

DESCRIPTION OF BRACERS FIELDS

by
KENNETH BLACKWELL
Hon. Russell Archivist

Last updated: 22 Jan. 1990; 1991; 4 March 1995; 26 Nov. 2000; 4 July 2008

All fields are character fields (not varchar); all do not allow null values.

COLL_CODE (6 characters) Allowed BRACERS records to interface with the records of the entire Ready Division. Within Russell Archives, allows distinction among Archives 1 and 2 and Recent Acquisitions, which latter we have identified as RA3. Only 3 characters are needed now. Letters from print sources are RA4.

CLASS_NO (5) The 3-digit classification number assigned to all record series in RA1 and 2. For RA3, the Recent Acquisition number is used. It goes as high as a 5-digit number when the alpha suffix is included. Leading zeros are used for 2-digit numbers in RA3. The first position must be blank or numeric; the last, blank or alpha.

DOCUMENT_NO (8) The 6-digit, unique, incrementing number assigned in principle to every document in RA1 and 2. Some document numbers in RA2 are also followed by 1 or 2 letters of the alphabet. Thus the total field is 8 characters. For documents in RA1 whose folders do not contain their numbers, this field is left blank for the time being. For RA3 this field will be filled in only if document numbers have been assigned (e.g. letters to Constance Malleson) or letter numbers assigned (e.g. letters to Ottoline Morrell). Only the first 6 characters *must* be filled in. The default is 6 zeroes.

BOX_NO (5) To the left of the period is the cabinet side number; to the right, the box number within the cabinet side. A relatively few one- and two-digit numbers (assigned within a class) are still present.

SOURCE_TEXT (40) Used in conjunction with RA3, it indicates an item's provenance. If the source is an institution, we use the ALA list of institutional abbreviations. If an individual, the name is entered, surname first. The field does not allow for indicating whether the item was purchased or donated or any other details, and therefore is not intended to replace the Recent Acquisition accession sheet.

TO/FROM_A_NAME, TO/FROM_B_NAME (45 each) These four fields allow us to record correspondent and recipient names as well as (a) those of a second correspondent and recipient,

or (b) names of an institution or company of a correspondent or recipient. If the letter is catalogued under the corporate name, that name appears in the first field. If a person is writing for an organization, the organization name goes in the first field. If there are more than 2 correspondents for 1 letter, "et al." will have to be used (or a 2nd screen).

Names were to be entered conforming to the general standards set down by Research Collections, modified by us and communicated to them. Names were to be asterisked at their end if they are inferred (e.g. from Dear Sir, My Lord, Darling, etc.). There must be no doubt as to the identity of the correspondent before the asterisk can be omitted, e.g. Stanley Unwin from "Dear Unwin". If there is doubt the name was to be followed by "(?)*". Even if some form of the name appears, the asterisk is necessary except in special cases, like Stanley Unwin. This use of asterisks was found to interfere with searching and the issuing of reports, and was discontinued.

The standard form of the name will be used in all cases. It is not necessarily what appears on the letter. A letter with a typed signature is not a signed letter. Although it would be ideal to make use of MORRIS as an authority file, the number of hits would be small as most letter-writers are not book authors. An authority (or consistency) file to standardize the individual form of entries is available from data inputted as the Distinct Names query. This file is available on the Web page for the Russell Archives. In 1997 a beginning was made on improving consistency in the name fields as a result of the Distinct Names query.

DATE_TEXT (13) Here we record the date on the document. There is room to indicate whether the date comes from a postmark, indicated by a "P" (records 0000014–19 only). Supplied dates and partial dates will be indicated by the use of an asterisk at the end of the date. If there is no date, indicate the fact by "N.D." Qualifiers can follow, e.g. "FRI" (there's only one, at 0000062).

ENCL_REF_TEXT (40) This field describes any enclosures with the letter being catalogued. They are briefly indicated as to what they are, e.g. essay, clipping, photo. A physical format is not given (e.g. typescript) and the number of sheets is not included in the Pieces count. The use of this field for Reference purposes is dormant. The idea is to link a reply to the letter it answers; there is provision for referencing other copies of the same document, as with Dictation, typed copies made at Russell's behest, and RA2 multiple carbons.

FORM_TEXT (12) Records the physical form of the document. Uses our abbreviation list. If the document is not an original, a parenthetical modifier must be added to the description indicating whether it is a photocopy, "(X)", or a microfilm, "(M)".

PIECES_NO (3) This field records the number of pieces of paper that make up each document. This is the count that matters most for security. It is usually equivalent to "sheets" on the archival folders. Since the purpose is to reflect the original document, a single photocopy containing images of two separate pieces of paper counts as two pieces, and photocopies of the recto and

verso of the same piece of paper would count as one. Envelopes are to be included in this count if they belong to the letter being described, but we note them separately, with “E” immediately following the number of pieces as in “1E”. Enclosures are never included in the count.

ADDRESS_CODE (3) This field records only BR’s address and is taken from letters written by him. No other addresses are to be recorded. Fresh alphabetized lists of abbreviations used can be printed out using the Address and Date Range query. The list is also in a WordPerfect table, connecting the 3-digit abbreviation to the full address, and providing a sort on addresses as well.

When inputting records, the operator uses only address codes from the list. If a new address code is needed, it will be made up (following procedures listed below) and entered on the WordPerfect list. In the case of London, “L” represents London followed by an abbreviation representing a specific address in that city. No other abbreviation code should begin with “L”, so that all London addresses may be retrieved easily from the system. If a specific address is not known, then the “LON” abbreviation will be used. Outside of London but still in the U.K., addresses can be given as either houses, hotels or towns/cities. When BR is writing on a train (“TRN”) or a ship (“SHP”), the address will reflect that. In countries other than the U.K., we have the following options for his address: the country, state/province, city, hotel, name of house. We do not ordinarily make a hotel-specific address for letters written on his lecture tours.

PUBLISHED_TEXT (40) This field will record whether a letter has been published and, if so, where. If the answer is definitely negative, the field should be filled in with an “N”. If it is affirmative, and the letter was published in the *Autobiography* or another of BR’s books, the Blackwell–Ruja *Bibliography of Bertrand Russell* number for the item is used, prefaced by “B&R” if needed. Only the first instance of publication will be shown in this field. If the letter has been published by another author, the title of the work will be given. If the title is too long for the field, an alphabetic code and list will have to be prepared. In these cases some bibliographic details must be given in order that the published version can be located. Only letters published substantially in full will be represented in this field. When the operator is in doubt as to publication and further research is needed, “R needed” should be entered in this field so it will appear on our printed reports.

LAST_CHANGED_DATE (8) Filled in by the db2 programme, this date stamp is most useful for “edit reports” in checking entries made over a given period and for proofs of daily input. The field was updated to avoid Y2K problems.

RECORD_NO (7) The record number is unique and unchanging. Records that are deleted mean permanently deleted record numbers. (Since mid-2001 there are 1,051 deleted records.) The uniqueness of the record number provides a means of making cross-references in the ENCL_REF_TEXT field. A separate table keeps track of the last record_no used.

TOPIC_TEXT (5,200, or 65 per line for up to 80 lines) At first a controlled vocabulary, or thesaurus, was tried for the indication of topics, but the available labour was insufficient. The text of some letters to Lady Ottoline was entered here (sometimes running over to 1 or 2 more full records), as were K. Blackwell's notes on the Morrell, Malleson, D. Russell, A. Russell, and Dictation files. The cataloguer and the reviser use the field for notes about unusual features of the letters as well as an indication of content. Line endings had to be watched until the input-screen changes of 2008, as each line is a different record in the RA_Topic_Text table.

LINE_NO (4) This is the line number in the mainframe's Topic_Text table. It is not used in the public BRACERS, since the lines are concatenated in FileMaker Pro.

REEL_NO (4) The original reel, or roll, number of the preservation microfilm is meant. The fourth position is alpha.

FRAME_NO (4) The number is the beginning image number of the letter in the scans made from the preservation microfilm.