Welcome to the BWS Newsletter

Our aim is to ensure that Ludwig Wittgenstein’s philosophy continues to play a fertile and creative role in 21st century thought.

The British Wittgenstein Society aspires to provide, through its annual conference and biannual lecture series, a British focal point for research and exchange of ideas among Wittgenstein scholars and students throughout the world.

It also seeks to address, in its conference themes, the many other disciplines (psychology, anthropology, sociology, education sciences, aesthetics etc.) that Wittgenstein’s work has impacted and will continue to impact.
We are delighted to report in this newsletter about our very successful 10th Anniversary Conference. 12 speakers and nearly 60 participants explored the impact of Wittgenstein's thought across a huge range of topics including autism, contemporary politics, education, ethology, philosophy of mind, ethics, and information technology. It was especially pleasing to see so many early career researchers present and engaged. You may gauge for yourself the atmosphere of the event from the participants feedback below. And of course, we are delighted to make videos of most of the sessions on our website. See the link below. We would like to thank our very distinguished speakers, all our participants for their contributions to this very successful conference.

We are now planning our 2018 conference on the philosophy of education to be held in London. Please expect a Call for Papers soon. And in the meantime, we look forward to Ray Monk's sell out talk in London.

With all best wishes

Ian Ground
BWS Vice-President
Participant Impressions
In July, the BWS celebrated its 10th Anniversary with a very successful conference. On this occasion, rather than a formal report, it seems appropriate to give the feedback of participants. Thanks to one and all for their contributions.

I thoroughly enjoyed the conference, and came away with two overriding impressions:

The atmosphere was particularly congenial. Discussions felt serious

I was particularly pleased to see how Wittgenstein’s influence is being felt beyond philosophy, and how it can (and is being) used in a very practical sense. I was, however slightly dispirited to hear it is suffering within philosophy departments.

Bernard Andrews

An incredibly inspiring and open-minded event from beginning to end! Thank you very much.

Katja Behrans

A highly successful and memorable event, proficiently demonstrating the ongoing relevance of Wittgenstein’s thought both for philosophy and for other areas of enquiry, including psychology, primatology and the study of education.

Mik Burley

I thought it was a wonderful celebration of the continued relevance of Wittgenstein across a broad range of disciplines. By day, excellent papers made Wittgenstein’s continued influence crystal clear, before night brought an equally welcome loss of clarity in the friendly atmosphere of the hotel bar.

Rob Chapman

I think Wittgensteinians thrive when presented with stark counter-positions (more so than with in house disputes), I have not been to a conference other than the celebratory one, but I look forward to the inclusion of other non-Wittgensteinian thinkers at the next one.

Thanks to all of the organisers again

Nathan Davies

In terms of range of subjects, quality of speakers, and vigorous engagement of an impressively diverse group of delegates; the BWS 10th Anniversary conference was a resounding success – by any standards. If currently under-rated within current academic Philosophy; it was clear from the relevance of Wittgensteinian ideas and method demonstrated that his thought remains vital, challenging and culturally significant well beyond the introspectively narrow boundaries of professional Philosophy.

Keith Farman

Highlights of this conference for me were the passionate, thoughtful and rigorous talks applying Wittgenstein’s insights to autism (Peter Hobson), non-human primates (Louise Barrett) and ethical theory (Edward Harcourt)

Richard Gipps

Interesting, stimulating and in a friendly atmosphere. Sent me home wanting to learn more about Wittgenstein

Allan Gottlieb
I thought it was an excellent conference with many first-rate papers and lively discussions.

Peter Hacker

It was a highly congenial occasion both philosophically and socially. Various people in the final session (including me) said it was valuable to look outwards and use Wittgenstein in a variety of philosophical connections rather than focusing on narrowly interpretative issues, but I think the substance of the conference also exemplified (one might even say 'showed') the value of so doing.

Edward Harcourt

An event made delightful by the mix of adamant and gentle opinions and their interplay.

Richard Harper

The most stimulating conference yet with an excellent range of papers and discussion and, as always, very sociable.

Susan Harris

The conference was a privileged reminder not only of the unique power of Wittgenstein's insights and approaches but of the value of developing one's abilities to just look, see, (and judge) what is not hidden: and the courage it takes to keep doing this.

Britt Harrison


Peter Hobson

The Society's anniversary celebration of Wittgenstein's philosophy brought together celebrated exponents, demonstrating the merits of careful examination of concepts along with younger voices from a wide range of disciplines applying the methods and insights of the philosopher. I was struck both by the vigor of the tradition and the possibilities for the future.

Liam Hughes

Many of the talks, for example those by a psychiatrist and by an anthropologist, were fine examples of applying Wittgenstein's thinking to other subject areas.

It was fantastic conference, congratulations to the BWS

Tom Joyce

Thanks for a great conference which signals a new start, and an exciting future, for Wittgensteian studies, totally in the open and transformative spirit that attracted us to his philosophy in the first place. Far from analytic conformity, or from a new scholastics, true attention was paid to what matters to us in Wittgenstein's writing and why it matters today.

Sandra Laugier

It’s impossible that any important philosopher in the 21st century can avoid Wittgenstein successfully.

Jing Li

The British Wittgenstein Society conference showcased how Wittgenstein's work continues to impact on philosophy of mind and cognitive science and how relevant Wittgenstein remains for other academic fields, such as primatology. It was an excellent conference and I thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere.
other academic fields, such as primatology. It was an excellent conference and I thoroughly enjoyed it!“

Victor Loughlin

The conference was astonishingly wide-ranging and stimulating, with a wonderful, friendly, inclusive atmosphere.

Ray Monk

Friendly, convivial, and a strong sense of an overall common interest in Wittgenstein unifying all participants that otherwise have very different interests, concerns, and techniques. The old unity-in-difference indeed!

Nigel Pleasants

It was a great refresher for sniffing out nonsense including my own and a reminder that philosophy needs to look OUTWARDS.

Alistair Stewart

The conference was very well organised and greatly intriguing, and presented a brilliant chance for me - an undergraduate - to meet the faces behind the papers and the books

Harry Tappenden

One of the most welcoming, competent and supportive communities I’ve been with so far -- it made for a marvelous experience and sparked many new ideas!

Hannes Wendler

It was very good to listen to speakers from various diverse disciplines applying sensitive understanding of Wittgenstein to their own contemporary subjects and interests.

Carolyn Wilde

The conference opened my eyes to the wide range of fields outside the academy in which Wittgenstein’s philosophical work has an impact that is deeper and wider than ever before.

Constantine Sandis

The conference was the culmination of a rich and successful decade for the BWS. Thanks to all who have contributed along the way, and particularly to the illuminating and engaged speakers and participants of the 2017 anniversary conference!

Daniéle Moyal-Sharrock

10th Anniversary Conference Videos

The BWS is delighted to be able to make talks from the conference available. Please note that some sessions were highly participative and we are unable to show videos of those sessions.

The following videos are available at

http://www.britishwittgensteinsociety.org/news/annual-conference/10-th-anniversary-conference-
Conference Welcome - Ian Ground

Daniele Moyal Shamrock (BWS & Herts) Wittgenstein’s Place

Daniel H. Hutto (Wollongong) Naturalism in the Goldilocks Zone: Wittgenstein’s Delicate Balancing Act

Peter Hobson (UCL) On Wittgenstein, development, and interpersonal understanding: the telling case of autism

Louise Barrett (Lethbridge, Canada) Picturing primates, and looking at monkeys: why Wittgenstein should have more impact on primatology

Michel Bitbol (CNRS, Paris) Mathematical demonstration and experimental activity: a Wittgensteinian philosophy of physics

Richard Harper (Lancaster) in conversation with Constantine Sandis Wittgenstein and Information Communication Technology

Peter Hacker (Oxford) The achievement and legacy of the private language arguments

Edward Harcourt (Oxford) Wittgenstein’s Ethics, Wittgensteinian Ethics, and Ethics after Wittgenstein

Sandra Laugier (Sorbonne, Paris) Wittgenstein and the Social: language, community, and dissent

Paul Standish (UCL) Wittgenstein’s impact on the philosophy of education

Read more.

Thank you Chon! Welcome Adrian!

We are delighted to welcome Adrian Brockless to the BWS Executive Committee. Adrian will be our new BWS Editor, replacing Chon Tejedor who will be on extended leave in Valencia.

We thank Chon for her work in the two years she has been with the committee, and warmly welcome Adrian!
Eighteenth British Wittgenstein Society Lecture

Turing and Wittgenstein on Logic and Mathematics

PROFESSOR RAY MONK

November 6th, 2017
@ 6:15 pm - 8:00 pm
The Bloomsbury Institute, 50 Bedford Square
London WC1B 3DP

Please note that this lecture is now fully booked and no more places are available. We are however keeping a waiting list in case of cancellations.

The BWS cannot guarantee entry for non-registered arrivals.

About the Speaker

Ray Monk FRSL is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southampton, where he has taught since 1992.

He won the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize and the 1991 Duff Cooper Prize for his biography of Wittgenstein, Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius. His interests lie in the philosophy of mathematics, the history of analytic philosophy, and philosophical aspects of biographical writing. His biography of Robert Oppenheimer was published in 2012.

In 2015 he was awarded a Fellowship by the Royal Society of Literature
Nineteenth British Wittgenstein Society Lecture

The Autistic Mind: a Wittgensteinian Account
Robert Chapman

14 May, 2018
@ 6:15 pm - 8:00 pm
The Bloomsbury Institute, 50 Bedford Square
London WC1B 3DP

The BWS cannot guarantee entry for non-registered arrivals.

About the Speaker

Robert Chapman is currently writing a PhD at the University of Essex whilst teaching part-time at King's College London. He primarily works on the philosophy and ethics of autism and neurodiversity, and is working on developing a notion of autistic thriving in his thesis. Beyond the notion of autistic thriving, he draws on feminist philosophy, critical theory, and the phenomenological tradition in order to develop new methods for framing neurodiversity as well to work towards therapeutically dismantling the notion of mental disorder. Beyond his work on neurodiversity, he is also interested in Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, emancipatory politics, and any combination of the above. He mostly teaches ethics but has also taught courses on Wittgenstein, the philosophy of gender, and political thought.
Obituary John V. Canfield (1934-2017)

It is with profound sadness that I must inform you of the death of John V. Canfield, Professor Emeritus at the University of Toronto, on August 6. Professor Canfield was an eminent philosopher of language, philosopher of mind and Wittgenstein scholar. His penetrating intellect, his profound absorption of the key insights of Wittgenstein and of Buddhism; his plain-spoken correctives of such mentalistic conceptions of the human as Chomsky's and Fodor's, have made a unique contribution to philosophy and many other disciplines.

I knew and admired the work before knowing and admiring the man. His deep sensitivity and humanity, always present in his work, were also the first thing that struck you in the man. I first met Jack – as he liked to be called – at the 2003 Wittgenstein Symposium in Kirchberg. The modesty of his soft-spoken voice and his probing, yet unobtrusive eyes, contrasted with the red baseball cap that persisted throughout the week. We became inseparable that week, and close friends thereafter. My husband and I had the privilege of spending a few days in the Toronto home he shared with his wife, Sharon. We will never forget their unbounded hospitality. He had a range and depth in numbers, chess and meditation that I could not fathom.

Professor Canfield taught at the Universities of Colorado and Cornell, and at MIT before joining the University of Toronto in 1967 and retiring in 1995. Only a few weeks before his death, I sent him a paper I'd written for a conference. It relies heavily on his work, particularly on his last book: *Becoming Human: The Development of Language, Self and Self-Consciousness* (2007), and celebrates it as the most compelling account we have of the acquisition of language by the human species and the human individual. I am happy that he was able to see the paper, and be gratified by it. In fact, Canfield's last book is a magnificent culmination of his thought. In it, he critiques, with the boldness and subtlety of a great thinker, the concept of self in our understanding of our humanity. Without losing sight of the mystico-religious, he exposes the 'self' as great mistake we have all somehow foisted upon ourselves; a superfluous appendage in the constitution of the human; and that with it gone, we are finally, authentically, left to ourselves. It is as a philosophical anthropologist that Canfield then retraces the main stages in our journey from hominid to human; and from 'Eden' – the wholly natural state of humanity before the development of a full-blown language. And it is as a philosopher of language and mind that he retraces the child's journey – our individual journeys – into language. Canfield's contribution – his filling in the blank spaces in our understanding of the steps we take towards becoming human; his compelling view of humans as animals among other animals, with no essential difference but only a uniqueness in richness and sophistication of language and culture – is unprecedented and invaluable.

Our warmest thoughts are with his beloved wife, Sharon and their children, Zoe, Betsy, Sean, Edie, Patrick.

Dr. Danièle Moyal-Sharrock

Read more.
Wittgenstein Forum - University of Reading: Fionn O’Donovan (Southampton): Harry Tappenden: Wittgenstein’s treatment of so-called ‘hidden contradictions’

Seminars take place on Tuesdays (weeks 2, 6, 8, 10) at 4.10-6 p.m., in Agric-1L10. All staff and students are welcome to attend.

Read more.

Wittgenstein Forum - University of Reading: Severin Schroeder: God, Lions, and Englishwomen

Seminars take place on Tuesdays (weeks 2, 6, 8, 10) at 4.10-6 p.m., in Agric-1L10. All staff and students are welcome to attend.

Read more.

Click here to add a title or text.

Recent Books

2018

Ascher, Brian McGuinness and Maria Concetta Wittgenstein’s Family Letters Bloomsbury

Peters, Michael A.; Stickney, Jeff A Companion to Wittgenstein on Education: Pedagogical Investigations Springer

2017
Glock, Hans-Johann; Hyman, John A. 
Companion to Wittgenstein Wiley-Blackwell


More books..

Our website is at www.britishwittgensteinsociety.org

The BWS Facebook Page, for informal discussion of Wittgenstein related issues and news has more than 2400 members.
Please follow the BWS on Twitter @BrittWittSoc.

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Your BWS Membership

We are always happy to receive news of Wittgenstein related events, publications and resources.

• Please let us know about events by emailing events@britishwittgensteinsociety.org
• Please let us know about publications by emailing editor@britishwittgensteinsociety.org
• Please let us know about Wittgenstein related links

You must be logged into the BWS site to use these services. Please appreciate we will not be able to post all announcements.
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