

RUSSELL'S CHRONOLOGY, 1872-99

THE TASK OF preparing a Chronology of Russell's life for the period 1872-99 for Volume I of the *Collected Papers* turned out to be an exciting challenge. Although I first regarded it as a fairly routine assignment—after all, there was Clark's *Life of Bertrand Russell* and the *Autobiography* to use as guides—it proved to be anything but routine. It became, in fact, a job of keen detective work, tracking down clues to events that were nearly a century old. Joy and frustration followed in turn as elusive dates were apparently verified and then cast into doubt by new evidence. Eventually the Chronology which appears in Volume I took on its final form. It is six pages long, containing 129 dated entries and 174 separate pieces of information about Russell. In the course of its construction, the ordering of papers in the volume was changed as the result of new evidence that had been uncovered. This re-ordering was a crucial and unexpected benefit of the Chronology. Headnotes also benefited from the new or more precise dates. Before revealing these discoveries to you, I will briefly outline the method of compilation.

The first step, of course, was a thorough reading of both Clark and the

Autobiography. These two books were invaluable aids in beginning the Chronology. Papers 1 and 9 "Greek Exercises" and the "Locked Diary", from Volume I were also very helpful, as was Barbara Strachey's *Remarkable Relations*. A list of events was then prepared and circulated to the editors and other researchers for their comments and suggestions. The next step was to use the resources of the Russell Archives to verify all the dates already obtained, ascertain unknown dates and add new entries. The microfilm printout of the Russell-Alys correspondence during their courtship and Alys's entries in the "Locked Diary" were invaluable at this stage. Use of archival material occasionally raised questions which could not be answered at McMaster. Thus the final stage of research included writing to other university libraries for assistance. The raw material produced by me was edited by the Textual Editor. Using the format designed by him, I began to add new items. Midway through the project we were functioning as a team. Although most of the research was carried out by myself, the Chronology could never have reached its final polished form without his expert editing.

The major accomplishment in compiling the Chronology was the discovery of the Cambridge and Westminster Club. The only mention of it is a cryptic February 1896 entry by Alys in the "Locked Diary" where she states: "started social evenings for our friends, the Cambridge and Westminster Club". This information, when presented to the editors, resulted in the shift of "The Uses of Luxury" and "Mechanical Morals and the Moral of Machinery" (now Papers 47 and 48) from Part III to Part VII. The papers had been included in Part III because Paper 47 was assumed to be an Apostolic paper, despite its reference to the Tate Gallery being next door, and 48 makes mention of a "Club" which the editors interpreted as the Cambridge Moral Sciences Club, Russell's only known club at the time. Not only did the papers shift position—the fact that they could now be put in an accurate and much clearer context resulted in new headnotes being written and annotations added.

A second discovery resulted in a clarification to the text of Paper 9 (the "Locked Diary"). It was not definitely known when or where the sonnet which ends 9 was copied out by Russell, although the note regarding the return of the diary to Alys seemed to make it fairly clear that it was done after his return from Paris. Russell took an appointment at the British Embassy in Paris arranged by his grandmother who hoped that the accompanying three months' separation from Alys would result in a broken engagement. The dates at the bottom of the poem coincide exactly with this separation period, which differs from the dates Russell spent in Paris by approximately two weeks. Although Russell did not leave for Paris until early September 1894, he and Alys had last seen each

other on 17 August. Considering these dates to be a significant clue that Russell had copied out the poem for Alys in Paris before returning the diary, verification was sought and found in their correspondence. On 16 October Alys wrote:

We shall soon forget the loneliness of separation, and feel as if we had always been together. I liked thy putting the sonnet in. As thee says, our words get to be phrases, but the expression of such a sonnet is always new and beautiful.

This part of the text of Paper 9 has been clarified by a textual note and the headnote revised.

The majority of the work, however, did not result in any changes to the text. It consisted of tracking down elusive dates, deciding on a date based on conflicting data, and finally in clarifying errors in previously published material. On the question of elusive dates, a method that proved successful on more than one occasion was to look at what was written a year later. Both Alys and Russell often reminisced about an event on its anniversary date. For example, to obtain the precise date of his attendance at a temperance demonstration in the spring of 1893, the archival material covering the period of the spring of 1894 was examined. A reading of the "Locked Diary" revealed Alys's entry for 9 June 1894, which states: "Just a year since B. came to lunch after his Mathematical Tripos and arranged to go to the Temperance Demonstration with us". Precise dates could not be obtained for every entry, despite intensive searching, and thus some entries in the Chronology are for a month or even a season of the year. No precise date has been given without convincing evidence to corroborate it and all dates given are supported by documentary evidence.

A good example of the compilation of evidence for a date is Russell's first proposal of marriage to Alys in 1893. Clark is not specific, although the *Autobiography* is. Russell states that, "on the 13th of September, I went to Friday's Hill for a two days' visit" (Vol. 1, Allen & Unwin, 1967, p. 81). Correspondence between them at the time confirms this date as well as an arrival time of 12:50 p.m. From other information given in the *Autobiography* passage, the proposal date would appear to be 14 September. A letter written by Russell to Alys one year later supports this date. However, his entry in the "Locked Diary" written on 16 September mentions two mornings at Friday's Hill with the proposal taking place on the second morning (*Collected Papers* 1, pp. 63-4). Given the arrival time of 12:50, the proposal date would have to be 15 September. Alys's diary entry of the following 14 May—"Spent the morning in the Bô Tree, reminiscing about 15 September ..."—adds substance to this

latter date. Because of the conflicting evidence concerning the two dates, "c.15 Sept." was used in the Chronology.

Another example of the diligent searching for dates was determining the number of Russell's visits to Italy. In the *Autobiography*, he states: "From the date of my first marriage down to the outbreak of the First War, I do not think any year passed without my going to Italy" (Vol. 1, p. 135). Evidence for trips from 1894 through to 1898 (*Collected Papers* 1 ends in February 1899) was easily gathered with the exception of 1896. Had Russell's memory failed him? After all, 1896 was a busy year, beginning with his lecture series at the London School of Economics and ending with the trip to America. No evidence could be found in the Russell Archives, and virtually all published sources, including Samuel's *Berenson*, do not mention the trip. There was, however, one important exception, Barbara Strachey's *Remarkable Relations*, which contains a quotation from Mary Berenson's diary indicating that the Russells visited her in Italy in 1896. The author was able to confirm from her notes that the Russells had arrived on 12 April, but an exact departure date could not be determined.

Occasionally published sources were in error on the matter of dates. An illustration of this is the date the Russells acquired their cottage, The Millhangar, in Fernhurst, Sussex. Please note the spelling—Clark misspells the name of this cottage in both his biography of Russell and his new book *Bertrand Russell and his World* (as does the *Autobiography*). Clark states in both books (*World*, p. 22, *Life*; p. 67) that Russell and Alys did not settle into The Millhangar until after their return from America in January 1897. In this he is clearly in error. Alys's entry in the "Locked Diary" for April 1896 states: "Took Possession of the Millhangar". In fact, there is evidence which links the Russells to The Millhangar much earlier than April 1896. Writing to her mother from Berlin on 2 November 1895, Alys said: "It is very nice to have Father's accounts of the Millhangar". To her father on 4 November she wrote: "Thanks very much for all thee has done at the Millhangar. I hope the glass blower will stop the smoke." The fact that alterations were carried out at The Millhangar is confirmed by Beatrice Webb's diary (20 June 1896). Alys wrote from Berlin in the fall of 1895 on stationery that had already been printed for The Millhangar. And Russell spent at least one weekend in February 1896 with Logan at the cottage hanging pictures and planning improvements (Russell to Alys, 29 Feb. and 1 March 1896). It appears, therefore, that preparations to move into The Millhangar took at least six months, and that both the Russells and Pearsall Smiths had access to the cottage during that period. The actual legal possession date was probably April, and this is the date used in the Chronology.

Later in 1896 the Russells visited America. Precise dates are not given in the *Autobiography* or Clark. An indication of their sailing-date was contained in a letter from Alys to her cousin, Carey Thomas, then President of Bryn Mawr. "We shall still sail 26th September and go to Millville" (28 July). Photocopies of this revealing correspondence were supplied by the Bryn Mawr College Library. This date, which in the end proved to be correct, was disregarded because Philadelphia newspaper accounts in mid-October described the Russells as having "just arrived" in America. In addition, the dates for the lecture series at Bryn Mawr were established as 2–20 November. Also, the agreement with Cambridge University Press to publish *An Essay on The Foundations of Geometry* was dated 28 September. In the course of other research, however, a letter from Alys to her mother was discovered written from the U.S.M.S. *Paris* on 26 September. A check of sailing schedules in the *New York Times* revealed that the *Paris* left Southampton on 26 September and arrived in New York on 3 October. Once again, the evidence in favour of a particular date—in this case 3 October as the arrival date—seemed to us to be overwhelmingly persuasive and thus that date was chosen for the Chronology.

One final example proves the helpfulness of other libraries. The *Fabian News* listed Russell as a candidate for membership in March 1897. Confirmation was then sought (and received) from Nuffield College Library that Russell did in fact join the Fabian Society at the time.

Researching the Chronology for Volume 1 was a valuable, constructive exercise of considerable assistance to the editors in the preparation of the volume. In fact, based on the experience of Volume 1, it has been decided that every volume in the series will contain a Chronology. Work has already begun on a Chronology for Volume 12, the first volume of the non-technical series, which covers Russell's personal, political and social writings 1902–14. Each chronology will have two main roles to play. First of all, during its construction, it will act as a research tool by providing an ordered compilation of correct, factual and occasionally new information for headnotes and annotations. Secondly, once published, it will assist readers by both providing a chronological guide to the papers in the volume and also allowing them an overview of the main events of Russell's life juxtaposed against his writings.—S.T.