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**Subject:** Newsletter no.18

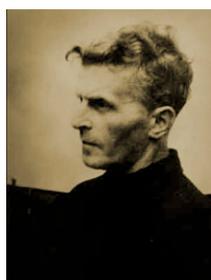
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August 2013  
BWS Newsletter Issue no 18

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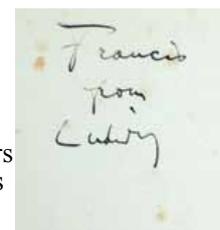
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## Nota Bene

### The Wittgenstein-Skinner Archive

*Arthur Gibson on Wittgenstein's rediscovered archive*



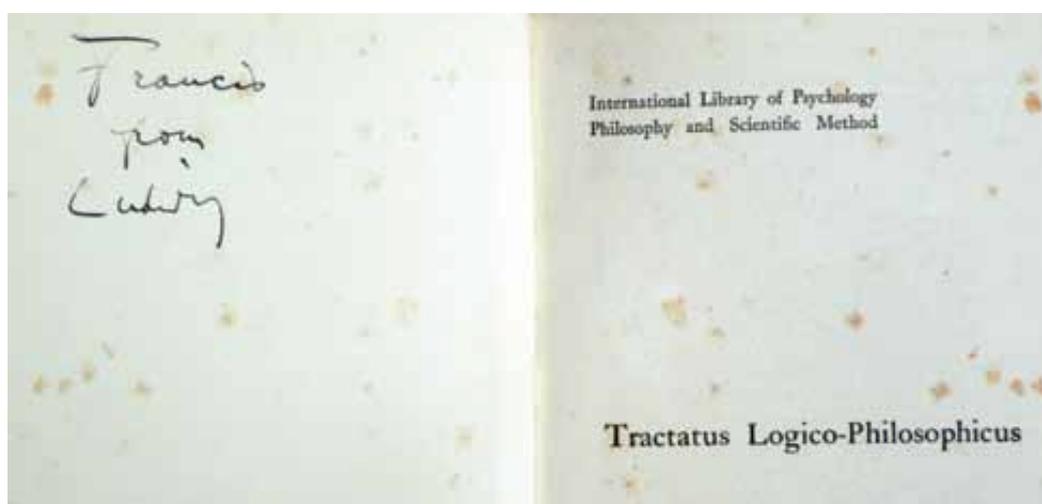
In early October 1941 German bombers attacked Oakington RAF base. Victims were rushed to hospital in Cambridge. The only slightly later admission of a polio patient was unnoticed, by-passed, being left untreated for very many hours in a corridor. This is how Wittgenstein's closest friend Francis Skinner came to die at the age of 29.

## About BWS

BWS is a British focal point for research and exchange of ideas among Wittgenstein scholars and students throughout the world.

This Newsletter will be sent exclusively to members of the BWS, on a regular basis, in order to draw attention to updates on the website, or to share as yet unpublished news.

Within the week of Skinner's funeral, in a state of trauma, Ludwig attempted to resign his Philosophy Chair; arranged to leave Cambridge for Guy's Hospital working to fulfil his, now memorial, plan with Francis; attended Francis' funeral; reclaimed from Skinner's family the Wittgenstein-Skinner Archive, and posted them to Skinner's school friend, Reuben Goodstein. Eventually Goodstein gave the Archive to the Mathematical Association. It was a much-appreciated invitation from the Association (and full acknowledgement to it in references here), with the support of Trinity College, for me to research and prepare this unpublished Archive for book publication.



*Wittgenstein's dedication to Skinner; with thanks to William Truscott*

Detailed research on the Archive yields the following context. Wittgenstein's relationship with Skinner was redolent of

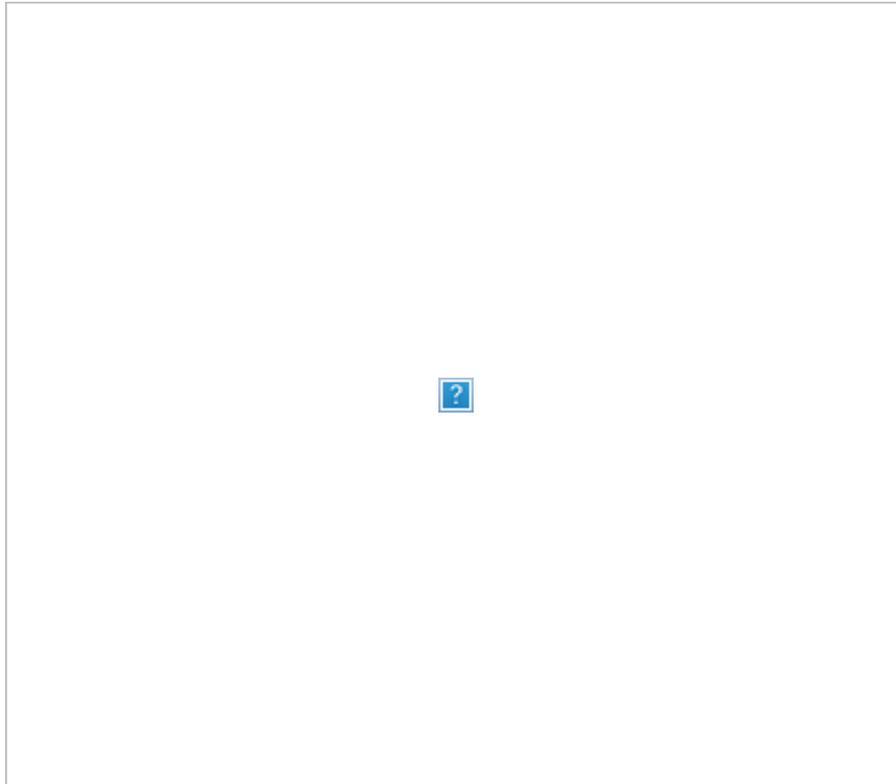
his intense friendship with David Hume Pinsent. Dying in World War I, 1918—some months short of his 29th year, the *Tractatus* was dedicated to Pinsent. Probably this is mirrored in Wittgenstein's gift of it to Francis (shown above).

In different generations both Pinsent and Skinner lived in the same Trinity College Court as Wittgenstein, studying mathematics; each went with Ludwig to Norway, and both wrote under his influence, with Pinsent substantially helping Wittgenstein to draft his only book review in English (I thank and acknowledge the Hon. Mrs Anne Keynes and Prof. Simon Keynes for access to these unpublished Pinsent manuscripts). A descendant of David Hume, emulating yet disputing with Wittgenstein, Pinsent began composing a philosophical work towards the end of his time with him. If this composition bears any relation to Wittgenstein's own philosophies—and it would be a distant one—it would find its referent in the late 1930s. So it is not surprising that Russell found it disagreeable, as Pinsent noted. Francis Skinner more completely submerged himself in Wittgenstein's identity via composition. One way that Wittgenstein acknowledged this was to dedicate Skinner as his custodian and editor of some of his other large volumes, long before Rhees, Anscombe, and others.

## The Archive's Contents

The Archive is written in Skinner's hand, with revisions by him and also periodically by Wittgenstein. Not infrequently this process involved complex interplay between their complementary re-drafting of phrasing in both their handwriting, which lays bare some of Wittgenstein's thought processes. This feature amounts to striking new data of how Wittgenstein creatively worked. The Archive consists of the following nine manuscripts:

1. The original Brown Book itself, with hitherto unknown new sentences in Wittgenstein's handwriting on its opening pages. (It also displays a significant number of German paragraphs or sentences in Wittgenstein's hand, on facing pages to the English text. These are often varying translations, or sometimes extend the notion there expressed in English.)
2. A Pink Book, entitled Book I and Book II (composed of 14,200 words as well as many visual illustrations). It appears to be a fair copy, with revisions and the occasional paragraph added by Wittgenstein. It is very different from the Yellow Book fragments that Alice Ambrose published, with only occasional hints of superior overlap. There are grounds for supposing that it is what Wittgenstein wished to write instead of, or to replace the Yellow Book.
3. 'Communication of Personal Experience' (at 12,000 words, this comprises the hitherto unknown extension after the ending of the published version of Brown Book), in fair copy form, with finely nuanced revision of details in Wittgenstein's hand, and with cross-referencing to the printed Brown Book.
4. 'Lectures on Philosophy' (this manuscript is 20,352 words long, replete with lecture dates, the first of which is stated to be 'Wedn. Jan 17th [1934]'). It is a series of carefully crafted notes with continuous arguments and strategies that do not correspond to any published narrative.
5. 'Visual Image in his Brain' (comprised of 3,600 words, it was probably a private dictation to Skinner). Refined remarks in lecture note form.
6. 'Lectures on Self-Evidence and Logic' (20,544 words). Almost detailed lecture notes, with evidence of revision prior to its final form. It comprises one term's lectures, with evidence that the manuscript has been crafted and re-shaped in the direction of becoming a unified manuscript. Although it returns to the matter of self-evidence in the *Tractatus* and is concerned to challenge Russell's views on logic and pure mathematics, yet it is not a repeat of earlier views. Rather, it newly develops denial of self-evidence.
7. 'Norwegian Notebook' (4,400 words) in draft form. This was perhaps dictated to Skinner on his visit to Wittgenstein in Norway, while completed in Cambridge.
8. 'A Mathematical Investigation'. This manuscript is entirely constituted of precise unusual forms of calculations. Since it does not obviously have Wittgenstein's hand expressed in it, there is a problem of ascription. Nevertheless, given that it is a component in an Archive that Wittgenstein himself gathered as an expression of his and Skinner's joint work, we should at least allow space for it to be aired. It comprises 12,353 mathematical symbols—without any narrative. It explores matters involving Fermat's Little Theorem. Its deviation from the usual routes of calculation explicitly complements how Wittgenstein's own philosophy exposes unexpected possibilities within the use of 'rules'.
9. An incomplete cyclostyled copy of the Blue Book. It is the only typescript in the Archive. Significantly, it ends prematurely, roughly at the same point as a later Skinner handwritten copy.



*Thouless's copy of the Blue Book displays Skinner's revision 'to speak about philosophy', with Wittgenstein's own handwriting also on the same page.*

This last on the list is the least significant member of the Archive, though it signals a route to a research pathway. The Trinity College archivist, Jonathan Smith, who deals with its Wittgenstein Collections, has written a pioneering chapter on the Blue Book: 'Wittgenstein's Blue Book: Reading Between the Lines' in Venturinha, N (2013) [The Textual Genesis of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations](#) Routledge, analysing another newly discovered typed copy of the Blue Book given by Wittgenstein to Robert Thouless, recently acquired by Trinity College. This is highly annotated by Wittgenstein, and it has revisions in Skinner's handwriting. For example, Skinner's hand presents a revision "to speak about philosophy", with Wittgenstein also including other changes (see image). Throughout the Archive there is a complex role for such interaction between Wittgenstein and Skinner, no doubt under the former's direction. My analysis of the Archive displays similar handwriting interaction between Wittgenstein and Skinner, but of a more substantial sort. By such means and others, the Archive displays great insights into Wittgenstein's thought processes portrayed by the manuscripts. Not a few of these thought process are concerned, in original ways not published before, with the uses of advanced mathematics and its problems as analogies for the problems of mapping usage in natural languages and in philosophy.



*Professor Arthur Gibson (Jesus College 1970–73) is based in the Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics, Cambridge University. He has just finished preparing the Wittgenstein-Skinner archive manuscripts for his forthcoming book publication Ludwig Wittgenstein Dictating Philosophy: to Francis Skinner.*

This article was first published in 'Philosophy at Cambridge', Issue 10, May 2013 and reproduced with permission of the the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Cambridge.

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## Conferences

### BWS in 2014

#### **Sixth BWS Annual Conference: Wittgenstein and Epistemology**

To take place at the University of Edinburgh  
Professor Duncan Pritchard

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## Wittgenstein around the world

### Chinese Wittgenstein Society

We're delighted to learn of the foundation of the Chinese Wittgenstein Society at the International Conference on Wittgenstein and Contemporary Philosophy on 12-13 October at Beijing Normal University, China. You are all welcome to submit papers for this conference. Deadline 30 August - [see details](#).



### New Philosophy Department in Bengal

The Society is always pleased to hear of the success of its members from around the world. We offer our congratulations to Dr. Purbayan Jha on the successful defence of his doctoral thesis on 'Private Language Argument: A Critical Observation after Later Wittgenstein' at the University of North Bengal. Dr. Jha is also a founder member of a new department of philosophy at the [University of Gour Banga](#).



## Wittgenstein Postings

### In the footsteps of Wittgenstein

On 12 June 2013, a group of postgraduation students and staff from the University of Hertfordshire went to Cambridge to walk in Wittgenstein's footsteps. The day included visits to Trinity College (for manuscripts and LW's residence), King's College (for the famous poker incident with Popper), LW's death house in Storey's Way and finally his grave. The day was organised by UH visiting researcher Mark McKergow (pictured with the poker).



*Visit to Trinity library*

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## The Lecture Series

The next in the BWS lecture series are:

[21 May 2014: Professor Charles Altieri](#)

Title: Why Wittgenstein on Expression matters for the Arts,

[Autumn 2014: Professor Gavin Kitching](#)

Title: 'What is the use of my teaching you these techniques...?': Contemporary Wittgensteinian Philosophy and the Really Rough Ground of Politics

All lectures will be followed by a wine reception. These are complimentary, but advance registration is required once the announcement has been sent, so do check back to the website for details.



## Pastures new

We are sorry to have to bid BWS Treasurer Dan Hutto farewell, as he leaves the UK for a post at Wollongong University, Australia -- determined, of course, to found the Australian Wittgenstein Society. Our deepest and warmest thanks go to Dan for his collaboration and support of the BWS since its foundation. We wish him and his family every success in their new life. Dan will, of course, remain in close contact with us.

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## Housekeeping

In the summer, we did a site clean-up to get rid of broken links. This happens because online papers and publications get moved to new venues. Sometimes the authors put a redirect on the old URL, but often they get lost in the ether. Also, academics move to new posts and links to their biographies may become obsolete. Please let us know if information about you or your work changes so we can amend our links.

To unsubscribe or inquire about posting news please email [bws@herts.ac.uk](mailto:bws@herts.ac.uk). Please inform us of changes in your email address so that we can keep our list up to date.

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## BWS Executive Committee



Dr Danièle Moyal-Sharrock, *President*  
University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield, Herts AL10 9AB



Dr Ian Ground, *Secretary*  
The University of Sunderland  
Sunderland  
SR1 3SD



Dr Constantinos Athanasopoulos,  
*Editor*  
Research Affiliate, Department of  
Philosophy  
Open University, UK

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