately attracted favourable interest in France, and subsequently also of Terry Rutherford, based in British Columbia and a regular visitor to Montreal. We are now able to update Dr. Wallis' 1992 article.

The fine work done for the Library by Madame Genest particularly well exemplified in the 1546 *Epistola* of Vesalius (B.O. 584), the original cover of which is preserved inside the volume's custom-built new box while the volume itself now has a new vellum binding. The restoration of this valuable book was made possible by the former Dean of Medicine Dr. Richard Cruess, whose generosity extended not only to other books in the collection but also (along with Mrs. Eve Osler Hampson) to the restoration of the Seymour Thomas drawings described by Jonathan Browns in issue no. 89 of the Newsletter. Madame Genest has also worked on a magnificent sixteenth century herbal adopted by Dr. Roger Ghys, the *Stirpium historie... of R. Dodoens*, 1583, (B.O. 2475), and on two of the Library's precious incunabula, the beautiful *Lumen animae* of Matthias Farinator, 1477, (B.O. 7433), which had been adopted by Dr. Elton Kerr (ill. 1), and Rolevinck's *Fasciculus temporum*, 1487, (B.O. 7481), adopted by the EJLB Foundation. The Foundation also financed the restoration by Madame Genest of Nathaniel Hodges' *Loimologia*, 1720, (B.O. 2978), as well as the 1648 *Philocophus* of J. Bulwer (B.O. 2177), and the enormous "elephant folio", *Anatomy Of humane bodies...* by William Cowper, 1698. These are part of a group of notable seventeenth-century items which also includes Kenelm Digby's *Discourse concerning the vegetation of plants...*, 1661, (B.O. 2462), adopted by Dr. Norman J. Goldberg, and, from the "Litteraria" section of the collection,



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One of the many attractive aspects of June Schachter's application for the directorship of the Osler Library back in 1993 was her interest and expertise in the area of book conservation and restoration. When she took over the Library, she immediately set about to develop its rather embryonic and *ad hoc* conservation efforts into a comprehensive program. Her success in locating first-class artisans, and in raising the funds to rehabilitate the Library's most important books, was "outstanding. As Editor of the Newsletter, I hounded her for years to produce a report on her work, but the press of business, as well as June's modesty about her achievements, always held her back. June Schachter retired in December 1998. She and her husband, classicist Albert Schachter, have moved to Oxford, and now she has found both the leisure and, we might speculate, the psychological distance required to speak about one of her finest accomplishments as History of Medicine Librarian. The result is this lead article. We wish June many long and happy years in her Oxford home, and extend our heartfelt gratitude for all that she did for the Osler Library, its readers, its friends — and its books.

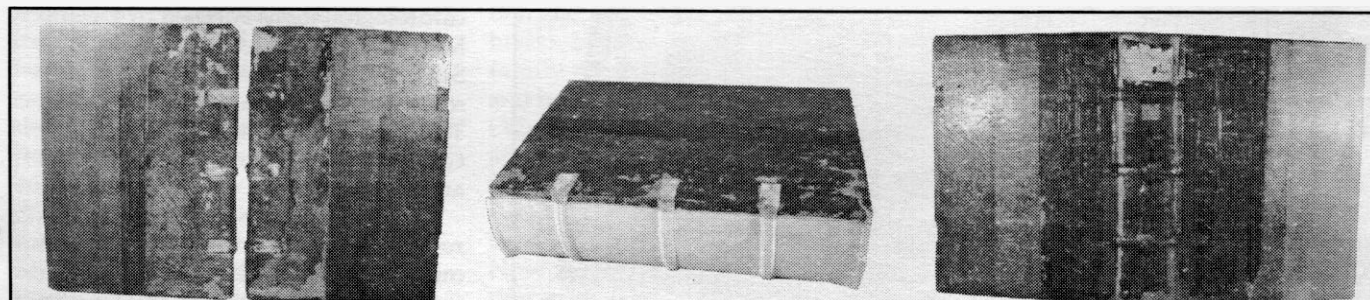


Illustration 1. Mme. Louise Genest restored Farinator's *Lumen animae* (1477) to its original 15th century board and leather cover. The battered state of the detached cover is shown on the left; the centre photograph shows the rebuilding of the binding, using historic techniques; and the picture on the right depicts the restored volume.

“consolidation”, the 1543 first edition of the *De Fabrica...of Vesalius* before it was loaned to the National Gallery of Canada for a recent travelling exhibition entitled *The Ingenious Machine of Nature*. More will be said later about exhibition materials and about the *De Fabrica...*

A rather different range of books, that is, books not originally owned by Sir William but added to the collection after the Library's foundation, has already been restored by our other principle conservator Terry Rutherford of Port Moody, British Columbia, whose work is now beginning to be better known on this side of the continent. Ms. Rutherford keeps very much up to date with new techniques and has recently spent considerable periods of time retraining in Switzerland, notably with Andrea Giovannini in Bellinzona (whose workshop I visited myself in 1993). Our reason for usually giving her non-Oslerian items to work on has been that it seems unnecessarily risky to send Osler's own books as far afield as to British Columbia. In general, Louise Genest is asked to work on these. Much of the work Terry has done for the Library has been financed by the income from the AMS endowment mentioned above -A. Du Laurens' *Discursus de visus mobilitate et conservandi modo, 1618* (ill. 2); Robert Fludd's *Mosaical philosophy, 1659*; Nicholas Culpeper's *Semeiotica uranica, 4th ed., London, 1671*; Jean François Xavier Pugnet's *Memorie sulle febbri maligne..., Milan, 1804*; Allan Burns' *Observations on the surgical anatomy of the head and neck, Edinburgh, 1811*; and the 5th ed. of Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio medici, Boston, 1872*. This last item, in fact, owned by Osler himself, having been given to him by Casey Wood, who himself had it from George Iles. An earlier owner still was Dr. George Fenwick, according to the bookplate. The *Religio medici* and the *Memorie sulle febbri maligne... w e r e* both recently displayed in the Casey Wood exhibition described in the June 1998 issue of the *Newsletter*, and *Memorie sulle febbri maligne...* was also used in the Napoleon exhibition referred to in the October 1998 issue. Income from a conservation endowment which does not specify particular books for treatment enables the library staff to decide to protect exhibition materials in this way. Another recent exhibition mounted to celebrate the 175th anniversary of McGill's Health

Sciences Library placed on display two early library catalogues which are kept in the Osler Library's archives (MS. 544-38/65/A1/ and /2). In this instance the Health Sciences Library financed the restoration of these two relics before they went on display, making them easier to open.

Terry Rutherford has also restored Daniel Le Clerc's *Histoire de la médecine, 1702* (one of several adoptions of the EJLB Foundation); Jacques M. Delpech's *De l'orthomorphie, 1828*, (another adoption by Dr. R. Cruess); T. Bartholin's *Anatome..., 1686*, (adopted by Mrs. Margaret Sifton); Erasmus, *De rectaladini..., 1528*, (adopted by Mr. Eric de Bellaigue); Thomas Willis' *Pathologiae cerebri..., 1668*, (adopted by the Honorary Osler Librarian, Dr. William Feindel, who has donated so many Willis items to the Library); C. Barbeyrac's *Nouvelles dissertations..., Amsterdam, 1741*, (another restoration financed by Dr. Muirhead's endowment), and two further adoptions by Dr. Menard M. Gertler and Mrs. Anna Paull Gertler, Giambattista Morgagni's *De sedibus, et causis morborum..., Louvain, 1766-67* (4 volumes in 2), and Antonio Scarpa's *Engravings of the cardiac nerves..., translated from Latin Tabulae neurologicae by Robert Knox, Edinburgh, 1836*. The Morgagni set, described by Osler as one of the great books in medical literature, was adopted by Dr. Gertler in memory of his parents Clara and Frank Gertler, and *Engravings...* of Scarpa (a splendidly handcoloured item) by Mrs. Gertler, as in the case of the Senac set mentioned earlier, in memory of her parents.

As was noted in the inserted leaf in the last issue (no. 89) of the *Newsletter*, the latest very encouraging initiative in the quest to restore the collection comes, in this Sesquicentennial year, from the Osler family itself, in the person of Mrs. Eve Osler Hampson. Thanks to Mrs. Hampson's imagination and energy, a new list of battered books is now circulating amongst family members and other Friends, and books on this new list (all of them Osler's own books) are already being adopted. One such adoption is especially gratifying. This is the Vesalius *De Fabrica* mentioned earlier as having been loaned for a travelling exhibition. Now requiring some serious restoration work, it has been adopted for that purpose by a" Osler family member. In some cases donors are simply giving

money to the fund without specifying a book, so that a particularly expensive item might have, eventually, more than one name on the bookplate. Either option is more than welcome. Any of our readers who may be interested in supporting this enterprise is invited to communicate with the Osler Library.

The preservation of the collection involves more, of course, than the labour-intensive and expensive restoration of individual items. The Osler Library's collections are much used, and that is as it should be, for it is a working library. Both the rare books room and the circulating collection are monitored on a regular basis, as time permits, for signs of damage. Rare books with broken spines are tied with cotton tape and sometimes put in an acid-free cardboard box as a" interim measure, in the hope that funds will eventually be found for restoration work. Not all books are susceptible to repair, especially the highly acidic nineteenth century items which in some cases are so brittle that the best one can do is to note them for possible replacement, if a copy can be found which is in better condition and can be afforded. Readers consulting rare books, manuscripts or archives are requested to wear the cotton gloves provided for their use, and to use pencils, not pens, for note-taking. A pillow is provided for the support of large folio volumes to protect their spine during consultation (an economical solution borrowed from a" Edinburgh library). Photocopying or photography is done or arranged by the staff, when and if the condition of the material permits (a decision which is taken by the staff).

A word of encouragement on the preservation front came from the Coordinator of the Oxford Colleges Conservation Consortium when she paid the Library a visit in September 1993. Although she noted, of course, the presence of many individual battered books, and the problems posed by the lack of climate control, she thought that, overall, the Robertson Room, where most of the rare books are housed, appeared to be in reasonably good shape.

New technologies such as digitization offer a means to preserve at least the text matter, and the Osler Library is already collaborating with the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections on a pilot project to digitize part of the tuberculosis collection. This

will help to ensure the preservation of the text of many highly acidic nineteenth century titles. Long-range plans for the protection of the Osler Library's collection of archival papers include online indexing which will facilitate identification of needed materials and save wear and tear on the precious originals. Such initiatives are costly, for they require additional manpower, but they represent another, increasingly important facet of the Library's preservation efforts. Staff vigilance, new technologies, and continued support from the Library's Friends will work together to ensure the maintenance of the Osler Library's valuable collections as a resource for present and future historians. For many readers, especially those who are able to visit the Library, there is no substitute for the privilege of consulting and handling the original materials.

June Schachter

TUBERCULOSIS:

THE ENDURING ENEMY

The History of Tuberculosis Full-Text Online Database Project

As physicians struggle to combat the unexpected resurgence of tuberculosis, a historical perspective on the disease and its impact on society is increasingly valuable. Having access to the full texts of important historical works on the disease is one way to do so. The Osler Library and McGill's Digital Collection Program under the direction of David McKnight are in the process of creating a full-text database based on the Osler Library's rich holdings of works related to the subject of tuberculosis. The more than 1800 titles in the Osler Library tuberculosis collection include works from the 17th century to the present. The works, written in English, Latin, French, Italian, and German, among other languages, represent the complex medical and social history of the disease.

The Tuberculosis Database will be an invaluable research tool for scholars from a number of different disciplines including social history, history of medicine, and public health. The goal of the project is to make the full texts available in a searchable online database and accessible to the multi-disciplinary research community located around the world via the World Wide Web.

With generous funding from the Sequella Foundation, an American private foundation dedicated to supporting projects related to the control of the global tuberculosis epidemic, the Digital Collection Program and the Osler Library have joined forces to create a pilot project based on the Osler Library's significant holdings of primary works on the subject of tuberculosis. The value of the Sequella Foundation gift is \$75,000 (US). In time, other sources of funding will be required to continue the work of the project.

At the present time, work has begun to identify the works related to the subject of tuberculosis in the Osler collection and select texts which will be scanned for the pilot project. Work will begin shortly, scanning, converting and tagging the texts which will form the nucleus of what is envisioned as one of the most important history of medicine full-text databases available to researchers. Indeed, beyond access to the texts themselves, *The Enduring Enemy* website (imago.library.mcgill.ca/tuberculosis/) will serve as a multifaceted research site stimulating the study of tuberculosis in relationship to non-medical disciplines, including public health, social history, architecture, literature and art.

Completion date of the pilot phase is expected to be December 2000, at which time the tuberculosis full-text database will be made available via the World Wide Web.

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Osler Library Research Fellowship 1999

This year's winner of the Osler Library Fellowship is Martin Pâquet, Professeur adjoint of History at the University of Moncton. He will be working on the role of Dr. Antoine-Hector Desloges in public health and eugenics in French Canada for the years 1918-1941. Beginning in 1918, Dr. Desloges served on the Quebec Superior Council for Health, as well as director of the anti-venereal disease division and Medical Supervisor of the Hôpitaux d'aliénés and the Provincial reform schools and schools of industry. A follower of Alexis Carrel, Dr. Desloges played an active role in discussions on mental health, immigration, sexually transmitted diseases and the control of immigration with respect to mental disease. The books, journals and archives available at the Osler Library will provide valuable source material on a man whose work has yet to be assessed.

Dr. Pâquet is our 18th Osler Library Research Fellow. To signal this important anniversary, we append a list of all the Fellowship winners since 1985.

(1985) Miss Mimi Cazort
To study the interconnection between artists' and anatomists' understanding and portrayal of the human body during the 15th through the 19th century.

(1985) Prof. J.D. Raynor
To study the sources of medical metaphors and analogies used in 17th century political writing.

(1986) Dr. Roger N. Buckley
To study the medical history of the British Garrison in the West Indies during the 18th and early 19th centuries.

(1986) Dr. William P. Stoneman
To record and analyze the features specific to the Osler Library copies of incunabula.

(1987) Mr. Cary Alberstone -
Student Fellowship
To study the relationship of humanism to Renaissance medicine and medical education.

(1987) Mr. Giuseppe Del Priore -
Student Fellowship
To study the history of contraception
and abortion in 19th century America.
(1987) Dr. Albert Z. Iskandar
To survey the Osler Library's Arabic
manuscripts with a view to a potential
catalogue.

(1988) Dr. J.B. Lyons
To study Irish-Canadian physician
and dialect poet William Henry
Drummond.

(1988) Dr. Patrice Delavenne
To gather information for a biblio-
graphical project of a catalogue of
psychiatric literature from 1799 to the
period of the First World War.

(1989) Mr. Donald Brady -
Student Fellowship
To study the evolution of the
Hippocratic corpus of writings.

(1989) Dr. Mark Lubinsky
On how medical thinking handled
monogenetic disorders in the 19th
century before the rediscovery of
Mendel's principles in 1900.

(1990) Miss Wendy Wobeser -
Student Fellowship
To study Pierre-Charles Alexandre
Louis' contribution to the use of statis-
tical methodology in clinical medicine.

(1990) Miss Ellen Brickwedde
To study the impact of yellow fever
epidemics on the development of
medical thought, theory and preven-
tive policies in Colonial Senegal, c.
1830-1940.

(1991) Mr. Mark D. Fox -
Student Fellowship
To study the evolution of medicine as
a moral art and the emergence of the
professional identity of the physician
during the Greek and Roman eras.

(1991) Dr. Walter J. Vanast
To study the underlying medical theo-
ries on which governments and
missionaries based their response to
disease, particularly tuberculosis,
among Canada's northern people.

(1992) Mr. David Fisman -
Student Fellowship
To study the state of diagnosis,
medical practice, and medical politics
in Stuart England.

(1992) Dr. André Paradis
To study the beginnings of the organi-
zation of psychiatric practice in
Quebec from 1890 to 1920 and in
particular the reception of psychiatric
ideas from Europe and America into
the Quebec milieu.

(1993) Ms. Kae Bendixen -
Student Fellowship
To study the historic representations
of the childbearing pelvis, both textual
and graphic.

(1993) Dr. Italo Ronca
To study our copy of *De anima* (B.O.
480), an anonymous 13th century
Latin translation of a lost 11th century
Arabic treatise on alchemy.

(1994) Mr. Terrence Joyce -
Student Fellowship
To study Osler's interest in
Shakespeare.

(1994) Prof. Catherine Kudlick
To consult our collection of Paris
medical theses for a forthcoming book
on cholera in Paris, 1830-1850.

(1995) Mr. Peter Kang -
Student Fellowship
To study the social context of medical
case presentation in Canada and the
U.S.

(1995) Dr. Jennifer Connor
To conduct research on the role of
McGill physicians and librarians in the
development of the Medical Library
Association.

(1996) Dr. Larry Stewart
To study the writings of Dr. Thomas
Beddoes and in particular on Beddoes'
interest in using newly discovered
gases such as oxygen and nitrous
oxide in therapies for tuberculosis.

(1997) Prof. James **Alsop**
To study the literature on health care
available in a period (1660-1763) of
rapid overseas expansion, when large
numbers of people were exposed to a
variety of health risks.

(1998) Prof. **Andrée Courtemanche**
To study medieval medicine in
Provence, specifically on a 14th
century doctor at Manosque who gave
medical evidence in a case of
suspected poisoning.

Last summer, I temporarily put aside my studies (like most doctoral students, I am constantly looking for excuses to avoid **working** on my thesis) to undertake a Young Canada Works International Internship, funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage, at the Osler Library. Much of my work has been devoted to preparations, under the direction of Osler Archivist Pamela Miller, for a " exhibit to coincide with the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of William Osler's birth.

Appropriately enough, we have chosen "Osler's McGill" as our theme, and the exhibit bears witness to the roughly fifteen years in the life of the Medical Faculty which elapsed between Osler's arrival in Montreal as a medical student in the early 1870s and his departure for Philadelphia in the mid 1880s. Osler's experience-as a McGill student, McGill graduate and McGill faculty member - serves as a point of departure, but the exhibit also seeks to capture the experiences of the hundreds of other individuals who participated in the life of the medical faculty during that time.

Of course, teaching must be a major theme of any exhibition on medical education, and most of what is presented relates to the multiple ways in which knowledge about medicine was transferred from teacher to student (although those of us who more often than not play the latter role like to think that occasionally the flow of knowledge goes in the other direction). Sometimes morbid, sometimes striking, sometimes mundane, the variety of teaching and research methods is reflected in a series of objects and images. They include pathological specimens (several of which were prepared by Osler himself); images and documents related to the practice and legal quagmires surrounding the dissection of human specimens; huge drawings, which William Dawson used in teaching botany to medical students; and students' notebooks and class tickets attesting to the endurance of that most common yet often most boring form of instruction-the lecture.

But the exhibit also explores the people and places which made the transfer of medical knowledge possible. For example, along with images of library, lecture, and museum as well as the hospitals where students under-

took their clinical training, the plans that William Dawson presented to university authorities for the new medical building, opened in 1872, are also on display. Graphs, maps, photos and descriptions seek to give some idea of who the McGill students were, where they came from and where they were going. There are also numerous objects which belonged to McGill faculty members, who were among the most prominent physicians - and prominent citizens - of Montreal. These include instruments used by faculty members, instruments often passed down from one physician to another, reinforcing personal as well as institutional bonds. Such bonds also had much to do with which students attended McGill, as place names and family names have a tendency to repeat in the registration rolls.

Furthermore, the exhibit explores the multiple ways in which learning about medicine extended beyond the established curriculum, and how the lives of those involved with medical education at McGill extended well beyond the lecture hall. There were, for example, various clubs and societies where medical students and professors discussed issues related to their profession, shared knowledge, and presented research. Besides such things as examinations and theses, there were more obscure hurdles-bureaucratic, regulatory, financial- which stood in the way of those who desired first of all to become a medical student and then, to become a medical graduate. For example, McGill had the highest fees of any medical school in Canada, while the faculty was often negotiating with licencing bodies to ensure its graduates' degrees would guarantee them the right to practice. In any case, whether it was economics, bureaucracy or some other factor, most students stumbled at some point along the way, or at very least departed from the four-year course of study prescribed by the annual *Faculty Announcement*. Osler was no exception, as he began his medical education in Toronto, spending only the final two years of his studies at McGill. Speaking of hurdles, also displayed at the exhibit are images and awards bearing witness to active participation in sporting events, from football to footraces. And although some correspondence suggests that McGill medical students, who were mostly drawn from major Protestant denominations, were not

always diligent in their attendance, many local churches reserved pews for them for Sunday services. Medical students of the period also had a reputation for rowdiness, a reputation which several incidents at McGill in the period 1870-1885 suggest may have been well-earned. These spiritual and recreational pursuits coexisted with more pragmatic concerns, such as the question of accommodation for students arriving from out of town. To aid them in their choice, the university provided lists of approved boarding houses.

Many of the themes mentioned above prove more or less timeless, affecting medical education as much today as it did 125 years ago. But life at the McGill Medical Faculty between 1870 and 1885 also bore witness to much change. The exhibit attempts to give some sense of the changes which occurred during the period. To begin with, notwithstanding some fluctuations early in the period, enrolment in the McGill Medical Faculty was consistently rising. Furthermore, these greater numbers of students were not being educated by exactly the same people or in exactly the same way. There was a trend away from traditional teaching methods and towards more clinical instruction and practical training. Of course, these changes required new methods and new equipment, such as the microscopes purchased by Osler for the use of his students, examples of which are on display. In terms of faculty, one particularly dramatic change was the departure of William Wright from the ranks of those actively teaching at the faculty. Students complained that his lectures in *Materia Medica* were boring and irrelevant, and most of Wright's fellow faculty members seem to have agreed. So, after a couple of petitions and a boycott of classes, calls for change won out over tradition. If the period saw the end of lengthy and illustrious careers like that of George W. Campbell, who served as dean of the Faculty from 1860 until his death in 1882, it also witnessed the beginning of even more illustrious careers, like those of Osler and Francis J. Shepherd, both of whom completed their studies and began their careers as professors at McGill during the period covered by the exhibition.

This is but a glimpse of the many themes and issues raised by the exhibit, which is, being shown at McGill's Redpath Museum from May to

December, 1999. It is my sincere hope that the exhibit proves a positive contribution to the sesquicentennial celebrations.

stew watt

Curators take the prize!

Dr. Samuel Freedman, a former Dean of Medicine and ~~ex~~officio Chair of the Board of Curators of the Osler Library, and Dr. Theodore Sourkes, presently chair of the Board's Standing Committee, have both been awarded the Prix du Québec - the province's highest honour for achievement in the arts and sciences. Dr. Freedman won the Prix Armand-Frappier for his role in developing medical research programs at McGill and its teaching hospitals, in particular the Jewish General Hospital. The prize also honours Dr. Freedman's own distinguished research career in asthma, allergies, and cancer. Dr. Sourkes' prize was named in honour of yet another Curator - Wilder Penfield. The Prix Wilder Penfield recognizes Dr. Sourkes' outstanding contributions to the field of biochemistry in its application to neurological disorders, especially Parkinson's Disease. His work has been honoured around the world, most recently by a special symposium in Israel. Congratulations to both! It is not for us to speculate whether a Curatorship of the Osler Library ranks above or below the Prix du Québec in terms of prestige, but we are delighted and proud to be associated with two such extraordinary scientists.

Brochure of Osler's Montreal

Tour of Osler's Montreal 1870-1885 is enclosed with your newsletter. It guides us through what remains, and what has disappeared, of the Montreal of William Osler. The original idea was Wayne LeBel's with the choice of photographs and text by our Young Canada Works International Intern, Caroline Cholette. The project was sponsored by the Osler Sesquicentennial Committee and Heritage Canada. Bon Voyage.

Greenwood

This summer, the garden of the Greenwood Centre is open to the public on Sunday afternoons. Situated at 254 Main Road, Hudson, the centre is featuring a display about Osler's great friend and colleague Dr. Francis J. Shepherd, who purchased Greenwood, adjoining his own property, for his daughter Cecil and son-in-law architect Percy Nobbs. Oslerians will recall that Osler frequently visited Shepherd at Como (now Hudson). Tours of the house can be arranged. For more information, please call 450-458-5396.

Friends of the Osler Library

The list of Friends who have **responded to the** appeal for funds for the 1998-99 academic year will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Osler Library E-Mail Address

Please take note the Osler Library now has a new e-mail address: oslerlib@library.mcgill.ca

Correction

In issue no. 88, June 1998, on p. 6, Mr. Cavanagh's name was spelled incorrectly. It should be "G.S.T." Cavanagh not "T.S.E." We apologize to Mr. Cavanagh for this error.

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