

OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL, CANADA

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A PILGRIMAGE



uring the summer of 1979, I visited the First World War sites in France and Flanders with my eleven-year old son, Andrew. Part of the pilgrimage was to see the cemetery where Revere Osler was buried. The short description in "The Life of Sir William Osler" by Harvey

Cushing was my guide. We drove along Pilkem Ridge, which is a very slight elevation overlooking Ypres between Langemark and St. Julien, but had no way of identifying the place where A Battery of the 59th Brigade had been located among the many farms in the area.

When wounded Lieutenant Revere Osler was carried to Essex Farm on the side of the Canal north of Ypres. A cemetery is situated here, along with the remnants of the bomb-proof shelters used by the Advance Dressing Station in 1917. Some of these can still be entered, though overgrown with weeds and nettles. From there we proceeded north to Canada Farm Cemetery past Elverdinge – the site of the advanced post of the 131st Field Ambulance – about 10 km. distance. This Field Ambulance may not have been receiving casualties at this time, or the severity of his wounds prompted evacuation to No. 47 Casualty Clearing Station in the Dozinghem area. The map indicated the site of the Dozinghem Cemetery where Lieutenant Osler was carried and treated on August 29-30th, but to find it was another matter. We followed the map and drove up and down every road in the area from Poperinge to Proven to Krombeke to Westvleteran to Woesten, but by the time the light was fading, there was no sign of the elusive cemetery.

The next afternoon, another sortie was mounted. There on the road between Westvleteran and Poperinge, was the Commonwealth War Graves sign – "Dozinghem Cemetery" leading to a dirt road through the woods and hop vines to the Cemetery - Plot 4, Row F, Grave 21 -

Second Lieutenant E.R. Osler,
Royal Field Artillery,
30 August 1917, Age 21.

We thought of Harvey Cushing's description of the burial – a most poignant description of an everyday occurrence at that time which epitomizes the same loss suffered by so many in that war. The following is the account which Cushing wrote in his diary, August 30th, 1917. "We saw him buried in the early morning. A soggy Flanders field beside a little oak grove to the rear of the Dosinghem group – an overcast, windy, autumnal day – the long rows of simple wooden crosses – the new ditches half full of water being dug by Chinese coolies wearing tin helmets – the boy wrapped in an army blanket and covered by a weather-torn Union Jack, carried on their shoulders by

Last January a personal letter came from Dr. W. David Parsons describing the search for Revere Osler's grave which he and his son, Andrew, had made the previous summer. With Dr. Parsons' permission, the letter, slightly modified, forms the leading article in this issue of the *Newsletter*. As a McGill medical undergraduate, David Parsons was a member of the Osler Society and he remembers many happy hours with Dr. W.W. Francis. His interest in medical history has continued and he has become involved in the history of medicine in Newfoundland. He practises general internal medicine in St. John's and is a Clinical Lecturer in Medicine and the History of Medicine at Memorial University.

Last April the Osler Library received a most welcome addition to its holdings relating to Thomas Archibald Malloch (1887-1953), a McGill medical graduate of 1913, one of the editors of the *Bibliotheca Osleriana*, a long-time member of the Osler's Board of Curators, and for many years Librarian of The New York Academy of Medicine. This was a scrap-book assembled by Dr. Malloch during World War One. It came as a gift from Dr. Malloch's widow and her son, Professor Archibald E. Malloch of McGill's Department of English. Like his father before him, Professor Malloch is a Curator of the Osler Library. At the request of the Editorial Committee, he has very kindly contributed an account of his father's scrap-book to this issue of the *Newsletter*.

four slipping stretcher-bearers. A strange scene – the great-great-grandson of Paul Revere under a British flag, and awaiting him a group of some six or eight American Army medical officers – saddened with thoughts of his father. Happily it was fairly dry at this end of the trench, and some green branches were thrown in for him to lie on. The Padre recited the usual service – a bugler gave the 'Last Post' – and we went about our duties. Plot 4, row F."*

The cemetery, like all the others in France and Belgium, is beautifully cared for. Quiet, bright – a place of repose – situated as it is in the middle of a wood with the tall hop vines on three sides. We reverently placed a poppy in memory on Revere's grave and then we silently traced our way back, stopping at The Menin Gate at Ypres to hear The Last Post sounding at 8:00 o'clock – another moving experience.

When I first inquired about the Dozinghem Cemetery, I thought that it was named after a Flemish village, town, or landmark, as so many have the -ghem ending. The

The decorated letter on this page is taken from Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici, A Letter to a Friend, Christian Morals, Urn-Burial, and other Papers*, Ticknor and Fields, Boston, 1862. (*Bibl. Osl.* 4446). Osler described this as "the father of my Browne collection"; it bears the book-plate of his son, E.R. Osler. See *The Osler Library*, Osler Library of McGill University, Montreal, 1979, pp. 17, 20, 21, 23.

*Harvey Cushing, *From a surgeon's journal: 1915-1918*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1936, pp. 197, 198.

British soldiers' humour was responsible for the name. There are three cemeteries in this area, sites of Casualty Clearing Stations. Dosing them, Bandage them, Mending them, have been translated into: Dozinghem (s has become z), Bandaghem, Mendinghem.

I don't remember the exact number of graves in the Dozinghem Cemetery, but I think it was about seven hundred. Included in this number with Revere Osler were fourteen members of The Royal Newfoundland Reg't., who were in action at Steenbeke and Broembeke at the same time in 1917, and like him, were transported back to the CCS, but did not survive and were laid to rest there, along with comrades in arms from Britain, New Zealand, Bermuda, and Canada – a truly Commonwealth Cemetery. Brothers in arms who shall not grow old....

W. David Parsons

T.A. MALLOCH'S SCRAP-BOOK OF THE 1914-18 WAR

The Osler Library has a number of items left to it by my late father, Dr. Thomas Archibald Malloch (1887-1953). It has recently received a scrap-book he put together, illustrating his experiences in the Great War, from the time he left Canada in the autumn of 1914 until his return in 1919. It contains a number of items that are likely to be of interest to users of the Library, both students of Osler and students of the medical history of the war.

The first item in the book is a Transatlantic Cablegram form dated 30 October 1914, addressed to my father in Hamilton, Ontario, and reading, "Position base hospital France passage paid both ways red cross fees sail immediately come Oxford answer." It is signed, "Osler." My father had finished his medicine at McGill in 1913, and his internship the year following. He did sail almost immediately, arriving in England in the middle of November, and then going on to the Continent where he served during the next six months, first with the Friends' Ambulance Unit near Dunkirk, and then at a hospital under the Belgian Red Cross at LaPanne in Belgium. The first section of the scrap-book has photographs of the hospital, of his colleagues there, letters from patients he had treated there, copies of military passes, photographs of dog-drawn Belgian machine guns, and a range of other memorabilia.

In the spring of 1915 my father went to be medical officer in charge of a convalescent hospital at Aldford House in London, and among the items from that period are photographs of a visit paid to the hospital by King George V and Queen Mary.

In the early summer of 1915 he went to be in charge of a convalescent hospital for officers at Burley-on-the-Hill in Rutland County. By late 1915 the Canadian Army was reviewing its medical categories, and the sometime tubercular knee which had excluded him from the Medical Corps at the start of the war was no longer thought an impediment. A newspaper clipping shows that he was gazetted Temporary Captain in the C.A.M.C. in December 1915. In the spring of 1916 he joined the McGill unit (the no.3 Canadian General Hospital) near Boulogne, and served with it until 1919, working particularly with cases of influenza and pneumonia. There are many items in the scrap-book illustrating life in the unit – photographs of the wards and of the medical and nursing staff, and memorabilia ranging from unit Christmas cards to menus

for special mess dinners to my father's identity discs (made of the same composition material used in the Second World War, and very crudely lettered).

When he returned to Canada for demobilization in 1919, he was medical officer of the troop-ship, and one of the most interesting items in the book is a log of the voyage, showing the cases he treated each day on sick parade.

Scattered through the book are photographs of the Oslers, taken when my father was spending leaves at 13 Norham Gardens. The most striking photograph is one showing Lieutenant Edward Revere Osler in uniform, taken in the spring of 1916, about the time he was beginning his training in the Royal Field Artillery. The photograph is reproduced in this Newsletter. Revere stands holding a fishing rod, and the inscription below is in his own hand – a fact that shows my father actually made up the scrap-book during the course of the war. Two other photographs record a visit to Oxford in the early summer of 1916 of four Canadian officers, three of them later well-known Montreal doctors, Sclater Lewis, Graham Ross, and Harry Wright. The fourth was Sir William's nephew, Campbell Gwyn, who was to be killed less than a year later in the battle for Vimy Ridge. Several years ago I showed the photographs to Graham Ross. He laughed and said he remembered the occasion well, because they had all been so short of funds on leave that only the resourcefulness of Harry Wright had found the rail fare from London to Oxford.

I think that my father would be delighted to know that all the miscellaneous information contained in his war scrap-book is now available to readers in the library whose collection he helped catalogue.

A.E. Malloch

ADDENDA TO ABBOTT'S BIBLIOGRAPHY OF OSLER'S PUBLICATIONS

Dr. H. Alexander Heggteit, Pathologist to the Ottawa Civic Hospital, has drawn the attention of the Editor of the *Newsletter* to two addenda to Dr. Maude Abbott's comprehensive *Classified and Annotated Bibliography of Sir William Osler's Publications*. Neither appears in the second (1939) edition of that work (including the Osler Library's copy containing additional handwritten annotations by Dr. W.W. Francis) or in Dr. Charles Roland's article in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (38: 78-79, 1964).

The first relates to Osler's lay sermon, "Man's redemption of man." Abbott (2nd ed, 1939, p.97) gives 1913 as the date of publication of the first American edition of this book and it is so listed in booksellers' catalogues. Dr. Heggteit points out that the first American edition appeared in 1912; the publisher was the same as for the 1913 printing – Paul B. Hoeber, New York.

The second addendum is a most interesting letter to the Editor of *The Philadelphia Medical Journal* (4: 233-234, 1899) entitled "A morning in the Hunterian Museum," signed "W.O." and dated July 12 from London, England.

Editorial Committee for the *Newsletter*: E.H. Bensley, Editor; Philip Teigen, Osler Librarian.

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FRIENDS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY

In the *Osler Library Newsletter* published a year ago, I reported that the Curators of the Osler Library had resolved to found a Friends Endowment Fund, using as its first contribution the bequest of \$12,500 of Dr. Honor M. Kidd. Our goal was to match this bequest and establish a fund, the income from which would support the printing and publishing expenses of the *Osler Library Newsletter*. This income in turn would free the yearly gifts of the Friends for various special projects in the Library, such as the purchase of books which we could not otherwise obtain.

One year after the announcement of this fund, I am happy to report that our goal was met and that the Friends Endowment Fund is now established at slightly more than \$25,000. The success of this drive is due to the many individual Friends of the Osler Library who have faithfully supported it for many years. The success is also the result of large gifts from the Beta Mu chapter of the Nu Sigma Nu fraternity at McGill, the Ottawa Valley Graduate Society of McGill University, Dr. Joseph Stratford, and the estate of Dr. William Atkinson. (Donors not listed in the February or June issue of the *Osler Library Newsletter* will be listed in the February, 1981 issue.)

This year the Library also received a gift from the Gladys and Merrill Muttart Foundation of Edmonton. Their gift was for the purchase of the eighteen-volume *Subject Catalogue of the History of Medicine and Related Sciences*

of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London, and the stunning facsimile of Conrad Gesner's manuscript, *Historia Plantarum*. Since the first work is a catalogue of the secondary literature of the history of medicine, it will receive frequent use by students, physicians, and historical scholars who come to study in the Library. The second work is by a favorite author of Sir William Osler, Conrad Gesner (1516-65). Readers of the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* may remember this note in the Gesner section of the Prima (623): "Sir William Osler is reported to have remarked, when showing this section of his card catalogue to a friend and speaking of Gesner, 'I am not sure that this fellow should go into "Prima"; but I love him so much that I must put him there.'" This work of Gesner, which may well give him an additional claim for inclusion in the Prima, adds considerable depth to the Library's holdings on Renaissance medicine and science.

It has been a good year. We are proud to report this progress, and we urge you all to help us maintain it by responding to our appeal for funds. Those who wish to contribute to the Friends, thereby supporting the Osler Library's aims and activities, are asked to fill in the enclosed golden-rod coloured form and return it with their cheques to one of the addresses printed on that form.

H. Rocke Robertson, President
Friends of the Osler Library



A view of a part of the Dozinghem Cemetery where Revere Osler was buried



E.R.O. Iz. Wa. jun. There was no worm in
the picture for the fish in April 1916.