



The BERTRAND RUSSELL RESEARCH CENTRE NEWSLETTER

McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont., Canada

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CENTENARY OF “ON DENOTING” NEARS

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

When the Russell Research Centre was created four years ago, I thought that probably this year or next I would be making a major grant application to start work on a scholarly edition of Russell's letters. We have obviously moved far faster than I envisaged. As described elsewhere in this issue, we already have more than two years work on the *Collected Letters* behind us and some of the most difficult and problematic work already done. Nonetheless, I was not wrong in thinking that in 2004 I would be making a major grant application for support of the *Collected Letters*, for the letters project, after two years of spectacular progress, is (momentarily) becalmed because we have run out of money. Quite a large amount of money is needed over the next three years to get the editing programme fully operational, and then to mount on the web an edition of digitized images of Russell's letters accessible from their BRACERS entries—the initial form

of what will eventually be a critical edition of the entire correspondence. Even if the grant application is entirely successful (and we've asked for the maximum permitted), we will still need additional funds over the next three years to get the letters on the web. If you want to see Russell's letters on the web, please give generously!

In all other respects the Russell Centre has been sailing full steam ahead over the past year. Volume 29 of the *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell, Détente or Destruction, 1955–57*, edited by Andrew G. Bone, is now with the publisher, and work is proceeding on nine volumes. Over the past academic year, David Blitz, editor of Volume 30, worked at the Russell Centre during his sabbatical leave from Central Connecticut State University. Work on this volume has been most generously supported over three years by the Samuel Rogers Memorial Trust, as a result of which it is now nearing completion. Also nearing completion are Volumes 5, the last of the philosophy volumes to be edited, and 18, the first volume covering the years of Beacon Hill School.

During the past year the philosopher Bernard Linsky, from the University of Alberta, paid the Centre a brief visit. He was delighted to discover in the Archives the notes Russell made when first reading Frege, and also some of the preparatory materials for the second edition of *Principia Mathematica*. A couple of significant research projects are underway as a result.

The Centre's major event for next year will be a conference celebrating the centenary of Russell's landmark paper, "On Denoting". The conference, to be held on 14–18 May 2005 under the title "Russell vs. Meinong: 100 Years after 'On Denoting'", is being organized with the help of Dale Jacquette, of Pennsylvania State University and editor of *American Philosophical Quarterly*. Plans are moving ahead quickly with several major philosophers having already committed to present papers. (See also the call for papers elsewhere in this issue.) The Bertrand Russell Society will hold its annual meeting at the Russell Centre at the same time as the "On Denoting" conference.

A more long-term venture, still in the early stages of planning, is a collaboration with a number of philosophers at French universities on the history and philosophy of logic and mathematics 1880–1914, with especial reference to work in France, England, and Italy. Over the past several years there has been an extraordinary upsurge of interest in Russell among French philosophers. The collaboration, we hope, will enable some of these philosophers to visit the Russell Archives, and allow some philosophers from Canada to visit French centres of research. I should have further details to report in the next newsletter.

This is a good occasion to pay tribute to the people who work so hard at the Russell Centre: Andy Bone, Michael Stevenson, Sheila Turcon, Arlene Duncan, Ken Blackwell. It is hard to imagine a more able, dedicated, and hardworking group of colleagues.

Nicholas Griffin

DÉTENTE OR DESTRUCTION

Forthcoming from Routledge early in 2005, *Détente or Destruction, 1955–57*, will be the sixteenth published volume of Russell's *Collected Papers* (it is numbered 29

in the series) and the second to chart the deepening of his commitment to the anti-nuclear struggle. Vol. 28, *Man's Peril, 1954–55*, also edited by me, was published in the spring of 2003.

Russell had embarked in his mid-80s on one last political mission that would preoccupy him for the remainder of his life. Although this quest did not overshadow his intellectual achievements or even the other dimensions of his highly varied public career, it is the image of Russell as anti-nuclear prophet and sage that became fixed in the mind's eye of much of the generation that came of age in the 1950s and 1960s. This concluding phase of Russell's life also generated an enormous amount of the material that resides in the Russell Archives at McMaster, including most of the second archives—material that was acquired in 1972 (the original purchase having been made in 1968).

One revealing gauge of Russell's rising public profile in the mid-1950s is provided by the growing number of goodwill messages that were solicited from him by a wide range of organizations and causes world wide. As his public activities became coordinated by the Peace Foundation that bore his name from 1963 onwards, the output of published communications and private correspondence became larger still.



BBC radio discussion, "The Limits of Tolerance"

Thus, while Volumes 28 and 29 comprise some 1,600 pages between them, these latest instalments of the McMaster edition of his *Collected Papers* take the political narrative only up to the end of the beginning of Russell's final peace crusade. A further three or four

volumes will have to be devoted to the last decade of his life. This will be a taxing exercise in scholarly editing, not only because of the sheer bulk of the documentation available but also because of perplexing questions of authorial origin.

Fortunately, the latter issue did not complicate the editing of *Détente or Destruction*, although the textual editing of the

papers was by no means simple as there are multiple versions (both printed and pre-publication) of many of the assembled texts.

There would be a number of shifts of emphasis in Russell's peace campaigning between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s. In Volumes 28 and 29 of the *Collected Papers* he is concerned first and foremost with alerting Western public opinion to the magnitude of the nuclear peril now that both superpowers were armed with the hydrogen bomb. He is also determined to enlist the political support of neutral states (especially India) and the scientific community. Indeed, one of the keynote papers in *Détente or Destruction* is his message to the inaugural conference of the Pugwash movement (held in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, in July 1957), which Russell had been instrumental in launching and which became an influential, independent forum of East–West scientific cooperation and counsel—especially as regards the atmospheric test-ban treaty that was to be signed in 1963.

Russell's interest in war and peace was paramount certainly by 1955, but not to the exclusion of all else. The texts assembled in *Détente and Destruction* touch on a variety of other themes as well. Included among them are the transcripts of a number of radio discussions, such as that with Hugh Trevor-Roper and Lord Samuel that Russell is seen recording in the adjacent photograph. (Their topic of debate was “The Limits of Tolerance”.) Elsewhere, Russell can be glimpsed in a reminiscing mood in a series of broadcast talks for BBC radio. In other writings he revived some older controversies: about nationalism and empire, religious belief, and civil liberties in the United States, as well as responding to the two most dramatic developments in that most dramatic of years in world politics, 1956: the armed interventions of Britain and France in Suez and of the Soviet Union in Hungary.

Andrew G. Bone

SEEING AND HEARING RUSSELL

The Bertrand Russell Audio-Visual Project is a joint endeavour between the Russell Centre and Russell Archives at McMaster University, and the Philosophy Department and Media Centre at Central Connecticut State University to preserve the many hours of audio recordings, TV

appearances, and films by Bertrand Russell, most of which date from the early 1950s to the mid-1960s. The project aims at documenting these sound recordings and moving images—much of which is now available only in obsolete or near obsolete formats—and converting them to digital format, for purposes of archival preservation. The newly formatted media will also play a valuable role in the determination of copy-texts for the *Collected Papers*.

The impetus for this project began when I heard a brief, ten-second sound clip from Russell's Nobel acceptance speech, available at the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Intrigued by the possibility of actually hearing Russell, I became aware that much more material was available at the Russell Archives at McMaster University, where Sheila Turcon has maintained this aspect of the collection, and also at the Russell Society Library maintained by Tom Stanley. However, almost all of this material was available in older formats such as monaural discs, audio reels, audio mini-cassettes, VHS video-tapes, and 16 mm film reels. They are being supplanted by digital formats such as QuickTime movies for CDs, and more importantly, DVD videos (the price of which has now declined to the extent that players and even recorders are included on all new personal computers).

The first phase of the project, which was a “proof of concept” period, is now complete. During this phase, two dozen audio and video documents were digitized in MP3 format for the former, and QuickTime for Windows and Macintosh for the latter. These include Russell's 1950 Nobel Prize speech “What Desires Are Politically Important?”, the “Man's Peril” radio lecture of 1954, which inaugurated his “ban the bomb” period, and the 1955 press conference launching the Russell–Einstein Manifesto against war and nuclear weapons.

Video translations include three half-hour interviews with Ralph Miliband on the topics of “Man and the Twentieth Century”, “War and Peace”, and “Wealth and Poverty”, made in 1965 when Russell was already in his 90s; three of the many fifteen-minute interviews with Woodrow Wyatt on topics ranging from “What is Philosophy” to “Fanaticism and Tolerance” (reproduced as text in *Bertrand Russell Speaks His Mind*), and two half-hour debates with Edward Teller over a ban on nuclear testing, moderated by Edward R. Murrow in 1960 for his *Small World* TV series broadcast on the CBS network in the United States. Some of this material was played at McMaster on the occasion of the opening of the Russell

Research Centre in 2000 and was well received. Much more may be available at the BBC archives, on whose airwaves Russell delivered dozens of lectures and participated in many debates, including numerous “Brains Trust” appearances. There is also material from radio and television broadcasts in Canada, Australia, Japan and Europe. The K and M sections of the *Bibliography of Bertrand Russell* list some of this material.

The second phase of the project involves collecting and digitizing the remaining material—perhaps 20 to 25 hours of material currently known, using DVD format for the video, and maintaining audio material in a format suitable for translation into the evolving DVD equivalent for spoken voice. On an interim basis, MP3 audio files will be burned to CDs. The digitization of this rich trove of material by the Audio-Visual Project is for archival preservation only. As a result, copies will be available on a limited basis at both McMaster University and CCSU for in-house consultation. We plan to show some of the videos at Russell Society annual meetings, as was the case this year, when the Russell–Teller debate and one of the Miliband interviews were presented. In a third and final phase of the project, we will research copyright holders of the original material, and see whether arrangements can be made for wider distribution of at least some of the material.

For those who would like a hint of some of the material available in recorded form, here is Russell, delivering a speech to Manchester CND for May Day, 1959, when he was interrupted by a heckler just over fourteen minutes into the talk (notes in square brackets are added to indicate surrounding sounds):

BR: “... It’s a terrible thing about governments, that they will not believe the things that are necessary to believe if you are going to take sane measures to prevent this appalling holocaust with which we are threatened. We ...” [Interruption by heckler]

Heckler: “You support atheistic communism. Bertrand Russell, you are a traitor.”

[Commotion in the hall. BR asks for the comment to be repeated by a member of the hosting committee.]

BR: “Oh yes, a traitor. Quite so.”

[Laughter, applause from the audience.]

BR [raising his voice]: “Who do you think is the greater traitor: the man who wishes to see some people left alive in this country, or the man who pursues a policy that means that they must all die?”

[Applause from the audience.]

BR: “No, if there are any traitors it’s the people who want us to go on with this suicidal policy, not the people who want it stopped.” [BR continues his speech without further interruptions.]

This, and much more, will enable the Bertrand Russell Audio-Visual Project to present Russell as he spoke, and as he was seen, defending analytic philosophy and political sanity from those who preferred obscurantism to clarity, and war and violence rather than peace and justice.

David Blitz

COLLECTED LETTERS PROGRESS

Another mammoth enterprise that the Russell Research Centre has taken on is the online scholarly edition of Russell’s complete correspondence. Everything about this edition is enormous. We are working now on a preliminary edition of around 30,000 letters written by Russell. These are letters already available in the Russell Archives, not embargoed by Russell at the time McMaster acquired his papers, and letters of which legible images can be captured from security microfilms of the Archives. The Archives contain possibly another 10,000 letters which don’t meet these conditions, and we confidently expect several thousand more letters to be discovered as we work on the project. We have a computer-generated list of 29,000 correspondents; it certainly contains many redundancies, but the task of eliminating redundancy in a list that long is daunting, to put it mildly. One of the things we’ve been working hard at is completing the Bertrand Russell Archives Catalogue Entry and Retrieval System (BRACERS), the on-line archival catalogue of letters to and from Russell. Teams of students working under the direction of Ken Blackwell have been drafting BRACERS entries at the rate of 700 a month for the past three years—and that task is still not quite complete. We expect it to be done, at around 100,000 entries, by next summer. There were times, as we worked on the project over the last three years, when we discovered that some of our lists of exceptions and non-conforming instances had more members than other major editions had letters.

The main achievement of the last three years has been the creation of the editing programme that will make the entire

edition practicable. What originally drove us to develop an editing programme was the need to automate the electronic mark-up of the text we were encoding. All electronic text has to be marked up with a series of electronic tags which allow the system to recognize the various parts and features of a text. For example, it must be possible for a machine to distinguish between the date on which a letter was written and a date mentioned in the letter. This, and much more, is achieved by the set of tags employed in the edition. A universal set of tags, which ensures that the features of a text can be recognized across different hardware and software configurations and will continue to be recognized through innumerable future changes in technology, has been developed by the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). The tag set, however, is extremely complicated, and applying the tags by hand requires highly trained operators and even then is excruciatingly slow and prone to error with complex text. It was clear that if the *Collected Letters* project was to be feasible, we had to find a more cost-effective way of applying the tags, so that the transcription of Russell's letters could be done by students with very little training.

James Chartrand provided the solution (described by him in the last issue of this newsletter) in the form of a transcription programme which, through a series of screens, will prompt transcribers to enter data in various on-screen boxes. The programme will then apply the appropriate TEI tags automatically to the data within the box. Because the tags are mechanically applied, errors and inconsistencies are eliminated. Moreover, there is no need for transcribers to learn the TEI tag-set. To apply the tags transcribers need to know only how to follow the on-screen instructions, how to type, and how to read a letter. But Chartrand went further and analyzed the entire editing process from beginning to end, automating more of it than any of us would have thought possible. The result is a fully-fledged custom-built editing programme of a type not found anywhere else.

When Russell's papers came to McMaster they were microfilmed for security purposes. Using digital microfilm readers it is possible to capture images of Russell's correspondence from the security microfilm, and the editing programme will automatically link these images to the online BRACERS entry for the appropriate letter. This method is so much quicker than scanning the original documents that it alone is likely to shorten the completion time of the project literally by years. The images thus captured are presented on-screen to

the transcriber alongside vacant text panes for the transcription. The transcription can thus be done online, without recourse to the original document except for proofreading purposes and for deciphering the occasional illegible passage. Since images of letters to Russell, as well as those by him, are captured at the same time, these can be made available online to editors of the *Collected Letters* for use in annotating the edition. (For copyright reasons, it will not be possible to include incoming letters in the edition itself.) As a result, much of the editing, like the transcription, can be done online. This will enable us to recruit editors around the world: it will not be necessary to assemble at McMaster the immense range of scholarly expertise needed to edit the correspondence of a polymath like Russell. Finally, the editing programme keeps track of the entire process for each letter, from the initial capture of the scan, through transcription and editing, to the final mounting of the fully annotated letter on the web. This makes it possible to track the progress of a letter through the entire system, something which would hardly be possible otherwise in an edition of this size. This is, I believe, by a wide margin the most advanced text-editing programme in the world.

Nonetheless, the *Collected Letters* project has its frustrations. The editing programme has been created with the help of a major infrastructure grant received jointly from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation and the Ontario Innovation Trust, a grant which has also allowed us to bring BRACERS very nearly to completion. Now, however, with the editing programme on the verge of being operational, the grant has run out and we are scrambling to find the funds needed to take the next step. The editing programme is vastly more ambitious than we anticipated when we set out, and like all programmes of this complexity needs debugging before it can be used smoothly. No doubt also we will want to refine the programme in ways which will only become clear with experience gained in using it. We also need to develop the documentation for the programme and improve the online instructions for the benefit of editors and student transcribers. While the main programming is done, there is still a need for a good deal of technical computer work. We also have to capture images of all the letters to and from Russell on microfilm. Work on this has begun and, as I write, slightly over 15,000 letters have been digitized in this way: that's a lot of letters, but there are several times that number to be done. Once the images are captured and linked to the appropriate BRACERS entry by the

editing programme, it will be a straightforward task to mount on the web a preliminary edition of Russell's correspondence in which it will be possible to see a Russell letter by clicking on the BRACERS entry for it. Functionality will be limited, but even so the preliminary edition will be an enormous boon to scholars using the letters. At that point we intend to sell subscriptions to the edition in order to fund the work on transcription and annotation which will still need to be done.

We have just submitted a major grant application to enable us to launch the preliminary edition. The *Collected Letters* project is certainly much further ahead than I expected it to be at this time when the Russell Centre was created four years ago: then, I thought we would be just beginning. Even so, it is frustrating to be marking time so close to having a really major achievement with which to validate our labours. In the meantime, we can only keep our fingers crossed.

Nicholas Griffin

CALL FOR PAPERS

On 14–18 May 2005, BRRC is hosting a major international conference: "Russell vs. Meinong: 100 Years after 'On Denoting'". Submissions are sought on any area of Russell's philosophy relevant to the theory of definite descriptions and in particular to Russell's dispute with Meinong concerning non-existent objects. Contributors are asked to submit two copies of a paper suitable for 30–45 minutes' presentation with an abstract no later than 1 January 2005 to:

Nicholas Griffin, Director, Russell Research Centre, 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON, Canada, L8S 4M2.

Graduate students are also encouraged to submit. Announcements of acceptances for the programme will be made by the end of February 2005. For further details about the conference visit <http://denoting.mcmaster.ca>.

WHAT'S NEW



Website Visit our website which is updated regularly. It contains information on editors, staff, and visitors as

well as the progress of volumes: <http://russell.mcmaster.ca>.



Publications Vol. 29, *Détente or Destruction, 1955–57*, edited by Andrew G. Bone, will be published by Routledge in Britain early in 2005. A feature article on this volume appears in this issue of the newsletter.



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>



Editors David Blitz of Central Connecticut State University has returned there following his sabbatical leave at BRRC. See his article in this issue on the Russell Audio-Visual Project which he coordinates. Bill Bruneau, who is editing Russell's writings on education, taught a four-session course on "Bohemians and Scallywags: Augustus John, Nancy Mitford, Oswald Mosley, Bertrand Russell" for UBC Continuing Studies in October and November.



Research trips Nicholas Griffin visited Sussex University, the British Library, and the Victoria and Albert Museum during a summer trip to Britain.



Documentary Work continues on the TV documentary, *The Three Passions of Bertrand Russell*. The documentary is a collaboration between BRRC and Redcanoe Production. Although the production has experienced some delays, it is now expected that it will be completed sometime in 2005.



Visitors Over the past year visitors to the Russell Archives came from Canada and also from England, the United States and Singapore, including E. Sauer, M. Martin, U. Kriegel, J. Hopkins, N. Neudoerffer, E. Morant, B. Garrett, B. Davies, S. Krishnan, L. Wee.



Students Megan Platts, Sam Hanna, and Natalie Schlee did valuable work for BRRC over the summer and are continuing into the academic year 2004–05.

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Russell portrait by Carola Spaeth Hauschka

