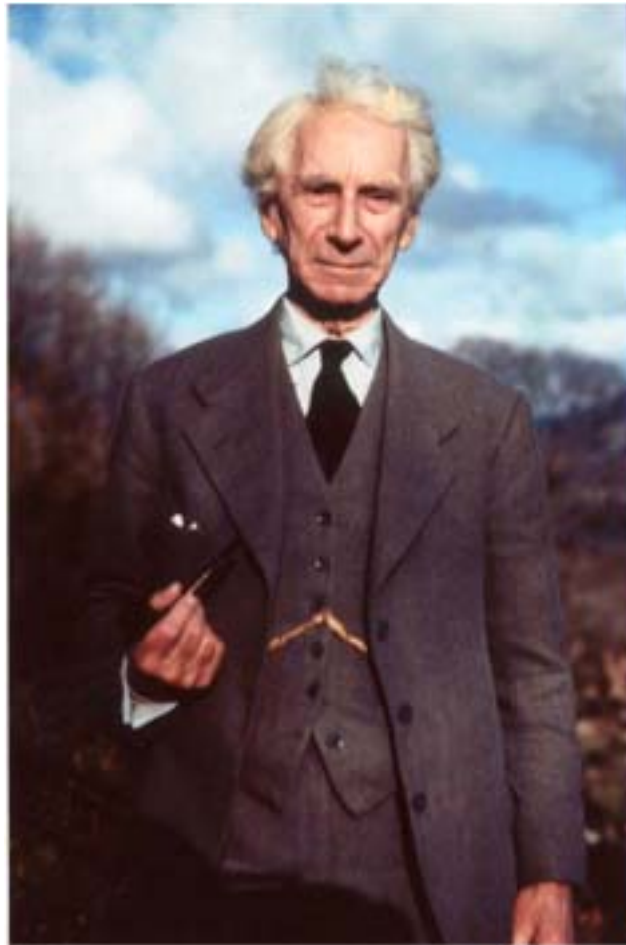


BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY BULLETIN



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THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY 2013 ANNUAL MEETING

It's time to register for the next annual meeting of the Bertrand Russell Society, and for those who wish to present papers, to send in an abstract. Below are details for this upcoming event of importance to all Russellians. Plan on attending for good cheer, collegiality, and interesting papers on a variety of topics.

Dates: 5/31/2013 – 6/2/2013

Location: The University of Iowa, Iowa City

Host: Gregory Landini

The conference will be held in the English-Philosophy Building, with audio-visual ready rooms.

Below is the url for the department webpage:

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~phil/>

Registration and booking for the dorm:

<https://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/UIConferences/>

Papers

Papers, of approximately 15-20 min. reading time, on any aspect of Russell's work or life are welcome. Contact Alan Schwerin: aschweri@monmouth.edu

Student Essay Competition

Students, both graduate and undergraduate, are also encouraged to submit papers (about 10 pages) for the annual BRS Student Essay Competition. Cash prizes (\$100) will be awarded to the best graduate and best undergraduate essay on any aspect of Russell's work. Essays on *Problems* are especially welcome.

Papers (or abstracts) and student essays should be sent, by May 1, to:

Submit to Alan Schwerin: aschweri@monmouth.edu

For general information: GREGORY-LANDINI@UIOWA.EDU

For payment information: Michael Berumen opinealot@gmail.com

RUSSELLIANA

Tim Madigan
St. John Fisher College

Those of us who recall the wonderful Bertrand Russell Society newsletters edited by Lee Eisler will remember how he would lovingly photocopy articles from various journals that made mention of Russell, no matter how fleeting or obscure the reference might be. This was usually my favorite part of the newsletter. In honor of Lee, I'd like to initiate a column called "Russelliana" which continues his practice of alerting us to references to Russell, often found in the most startling of contexts. And, thanks to the internet—a source which Lee unfortunately did not have available to him at the time—it's no longer necessary to copy the articles, as they can usually be easily found online. Here, in no particular order, are some mentions of the Good Lord I came across in my own recent readings. I encourage others to send me any such appearances they come across for use in future "Russelliana" columns:

In a blistering review of David Mamet's *The Secret Knowledge: On the Dismantling of American Culture*, Christopher Hitchens writes: "This is an extraordinarily irritating book, written by one of those people who smugly believe that, having lost their faith, they must *ipso facto* have found their reason. . . Slackness or confusion might explain his reference to the Scottish-Canadian newspaper magnate Lord Beaverbrook as a Jewish courtier in the tradition of Disraeli and Kissinger, but it is more than ignorant to say of Bertrand Russell—author of one of the first reports from Moscow to analyze and excoriate Lenin—that he was a fellow-traveling dupe and tourist of the Jane Fonda style" (Christopher Hitchens, "The Antagonist: David Mamet Comes Out Swinging Against Liberalism, Offering His Views on Religion and American Culture", *New York Times Book Review*, June 19, 2011, page 11)

Adam Kirsch, in a *New Yorker* article on the fascination many Westerners had for Rabindranath Tagore's poetry and prose in the early Twentieth Century, notes: "When Tagore made his triumphal *début* in London, poets like Yeats and Ezra Pound caught fire, but more committed rationalists remained cold: Bertrand Russell attended one of his lectures and pronounced it 'unmitigated rubbish—cut-and-dried conventional stuff about the river becoming one with the Ocean and man becoming one with Brahma.' It did not take long for such skepticism to extinguish the Tagore vogue, which died out nearly as quickly as it flared up. Today, his name evokes only a vague recognition in most English-language readers" (Adam Kirsch, "Modern Magus: What Did the West See in Rabindranath Tagore?", *The New Yorker*, May 30, 2011, pages 75-79)

In an essay on the language of work in *Harper's Magazine*, the philosopher Mark Kingwell talks about Russell's 1932 "In Praise of Idleness" and his campaign to show that resistance to work is *not* futile: "Bertrand Russell usefully defines work this way:

‘Work is of two kinds: first, altering the position of matter at, or near the earth’s surface relatively to other such matter; second, telling other people to do so. The first kind is unpleasant and ill paid; the second is pleasant and highly paid.’ Russell goes on to note that ‘the second kind is capable of indefinite extension: there are not only those who give orders, but those who give advice as to what orders should be given.’ This second-order advice is what is meant by *bureaucracy*; and if two opposite kinds of advice are given at the same time, then it is known as *politics*. Russell, however, appears to miss one crucial aspect: The greatest work of work is to disguise its essential nature. The grim ironists of the Third Reich were exceptionally forthright when they fixed the maxim *Arbeit macht frei*—Work Shall Make You Free—over the gates at Dachau and Auschwitz. We can only conclude that this was their idea of a sick joke, and that their ideological commitments were not with work at all but with despair and extermination” (Mark Kingwell, “The Language of Work”, *Harper’s Magazine*, July 2011, pages 19-24)

Louis Menand, in an article for *The New Yorker* on the paradoxes of T. S. Eliot (“Practical Cat: How Eliot Became Eliot”), discusses the convoluted relationship between Eliot, his wife Vivienne and Russell, who met the couple when Eliot was his student at Harvard. Menand quotes a letter from Vivienne to a friend shortly after her meeting with her husband’s professor: “I am very popular with Tom’s friends, and who do you think in particular? No less a person than Bertrand Russell! He is all over me, is Bertie, and I simply love him. I am dining with him next week.” Menand adds that the jury is still out over whether or not the two had an affair. “In Eliot’s surviving letters to Russell,” he notes, “there is nothing indicating suspicion, only gratitude.” (September 19, 2011, pages 76-83)

And finally, Colin Kidd, in the June 16, 2011 issue of *The London Review of Books*, has a review of the late Conrad Russell’s posthumously published *King James VI and I and His English Parliaments*. Kidd not only discusses the author’s major contributions to the British history but also gives a fascinating description of his life, and his relationship with his father: “Conrad was the son of Bertrand Russell by his troubled third marriage, and had an understandably fraught upbringing, but it is his sociological rather than psychological baggage as a Russell which invites legitimate historiographical prurience. On succeeding his half-brother as the 5th Earl Russell he became active in the House of Lords as a spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats, the distant lineal successors of the Whigs, the party his own forebears had founded. Yet, oddly enough, Russell, who happily celebrated the history of the Whigs and their descendants in *An Intelligent Person’s Guide to Liberalism*, was the very opposite of a Whig historian. Indeed, his overt Whig pieties were combined with a pronounced anti-Whig revisionism in his specialist interest, the origins of what used to be called the English Civil War” (Colin Kidd, “Royal Panic Attack”, *London Review of Books*, June 16, 2011, pages 17-18) -- Good stuff!

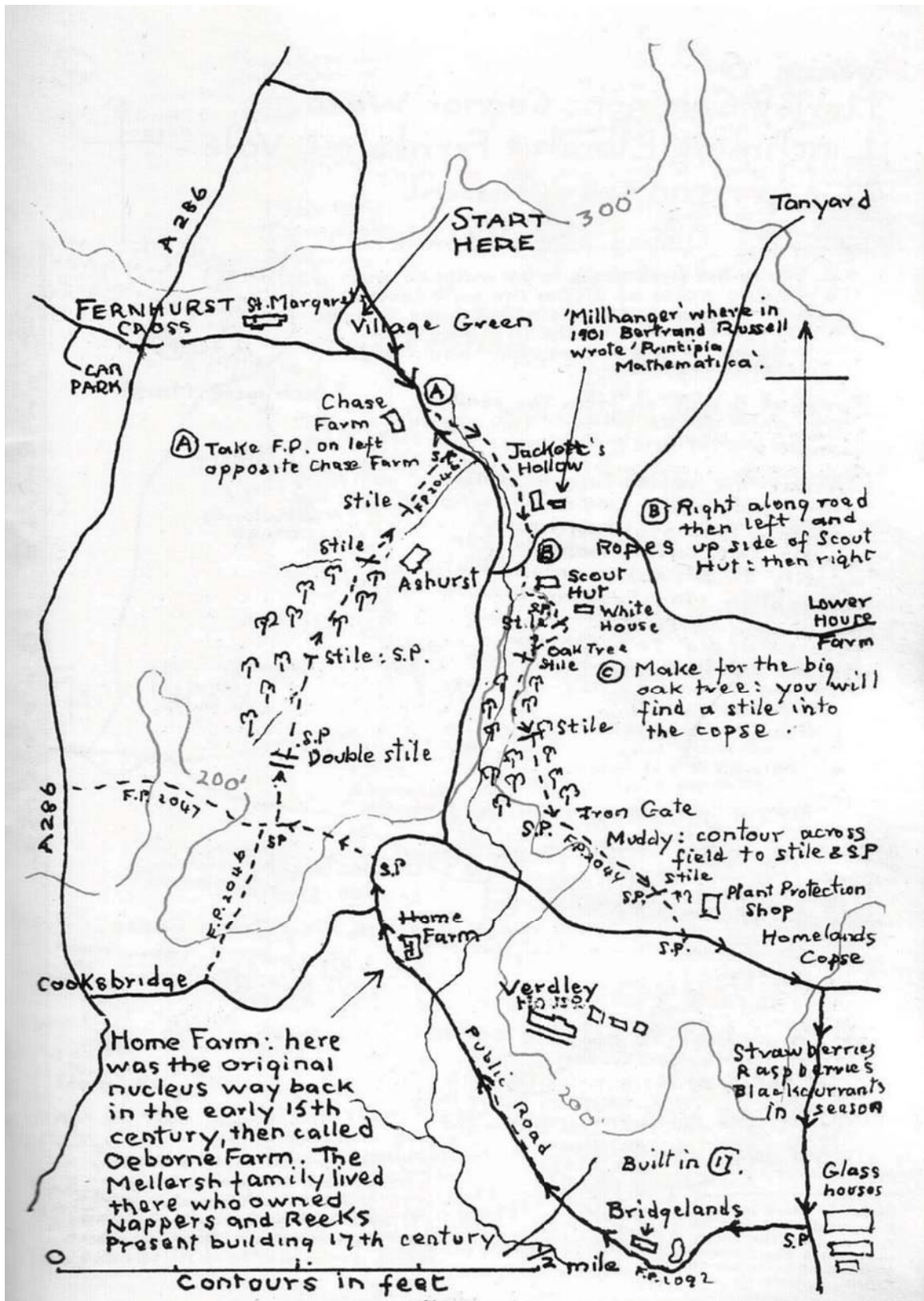
RUSSELL'S HOMES:
MILLHANGER

Sheila Turcon

McMaster University Archives and Bertrand Russell Research Centre



The Millhanger was Russell's first home as he embarked on his life as an adult. He had graduated from Cambridge University and married Alys Pearsall Smith. After honeymooning in the Netherlands, spending some time in Germany and living in a flat at 90 Ashley Gardens in Westminster, London, the couple chose this small cottage in Fernhurst, Surrey. Alys's first letter from the cottage was written on 20 January 1896, noting that "we find this cottage enchanting and most comfortable." Russell's first letter from the cottage was written on 29 February 1896 to Alys who was away in Bolton, Lancashire. They had possession in October 1895 with Alys noting in a letter from Trinity College on 10 October 1895 that Bertie's furniture and china had been unpacked, and although "some of the china is lovely, [...] nothing else [is] of much interest." By June Russell was showing the cottage off to his Aunt Agatha and Uncle Rollo, telling Alys who was away again in a letter of 2 June 1896 that they liked it so much they sat down to sketch it. Its main attraction was its proximity to Alys's parents who were renting the nearby Friday's Hill House. The village was also home to Alys's brother Logan who lived at High Buildings. Much later on Alys's niece, Ray Costello also moved to Fernhurst, building the Mud House in 1921. Russell had been visiting Friday's Hill House as early as 1891. The census of that year finds him there as an unmarried visitor, age 18, a student living on his own means. Why the couple chose this particular cottage and who their landlord was are not known.



Map of Millhanger and Surrounding Area

As Russell writes in his *Autobiography*: "With my first marriage, I entered upon a period of great happiness and fruitful work. Having no emotional troubles, all my energy

went in intellectual directions.” At the Millanger “many of the happiest times of my life were passed.” The Russells added a “fair-sized sitting-room and two bedrooms” to the cottage. With regard to the use of the new addition, Bertie’s memory seems to be at fault.

The cottage is described in better detail in a letter from Helen Thomas to Mildred Minturn, 23 July 1897: “I wish you could see the Millhangar [sic], it is the most charming and at the same time the most absurd of habitations. Imagine a tiny cottage with an adorable old garden, full of fancifully shaped box trees and sweet quaint flowers and at the back an orchard. The new part of the house, Bertie’s study, is skilfully hidden from the front, so there is nothing to show the ownership of civilised beings. The inside, however, is extremely sophisticated, and I noticed to my no small amusement, that Bertie, although he pretends to think nothing at all of his family – has hung his walls with pictures of the Dukes of Bedford, the Stanleys of Alderley and so forth.” Barbara Strachey, Ray Costelloe’s daughter also mentions the Millanger in her book, *Remarkable Relations*. She notes that the Russells had “added a couple of workrooms for Bertie.”

The Russells left the Millhanger early in the twentieth century. The exact date of their departure is not known; Russell’s last letter from the cottage was written to Louis Couturat on 24 March 1900. His last letter from Fernhurst was written on Friday’s Hill letterhead to M. Carey Thomas on 9 August 1903. By that time the Russells’ marriage existed in name only. Mildred Minturn’s children, two daughters and a son, moved into the Millhanger in 1922 with their father, Arthur Scott, after the death of their mother. I got to know Mildred’s daughter Leslie Allison in the 1980s and she wrote to me about her time in the cottage: “You can imagine how much we loved that cottage as children. My bedroom (which I shared with my sister Honor) is the upstairs right hand window.... We had an E.C. in a lean-to against the house, and only a cold water tap over the kitchen sink – the water had to be pumped up by hand and we each did 100 strokes a day. B.R. had added on a big verandah at the back and we built a little house under it, with proper bricks and mortar.” She had earlier written to me that the cottage had no electricity. The illustration of the cottage used in this article was sent to me by Leslie.

I went in search of the Millhanger in the 1980s. Fernhurst is still a small village and I had a photograph. I did not find it although I may have walked by it without realizing which cottage it was. I had taken the train from London to Haslemere and then a bus to the village. I did take some photographs, including one of the village green. It was only when I returned to Haslemere that I found a shop that sold maps of Fernhurst walks. Too late for me but if you plan on going yourself a map is a good idea.

This is the second in a series of articles on Russell’s homes. Next time: With their marriage in ruins the Russells’ live a nomadic life until they move into Bagley Wood, Oxford, in April 1905.

Sources

The Millhanger sometimes appears spelled as the Millhangar. That spelling is based on the original meaning of the word which is a shed located by a mill. It was spelled with an “a” on the Russells’ letterhead and thus in Vols. 1 and 2 of the *Collected Papers*. However, in the *Autobiography* it is spelled with an “e”. It appears with an “e” on the

Fernhurst walks map and in Barbara Strachey's book. I have used the more current spelling.

Fernhurst has an active society which maintains a website. The census date revealing Russell's visit in 1891 is accessible on its page. <http://www.fernhurstsociety.org.uk/>

Helen Thomas (later Flexner) letter. The extract which appears here is published in Leslie Minturn Allison, *Mildred Minturn: A Biography* (Shoreline: Ste Anne de Bellevue), pp. 70-1. Both Thomas and Minturn were American friends of the Russells. Letter in RA.

Barbara Strachey, *Remarkable Relations* (London: Gollancz, 1980), p. 152

Leslie Allison to Sheila Turcon, 10 July and 24 September 1984 (in RA).

Alys and Bertrand Russell letters in RA.

Victor Davey and Helen & Kenneth Ouin, *Walks around Fernhurst*, 1981
Voices of Fernhurst, Fernhurst Society, 2006.

FOLLOW-UP TO PEMBROKE LODGE:

Since my last article which was on Pembroke Lodge I have had the opportunity to visit it again. I was treated to tea by Daniel Hearsom on the second floor in the Bertrand Russell room which is not open to the public but can be booked for various occasions. Tea was served on Lord John's table which was donated to PL by Conrad Russell, along with other pieces of furniture including Frank's high chair which was also used by Bertie.



Pembroke Lodge in 2012

Photographs of the Russells are on many of the walls, along with a bookcase containing many of the books written by Russell. Daniel has done a magnificent restoration work on this property. He is very much interested in documenting the history of the Lodge. If any of you have visited in the past and taken photographs, please sent them to me and I will pass them on to Daniel. A tea room is open to the public on the ground floor.



Commemorative Column at the entrance to Pembroke Lodge: The lettering on the column reads: “Pembroke Lodge: Restored for Public Use by the Hearsurn Family and the Royal Parks 1997-2006”. The restorer and lessee of the property, David Hearsurn, is at the far left in the picture; the author of this article, Sheila Turcon, is at his right.

ANTI-NAZI POLITICS IN RUSSELL'S HEARST COLUMNS

Kenneth Blackwell

To Ray Monk, who lists Bertrand Russell's second profession as that of journalist and before political campaigner,¹ the Hearst essays are his worst: "These slight and ephemeral pieces represent the nadir in Russell's writing career", he claims, adding that "they rarely contained ... any serious attempt to grapple with the topic under discussion".²

Most, but not all, of the columns Russell wrote for the Hearst press in the early 1930s are gathered, under the editorship of former BRS board chairman Harry Ruja, in *Mortals and Others: American Essays 1931 - 1935; Volumes I and II* (Routledge, 2009). John G. Slater introduced the first volume, and *Russell* has published a lengthy index to this edition.³ Russell the essayist is a personal writer, and personal information and anecdotes disclosed by Russell are indexed thus: boyhood; and bag of rats; career(s); his Christmases at sea; and cigars; consolation in bits of knowledge; education; illness; in labourer's cottage; letters received; his personality; and politeness; his politics; in prison; his reading; and shame; and shyness; on Sierra Nevada, Andalusia; his Spanish; and sport; his title; his train stuck in a snowdrift; "without a sense of humour"; and his writing style.

The Hearst period, from July 1931 to April 1935, spans at least two volumes of the *Collected Papers*. The volume boundaries might be drawn at other points and spread the Hearst articles over three volumes, as their chronological context would may require. However, that is for their eventual volume editors to sort out.

How many Hearst columns are there? 156 actually appeared in the newspaper chain, Ruja printed 160 in his two volumes, and there are ten others whose text we have for a total of 170. How do we know there are ten others? Ruja omitted one, Patricia Spence lists⁴ seven more (although she deleted two that read just like the others), two appeared in another periodical and a tenth was published by Feinberg and Kasrils.⁵ There could be three more—they appear on Patricia Spence's list—but they are lost.⁶

The form of a typical Hearst article involves first grabbing the reader's attention by a homely example, and then using that to reflect on the disappointments and indeed

¹ Ray Monk, "Russell, Bertrand Arthur William, third Earl Russell (1872–1970)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Jan. 2011 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35875, accessed 26 Oct. 2012]).

² Monk, *Bertrand Russell: the Ghost of Madness*, [Vol. 2:] 1921–1970 (New York: The Free Press, 2001), p. 127.

³ By Roma Hutchinson, *Russell* 29 (2009): 149–66.

⁴ Russell Archives, box 3.45, file 220.015590.

⁵ *Bertrand Russell's America*, Vol. 1: 1896–1945 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973), pp. 270–9.

⁶ Two of the three titles were "On Sociability" and "The Benefits of Persecution". A probable third lost column is "The Minor Troubles of Feminists". The published column "Dangers of Feminism" is concerned with switching the roles of address and masculine/feminine expectation.

misery of the age. But that's not all, if, unlike Monk, you read to the end to find what Clark called “the propaganda contained in the articles”.⁷ The favourite column of the denigrators is “Who May Use Lipstick?”. If women mustn't wear lipstick, they are pretending to be asexual and therefore don't reflect the real world. The real topic of this column is the kind of moral role that schoolteachers should have. As Slater states of this essay in his Introduction to Volume I, “No one will doubt that he has reached important matters here, although hardly anyone would have expected it when they read the title” (2009, p. 4). What else does Russell do in the Hearst columns to warrant Clark's statement?

We know a lot about the writing of the Hearst columns. We have dates of composition and manuscript variants; even a rejected copy-edited typescript of one is in the Russell Archives. (This is “On Marriage”, one of two that have never been printed. The other is “The Steel Age”. Both were obviously too radical for the Hearst chain.) We even know that Russell met with the Hearst representative, the publisher George H. Doran, on 12 and 19 June 1931, and then his own literary agent, Nancy Pearn of Curtis Brown, and that by 15 June Russell had written the first four columns. We also know about when his compensation per column was halved from a munificent \$100 to \$50, and that although he wouldn't accept William Randolph Hearst's invitation to stay in his California castle, he would go to see him when he was on the west coast.⁸

How can these short papers, so dismissed by Monk (despite his spending three pages on them), be relevant to other papers in 1931-35? Because the same author who was ending his teaching at Beacon Hill was all of a piece. His thinking was interconnected. He was going through the personal crisis evidenced in addenda pieces for the 1931 autobiography, the breakup of his marriage to Dora, and his liaison with Peter Spence with its ensuing bitter divorce proceedings. He had complex views on sexual relations; British politics; race and anti-semitism; the rise of Hitler; economics and the depression; a new interest in writing history; the rise of President F. D. Roosevelt; India; pacifism; and his analysis of the “revolt against reason”.

To challenge Monk's thesis I chose a test period of undoubted international political importance, the first weeks of Hitler's chancellorship of Germany in 1933. Hunting for Russell's initial response to the rise of Fascism has always interested me, for he did not write a book on the subject.⁹ Here's a little chronological detail:

- 30 January – Hitler is made chancellor in the Nazis' coalition with von Papen.
- 2 February – Political demonstrations are banned.
- 12 February – Bloody Sunday.
- 27 February – The Reichstag fire.
- 28 February – A Presidential decree gives Hitler emergency powers; he arrests 81 (or 100) Communist deputies.
- 5 March – New national elections: Nazis get a bare majority.
- 22 March – The Dachau concentration camp is established.

⁷ Ronald W. Clark, *The Life of Bertrand Russell* (London: Cape/Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975), p. 434.

⁸ Letter to Dora Russell, 3 Nov. 1931, Russell Archives.

⁹ For background, see Brett Lintott, “Russell's Aborted Book on Fascism”, *Russell* 28 (2008): 39–64.

23 March – The Enabling Act: the government may issue decrees.
3 May – Trade unions are suppressed.

In the midst of all this, 4 March 1933, was Roosevelt's inaugural address.

During 28 February to 18 April 1933, Russell wrote seven non-Hearst articles, of which one was a philosophical review. One of the remaining six is on the League of Nations, and one is concerned with the Moscow trials, just under way. A third, "This Way to Chaos", refers to "the Nazi victory in Germany, secured by threats of wholesale pogroms and designed to prove that oratory is as satisfying as food." The only extended treatment of the German situation in these non-Hearst articles is "Moral Indignation and the Nazis". It is mainly concerned with a response that will be least injurious to the Nazis' victims, being mindful that the British and French treatment of Germany at Versailles and then of the Weimar Republic led directly to the Nazis.

There were also from Russell, at this time, letters to the editor on India and a BBC debate on public schools. Of the six articles, four were published in *The Sunday Referee*. Their style is very different from that of the Hearst articles. Two facts account for this: the *Sunday Referee* was semi-socialist and the Hearst chain conservative; and there was a delay of only two to twelve days for the publication of the *Sunday Referee* articles, whereas it then took eight weeks for the Hearst columns to appear. The latter had to be written so that they were less dependent upon the immediate news than articles published in Britain.

During the same period, 28 February to 14 April 1933, Russell wrote eight Hearst articles, an average of one per week. They were published from 26 April to 14 June, and all are in *Mortals and Others*, Volume II. I have applied a rating scheme to all of the Hearst articles:

non-political and non-economic;
political or economic;
very political or economic.

Some 92 of the 170 articles are political, economic, educational or on marriage. Of the eight from 1933, four were not political (although we do find minor references to "friends of peace" and "dread of the future"), three were political, and one was *very* political.

Of the four political articles, one (written 28 February) concerns itself with the problems of minorities in a democracy; one (7 March) with the worship of strength ranging from Carlyle, Nietzsche and Lawrence to the "law-breaking" German chancellor; and one (28 March) on racial problems of Jews, Negroes, recent events in Germany, and economics as the basis of racial fear. This sequence of articles is unusual for not including an extended discussion of economics, contrary to Russell's interests at the time.

The fourth, *very* political paper, written on 14 March 1933 and after the German elections, was titled by Russell "The Triumph of Stupidity". He begins: "What has been happening in Germany is a matter of the gravest portent for the whole civilized world"

The “brutal” and “stupid” sectors of Germany have subjugated the “intelligent” and “humane” parts of the nation. This could happen elsewhere, e.g. in Britain with the British fascists—and Britain, Russell maintained, was already fascistic in India. These are his particulars. True to his form, he swings now to the general. He remarks on the world since 1914, in the now famous quotation, that “the stupid are cocksure while the intelligent are full of doubt”, unlike the time of the Philosophical Radicals’ reflection that comes from his current research for *Freedom and Organization*. Intelligence needs moral fervour. Finally he brings it home to his audience of Americans, who form the “brightest spot” in the world and whose democracy may be “destined once more to save Europe from its excesses”.

This is why I conclude that Monk, who spends most of his Hearst pages attacking Ruja's praise of Russell, is exactly wrong about the nature of these perfect little papers, whose artistry in 700 words shows itself on a thorough reading. The ideal way to study them, however, is in the context of the other political, economic, educational and marriage papers of 1931–35. Russell once remarked to me about another publication: “It's good to have had one in against the Nazis.” He had plenty in his role of political advocate in the Hearst newspapers.



Russell at an Anti-Nuclear Demonstration

AN EPIC SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FOUNDATIONS OF MATHEMATICS

Stefan Andersson

Review of Apostolos Doxiadis and Christos Papadimitrou; art by Alecos Papadatos and colour by Annie Di Donna. *Logicomix: an Epic Search for Truth*. New York, Berlin and London: Bloomsbury, 2009. Pp. 347, including bibliography and appendix. £16.99; US\$22.95. ISBN-10 1-59691-452-1 or ISBN-13 978-1-59691-452-0.

The title of this best selling “graphic novel” comes very close to that of my own doctoral thesis “In Quest of Certainty: Bertrand Russell’s Search for Certainty in Religion and Mathematics up to *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903)”, so when I first heard about it through Russell–I and started to suspect that my thesis partly covered the same story as the book under review, I naturally wondered if the authors had read it. Ken Blackwell was kind enough to inform me that my thesis was the first in their bibliography, which only contains fifteen other books. That was a very nice surprise, since I haven’t seen many references to my *magnum opus* during the fifteen years that have passed since its publication.

This is a “graphic novel”, which, in this case, means it’s an intelligently told and nicely illustrated story about Bertrand Russell and his – and others – search for a sound foundation of mathematics, or, arithmetic to start with. But it’s much more; the authors of this book are constantly intervening and commenting on what they are trying to convey, which is that there is a connection between logic and madness, to put it briefly.

A large part of the story is tragic, but at the end Russell comes out sane and satisfied that, if his seven year long collaboration with his former teacher – Alfred North Whitehead – didn’t end the search for the truth regarding a solid foundation for mathematics, it certainly stimulated the ongoing discussion and Kurt Gödel in particular.

The book is a cartoon; the only difference being is that Tin-Tin is played by Bertrand Russell. It has twelve parts; An overture, that introduces the authors and the artists and their project and places Russell at the podium – somewhere in the United States – on the fourth of September 1939 prepared to give a lecture on the “Role of Logic in Human Affairs”, but I suggest the reader jumps to the tenth part “Logicomix and Reality”, to understand how the story often deviates from what really happened, but still manages to convey the most dramatic aspects of the story about Bertrand Russell and his epic search for the truth about the foundations of mathematics and its relationship to logic and set theory.

It’s a fascinating story and Russell approaches his topic biographically by telling the story of his life up to 1939. The first chapter “Pembroke Lodge” establishes a

connection between Russell's search for the Truth and madness, on the one hand, and danger, on the other; the curse that comes from having eaten from the forbidden fruits of knowledge, in this case finding out more about his parents, their death and why his grandmother was quite content with the fact that young Bertie didn't have to become the victim of their many vices.

Until I read *Logicomix* I had never thought about Russell's grandmother as anything else than a well-meaning sentimental old Lady, but the authors forced me to see her in a different light that has convinced me that her personal religion, consisting of 50 % Unitarian theology and 50 % stock conservative Victorian moral views, had a deeper influence on the development of Russell's personality than I had earlier suspected. Although I don't always agree with the authors' *psychologizing* explanations – in this case, I do.

Instead of having his older brother – Frank, who is kept out of the story – introduce him to his first Love: Euclid's certain rules of reasoning, which promised indubitable PROOFS for every theorem, the authors introduce a private tutor, who also convinces his young student of the necessity of basing his beliefs on SCIENCE and not THEOLOGY.

Now the scene is set for Bertie entering Trinity College to learn more about the Queen of all the sciences: Mathematics, but he is not impressed. Assisted by his friend and fellow student, G. E. Moore, he searches for a solid foundation for mathematics, but then another mistress enters the stage in form Alys Pearsall Smith – a five year older American Quaker woman, who doesn't please Granny at all as a suitable wife for her grandson. Her ultimate argument against their marriage is that both of them come from families with documented cases of insanity and that it would be insane of them to try to have children. Bertie accepted this argument and decided to marry Alys without the intent of having any children by her.

In the third chapter "Wanderjahre" Russell and his new wife go on a trip to Germany and France, where they meet many of the central characters in this story: Frege, Cantor, Poincaré, Hilbert and Peano, of which only some is true, but that doesn't matter, because the story goes on. The story being: the connection between Logic and Madness.

In the fourth chapter "Paradoxes" we learn more about Alfred North Whitehead, their collaboration with its ups and downs, and Whitehead's neurotic wife Evelyn, whom Russell falls in love with, which puts him in an awkward position. The foundations they've found remind Russell of the Hindus' mythical turtles that support the Cosmos. He was not totally satisfied with the result, but agreed to pay £100 to have the first volume of *Principia Mathematica* published by Cambridge University Press. The chapter ends with the introduction of Kurt Gödel as a child, who as an adult would play a crucial part of this saga.

Here the story is interrupted by an “Entracte” in which Aeschylus’ trilogy *Oresteia* is introduced, but that only complicates things and from here on the book loses its focus, as far as I’m concerned.

In the fifth chapter “Logico-Philosophical Wars” Ludwig Wittgenstein comes to Cambridge to learn more about logic, but professor and pupil soon shift chairs. The concept of “Infinity” plays an important part in this part of the drama. Russell falls in love with Alfred’s wife – Evelyn – and when she seems to be dying from a heart attack, it forces him to hide his true feelings, which prompts a mystic experience that had a profound effect on his general philosophy of life:

As I stood there, a dumb witness to the suffering of a woman I’d loved, the last footholds of my austere worldview crumbled. Staring into her eyes I faced, terrified, my own mortality. And this made the encounter with death, this *memento mori*...An occasion for a surprising new outreach to life.

The life-changing incident the authors are referring to really took place about ten years earlier and Russell has referred to it as his “first conversion”, experience of “mystic illumination” and also used other definite descriptions to capture the nature of this very special moment in his life, which made him realize the tragic loneliness of every human being, the finiteness and profound futility of life, the terrible harshness of pain and disease, and the unmitigated horror of death. It made him a pacifist, which eventually resulted in him being sentenced to six months in prison for having insulted the Army of the United States.

The sixth chapter “Incompleteness” introduces Russell’s second wife – Dora Black – and their educational failures both as teachers and parents. Gödel is brought in to deliver the mortal wound to Russell’s hopes of finding a secure foundation for mathematics: “There will always be unanswerable questions!” (p. 286) Hitler comes to power; the question remains: is it more reasonable for the American people to join the war or should they stay out of it? Russell refuses to give a clear answer.

Then follows the “Finale” in which the authors try to bring all the threads together ending with “Rejoice Rejoice! Rejoice, you happy citizens who love true wisdom!!!” (p. 313)

That’s the end of the story, but the authors have added three more parts: “Logicomix and Reality”, of which I’ve already spoken, “Notebook”, which consists of compressed notes about the major figures and the crucial concepts of relevance to this book, which ends with a short selected bibliography including my doctoral thesis, that is one of sixteen books that they “most liked and found most useful.” (p. 347)

My first encounter with Bertrand Russell was a Swedish translation of *Unpopular Essays*. The publisher had used the heading of the second essay “Philosophy for Laymen” as the title of the whole collection of essays. At the same book sale I also bought a Swedish translation of *Dear Bertrand Russell*, and went back to my girlfriend’s parents’ summer house on the Swedish east coast and started to read.

This was between my first and second year at the University of Lund, where I had embarked on a program that eventually would lead to me being ordained as a Lutheran Minister in the Church of Sweden. My motives for wanting to become a member of the clergy were mainly based on the fear of having to spend eternity in Hell. I figured that as a religious professional I would immensely increase my chances of going to Heaven.

There was, however, only one problem; the more I learned about Christian Theology, the more unbelievable and absurd it appeared to me. Obviously something had gone wrong in the development of the Gospel from the simple teachings of Jesus to the different elaborate modern versions of Christianity. I felt strongly that the good Lord had chosen me to set things straight, so I decided to pursue the truth and then start preaching about it.

But then another Lord intervened – Lord Russell. After quickly having read the two books, I immediately realized that, if I were to maintain my intellectual honesty, I had to be able to answer his critique of religion in general and Christianity in particular, before I could start to try to save other souls from going to Hell.

I wanted to know more about this remarkable man and went to the library and borrowed his *Autobiography* in order to find additional information regarding his spiritual journey that had led him to his – what I then thought to be – depressing beliefs. When I came toward the end of the first chapter, where he describes how the reading of John Stuart Mill’s *Autobiography* led him to abandon the “First Cause” argument and that that turned him into an atheist, I knew I had to seriously reconsider my plans of becoming a Minister. There was more liberating spiritual and intellectual power in Russell’s doubts than in any of the theologians’ creeds that I had come across at that time, except, perhaps, Jesus himself.

The decision to change my career plans from becoming a Minister to writing a doctoral thesis in the philosophy of religion about Russell’s spiritual development was not made easily and it took me some time to finalize it, but it would turn out to be a life changing choice that brought me to the Bertrand Archives in the beginning of 1976 with the hope of finding out more about his experience of “mystic insight” that he talks about later in the first volume of his *Autobiography*. By reading his – then mostly unpublished – letters to Lady Ottoline, I could pinpoint the exact day and time of day, when it took place. It made me feel like a real researcher.

The second element of my thesis – Russell’s search for certainty in mathematics – developed from my growing inklings that there was something “religious” about his fascination for mathematics and his attempts to find a secure foundation for simple mathematical truths. For a time he was infatuated by something he referred to as “Pythagorean Mysticism”. According to this form of religiosity the key to understanding the workings of the universe are to be found in the truths of mathematics.

I was amazed and didn’t really know what to think. Through out Junior and Senior High School I managed (without killing myself) to get pretty good grades in all subjects except one: Mathematics. I had problems with division and particularly by the rules governing zero, but most of all I was bewildered by the mysteries of the Geometrical Zoo with animals like “points”, “lines”, “the parallel postulate”, which was said to be “improvable” and therefore had to be accepted as “an axiom”, but mostly of the idea that certain mathematical propositions were in need of PROOF.

As I suffered through the weekly lectures in geometry and observed the more mathematically talented students go to the black board and – to my great astonishment – saw them being able to put a smile on our, otherwise, not so easily pleased teacher, I wondered what “a proof” was all about and, particularly, why anyone in a sober state of mind would ask for one in this context.

This aversion to mathematics made me ignore what Russell had to say about his love for the subject for a long time. But after having attended my first Russell conference in Toronto in 1984, I decided to take the bull by its horn and started to read about the history of logic, the philosophy of mathematics and became particularly interested in learning more about different views regarding the definitions of and the relationship between logic and mathematics.

When I then returned to Russell’s *Autobiography* to see what he had to say about what he as a young student desired most, namely: “to find some reason for supposing mathematics true,” it made more sense to me, and I was even able to find some inaccuracies in his accounts. The passage that fascinated me the most is the third last paragraph of the first chapter and I can’t resist the temptation to share it with you in order to more pedagogically summarize the main subject of the book under review:

At the age of eleven, I began Euclid, with my brother as my tutor. This was one of the great events of my life, as dazzling as first love. I had not imagined that there was anything so delicious in the world. After I had learned the fifth proposition, my brother told me that it was generally considered difficult, but I had found no difficulty whatever. This was the first time it had dawned upon me that I might have some intelligence. From that moment until Whitehead and I finished *Principia Mathematica*, when I was thirty-eight, mathematics was my chief interest, and my chief source of happiness. Like

all happiness, however, it was not unalloyed. I had been told that Euclid proved things, and was much disappointed that he started with axioms. At first I refused to accept them unless my brother could offer me some reason for doing so, but he said: 'If you don't accept them we cannot go on', and as I wished to go on, I reluctantly admitted them *pro tem*. The doubt as to the premises of mathematics which I felt at that moment remained with me, and determined the course of my subsequent work. (1975, 30-31)

This was written in 1931, i.e. almost fifty years after he fell in love with mathematics. Not doubting that the introduction of Euclid made a great impression on Russell, we still have to have a critical approach to his rhetorical skills that might have inspired some exaggerations and caused some slips of memory.

He had been told that Euclid "proved things" and that was probably very inspiring for a budding philosopher, who had decided to seek true knowledge, wherever it could be found, and mathematics must have seemed like a promising discipline compared to the Unitarian theology that his grandmother had introduced him to.

But that an eleven year old boy should be so critically equipped and skeptically minded that he initially would refuse to go on unless his brother could prove that:

1. A straight line segment can be drawn joining any two points.
2. Any straight line segment can be extended indefinitely in a straight line.
3. Given any straight line segment, a circle can be drawn having the segment as radius and one endpoint as center.
4. All right angles are congruent.
5. If two lines are drawn which intersect a third in such a way that the sum of the inner angles on one side is less than two right angles, then the two lines inevitably must intersect each other on that side if extended far enough.

This does not sound very convincing to me. Besides, Euclid's *Elements* starts with 23 definitions, but his teacher could have used a text book that started with the axioms, but that would only make his refusal to go on even less probable, since he wouldn't yet have been familiar with the terminology and thus couldn't have understood what he refused to accept.

In the light of these critical reflections, the last sentence "The doubt as to the premises of mathematics which I felt at that moment remained with me, and determined the course of my subsequent work," must be considered to be part of the Russellian self mythology, which is full of hard-to-believe exaggerations. But this doesn't mean that he

later on didn't strongly feel the need to look for solid foundations for the truths of mathematics and that those underpinnings were most likely to be found in logic *and* set theory. This search certainly took on epic dimensions.

The authors and artists responsible for this "comic book" have created a new set of literature with only one member so far. Using cartoons to tell the story about Bertrand Russell and his part in the history of the quest for a solid foundation of mathematics is nothing but a stroke of genius. But they also manage to bring in several other interesting themes like; the fear of madness, the search for God, love, and politics, not to mention all the interesting characters that were part of this story.

Until the 19th century Western views of the world rested on the whole on four, seemingly unquestionable, sources of information. 1) A more or less literal interpretation of the Bible that determined the age of the universe and the history of Mankind 2) Aristotelian logic 3) Euclidean geometry and 4) Newtonian physics. This was about to be changed and Bertrand Russell played a part in all of that, when he got old enough, which brings the story into the beginning of the 20th century.

No one - in a sober state of mind - questioned that $1 + 1 = 2$, but very few had the intellectual curiosity to ask why this is true. Russell, however, did and started to look for reasons that would silence his doubts and lead him to the calm land of Truth and Certainty. He thought that he could find peace of mind ("ataraxia" in Greek), if he could show that all mathematical concepts and rules of transformation could be deduced from logic. This idea, however, turned out to need the support of a recently invented branch of knowledge called "Set Theory" in English and "Mengenlehre" by its German inventor Georg Cantor.

The fundamental idea was that everything can be divided into different sets made up of its proper members. The set of all cardinals, now living cats and dead Catholics are some examples. The first set, however, has an Infinite number of members, but I won't go into that here, although the concept of "Infinity" plays a crucial part of the story.

Russell never met Cantor in person as the authors suggest, but that doesn't matter. Another German, Gottlob Frege, used Cantors ideas to define "number" in terms of sets and their members. Russell never met Frege as the authors propose, but that is of no real importance either; it only improves the story. Russell read Frege and was very impressed, after he had succeeded to decipher his notational system.

Russell had at this point started to work on his *The Principles of Mathematics* and tried to pin down all the necessary and sufficient logical concepts needed to build a solid foundation for mathematics. He made lists; sometimes they consisted of seven logical concepts, sometimes nine. He wasn't sure; he was like his Swedish contemporary

Salomon August Andrée still exploring unknown territories, except doing so in an intellectual balloon.

He soon realized that there were two kinds of sets; those who were members of themselves and those who weren't. The set of all sets is obviously a member of itself, the set of all dead Catholics is clearly not. But what about the set of all sets that are NOT members of themselves? Is IT a member of itself, Russell asked himself? SURPRISE! The question leads to a paradox: If it is, it isn't and if it isn't, it is.

Russell wrote to Frege about his discovery. The letter arrived just as the second volume of his *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* was in press. Immediately appreciating the difficulty the paradox posed, Frege added to the *Grundgesetze* a hastily composed appendix discussing Russell's discovery.

In the appendix Frege observes that the consequences of Russell's paradox are not immediately clear. For example, "Is it always permissible to speak of the extension of a concept, of a class? And if not, how do we recognize the exceptional cases? Can we always infer from the extension of one concept's coinciding with that of a second, that every object which falls under the first concept also falls under the second? These are the questions," Frege notes, "raised by Mr. Russell's communication." Because of these worries, Frege eventually felt forced to abandon many of his views about the relationship between logic and mathematics – his version of "logicism".

But Russell kept on thinking and started to collaborate with his former teacher, Alfred North Whitehead, who, a few years earlier had published *A Treatise on Universal Algebra with Applications*. They both tried to find an answer to the paradox and came up with different solutions, but none that really satisfied them. They had to introduce a theory of types and several questionable axioms to prove their ideas. They were NOT totally satisfied with their efforts, but decided to publish their results anyway.

You have to read the rest of this fascinating story yourself, but let me just end with one critical remark and one positive; You have to go to the "Notebook" to learn that Russell's Paradox didn't prevent others from establishing a paradox-free foundation of arithmetic (see the Zermelo-Fraenkel set theory with the axiom of choice: ZFC).

In their very short bibliography they do, as I mentioned earlier, list my doctoral thesis, which describes parts of the same story, but not as dramatically and extensively as they have done. Russell and Whitehead spent ten years of their lives on writing *Principia Mathematica*, but had they proved – beyond reasonable doubt – that mathematics is a branch of logic? There are different views about this among scholar. My personal conclusion is that a lot depends on what you mean by "logic".

Russell, incidentally, would reverse his theory a few years later in his book *Our Knowledge of the External World*. (See Dorothea Lotter's essay "Logic as a Branch of Mathematics, or Mathematics as a Branch of Logic?" in *Russell Revisited: Critical Reflections On The Thought Of Bertrand Russell*, edited by Alan Schwerin under the auspices of the Bertrand Russell Society, which I have reviewed in *Russell: the Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies*. New Series. Vol. 29, no. 2. Winter 2010: ?)

But that's a different story.



Russell at Tea Tim

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