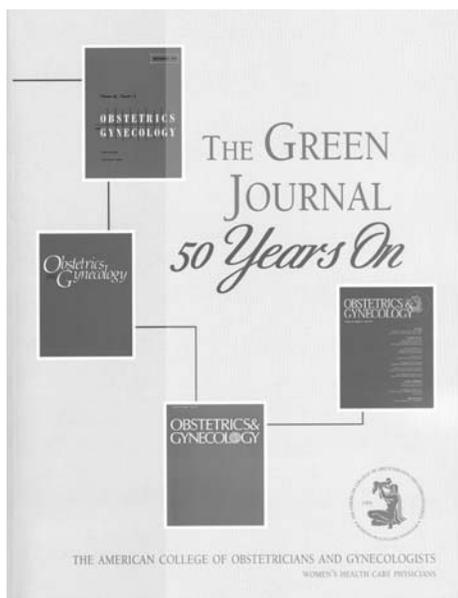


edited by Stephanie Deming



**THE GREEN JOURNAL: 50 YEARS ON.** ROY M PITKIN. SUPPLEMENT TO *OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY*, VOLUME 101, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 2003. WASHINGTON, DC: AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS; 2003. X + 213 PAGES. \$12.00 PLUS HANDLING AND SHIPPING; TELEPHONE (800) 762-2264 (ITEM AA433). ISSN 0029-7844.

**THE BEST OF AFTER OFFICE HOURS.** ROY M PITKIN AND REBECCA D RINEHART, EDITORS. WASHINGTON, DC: AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS; 2003. X + 274 PAGES. \$29.00 PLUS HANDLING AND SHIPPING; TELEPHONE (800) 762-2264 (ITEM AA439). ISBN 1-932328-00-9.

Why should *Science Editor* carry a review of the history of a journal for obstetricians and gynecologists? Members of CSE likely want to know the particulars of how *The Green Journal* (the familiar tag for *Obstetrics & Gynecology*) was founded, grew, and flourished are surely a tiny, tiny minority. The answer is simple. I venture to guess that most CSE members who work for a journal are working for one founded within the last 50 years; they may some day face the task that Editor Emeritus Pitkin—and associates who helped him—faced in writing this history. You could find it to be an excellent blueprint, a prototype, a detailed guide of how a journal can assemble its history when it decides it should.

Here is the story of the launching of *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, how its editorial aims were shaped, how its policies were defined, and why it prospered. It is the story of the journal's editors and associate editors, its editorial board, its staff, its relations with printers and publishers, and its relations to its parent society. The eight chapters making up this history close with a clear and detailed graphic illustrating the journal's main events through its first 50 years.

There is a lesson in this history for CSE members engaged in defining guidelines for publication ethics or proper peer-review methods and other kinds of guidelines that aim at helping any editor or publisher in running his or her own operation. Do they really influence anyone? As Pitkin tells us, he kept himself aware of editorial standards defined by such groups as CSE, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, and the World Association of Medical Editors. And more than just being aware of them, he applied

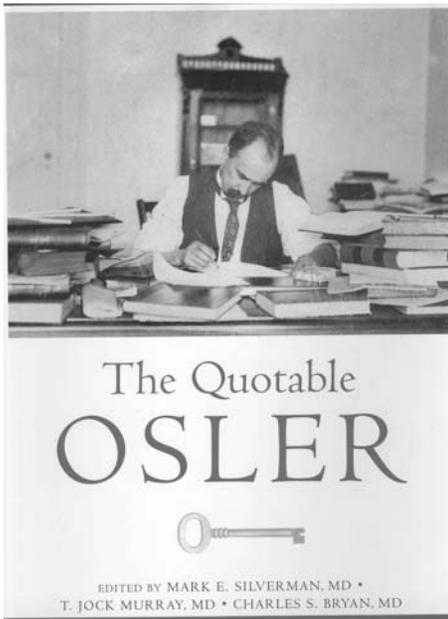
them, as he tells us, to his own journal. Standards can have influence.

The closing five chapters draw on papers that the journal published to illustrate the important trends, both scientific and technical, in its field. Each chapter covers a decade: the '50s, the '60s, and so on. Not many journals could so adequately represent how a field evolved through a half-century; here is clear testimony to *Obstetrics & Gynecology's* importance and a tribute to those who established the journal.

Beyond publishing scientific and technical reports for clinicians and investigators in its field, *Obstetrics & Gynecology* has carried some "lighter reading", essays on aspects of this field's history, on some of its historically important practitioners, and on less weighty matters, all appearing under the section title "After Office Hours". Fifty-seven of these essays have been gathered in *The Best of After Office Hours* by Pitkin and Rinehart. This anthology should not be dismissed as reading only for obstetricians and gynecologists; some of the essays could have a much wider span of readers. Their topics? Among them are obstetrics in Shakespeare, the birth of Mohammed, an imagined Hamlet's soliloquy on allergy, Ernest Hemingway and obstetrics, an analysis of the clinical trial reported in the Book of Daniel, and the "origin" of statistical terms in tea parties and pubs. There are MDs who can really write!

**Edward Huth**

EDWARD HUTH is an emeritus editor of the *American College of Physicians' Annals of Internal Medicine*, the founding editor of the *Online Journal of Current Clinical Trials*, and a past president of CSE.



**THE QUOTABLE OSLER.** MARK E SILVERMAN, T JOCK MURRAY, CHARLES S BRYAN, EDITORS. PHILADELPHIA: AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS; 2003. XXXV + 283 PAGES. HARDCOVER \$30.00. ISBN 1-930513-34-8.

The reputation of Sir William Osler (1849-1919) is so towering that on first reading a biographical account (the introductory section of this book contains a brief but very good one, by Richard L Golden), the neophyte in the history of medicine is almost surprised to find a warm-hearted and humorous person behind the charismatic teacher and hard-working physician. Perhaps it is precisely because of Osler's charisma that the number of his admirers is still so large and Osler societies continue to flourish in different countries. And the stream of books about Osler has not stopped. In 1999, a new comprehensive biography appeared, by Michael Bliss, that emulates Harvey Cushing's classic of 1925. This new volume of quotations and aphorisms by Osler is the third to appear; earlier anthologies by Camac and Bean both went through several editions.

*The Quotable Osler* could be the most complete collection so far. The book contains 812 numbered items extracted from writings and speeches. These have been ordered thematically: personal qualities, the art and practice of medicine, the medical profession, diagnosis, disease and specific illnesses, medical education, men and women, science and truth, and finally "faith, religion, melancholy and death". A very useful addition is the index.

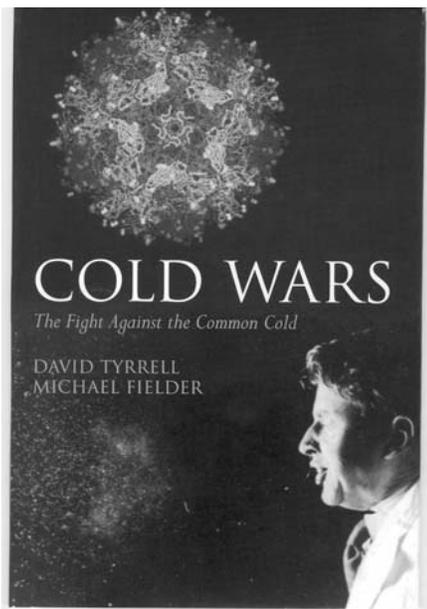
I cannot let the opportunity pass to let

Osler speak for himself. The teacher: "It is a good many years since I sat on the benches, but I am happy to say that I am still a medical student, and still feel that I have much to learn." The humanist: "Be careful when you get into practice to cultivate equally well your hearts and your heads." The common-sense physician: "Better admit a patient dead drunk than turn him away to be discharged from the jail dead sober a little later." The jester: "Superfluity of lecturing causes ischial bursitis."

There is almost nothing to criticize in this book. One minor criticism is that the illustrations, although apt, are not very well reproduced. And perhaps Osler has been idealized a trifle too much. After all, on consulting Cushing one finds that Osler could sometimes be harsh toward his colleagues: "The daily round of a busy practitioner tends to develop an egoism of a most intense kind, to which there is no antidote." To sum up, I warmly recommend this book not only to those who wish to quote Osler but also to those who do not yet know him.

**Jan van Gijn**

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**COLD WARS: THE FIGHT AGAINST THE COMMON COLD.** DAVID TYRRELL AND MICHAEL FIELDER. OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2002. XIV + 253 PAGES. HARDCOVER \$24.95. ISBN 0-19-263285-X.

*Cold Wars* is an animated report on the history and mission of Britain's Common Cold Unit (CCU). Founded in 1946 to continue work on the study of viruses and specifically on the common cold, the CCU and its gifted staff (and exceptionally pleasant volunteers) were responsible for a great deal of groundbreaking research in this field. The authors describe the methods and theories examined and the people involved in the process, and go into simple detail about the resulting discoveries.

Head of the CCU from 1957 until it closed in 1990, David Tyrrell clearly has a deep affection for the years he spent with the unit and for the people with whom he worked so closely. He was aided in the rewriting of this book, originally presented to Oxford as a "historical account", by science writer Michael Fielder. Unfortunately, both the switch from a historical account to a book for a more general audience (for "technical and non-technical readers") and the addition of a member to the writing team have disrupted what had the potential to be a lively, entertaining, and instructive book.

It's clear on reading this book that it

was written over a long period (the historical account took 10 years for Tyrrell to complete) and then quickly rewritten and edited. There are passages in the text that appear to have been dropped in at the suggestion of an editor (such as the section "The Parts They Played", which includes memories of seven members of the staff) and which disrupt the flow of the surrounding text, giving it the feel of being disjointed. Although the topic is absorbing and the people and situations described are deeply interesting, the problems with the presentation of the material are distracting. Tyrrell has a lively and personable manner, and as I read, I kept regretting that he wasn't given a freer hand (and more time) in his writing.

*Cold Wars* is a simple and ultimately enjoyable book relating the story of a fascinating time in human-disease research and in the scientific world in general, blemished only by the disjointed presentation of the material.

A L Wenzel

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## The Journal's Role in Scientific Misconduct A CSE Retreat

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