

Editor's notes

Edith Russell, *In Memoriam*. Edith, Lady Russell died on New Year's Day, 1978. She outlived Bertrand Russell by nearly eight years, all of which she devoted to his memory. Michael Burn, the poet, who knew the Russells well, wrote to the London *Times* as follows.

Edith Russell, Bertrand Russell's widow, was the only woman with whom he never stopped being happy, and he expressed all that she had meant to him in the lyric with which he prefaced his autobiography.

Born Edith Finch in New York in 1900 of an old American family, she studied English Literature at Bryn Mawr and then went to St Hilda's College, Oxford. She was extremely attractive and strong-willed. England was always her love, though she knew many countries and once became a member of a famous Parisian circus, in which she thought she might have stayed had she been able to do somersaults.

For many years she shared a house she built at Bryn Mawr with Miss Lucy Donnelly, Head of the Department of English Literature, and a close friend and correspondent of Russell's from 1896 till death in 1948. There Edith wrote her biography of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, and there Russell found refuge from the New York witch-hunt in 1940 and began his *History of Western Philosophy*. They fell in love on his triumphant return to America 10 years later. Edith immediately sold all she possessed and left for London, ready for anything, and never to return. So that she might have no illusions about him, he made her read his correspondence with previous loves. Disconcerted only slightly by the appearance there of endearments she had just heard verbally to herself, she married him in 1952, and from then till his death in 1970 they were never apart. She shared his work, passions, prejudices, gaiety, and delights. She had the same regard for good manners and the same courage, and in 1961, a climax to his protests against the bomb, she went to prison with him.

Like him an agnostic with a religious temperament, she believed as ardently as he did in mankind's need for a spiritual life. He was faultless in her eyes, and she made no apology for thinking so. She was well aware of the gossip that he had married her when "past it". Past it, indeed: He remained her lover until almost at the gates of death.

Implacable in private against his detractors, she refused public controversy about him, concentrating instead on the work of his Foundations. Disputes about his will left her in constant anxiety about money, and during her last years she maintained the large house in spotless order entirely on

her own, seldom went out, and received as few visitors as possible.

My final memory of her is of a most enchanting woman, from whose features all lines of age had been erased, waving a kiss from her bed in a public ward, on which she managed to confer the elegance of an 18th century salon. She had done all she could for Bertie's memory; to live on would lack dignity; and she seemed to have decided for herself that the hour had come to follow him into the unknown. (*The Times*, 7 Jan. 1978)

Contributors. Gary Slezak is a Chicago writer and is Vice-President of the Bertrand Russell Society. Donald W. Jackanicz is researching Russell's place in intellectual history for a dissertation in History at New York University; he is also librarian of the Russell Society. Teresa Iglesias has studied philosophy at Madrid University and University College, Dublin; she is now reading for a D.Phil. at Oxford on "Russell's Conception of Vagueness". Articles by Nicholas Griffin have appeared twice before in *Russell*. His book, *Relative Identity*, was published by the Clarendon Press in 1977. In 1978-9, he will be teaching the first undergraduate course on Russell's philosophy to be offered at McMaster University. James C. Duram is the author of a biography of Norman Thomas (Twayne Publishers, 1974). Dannel Angus McCollum is a professional writer. Diane Kerss has spent 28% of her life working in the Russell Archives. Andrew Brink's *Loss and Symbolic Repair: A Psychological Study of Some English Poets* was recently published by the Cromlech Press at McMaster. Katharine Tait's *My Father Bertrand Russell* has been very well received on both sides of the English-speaking Atlantic and has been translated into Japanese. Lester Denonn has often reviewed books by and about Russell; he is a director of the Russell Society.

Collecting Russell. It's "lower than you would think", says Joseph Connolly in *Collecting Modern First Editions* (London: Studio Vista, 1977). He lists 9 titles costing only £5 (\$10) or less. John Slater found a pleasant illustration of this during a recent trip to Britain. He spied a first edition of *Philosophical Essays* (1910) selling for £5 in a Cambridge bookshop, complete with an autograph letter. "This can hardly be a letter by Russell", he thought to himself. But it turned out it was--an exceptional bargain. He has given a photocopy of the letter to the Russell Archives.

Visitors and researchers. T. Reg Sayers, O. Delmos, D.W. Donaldson, Jules Vuillemin, R.M. Plant, Marcia Allentuck, Galib Khan, Bruce Peel, Don L. Cook, Stephen E. Koss, Herbert Hochberg, Douglas N. Walton, Dorothy Kerss, Mary Jackson, Nick Rosen, Jim Curtis and class, and Howard Woodhouse all recently visited or researched in the Russell Archives.

The Bertrand Russell Archives

Kenneth Blackwell