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## CHOMSKY VISIT HIGHLIGHTS YEAR

### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Some of the most important work done by the BRRC over the past year remains as yet unknown to the public. This is the work, described by James Chartrand in the following article in this issue, to create the database and input programs for the forthcoming electronic edition of Russell's complete correspondence. A large part of this work is now complete, and functioning prototypes of the database and the input applications are being tested and the first digitized images captured. For copyright reasons only letters by Russell will be included in our edition, but editors working on the edition will need to see both sides of the correspondence and they will now be able to do so electronically. Indeed, it will be possible to do a great deal of the editing electronically and thus from anywhere in the world, an important advantage in a such a large project which will involve many editors working over several decades. Although an archive of digitized images is not the

same thing as a critical edition of Russell's letters, it is nonetheless sufficiently valuable to be worth making it available to scholars in advance of the editorial work which a critical edition requires. In this way we hope, before long, to have something to show for our efforts.

The more traditional editorial work of the Russell Centre has also continued apace. Volume 28 of the *Collected Papers, Man's Peril, 1954-55*, edited by Andrew G. Bone, was published earlier this year, and Volume 29, *Détente or Destruction, 1955-57*, also edited by Bone, is now very nearly ready to be sent to the publisher. The editorial team at the Russell Centre—Andrew Bone, Michael Stevenson, Sheila Turcon, and Arlene Duncan—are working on several other volumes, most actively on 16, 17, 18 and 30. David Blitz, a philosopher at Central Connecticut State University and editor of Volume 30, has been a frequent visitor to the Russell Centre over the past two years. This summer he joins us for a full year to work on his volume while on research leave from his university. Another frequent visitor over the past year has been

Bill Bruneau, an historian of education from the University of British Columbia, who is editing Russell's educational writings. One of the most delightful and invigorating things about being Director of the Russell Centre is the opportunity it offers to work for extended periods alongside such colleagues.

The most exciting thing, certainly the most hectic, to happen at the Russell Centre during the last year was the visit of Noam Chomsky, the renowned linguist and political dissident. The Russell Centre combined with McMaster's Labour Studies Programme and the Centre for Peace Studies to bring Chomsky to campus for a crowded week in November 2002. During the week Chomsky gave the Bertrand Russell Peace Lecture on "The Emerging Framework of World Order"; a university lecture "Is There Intelligent Life on Earth? The Role of the Intellectual Culture and Institutions"; three seminars, including one on "Language and the Rest of the World" for the Russell Centre; and innumerable interviews. He also found time to visit the Russell Archives and to talk about his and Russell's involvement in the peace movement of the 1960s. Interest in his talks was unparalleled, he spoke to capacity crowds in the largest venues we could find and tickets were snapped up within minutes of being made available. At one point the Russell Centre was besieged by unhappy students who had missed tickets after hours of waiting. A television documentary, *Noam Chomsky: Rebel without a Pause*, was made for Vision TV during the course of the visit. Many times during the week Chomsky spoke warmly of Russell's political activism. Like Russell, Chomsky combines intellectual pre-eminence in his own field with untiring political advocacy. For this reason, I'm especially pleased to report that he has agreed to serve on the Advisory Editorial Board for the *Collected Papers*; given the huge demands made on his time, the BRRC is very fortunate to have his support.

Looking ahead, two new projects are likely to take more of our time in the next months. One is the three-part television documentary, *The Three Passions of Bertrand Russell*, which is being made by Redcanoe Productions in close collaboration with the BRRC and which was announced in the first issue of this newsletter. The film is about to go into production and should be complete about the middle of next year. The other project is a major philosophy conference to be held at McMaster in May 2005 to celebrate the centenary of the publication of Russell's landmark paper, "On Denoting", arguably the most important philosophy paper published in the

twentieth century. The issues raised in the paper are still hotly contended, as the name of the conference indicates: "Russell vs. Meinong: 100 Years after 'On Denoting'". The conference is being organized with the help of Dale Jacquette, the editor of the *American Philosophical Quarterly* and himself one of the contenders. We hope that May 2005 will see most of the current contenders at the BRRC for a major philosophical event.

The BRRC does an enormous amount of work thanks to a small but extraordinarily competent and hard-working staff. Unfortunately, secure funding for the Centre is slight and we depend heavily upon donations to keep going. I would urge everyone to consider making a donation to the Centre to enable its work to proceed. There is much exciting work to be done, but the task is far greater than the resources available to do it.

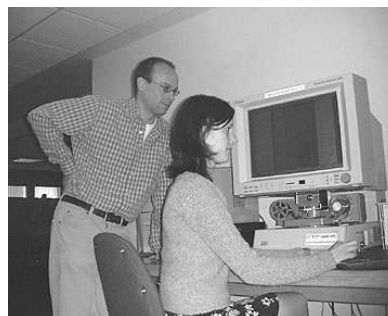
**Nicholas Griffin**

## DIGITIZING THE LETTERS

The *Collected Letters* project covers tens of thousands of letters, and over time will involve a great many people, some of whom may work from distant locations. One of the biggest challenges, therefore, is organizing and managing both the work and the people involved. A further hurdle is that a data format called TEI, a flavour of the more general format called XML, is the preferred format for electronic editions of humanities texts. TEI promotes longevity and increases the potential for interchange, but unfortunately is not familiar to project members.

The *Letters* project addresses these challenges with customized software that automates workflow, enables remote work, and simplifies the use of TEI.

Although work on the *Collected Letters* project began in March



James Chartrand and student Sarah Hipworth at microfilm scanner

2002, electronic cataloguing of the letters has been ongoing since 1988, under the supervision of Kenneth Blackwell. At last count the catalogue, called BRACERS, had 75,591 entries. The first priority of the project was to extract the information in the catalogue and create preliminary TEI records for the *Collected Letters*. This conversion is complete, giving the *Collected Letters* project a huge head start. The next step is to link digital images of letters, both those to and those from Russell, which are scanned by students from microfilm copies of the letters, to their corresponding entries in the converted database. New acquisitions that have not been microfilmed are scanned with a flatbed scanner. To date, close to 10,000 documents have been scanned from microfilm, although Russell's correspondence is so huge that we are still months from completion. Once the images are linked to the database they can be searched by sender, recipient, date, place, and class, and even a full-text search can be performed on existing notes. Images of letters that match search criteria can be immediately viewed on screen. After scanning and linking, the most difficult and time-consuming part of the project follows: transcription, data cleanup, marking of references to people, places, and bibliographic items, and finally annotation, with proofreading throughout the process. The end result will be a fully annotated critical edition of Russell's letters, with full-text search capability.

The most laborious part of the project until now has been the programming required to create an easy-to-use tool for transcription, reference-marking, proofreading, and annotation. The program also manages workflow, ensuring that letters (i.e. their images and their digital text) aren't lost, are processed at all stages, and are processed in a timely manner. The programming is nearing completion, and a preliminary version of the tool is now being used to produce a sample collection of transcribed and fully annotated letters. Despite the initial investment in time and effort, we are confident that the preparatory work undertaken to ensure smooth workflow and to create an easily used editing tool that can be utilized remotely will pay dividends many times over, given the enormous size of the project.

More information about the technical aspects of the project are available at <http://russell.mcmaster.ca/brletters.htm>.

**James Chartrand**

## DOING ARCHIVAL HISTORY WITH BRACERS

The Bertrand Russell Archives Catalogue Entry and Retrieval System, or BRACERS, has the aim of a separate entry for every letter that Russell sent or received or is otherwise in the Russell Archives. BRACERS periodically feeds its data to the new *Collected Letters* system through a complex mainframe downloading process. At the same time the data is captured and offered on a temporary basis through the web at <http://130.113.207.52:591/bracers/>.

The cataloguing data can be intriguing. For example, it's capable of revealing information about the history of the archives. A recently added virtual field is the "Russell Letter" number. Through this number we can get a snapshot of the state of the archives when Russell revised his autobiography in the late 1940s, and we can uncover his plans for selections of his letters for possible publication. It may come as a surprise that he edited and annotated several individual correspondences. The new *Collected Letters* software may be able to offer these "works" as sub-selections of his vast correspondence.

For the extensive revision of the 1931 draft of his autobiography, titled "My First Fifty Years", Russell successfully requested the return of some of his letters, and he went through his archives and had many letters typed. He corrected the transcriptions and often annotated them or provided separate introductions for individual correspondences, perhaps in the same way he had approached editing the volumes of *The Amberley Papers*. Then, through a secretarial hand, he indicated which letters were to go in a selection of his general correspondence ("Let"), of his philosophical and mathematical correspondence ("Shop"), of his political correspondence ("Pol"), appendices of the *Autobiography* ("Auto"), or unworthy of any of these destinations ("Rej").<sup>\*</sup> The transcriptions are separate Russellian documents and are catalogued accordingly.

Both the original letter and the transcription bear an "RL" number, our designation for the number that Russell's assistants in the late 1940s wrote on much of his personal corres-

<sup>\*</sup> For more on Russell's plans see his letter of 21 Sept. 1949 to Rupert Crawshaw-Williams and the memo "Autobiography" (both in RA3 Rec. Acq. 501).

pondence. By listing the entries by this number, we can detect the way in which many of the documents were ordered when Russell worked on them. Thus, with some reservations, scholars can see which of the letters in the Russell Archives were available to him at that time. The RL number has already been used to provide the year when that is missing from the date. Take the case of letter 710.049144. The letter is undated, and the content does not provide definite clues. But the RL number is 1388. So far, every other letter in BRACERS with an RL number in the range 1356–1392 has a 1922 date. With this assistance, we now see that the content of the letter fits a 1922 context. We can surmise that Russell had probably archived much of his correspondence by year. And if we find gaps in the RL numbering, they will be clues to any letters that were lost between the late '40s and 1966–68, when the archives were catalogued for sale and, upon arrival, microfilmed at McMaster.

The designations “Let”, “Shop”, “Pol” and “Auto” in the catalogue entries will allow us to reconstruct the volumes Russell had in mind when he worked on his archives. His selections cannot be viewed as decisive, however. They involved mostly incoming letters. Since that time, large numbers of his own letters have come to light, with the originals or copies acquired. If Russell had had these in front of him, he would surely have selected many of them, too. It's good to have these traces of Russell in unaccustomed roles as archival researcher and editorial partner.

**Kenneth Blackwell**

## APPROACHES TO EDITING



Michael Stevenson

[Michael D. Stevenson joined the BRRC in February 2002. He is currently assisting the editors of Volumes 16, 17, and 30 of the *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, and he is beginning to co-edit Volume 21 which covers the years 1935 to 1938. Dr. Stevenson worked previously in Ottawa editing two volumes of foreign policy documents in the

*Documents on Canadian External Relations (DCER)* series, and here he discusses the primary differences between the two editing projects.]

The fundamental difference between editing diplomatic documents and Bertrand Russell's papers concerns the amount of material to be included in a given volume. The vast amount of paper generated by modern government departments makes it impossible to publish all available documentation. Indeed, an editor of foreign policy documents can only hope to print a minuscule percentage of diplomatic correspondence on any particular topic, and he must select essential documents that shed light on the decision-making process at the highest administrative level. In the Canadian case, only topics that engaged the attention of Cabinet or senior government bureaucrats are included in the *DCER*. In contrast, the explicit goal of the *Collected Papers* is to publish an all-inclusive record of Russell's essays and other shorter writings. To achieve this end, a volume editor and the Russell Centre staff go to great lengths to gather and publish the entire corpus of Russell's article-length works written during a specific time frame. In short, an editor of diplomatic documents is judged largely on what he is able to exclude from the public domain, while an editor of a *Collected Papers* volume is evaluated primarily on how comprehensive and complete a record of Russell's works he can compile.

The second primary difference between editing diplomatic correspondence and Russell's writings concerns the supporting editorial apparatus. An edition of diplomatic documents contains an absolute minimum of annotation, no textual notes, no appendixes, no chronology, and sometimes no introduction; the documents are allowed essentially to speak for themselves with no additional editorial interventions. By contrast, the bulk of a *Collected Papers* editor's time can be devoted to such matters as collating texts, composing textual notes, annotations, headnotes and introductory material, and compiling indexes. This comprehensive editorial apparatus is a critical component of the *Collected Papers* project, and it allows the reader of a volume of Russell's papers to gain a detailed biographical portrait of Russell and a glimpse of the historical milieu in which he wrote and lived.

**Michael D. Stevenson**

## GLIMPSSES OF DAILY LIFE

Neither Russell nor Edith was a diarist,<sup>†</sup> but both kept pocket diaries (PDs) which are largely extant. Edith Russell's pocket diaries came to the Russell Archives along with the rest of her papers in 1986. Entries were made to BRACERS; some of the descriptive information was downloaded and appears in my "The Edith Russell Papers", *Russell*, 12 (1992): 61–78. Russell's PDs were mainly used to keep track of appointments, although he also used them to make lists of addresses and phone numbers, and occasionally record what he was reading. They were of great assistance in compiling his *Bibliography* because they record sources of his income as an author. Edith's PDs have remained a "hidden treasure" since their arrival at McMaster University, mostly unused by researchers apart from BRRC staff, probably because Russell's own PDs are available.

I have transcribed into electronic form much of the text in Edith's PDs from 1958 and 1959 to provide a framework for the construction of a chronology of Russell's life for Volume 30 of the *Collected Papers*. The text is searchable and provides an alternative to using the originals (mostly written in pencil), thus helping to preserve them. Russell's PDs were also transcribed; his entries at times clarify or add new material compared to what Edith had recorded. Her PDs provide leads to new interviews and television broadcasts, most of which have been identified.

Edith's extant PDs begin in 1950, the year she moved to England. From then until 1977 (with the exception of 1966 and 1967) there is at least one PD per year, sometimes as many as three. The reason for keeping more than one PD per year is not clear. They are small diaries—most measure 7 x 10.5 cm. There are several minis, a mere 5.5 x 8 cm. Only in 1970 did she use a larger PD, measuring 9 x 13.5 cm.<sup>‡</sup> The content is similar but not identical between PDs kept in the same year.

In 1953, the year after their marriage,<sup>§</sup> and for some years

<sup>†</sup> Russell did keep a few diaries earlier in his life: "Greek Exercises" and "Locked Diary" in *Collected Papers*, Vol. 1; "Journal, 1902–05" in Vol. 12; "Journal of Trip to Russia" in Vol. 15.

<sup>‡</sup> The day of Russell's death is marked with an X; regular diary entries do not resume until mid-March.

<sup>§</sup> Edith recorded her marriage with a star in two of her diaries, and one

thereafter, Russell gave Edith a BBC diary, inscribed by him. The BBC diaries provide useful printed information on the BBC as does the Labour Party diary which she used in 1961. The BBC diaries were supplemented by ones printed by Fortnum and Mason and other companies. In addition to recording both her and Russell's appointments (almost always in more detail than he did), Edith noted Russell's health, the weather, walks the couple took, domestic staff vacations, social gatherings, the comings and goings of the grandchildren, anniversaries, birthdays, addresses, the search for a new London flat, domestic crises (i.e. the lack of water in the spring of 1958), and other details of daily life. The entry for 8 December 1958 reads: "B entertains men fixing cupboards & milkman".

One curiosity of the PDs is her use of the phrases "time wasted" and "no time wasted". Time was usually recorded as having been wasted on Sundays, but not every Sunday. Usually the notation regarding time is the only entry under Sunday. However, the entry for Sunday, 16 February 1958 reads: "very fine and warm; waste time; 2.30 Joseph Alsop". Even more curious is the entry the next Sunday, "sleep till noon; no time wasted". I could find no entries where time was wasted during the week, but there are a few entries which note that time was not wasted—Tuesday, 22 July and Monday, 24 November 1958, for example.

Scholars may regret that the Russells were not diarists. However, much remains to be mined from what they did record in their miniature diaries.

Sheila Turcon

## WHAT'S NEW




**Website** Visit our website which is updated regularly. It contains information on editors, staff, board members, and visitors as well as the progress of volumes: <http://russell.mcmaster.ca>.





**Publications** Vol. 28, *Man's Peril, 1954–55*, edited by Andrew G. Bone, was published by Routledge in Britain on 13 February 2003 followed by American publication


with a silver tinfoil bell inserted at that page; Russell did not record anything in his PD.


in April. A feature article on this volume appeared in the previous issue of this newsletter. Copies of the book can be purchased through the BRRC. Vol. 29, *Détente or Destruction, 1955–57*, also edited by Bone, is nearing completion.

 **Director** Nicholas Griffin spoke about the Centre's editing work at editorial conferences in Toronto in November 2002 and Chicago in November 2003. *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell*, edited by him, was published in August.


 **Russell** Under Kenneth Blackwell's editorship, the Russell Centre published two issues of *Russell: the Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies* during the year. For tables of contents and how to subscribe, visit the website at <http://russell.mcmaster.ca/journal>.

 **Metcalf fellow** Michele Haampamki from the University of British Columbia (BA, 1998; MA, 2003) has been appointed as Metcalf fellow. More information on Michele and what she will be doing this year is available at our website.


 **Editors** David Blitz of Central Connecticut State University is at the BRRC for his sabbatical leave, 2003–04. He is editing Vol. 30, *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 1957–1959*. He will also continue to work on the Russell Audio-Visual Project which he coordinates. To date more than a dozen recordings have been transferred to CD-ROM, including Russell's 1958 debate on disarmament with Edward Teller. Bill Bruneau, who is editing Russell's writings on education, taught a three-session course on "Bertrand Russell: Humanist and Sceptic" for UBC Continuing Studies in October. Bill reports that registration was swift once the course was announced. Also this autumn he gave a seminar on Russell at the Sunshine Coast Eldercollege, Sechelt, B.C. Both Bill and Stephen Heathorn, his co-editor for Vol. 18, participated in the North American Conference on British Studies held in Portland, Oregon, in late October. Bill presented a paper in the session "Roads to Freedom? Bertrand and Dora Russell in the 1920s and 1930s" with commentary by Stephen.


 **Beacon Hill School** The discovery of newspaper items on Russell's speeches in two North American tours (1927 and 1929) has thrown new light on the school and the educational partnership of Dora and Bertrand Russell. Russell's ideas about pupil character and intellect are fairly well known, but less so his beliefs about physical health, social conduct in school, practical pedagogy, and curriculum. Stephen Brooke and Deborah Gorham, whose work was


discussed in the previous number of this newsletter, continue their research and also participated in the session on the Russells in Portland.

 **Research trips** Andrew Bone visited the BBC Written Archives Centre in Reading, U.K. in June 2003. The centre holds a significant amount of Russell material.

Further details on this research trip as well as photographs can be found at the BRRC website.

 **Documentary** Work continues on the TV documentary, *The Three Passions of Bertrand Russell*. The documentary is a collaboration between the BRRC and Redcanoe Production. Siobhan Flanagan has been hired to direct the film. It is expected that production will begin shortly with a completion date of mid-2004.

 **Visitors** Over the past year the following visited the Russell Archives: Mei Ping, Embassy of People's Republic of China in Ottawa; Sir Martin Rees, Professor of Astronomy and Cosmology at the University of Cambridge and next Master of Trinity College; Bernard Linsky, Professor of Philosophy, University of Alberta. At McMaster Linsky spoke to the Logic Colloquium on "Classes of Classes and Classes of Functions in *Principia Mathematica*".

 **Students** Linda Gourgy, Grisanth Sivapalan, Thulashika Sivanesan, Lindsay Holdsworth, Sarah Halsted, Sarah Hipworth, Salomeh Mohajer, Cecily Farrell, and Helen Tewolde worked for the BRRC over the summer. The latter five have continued into the academic year 2003–04 and have been joined by Doreen Wu, Nick Goupinets, and Angel Manohararaj.

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Russell portrait by Carola Spaeth Hauschka.

