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THE ROTHSCHILD ARCHIVE

REVIEW OF THE YEAR APRIL 2009 TO MARCH 2010

The Rothschild Archive Trust

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Front cover

Panoramic views of Moscow.

Lithograph, c.1865.

Front cover: *Palais Nikolaiensky, au Kremlin.*

Back cover: *Église de St Basile, vue du Kremlin.*

A set of these lithographs was collected by Leopold de Rothschild (1845–1917) on his European travels, and included in the volume ‘Stray Leaves From My Journey, 1867’, together with photographs and prints of other European cities. This volume was part of a large accession of important family papers deposited with The Rothschild Archive in 2009 by Sir Evelyn de Rothschild. The collection, formerly held at Ascott House, includes family photograph albums, testimonials, diaries, notebooks and personal correspondence. For further information about this collection, see *Principal acquisitions 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010* in this Review.
[RAL.000/2019]

Introduction

Eric de Rothschild, Chairman of The Rothschild Archive Trust

In its second decade of existence The Rothschild Archive Trust continues to make progress towards its objective of serving as a major educational and research resource in the United Kingdom and internationally. Our reading room in London welcomed scores of researchers from all over the world, the staff of the Archive answered hundreds of enquiries, and thousands of documents were accessed via the website, www.rothschildarchive.org

2010 sees the 200th anniversary of the signing of the first partnership agreement, which underpinned the development of the Rothschild banks throughout the nineteenth century. The Trust itself has developed some important partnerships within the research community as it promotes the importance of the collection to the academic world. The research project, Jewish Philanthropy and Social Development in Europe, the progress of which has been reported in previous issues of the *Review*, was rated ‘outstanding’, the highest rate, by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the major funder of the project. Partnerships with the AHRC are continuing through the Collaborative Doctoral Award Scheme, managed together with the Centre for Contemporary British History. Looking forward, we eagerly anticipate the Rothschild Archive Lecture by Emma Rothschild at the beginning of 2012, when the new Rothschild building is occupied.

The Archive continues to develop, thanks to the generous donations of material from members of the Rothschild family. The Trustees are enormously grateful to all donors, especially Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, Renée Robeson, Charlotte Lane, Charles Lane, Rozsika Parker, Nelly Munthe, Elisabeth de Rothschild and Nathaniel de Rothschild for their support in this way.

Rothschild Archive Bursaries are available for researchers engaged in full-time academic pursuits and committed to research projects which will involve substantial use of The Rothschild Archive. Two of the recipients have written about their research for this issue of the *Review*: Kathryn Boodry, who worked on the extensive records in our collections in London and Roubaix relating to business in America and the global trade in the nineteenth century, and Lisa-Maria Tillian, whose research was inspired by a recent acquisition of papers by the Archive. A further bursary was awarded to Simona Malá, who is basing her PhD on the German-language diaries of Charlotte, Baroness Lionel de Rothschild (1819–1884).

The richness of the archives of the Paris bank, de Rothschild Frères, continues to be uncovered, thanks to the work of our own staff and no less to the efforts of the archivists at the Archives Nationales du Monde du Travail, Roubaix, where our collection is currently housed.

Justin Cavernelis-Frost was appointed Archivist in June 2009, joining the Director, Melanie Aspey, and the small, dedicated and highly professional staff we have in the Archive. I wish to express my thanks to them for their invaluable contribution to the success of the Trust. In 2010 John Grimond accepted our invitation to join the board and we are grateful to him for his enthusiasm for the Archive and the objectives of the Trust.

A final recognition of invaluable partnerships must be to the supporters of the Archive: N M Rothschild & Sons Limited, Rothschild & Cie Banque, Les Domaines Barons de Rothschild (Lafite), La Fondation Maurice et Noémie de Rothschild and GFA (Château Mouton). I thank all of them most warmly on behalf of all the Trustees.

Lithograph of Moscow:
Vue des Cathedrales au Kremlin
from ‘Stray Leaves From
My Journey’ collected by
Leopold de Rothschild on
his summer travels, 1867.
RAL 000/2019

Review of the Year's Work

Melanie Aspey, Director of The Rothschild Archive

Research

Research lies at the core of the Trust's activities and during the year the staff of the Archive has continued to promote the collections to new audiences. In the current calendar year, the Archive has organised and hosted two special events: 'Meet the Archivists' and a workshop entitled 'Spreading the Net'.

'Meet the Archivists' is an initiative developed together with other City archivists to encourage students embarking on post-graduate degrees to find out more about potential archival sources, particularly those in the City and in the business sector in general. Over thirty participants attended the event which began with lectures from Professor Peter Scott of Reading University and Dr Valerie Johnson of The National Archives on research techniques. Students then had the opportunity to discuss their research plans with archivists representing banking, insurance, retail and communication business companies.

'Spreading the Net' brought together researchers who had worked at the Archive, all of them on different aspects of the collection but with similar research agendas. The German Historical Institute London and the University of Düsseldorf were partners in the organisation of this event.

Around one hundred individuals worked in the Reading Room in London on a broad range of subjects, including loan contracts with the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, Greek loans and trade with Greece, territory conflict in Brazil, the economic history of Mexico, the trade in US commodities in the nineteenth century, the collections of Max von Goldschmidt-Rothschild, Isaac d'Israeli's library, the history of Bapst jewellers, the dancing of Martha Graham, Béatrice de Rothschild and the Villa Ephrussi, and the plant hunters funded by Lionel de Rothschild.

Other researchers used the collections remotely, accessing the thousands of documents that have been published on the Rothschild Archive Research Forum. The use of the Forum continues to increase in line with the addition of more materials and greater awareness of this resource.¹

Collaborative Doctoral Awards

The Archive and the Centre for Contemporary British History (CCBH) were awarded funding under the AHRC's Collaborative Awards scheme for three PhD posts beginning in three years from October 2008. The first award was to Michele Blagg, who is working on the history of the Royal Mint Refinery, and who contributed an article to the last *Review* about her research. The second award has been made to Nicola Pickering, who will study the development of the Rothschild family's landholding, estate development and collections policy in the Vale of Aylesbury. She writes about her subject on pages 47–52.

Acquisitions

During the year under review, the Archive was again fortunate to receive a number of significant accessions of material from many sources including N M Rothschild & Sons Limited, members of the Rothschild family and other individual depositors. A small number of items were purchased at auction.

Volume containing the
City Elector's List, 1847,
From the Partners Room,
New Court.
RAL 000/2027

The accessions were varied in content and format. Notable items include a large transfer of family archives from Ascott House, the latest in a series of accessions arranged by Sir Evelyn de Rothschild and Mrs Renée Robeson which have featured in previous issues of this *Review*.

A weighty volume, formerly kept in the Partners Room of N M Rothschild & Sons and transferred to the Archive from the bank's Corporate Records Department, has proved to be a rarity. Its contents consist of printed sheets laid out to record in manuscript and in alphabetical order the names – 10,000 or so – of all voters in the parliamentary election for the City of London in July 1847. While electoral registers list the names of those entitled to vote, poll books (such as this) record how votes were cast. The 1847 election was the one in which Lionel de Rothschild (1808–1879) first stood as Liberal representative for the City, the beginning of a campaign which took eleven years to succeed. Research by Victor Gray has revealed how rare it is for poll books to survive. No parliamentary poll book for the City of London appeared until now to have survived after the 1832 Reform Act: the largest collection – of 800 – kept in the Guildhall Library, was destroyed by bombing in 1940. The new discovery is therefore important, first, as a unique survival, but also for the information it provides to political historians: its listing of every person entitled to vote in the City and what it tells us about how the support for Lionel and his Liberal colleagues was made up and how the political parties tried to make use of this information.

Register No.	NAME AND ADDRESS.	HUSKEL PATTISON LAWRENCE MARTIN JOHNSON BASTARD BEVAN FRISWELL PAYNE
R 12311	Cockrell, Daniel 11 Crossway, Blackfriars	1 1 1 1
R 17169	George 65 Fleet Street	1 1 1 1
R 12117	Jos. Joseph 57 St. James Street	1 1 1
R 35119	Jos. Miller 21 Whitehall, Mansworth	1 1 1 1
R 12215	John 8 Austin Friars	1
R 2110	Cockerton, Christopher 15 Whitechapel Lane, Whitechapel	1 6 0 0
R 12219	Joseph Dow 2 Austin Friars	1 1 1 1
R 14120	Cockett, Charles 26 Aldermanbury	1 1 1 1
R 14123	Cockin, J. Baker 5, Milk Street	1 1 1 1
R 2119	Cockmans, William 17, Cross Street, St. Dunstons	1 1 1 1
R 141577	Cockle, Richard 6, 1/2 St. Christopher Lane	1 1 1 1
R 15198	Cockle, Joseph 23 Newgate Street	1 1 1 1
R 2113	Cocks, John 98 London Wall	1 1 1 1
R 15979	Cocks, John 21 Wren C. Kilburn	1 1 1 1 em
R 12512	Cocksworth, David Crossway, Blackfriars	1 1 1 1
R 3014	Codner, William Cross Street, Leamington	1 1 1 1
R 15339	Coffey, Thomas 1 Warwick Square	1 1 1 1
R 15963	Cogger, John 61, 1/2 Farringdon Street	1 1 1 1
R 2522	Cogger, J. Payne 22 Lambeth Square	1 1 1 1 em
R 19056	Cotton, Barnett 11 Abchurch Buildings	1 1 1 1
R 19057	Cotton, Barnett 6 Abchurch Lane	1 1
R 5815	Coyman, 3 Church Alley	1 1 1 1
R 19058	Dan 113, Newmarket Street	1
R 52150	Clas 27 Burg Street	1
R 9566	Clayton 4, 1/2 St. Dunstons	1 1 1 1
R 30141	Clayton 41, 1/2 Lane Street	1 1 1 1
R 19060	Clayton 21, 1/2 Newmarket Square	1 1 1 1
R 19061	Clegg 136, Newmarket Street	1 1 1 1 em
R 3279	Clegg 42, Duke Street	1 1 1 1
R 19062	Clegg 33, Cutler Street	1 1 1 1
R 15190	Coleman Samuel 4, 1/2 New Court	
R 12072	Cole Samuel 1, 1/2 Cross Street	
R 1997	Coleman Abraham 4, 1/2 Cross Street	
R 1905	Coleman Andrew 38, 1/2 Cross Street	
R 20000	Coleman Benjamin 4, 1/2 Cross Street	
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Portrait of Rozsika
Rothschild (1870–1940)
née Wertheimstein by
de Laszlo. Oil on board,
c.1910.
RAL 000/1983

The children of the late Miriam Rothschild, DBE, FRS, made a gift to the Archive of a painting of Miriam's mother, Rozsika, by the artist Philip de Laszlo.

Over sixty new publications were added to the Archive's library. A number of titles are pertinent to the theme of the research project on Jewish philanthropy, such as the account of the Rothschild sanatorium in Nordrach during the period of National Socialism (presented by the author Uwe Schellinger); the children's asylum in Göstling (presented by Julia Demmer, whose article about the subject of her book appeared in last year's issue of the *Review*) and publications about the Clementine hospital in Frankfurt and the Evelina hospital in London, both named after and founded by members of the Rothschild family.¹

Rothschild estates and collections were represented in a number of publications, among them the first volume of *Waddesdon Miscellanea* on the Duc de Choiseul, a guide to Ascott House in Buckinghamshire edited by John Martin Robinson and others and a description by Norbert Parguel of the Villa Victoria at Grasse, the estate of Alice de Rothschild, which appeared in *Nice Historique: Organe Officiel de l'Academia Nissarda*. All three publications appeared in 2009.

Visitors

A small number of visits to the Archive by special interest groups have taken place this year. In January 2010 the archivists hosted a seminar for students on an M. A. programme run by The Photographer's Gallery and Birkbeck School of Extra-Mural Studies as part of their 'Investigating the Archives' course. Members of the Judaica Libraries Group made a second visit to learn more about the Archive's collections.

Outreach

In conjunction with the Austrian Cultural Forum the Archive hosted an evening lecture by Professor Dr Rudolf Agstner on the Austrian and Austro-Hungarian consulates in the United Kingdom. Professor Agstner is an authority on the history of the development of the consular system on which he has written numerous articles and books. His lecture at the Archive and his account on page 27 of this *Review* reveal the extensive service of members of the Rothschild family and their circle in several European cities.

The Archive prepares regular small exhibitions based on its collections on topical and seasonal themes, which are on display in the Reading Room and the premises of the bank. Some of the themes this year were the banking houses of the five Rothschild brothers, the history of Rothschild business in Japan, collections of silver made by members of the Rothschild family, Rothschild estates in Europe, Austrian Consuls General, horse-racing, and the Rothschild family and businesses during the world wars.

Archive education

As in previous years the Archive arranged group visits for students on the postgraduate archive training courses at University College London and the University of Wales at Aberystwyth. As in recent years the Archive also hosted individual student placements from these courses. Natalie Broad, who took up a temporary post as Archive Assistant in November 2009, secured a place on the postgraduate training course at UCL beginning in September 2010.

Research projects

Dr Peter Mandler, one of the Trust's Academic Advisers and a member of the Academic Advisory Committee of the research project 'Jewish Philanthropy and Social Development in Europe 1800–1940: the case of the Rothschilds', was one of the organisers of the International Conference of the Council for European Studies which took place in Montreal in April 2010. At the invitation of Dr Mandler, members of the Philanthropy Project presented papers at the conference. Dr Klaus Weber and Dr Ralf Roth organised a session entitled 'European Jewish Entrepreneurs: Global Business and Local Charitable Commitment, 1860–1919' in which Dr Céline Leglaive-Perani spoke on *Men and Women in French and British Jewish Philanthropy 1860–1939*, Dr Roth on *All About Metal Trade, Railroads, and How to Solve the Social Question: Frankfurt's Global Players Wilhelm Merton and Charles Hallgarten, 1860–1916* and Dr Weber on *Diamonds and Hospitals: Imperial Dimensions of Anglo-Jewish Philanthropy, 1885–1920*. A paper by Dr Tobias Brinkmann, who participated in the project's conference in Cambridge in July 2009, also formed part of the session.

Dr Weber took part in two seminars in Japan also in April on the subject of 'Welfare and Philanthropy, Europe and Asia compared'. He presented papers entitled *Studies on the Western Welfare State: A Historiographic Overview* and *Mandatory Welfare and Private Charity in Europe: The Example of Jewish Philanthropy (19th & 20th centuries)*. The seminars were organised by Professor Shusaku Kanazawa, University of Kyoto, and supported by the Centre for International Research on the Japanese Economy (CIRJE), Faculty of Economics, University of Tokyo.

Dr Weber presented the collection of essays resulting from the project at a seminar held at the Institut für die Geschichte der europäischen Juden (Hamburg).²

Discussions have begun with colleagues at the Natural History Museum in London to consider future collaborative ventures on the collections of Rothschild scientists held by both institutions and elsewhere. Plans for a major research project based on the collections at the Archive in London and Roubaix which reveal the nature and extent of the involvement of the Rothschild banks in American trade and finance during the nineteenth century first took shape this year.³ Kathryn Boodry's article on page 13 analyses the approach taken by the Rothschild banks to this part of their business.

During the course of the coming year and into the summer of 2011 the staff of the Archive will be preparing to move into purpose-built accommodation on the site of New Court, the address first chosen for the bank in London by Nathan Mayer Rothschild in 1809. When the Archive settled into its current premises in August 1999, the Trust had just been established to care for the records of N M Rothschild & Sons and for the small number of collections that had been deposited with the bank's archive department by some members of the Rothschild family. Since then the collection has almost doubled in size, thanks in large part to the transfer of the records of the Paris bank, de Rothschild frères, from the family to the Trust although it remains housed in the Archives Nationales du Monde du Travail in Roubaix. The collection, which was always of interest to users beyond banking and financial historians, has become even more diversified with the acquisition of new material from many branches of the Rothschild family.⁴ The staff of the Archive is committed to making the collection relevant to a wide range of researchers and looks forward to the opportunities created by some of the partnerships formed over the last years – with colleagues, archivists, academics, researchers and friends – to fulfil this most challenging and rewarding task.

NOTES

- 1 Uwe Schellinger, Rolf Oswald, Egbert Hoferer, *Deportiert aus Nordrach. Das Schicksal der letzten jüdischen Patientinnen und Angestellten des Rothschild – Sanatoriums*; Julia Demmer, *Das Kinderasyl 1878–1945. Erziehung und Lebenserinnerungen ehemaliger Zöglinge an das Rothschild'sche Kinderasyl in Götting an der Ybbs*; Bürgerhospital Frankfurt, *Rund ums Uhr Türmchen und die Clementine Bürgerhospital Frankfurt*; Wendy Mathews, *My Ward: The story of St. Thomas, Guy's and the Evelina Children's Hospitals and their ward names*.
- 2 Rainer Liedtke & Klaus Weber, *Religion und Philanthropie in der europäischen Zivilgesellschaft* (Cologne: Ferdinand Schoeningh 2009.)
- 3 A joint conference with the Program in Early American Economy and Society will be held at the Library Company of Philadelphia in the Spring of 2012.
- 4 Further details of new acquisitions made each year will be found on the final pages of each issue of the *Review*.



Packets of files of N M Rothschild & Sons containing correspondence and telegrams with Kuhn, Loeb & Co, 1930s, awaiting appraisal.

‘A mystery to the future historian...’? August Belmont and the Atlantic Trade in Cotton 1837–1865

Kathryn Boodry explores how the House of Rothschild and the financier August Belmont spearheaded a new phase of enterprise in America.



In a letter to the London house in 1863 August Belmont commented acerbically: ‘It will always remain a mystery to the future historian to explain the sympathy which a large portion of civilized Europe gave in the nineteenth century to a rebellion the principal aspect of which was the extension & perpetuation of the odious system of slavery.’¹ Belmont’s disingenuous claim belies the fact that he, like most agents of Anglo-American financial houses, was well aware that the American Civil War, at least in part, was about the revenue generated from agricultural goods produced in the south. Tobacco, sugar, cotton and rice, all commodities produced in the southern United States with slave labour, were vital exports for the emergent nation. After 1815, the United States was the largest producer, and Great Britain the largest consumer of American cotton.² The economic undercurrents that influenced political allegiances during the Civil War were well understood in the nineteenth century, particularly by merchants and bankers, as was noted in *Punch*:

Tho’ with the North we sympathize,
It must not be forgotten
That with the South we’ve stronger ties
Which are composed of Cotton.³

In the nineteenth century cotton literally wove together an Atlantic world of factors, agents, merchants, financiers, slaves, stevedores and spinners. It was a vital source of revenue for northern coffers and no doubt coloured perceptions of the need to ‘preserve the union.’ Trade in cotton also fostered the development of sophisticated financial relationships between the southern United States, New York and London. After a brief summary of August Belmont’s history with the congeries of Rothschild houses, this article will consider his operations in cotton on behalf of the Rothschilds in the context of the Anglo-American trade in American cotton in the antebellum period, as well as the approach of the Paris and London houses to business in the United States.

Belmont’s association with the Rothschild firm began humbly with his apprenticeship to the Frankfurt house at fourteen, his primary responsibilities being sweeping floors and polishing the furniture in the office. He moved up the ranks quickly, becoming a private clerk and, eventually, secretary.⁴ In 1837 Amschel von Rothschild sent Belmont to Cuba to investigate the repercussions of the first Carlist War for Rothschild interests in the region. Arriving in New York in May en route to Havana, Belmont found himself in the midst of a financial panic of global proportions that some writers have attributed in part to over-speculation in southern cotton.⁵ He was instructed by the London house to remain in New York ‘for the present time...’ since he would ‘have more opportunity for protecting our interests in New York in receiving our property from Messrs Josephs & sons’, ‘who had suspended payments two months previously’.⁶ Belmont instead decided to settle in the city and establish his own agency, much to the chagrin of both the London and Paris houses. Baron James de Rothschild concluded that

Above
August Belmont.
www.picturehistory.com

'he is a stupid young man.... Such an ass needs to be kept on a short leash.'⁷ This assessment served to colour the firm's relations with Belmont for the duration of his tenure. Nevertheless, Belmont became the American agent representing the London and Paris houses and August Belmont & Co. continued in the role in the United States until 1922.⁸

Feckless and irresponsible as Belmont's behaviour might have appeared, he was wise beyond his years at twenty-three. He understood that remaining in the United States was a unique chance to better his position in the world, and was savvy enough to comprehend how the various markets functioned.⁹ Within three years of his arrival, he was reputed to be one of the wealthiest men in New York, as well as one of the most important bankers in the country, known as 'the king of the money changers' because of his mastery of arbitrage trading.¹⁰ Belmont went on to serve as the Austrian Consul from 1844–1850 and the Ambassador to The Hague in 1853. Additionally, he held various offices in the Democratic National party.

Initially the Rothschilds' involvement in American markets had revolved around the transport and sale of quicksilver, as well as investment in state and municipal bonds. Soon after Belmont's arrival he became intrigued by seemingly more profitable financial ventures with which to entice his employers, including speculation in commodities produced with slave labour, like sugar, tobacco and cotton. Given the recent financial panic, and shortage of money, there was plenty of room to do business if one had cash to hand, as Belmont noted early on: 'I think that the coming season will give opportunity to a safe and lucrative business... perhaps more as than [*sic*] in any previous one... the prices of cotton will average low and comparatively few houses will probably be able to accept large consignments...'¹¹ Belmont had enough confidence to believe he could eliminate, or minimise, the inevitable risk involved in these speculative ventures, and a more enthusiastic estimation of potential profits than was likely shared by his employers.

It was no secret that cotton was an increasingly lucrative commodity and that the triangular trade between southern ports, New York and Liverpool could be fantastically profitable. The difficulty was that the trade was also incredibly volatile, involving not only speculation in the commodity but often in bill discounting, arbitrage trading and the advance of credit against future crops that was part and parcel of the business.¹² The erratic nature of commercial operations was exacerbated by the fact that entry into the world of cotton speculation was relatively simple. This made it very difficult for anyone to control or dominate trade in the article, and no firm ever managed to control much more than 15% of the market in the antebellum period.¹³ More people speculating in the commodity increased volatility, so timing was often crucial. It was most advantageous to enter the market after panics, when money was scarce, prices were low and competition was minimal, as Belmont pointed out to his employers in both Paris and London on numerous occasions, often playing one against the other.

The Paris house has some idea of accepting consignments of cotton during the next season. I think that no more precipitous time could be selected. The low prices of cotton and the want of competition will allow those who come early in the market to make their own conditions...¹⁴

Unfortunately, Belmont was apparently ignorant of the almost daily communications between the London and Paris houses and this weakened the persuasiveness of some of his appeals considerably.

The Rothschilds had other views on cotton, their thoughts coloured by different assessments of risk. Baron James de Rothschild advised his nephews in London around this time, 'all the people are speculating on cotton which will now be sold at any price and we will have to consider very carefully whether we do in fact want to get so deeply involved in the American business.'¹⁵ James was well aware of the volatility in the market and his assessment of it was quite prescient. It has been suggested by some historians that the Rothschilds failed to take

Opposite

Detail from a bill of exchange. The bill forms part of the collection of documents relating to the period when N M Rothschild was Banker to the US Government in Europe. RAL 11/46/0A

Opposite, below

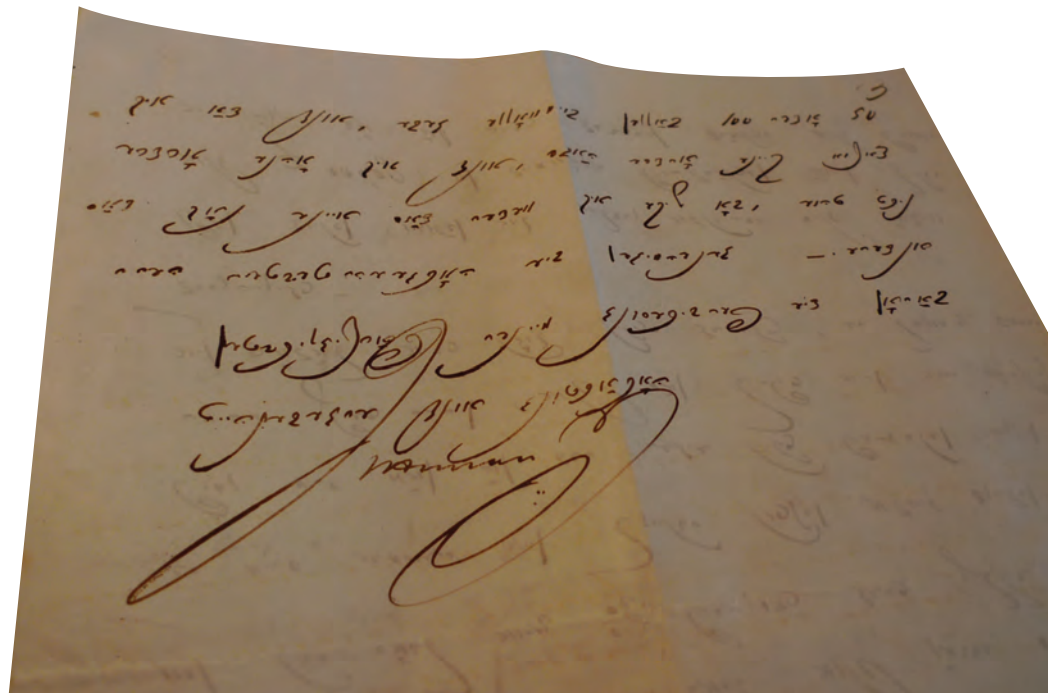
Final page of a letter from J Hanau, New Orleans, 12 February 1844, to James de Rothschild Paris. Hanau, the agent of the Rothschild businesses, discusses the market in cotton and other commodities. He concludes the letter, 'I wanted to send some lead to Antwerp but the Captain will only take it if I give him 50 or 100 bales of cotton but as I do nothing without any orders I send neither one nor the other.'

The Rothschild archives, Roubaix, AQ132 60P



advantage of opportunities in America. However a more considered view of their involvement in financial ventures in the nineteenth-century United States reveals a thoughtful and cautious approach that, although it did not yield extravagant profit, also avoided catastrophic losses, which fits very well with an end goal of wealth preservation.¹⁶ Part of their hesitation around investments in American ventures can undoubtedly be attributed to their frequently acrimonious relationship with Belmont, but much of it was probably a matter of simple prudence, or avoidance of what they perceived to be an unacceptable level of risk. The inherent instability of operations in cotton was well understood by all the major Anglo-American houses. After the panic of 1837 some of them, most notably Alexander Brown and Sons, the firm most active in the consignment and sale of cotton, resolved to reduce their involvement in the commodity and focus on specie-based transactions and discounting bills, effectively transforming themselves from merchants to bankers.¹⁷ In light of the precarious nature of the trade and the financial position of the respective houses it is reasonable to assume that Nathan's sons in particular abided by his dictum that 'it requires a great deal of boldness, and a great deal of caution, to make a great fortune; and when you have got it, it requires ten times as much wit to keep it.'¹⁸ Speculation in cotton was simply not as enticing when the preservation of wealth was given precedence over the potential of high returns.

In retrospect, it is clear that the advice Belmont proffered on cotton investments was often, but not always, sound. His letters display a thorough consideration of the complex influences at play in determining supply, demand and pricing and an astute grasp of the play of larger regional and geographic interests. Belmont often considered commodity sales, the abundance or scarcity of money, and political events when determining what investments were most likely to yield 'handsome profits' and was quick to scold when his advice was not followed and profit forfeited as a result. He also anticipated the effects that sales, or lack thereof, would have in other markets. 'The effect of the heavy transactions in cotton at the southern markets is beginning to be felt upon exchanges & I think that henceforth the export of specie to Europe will be on a small scale until next spring.'¹⁹ He goes on to note that exchange has already dropped in New Orleans and that, in this instance, the London house lost out on a handsome profit by not giving him permission to act. Even Betty de Rothschild begrudgingly acknowledged Belmont's detailed understanding of the American markets, stating that 'he knows inside-out all the country's resources; he holds the key to all the wheeling and dealing in the commercial world and he knows which sources to tap, which are the means of success, which are also the pitfalls that must be avoided.'²⁰ Much of this knowledge was hard earned, the result of years of hard work and time invested in the cultivation of business relationships in the North and South.



Belmont was also compelled to master quickly many of the difficulties attendant on trade in cotton, and by extension, stocks, bonds and discount paper. Planters were often cash hungry and capable of all types of crafty tricks in order to increase their profits, resulting in the need to evaluate critically all reports from the South. Southern planters were often deeply in debt. In part this was a result of the rhythms of the plantings and harvests, but it also had much to do with the nature of plantation life. The planter would spend profits, potential profits and future profits in the relentless quest for more slaves and land to grow more commodities.²¹ And with good reason; this type of investment yielded greater production, prestige and political power. 'To sell cotton in order to buy negros – to make more cotton to buy more negros 'ad infinitum,' is the aim and direct tendency of all the operations of the thorough going cotton planter; his soul is wrapped up in the pursuit.'²² The wisest of agents and cotton merchants learned when a healthy dose of scepticism was warranted, developing an intimate sense of weather, borrowing and sale patterns throughout the cotton belt. Additionally they cultivated information networks across the region, often receiving daily reports from correspondents. In years when there was an expectation of a large crop, knowledge of which pushed prices downward, planters would sometimes spread rumours of frost striking the plants, or hold back the cotton in hopes of diminishing expectations of the yield and driving up the price. Invariably Belmont would pass on the reports of these erratic and spontaneous outbreaks of frigid weather, noting when he had 'not much belief' in the veracity of the accounts.²³

A hearty measure of caution was called for in markets that were often ruled by manic spending and irrational decisions. Default and suspension of payments were common. Planters frequently leveraged themselves to the hilt, incurring debts of such magnitude that repayment was simply impossible. Often these debts were securitised using real property, which in this time and place meant both plantations and human chattel – slaves.²⁴ When planters were unable to pay, the end result was a loss of slaves or the entire plantation for the planter and a highly resented lock-up of funds for the imprudent creditor. In this way, many Anglo-American houses, including the Browns, found themselves reluctant plantation owners. In the case of Alexander Brown and Sons, they ended up in the unenviable position of running these plantations for a period of years before they were able to sell them, eventually, for a profit.²⁵ The Paris house narrowly averted a similar fate in 1841 upon the death of John Forsyth, a former United States senator and Secretary of State. Forsyth was also a planter, to whom the Rothschilds had extended substantial credit. In settling his accounts his son found the estate unable to offer immediate remuneration in cash and instead suggested the firm accept the plantation and several slaves as payment at what was perceived to be a very favourable valuation of the property. This was refused out of hand, the Paris house opting to wait until 1850 for the payment of the debt in full.²⁶ Both houses assiduously avoided using slaves or plantations to securitise debts, which reduced their vulnerability to the volatility in Southern credit markets. On the one occasion when they might have ended up holding chattel property they opted to wait patiently for payment, losing access to their capital for nine years, but keeping their hands (relatively) clean.²⁷

Together, all of these factors resulted in a steep learning curve and suggest yet another reason the Rothschilds may have opted against the establishment of an American house, even though it seemed, at various points, that they were poised to do so, particularly in 1849 with Alphonse de Rothschild's visits to New York and Louisiana. It is abundantly clear from Betty de Rothschild's letters to her son during his sojourn in America that this was a topic of discussion between Alphonse, his parents and the London house. She mentions various schemes, claiming at one point, 'I would not want to abandon the plan to see one of you established in America for anything in the world, and deliver this great future from the stupidity and greed of an agent.'²⁸ Betty proves herself particularly aware of Belmont's status in American society and his value to the firm, even though she views him as wily, irascible, and reaching beyond his

rightful social position. ‘B. has created for himself a strong and independent position,’ she notes, discussing his skill in developing business relationships and his mastery of the myriad and complex skills essential to operating in the Atlantic markets, concluding ‘all that makes him an important man these days.’²⁹ She goes on to point out that upsetting the *status quo* too soon could have a deleterious effect on business and compromise Alphonse’s ability to succeed. It is possible that by 1849, with Alphonse of age and ready to assume the business in America, Belmont had simply gained too much traction in American society to be easily replaced, regardless of his status as a mere agent.

By the end of the Civil War in the United States, the Atlantic financial world had changed irrevocably, no longer governed by King Cotton. The merchants and bankers had moved on to other, more profitable, as well as characteristically modern avenues of business. The Rothschilds, like the Barings and Browns, had actually been moving out of cotton since the 1850s. All three firms entered into the more lucrative exchange markets, selling specie, making arbitrage trades, operating in gold and behaving much more like modern investment bankers. This shift in activities was not a conscious choice. Nor was it immediately apparent. It was governed by the availability of opportunity and can be seen in retrospect in changing patterns of investment and greater interest in financial markets. At its root lay changes in the American economy and the incorporation of the American West into larger American markets and institutions.

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- Bill drawn on de Rothschild Frères, Paris by August Belmont in favour of Sylvain Bonnè, 24 March 1852 for the sum of ‘sixty one hundred and eighty francs’.
- RAL 000/1490

NOTES

- 1 August Belmont to NMR, 17 July 1863. RAL XI/62/11.
- 2 Douglas Cecil North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790–1860* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965).
- 3 Quoted in John Crosby Brown, *A Hundred Years of Merchant Banking: A History of Brown Brothers and Company, Brown Shipley & Company and the Allied Firms, Alexander Brown and Sons, Baltimore; William and James Brown and Company, Liverpool; John A. Brown and Company, Browns and Bowen, Brown Brothers and Company, Philadelphia; Brown Brothers and Company, Boston* (New York: 1909 p.225).
- 4 David Black, *The King of Fifth Avenue: The Fortunes of August Belmont* (New York: Dial Press, 1981).
- 5 See Peter Temin, *The Jacksonian Economy, The Norton Essays in American History* (New York: Norton, 1969) and John R. Killick, 'The Cotton Operations of Alexander Brown and Sons in the Deep South, 1820–1860', *The Journal of Southern History*, 4 (May, 1977), pp.169–194.
- 6 American Letter books, RAL II/10/1, 29 April 1837.
- 7 James de Rothschild to his nephews in London, 25 May 1837. RAL XI/101/0/8/13.
- 8 Private papers re August Belmont & Co., New York, 1907–1923. RAL XI/111/186–187.
- 9 Black, *The King of Fifth Avenue*. See also Irving Katz, *August Belmont; a Political Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968) pp.6–7.
- 10 Black, *The King of Fifth Avenue*, pp.5, 22 and 39.
- 11 Letter from Belmont to NMR, 30 September 1839. RAL XI/62/0/2/48.
- 12 For further discussion of the various financial transactions involved in nineteenth-century cotton speculation, particularly discount paper, see Edwin J. Perkins, *Financing Anglo-American Trade: The House of Brown, 1800–1880* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975). For a more general discussion of discounting within the context of banking in the city of London see Walter Bagehot, *Lombard Street: A Description of the Money Market* (New York: Scribner Armstrong, 1877).
- 13 John Killick, 'The Cotton Operations of Alexander Brown and Sons', p.71.
- 14 Letter from Belmont to NMR, 12 September 1839. RAL XI/62/0c/2/35.
- 15 James de Rothschild to his nephews in London, 15 September 1839 RAL XI/101/2/4/63
- 16 Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, 1st American edn. (New York: Viking, 1998) p.66. It is worth noting that the approach described here, a cautious, risk-averse policy that leads to steady profit in secure markets, in contrast to overzealous speculation, has a marked similarity to the approach adopted by the bank in advance of the most recent economic downturn.
- 17 For a discussion of the nineteenth-century trade in discount paper and the practice of discounting see Perkins, *Financing Anglo-American Trade*. For more on the Browns' management of risk see John Killick, 'Risk, Specialization and Profit in the Mercantile Sector of The Nineteenth Century Cotton Trade: Alexander Brown and Sons 1820–1880' *Business History*, 1974, Vol. 16, Issue 1, pp.1–34.
- 18 Thomas Fowell Buxton and Charles Buxton, *Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Bart*, 2nd edn. (London: 1849), p.293.
- 19 Belmont to NMR, 12 October 1852. RAL XI/62/5.
- 20 Betty de Rothschild to Alphonse de Rothschild, 7 March 1849. RAL 000/930 58/1/222.
- 21 See Harold D. Woodman, *King Cotton and His Retainers: Financing and Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800–1925* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), ch. 11, 131–138. For a more critical consideration of planter fantasies and the relentless motivations to buy slaves with a focus on the market itself, see Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life in The Antebellum Slave Market*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).
- 22 Joseph Holt Ingraham, *The Southwest By A Yankee* (New York: Harper, 1835), p.91.
- 23 Belmont's letter to NMR, 6 May 1851 is one example: 'There has been some news in our cotton market and prices have gone up about 3/8 ct from the lowest point, in consequence of advices from the south of a killing frost in some parts of Alabama & Tennessee in which I have not much belief...there has been so much cotton planted that we have every prospect for a large crop & this with the now established fact that the present crop cannot fall short of 2300m bales must keep prices[?] down.'
- 24 For more on the collateralisation of debts with slaves see Richard Kilbourne's *Debt, Investment, Slaves: Credit Relations in East Feliciana Parish*, (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1996).
- 25 Killick, 'The Cotton Operations of Alexander Brown and Sons', p.187.
- 26 Probably the initial advances were made because of Forsyth's prominence in American politics, and it seems reasonably clear that the mortgage was not secured with either land or chattels. The initial mortgage was issued from the Paris house. The offer from John Forsyth Jr. to settle includes 60,000 acres and fifty negroes. See Belmont to NMR, 31 May 1842 RAL XI/62/2A/86. On the refusal of real property for the settlement of the debt, see Belmont to NMR, RAL XI/62/2A/124. The remaining \$7,457.68 due was received by August Belmont on 13 May 1850, Belmont to NMR, 13 May 1850, RAL XI/62/4B.
- 27 In the one case where this type of association has been uncovered, Nathan Mayer Rothschild and James de Rothschild were counter-claimants as mortgagees on compensation due under the slave compensation process initiated after the abolition act of 1833. They pursued the compensation due for 88 slaves on an estate in Antigua, for which Chas. Chatfield, the trustee of Nathan's executors was awarded £1,570 18s after his death. The two houses pursued this conveyance as counter-claimants on a claim filed initially by Robert Hyndman for 158 slaves on the Matthews and Constitution Hills estates in Antigua. To clarify, this was a counter-claim filed against a claim filed by a defaulting debtor, Hyndman. As a means of seeking compensation on a debt he failed to pay, the two houses filed a counter-claim against his claim for funds on a debt he was owed. Thus the houses were twice removed from owning or securing debts with enslaved peoples. To suggest from this information that the Rothschilds were in fact slave owners is a stretch. Likewise, to suggest that the houses securitized mortgages with slaves is inaccurate. For more on the filing and compensation received under the Abolition Act see the forthcoming work on slave compensation by Nicholas Draper, et. al. See also 171/1/877, The National Archives, Kew and Nicholas Draper, *The Price of Emancipation: Slave-Ownership, Compensation and British Society at the End of Slavery*, Cambridge Studies in Economic History (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 28 Betty de Rothschild to Alphonse de Rothschild, 16 May 1849. RAL 000/930 58/1/222.
- 29 Betty de Rothschild to Alphonse de Rothschild, 7 March 1849. RAL 000/930 58/1/222.

Motoring Rothschilds: Style, speed and sport

Highlighting some of the unexpected resources in the Archive's collections, Justin Cavernelis-Frost looks back to the golden age of the automobile and the enduring passion of some members of the Rothschild family for elegant and fast cars.

Cars have always exerted a strong, seductive power. The skills of the draughtsman, the coach-builder and the engineer have together created objects of beauty, desire and status. Throughout the twentieth century, members of the Rothschild family came under the spell of the automobile. In the early days of automotive history, Rothschilds undertook feats of endurance which influenced developments in car engineering and design. As active participants in the field of motor racing, they succumbed to the thrill and adventure of the race-track. As collectors, the Rothschilds demonstrated the same passion for excellence and craftsmanship in their automobiles as they did in their collections of art and *objets d'art*.

In England, Lionel de Rothschild (1882–1942), eldest son of Leopold de Rothschild (1845–1917), is well-known for his horticultural and photographic interests, but he was also an early pioneer of motoring.¹ Lionel was a founding member of the Royal Automobile Club and he and his brother Anthony were early members of the Cambridge University Automobile Club, which had been founded in 1902.² The Club organised runs, competitive hill climbs and inter-varsity races, for which there was a Rothschild Challenge Cup. Before the First World War Lionel and his chauffeur (and often as not mechanic, navigator and all-round help) Martin Harper, drove Mercedes, Napiers, Wolseleys and Siddeleys across France, Italy, Spain, Germany and North Africa. Many of the cross-channel trips Lionel made were to court Marie Louise Beer, who became his wife in 1912.³ Harper was working in his brother's garage in Cambridge when he first met Lionel, who was an undergraduate of twenty-one, and then driving a 10/12 New Orleans. Whilst at Trinity College, Lionel was summonsed for 'driving a motor car at a greater speed than 12 mph', and fined the sum of £1.⁴

Martin Harper later published his memories of working for Lionel between 1903 and 1914 in *Mr. Lionel: an Edwardian Episode*. He recalls that early motoring was a hazardous undertaking and not for the faint-hearted. Any journey was an adventure and 'to arrive at all was not a foregone conclusion!' Drivers and passengers had to be prepared to carry out quite possibly major repairs on the road. Contemporary maps were impressive-looking affairs, but the roads they showed were often given an appearance equal to the importance of the place they led to; their condition and size could not be judged accordingly and could only be proved by experience. Without the benefit or comfort of windscreens or effective mudguards, dust and mud were constant companions. On their first trip to Rome in 1904, in a forty horse-power Mercedes, Lionel and Harper took many spares, including connecting rods, valves, ignitors, rocker arms, push rods, a spare carburettor and assorted jets, a clutch, extra driving sprockets, driving chains and links, four spare tyres, a loud bulb hooter, indicating the kinds of hazards that could be endured. In addition, they carried a kit of tools 'sufficient to dismantle any part of the car', including tyre pump and repair outfit, vice, soldering iron, blow lamp, copper wire, insulation tape, engine oil, grease, paraffin, emergency petrol, methylated sprits, carbide and gear oil.⁵

At the start of the journey to Rome, with Lionel driving, the car broke down with a stuck valve on the way from London to the coast. Once the Channel had been crossed, in a village

between Calais and Paris Lionel just clipped the side of a donkey cart laden with vegetables, driven by a farmer and his wife, resulting in the street being strewn with produce. Having established that no-one was injured, he apologised handsomely, and asked the farmer to put a price on the damaged goods. A price having been agreed, the farmer's wife began to load the Mercedes with vegetables. This was quickly stopped as Harper disappeared under a mountain of greengrocery. Once it was established that Lionel did not want the goods and was only paying damages, they were sent on their way with blessings for a safe journey. This was the start of many such exciting and hair-raising journeys. Lionel published an account of one of his motoring trips abroad (on this occasion to Spain) in *The Car*, in July 1909. Not everywhere in Spain was ready for the motorist, as Lionel recalled:

Just before Alcala we met an American driving a big Renault. He stopped us and asked if we had any spare petrol as he had lost his way and run short: unfortunately we had none to spare. I told him that perhaps he might buy some in the chemists' shops at Alcala, and that it was all downhill from there to the railway, but I did not tell him about the state of the road, and from what I know of it, if he ran out of petrol on it, he is still there.⁶

Combining his business skills with his great interest in things mechanical, Lionel was elected to the board of The Wolseley Tool & Motor Car Company Ltd in 1906.⁷ Lionel was a keen advocate for Wolseley, buying many of their vehicles, and he and Harper often filed test reports back to the manufacturers from their excursions, on one occasion driving over some of the worst roads in Corsica. Lionel was an adventurous motorist and had many incidents at home as well as abroad, as reported in *The Times* in 1907:

Mr Lionel Nathan de Rothschild is under medical treatment at the Queen's Hotel, Birmingham, for injuries sustained in a motor-car accident at South Yardley on Thursday. His injuries are not of a serious character. They consist of superficial cuts about the face, caused by the goggles which Mr. Rothschild was wearing while driving the car, and which came into violent contact with the head of a horse attached to a milk float.⁸

Lionel's French relations were just as keen as their English cousins to take to the road. In addition to models produced by French marques such as Panhard-Levassor and Delaunay, they owned Rolls-Royces and Mercedes. Records of the family's pre-war motoring are well-preserved in The Rothschild Archive. Invoices and letterheads show the emergence of companies still known today. Edouard de Rothschild (1868–1949) purchased a Kellner in 1906, though as the archives show, in a letter of 5 June 1906, delivery was delayed due to a strike.⁹ Edouard was no less adventurous than Lionel; papers in the Archive relate to charges for speeding brought against him by the Neuilly-sur-Seine police in 1904 and again in 1906.¹⁰ The accounts for Henri de Rothschild (1872–1947) show that he spent over 10,000 francs a month on motoring, over £22,000 today.¹¹ Henri had a particular association with the car manufacturer Société anonyme des automobiles UNIC, and in 1904 provided the finance necessary for UNIC's founder Georges Richard to set up his factory in Puteaux in the western suburbs of Paris to produce two-cylinder and four-cylinder models.¹² UNIC pioneered innovative production techniques and was noted for using components which were interchangeable between its models. UNIC quickly developed a market in vans, and set up the first credit scheme to expand vehicle ownership beyond the wealthy. In 1907 the 12–14hp model was chosen as the London taxi. Henri, later to study medicine, is even credited with providing the design for a UNIC ambulance during the First World War.¹³

The inter-war period was a golden age for the home motor industry with significant growth in the production of both new cars and commercial vehicles. England led the way in luxury coachbuilt motor cars with Jaguar, Lagonda, Rolls-Royce and Armstrong Siddeley producing elegant cars. These latter two marques attracted the attention of Lionel de Rothschild, who



Clockwise, from top left
Report of the Roads
Beautifying Association
for 1936-37.

The Rothschild party on
one of their European
tours, possibly in Verona,
c.1907.

Roads Beautifying
Association leaflet 1937.
RAL XI/15/19

RAL 000/880

Photograph of a hill climb
race from an album
belonging to Lionel de
Rothschild c.1905.
RAL 000/880

Loading a car for a
Continental trip c.1910.
RAL 000/880



continued to maintain his interest in cars throughout the 1920s and 1930s, owning Wolseleys, Rolls-Royces and Armstrong Siddeleys. The bodywork of the cars he ordered would usually be painted in Rothschild colours, blue with a yellow line. Lionel purchased a Wolseley 16/20 Laundalette in 1919, costing £875, equivalent to just under £30,000 today.¹⁴ Documents in The Rothschild Archive record that the purchase was delayed as a result of difficulties in returning the factory to peacetime production after the First World War. Postwar shortages also caused the price to rise above that advertised in the specification. When he was in London, Lionel lived in Kensington Palace Gardens and spent most weekends at his country estate at Exbury House in Hampshire. In the 1920s, he would frequently drive himself down in his two-seater Rolls-Royce, with the distinctive registration plate 'FLY 5'.¹⁵

Lionel was closely involved with the intriguingly named *Roads Beautifying Association* in the 1930s. The Association was founded in 1928 by Lord Mount Temple, the then Minister of Transport, to provide an organisation through which the voluntary services of horticultural experts were made available to local authorities and others responsible for highway planting and the preservation of trees. Planting advice was also extended to newly expanding industrial

estates and the rehabilitation of slag heaps and other derelict land. This organisation must have held an immediate appeal for Lionel, combining both his passion for horticulture and his interest in cars, and he became chair of the technical sub-committee. The Roads Beautifying Association's annual report for 1936–1937 included photographs of successful and unsuccessful landscaping of roads from around Britain and the world.¹⁶ It also contained some warnings about the deleterious effects of roads and road widening on the English countryside. Published by the Association in 1937, 'The planting of central reserves and roundabouts under the dual carriageway system' gave detailed information about planting schemes and made recommendations for suitable types of plants. A letter from Lionel to the *Hampshire Chronicle* in 1937 expressed the philosophy of the Roads Beautifying Association as being 'to let the poor man have the same pleasure from driving up to his cottage or his house as the rich man can get from his private drive.'¹⁷

Rothschilds on both sides of the continent have had a long association with motor racing and motor events. Martin Harper in his memoirs recalls a race from Paris to Monte Carlo between Lionel de Rothschild and Baron Henri de Rothschild, with both teams driving '60' Mercedes.¹⁸ Henri de Rothschild (1872–1947) sponsored the 'Coupe Rothschild' for the Nice motor race. Between 1901 and 1903 the race was won by Léon Serpollet, and at the race in April 1902 he reached 120.8 kph, breaking the world speed record. His car, a 100hp Serpollet, was nicknamed 'the Easter egg'. Philippe de Rothschild (1902–1988), the son of Baron Henri de Rothschild is famous for developing the family wine estates at Pauillac in the Medoc in the 1930s, but in the 'Roaring Twenties' he was a highly successful racer, under the pseudonym 'Georges Philippe'. Philippe may have been influenced in his love of speed and danger by his older brother James, a military aviator. For one short season he drove Bugatti Grand Prix cars with some notable successes.¹⁹ On one occasion he even drove briefly for the crack Bugatti factory team. In 1928 he came second at the Bugatti Grand Prix at Le Mans in a Bugatti 37, and

Correspondence from Wolseley Motors Limited concerning delays in delivery of Lionel's new car.

RAL XI/15/14

Specification for a Wolseley Landulette, ordered by Lionel de Rothschild in 1919.

RAL XI/15/14

CUSTOMER'S CARE ARE ONLY GIVEN AT CUSTOMER'S RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY.
DRIVERS MUST BE AT LEAST 16 YEARS OF AGE AND BE IN POSSESSION OF A LICENSE, AND NOT BE ACCEPTED AS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY OR ACCIDENT TO BEAR ARISING FROM THIS OR ANY OTHER CAUSE.
 CONTRACTORS TO THE ADMIRALTY & WAR OFFICE.

WOLSELEY MOTORS LIMITED.
 PROMOTED BY VICKERS LIMITED.

WOLSELEY MOTORS

LONDON OFFICE:
 YORK STREET, WESTMINSTER.
 TELEPHONE: AUTUMBERVILLE 2000.
 TELEGRAMS: WOLSELEY 2000.

LONDON OFFICE:
 15, CANNON STREET.
 TELEPHONE: 5555.

HEAD OFFICE:
 ADDERLEY PARK,
 BIRMINGHAM.

BY APPOINTMENT TO
 H.M. QUEEN ALEXANDRA.

July 12th, 1919.

Major Lionel de Rothschild,
 New Court,
 St. John's Lane,
 LONDON, E.C.4.

Dear Sir,

We beg to confirm our telephonic advice of yesterday afternoon to the effect that we are exceedingly sorry your 16/20 h.p. "Wolseley" Landulette cannot possibly be ready until approximately the middle of next month.

We realize that this is considerably later than the date originally suggested for delivery.

Unfortunately, owing to the many difficulties we have encountered in changing over from war to peace work in this factory, all our 16/20 h.p. complete cars are delayed to the extent of several months and we sincerely trust that you will kindly grant us your indulgence in the matter. We on our part would assure you that everything possible is being done to expedite the completion of the car.

We beg to remain,
 Your obedient servants,
 J.G. WOLSELEY MOTORS LTD.

December, 1918

THE "WOLSELEY" LANDAULETTE

PRICES.			
16/20 h.p. (four-cylinder) LANDAULETTE	£875
24/30 h.p. (six-cylinder) LANDAULETTE	£1075
30/40 h.p. (six-cylinder) LANDAULETTE	£1275

For details see specification.

in a Bugatti 35C he competed throughout 1929, coming fourth at the first Monaco Grand Prix, first at the Bourgogne Grand Prix, second at the Grand Prix de Nations held at the Nurburgring, and second at the Saint Sébastien Grand Prix. Driving a Stutz he came fifth at the Le Mans 24 Hours, also in 1929. In his memoirs *Milady Vine*, he claims to have invented the windscreen wiper, as part of some improvements to his sports car to protect the coiffure of a lady friend.²⁰

The Aston Clinton Hill Climb has a special place in Rothschild automotive history. Sir Anthony de Rothschild (1810–1876) had acquired the estate at Aston Clinton in Buckinghamshire in 1851. Aston Hill, on the nearby Tring Park estate of Anthony's nephew, Nathaniel Mayer, First Lord Rothschild (1840–1915) was a renowned motoring venue. Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford were early racers at Aston Clinton, and had set up a small business selling and servicing cars in west London in 1913. Lionel Martin made his first ascent of the hill in a tuned Singer on 4th April, 1914. Bamford's early departure from the partnership left Martin with the need for a new name for his first car, created by fitting a four-cylinder Coventry-Simplex engine to the chassis of a 1908 Isotta-Fraschini.²¹ His success, achieved at the Aston Clinton Hill Climb course in the prototype car, provided the ideal name, and thus the marque of Aston-Martin was born.²²

Other noteworthy cars were owned by members of the Rothschild family. Anthony Gustav de Rothschild (1887–1961) had a passion for exotic luxury automobiles, in addition to being an international banker and breeder of horses. In March of 1934, he ordered a matching set of Hispano-Suizas, a κ-6 for formal occasions and the other, a J-12 for cruising around town.²³ The two cars were ordered through Hispano-Suiza's London agent, J. Smith & Co. Ltd. Both chassis were sent to Howard R. Darrin of Fernandez & Darrin in the United States to receive his most striking bodies. The cars were to be finished in identical colours and complementary styles. These were some of the most expensive cars of the day. The cars were completed in six months and delivered to Anthony at the end of September. The most striking was the Coupe Chauffeur limousine which was built for the long wheelbase (146½ inches) κ-6 chassis. The body featured a teardrop-shaped closed passenger compartment whose raked windscreen matched that of the open chauffeur's compartment. This is believed to have been Anthony's car of choice. On the shorter J-12 chassis, a matching teardrop-shaped four-passenger coupe was built and this was favoured by Anthony's wife, Yvonne. The J-12 was one of the most expensive Hispano-Suiza chassis, costing \$10,150 and featuring a V12 engine similar to the fighter plane engines of the era.²⁴ The J-12 coupe was sold by the Rothschild family to industrialist A. J. McAlpine in 1949 for his personal use. The κ-6 Coupe Chauffeur remained with the Rothschild family until 1984.²⁵

The Rothschild Archive collections in both London and in France contain material relevant to further study of the Rothschilds and their motoring pursuits. Items concerning the English motoring Rothschilds will be found in the Rothschild Archive London, where the papers of Lionel de Rothschild (RAL XI/15 series) will be particularly fruitful (items relating to cars will also be found in the personal papers of other family members). For the continental family, the Moscow papers (RAL 58 series) and the Lafite papers (000/929 series) held at The Rothschild Archive London, together with the personal and family papers of de Rothschild Frères, Paris, held in the custody of the Archives Nationales du Monde du Travail in Roubaix, contain a wealth of information.

The interest of the Rothschilds in all things automotive is enduring and indicative of the diverse range of activities undertaken by members of the family. From the early days of the 'horseless carriage' to the age of the supercharged V12 engine, cars enabled the Rothschilds to indulge their passions for modernity and excitement. Philippe de Rothschild, in *Milady Vine* uniquely expressed his passion, declaring: 'I'm a great driver, a born driver. My buttocks were designed to fit in a driving seat.'²⁶

Justin Cavernelis-Frost has held senior positions with The National Archives and the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council. He joined the staff of The Rothschild Archive in 2009, and was previously Trust Archivist of St Bartholomew's Hospital. He is currently working on a more detailed study of the Rothschilds, their cars, and their automotive exploits.

NOTES

- 1 See *The Colours of Another World*, by Victor Gray, *The Rothschild Archive Annual Review 2005–2006* for an account of Lionel's pioneering use of the autochrome process, an interest that combined his twin loves of photography and horticulture.
- 2 The Cambridge University Automobile Club maintained a club room and a garage for its members at 22A Jesus Lane from 1904–1908. The Club was active until 1910. By 1926 the increasing predominance of car owners prompted a return of the Club, which continues to thrive today. Records of the Club have been deposited with the Cambridge University Archives.
- 3 Marie Louise Eugénie Beer was the daughter of Edmund Beer of Paris. She married Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, son of Leopold de Rothschild and Marie Perugia, on 8 October 1912. She died on 17 May 1975.
- 4 Reported in *The Cambridge News*, June 1902.
- 5 Martin Harper *Mr. Lionel: an Edwardian Episode* (London: Cassell, 1970). p.35.
- 6 Lionel de Rothschild, 'In sunny Spain: a tour from Seville to San Sebastian' published in *The Car*, No 374, 21 July 1909 pp.421–424 (RAL 000/924).
- 7 The origins of Wolseley date back to 1895 when Herbert Austin, then employed as a works manager at the Wolseley Sheep Shearing Company, became interested in engines and automobiles. During the winter of 1896 he made his first car but production did not get under way until 1901, by which time the company had changed hands. Austin managed the new Wolseley company for a short time before resigning to form his own concern, the Austin Motor Company, in 1905. Wolseley continued to expand, over-reaching themselves in 1926 with debts of £2 million. It was purchased by Morris Motors in 1927 and subsequently became part of the British Motor Corporation, later British Leyland. The last Wolseley was produced in 1975 after 80 years. Today, the Wolseley marque is owned by Nanjing Automobile Group. The Wolseley Sheep Shearing Company continues to trade today as Wolseley plc.
- 8 *The Times*, 30 March, 1907.
- 9 The Kellner Coachbuilding Company, founded by George Kellner, began creating custom bodies for carriages in 1861. As a natural progression, Kellner began creating custom coach bodies for automobiles from 1903. Georges Kellner Jr. is credited with being the creator of the 'torpedo' body style. During World War I, the company co-produced SPAD fighter planes. The letter referred to can be found in RAL 58/1/1237.
- 10 RAL 000/929 OC 166.
- 11 RAL 58/1/1237.
- 12 Société anonyme des automobiles UNIC was established in 1906, and quickly established a reputation for cars, trucks and in particular taxis. Passenger car production ceased in 1938, and the company concentrated on commercial vehicles. In 1952, the firm was taken over by Simca. In 1966 it was taken over by Italian Fiat and eventually merged into IVECO (Industrial Vehicle Corporation) in 1975.
- 13 Alan Jenkins, *The Rich Rich* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), p.137.
- 14 Documents relating to the specification and purchase of this model can be found in RAL XI/15/14.
- 15 Ronald Palin, writing in his memoirs in the 1970s recalls 'although FLY 5 was a small Rolls-Royce, it was a big car with a long wheelbase, but Lionel never failed to negotiate the narrow turn from the courtyard into St Swithin's Lane in one go, without reversing, something which few professional drivers seemed able to do.' (Palin, *Rothschild Relish*, London: Cassell, 1970). 'FLY 5' is still in use on Rothschild cars today. Edmund de Rothschild used it on a green Rover 3.5 litre he ordered from the Leyland Motor Corporation in 1970.
- 16 RAL XI/15/90.
- 17 RAL XI/15/90.
- 18 Martin Harper *Mr. Lionel: an Edwardian Episode*, (London: Cassell, 1970). pp.61–66.
- 19 The Bugatti company was established by Ettore Bugatti in Molsheim, near Strasbourg in 1909 and had a tradition of racing throughout its history. The firm dominated the Grand Prix world in the late 1920s and early 1930s and, when it could no longer compete with the Nazi-government funded German teams, it turned to Le Mans and won the French classic in 1937 and 1939. Bugatti died in 1947. The company passed to his son, and was later taken over by the Messier company.
- 20 Philippe de Rothschild & Joan Littlewood, *Milady Vine* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984). p.77.
- 21 Aston Martin has produced bespoke sports cars for over 90 years. Lionel Martin's original vision was to build 'a quality car of good performance and appearance; a car for the discerning owner driver with fast touring in mind – designed, developed, engineered and built as an individual.'
- 22 A plaque near Aston Hill, placed by the Aston Martin Owners Club & Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd, commemorates the birth of the Aston Martin.
- 23 Hispano-Suiza was a Spanish luxury automotive and engineering firm, best known for their cars, and world famous aviation engines. The company's origins go back to 1898, when a Spanish artillery captain, Emilio de la Cuadra, started electric automobile production in Barcelona. In Paris, De la Cuadra met the talented Swiss engineer Marc Birkigt and formed an alliance. In 1923 the French subsidiary became an autonomous partnership though not totally independent from the parent company. Today they are part of the French SAFRAN Group, while the Spanish company sold all their automotive assets to Enasa, the maker of Pegaso trucks and sport cars, in 1946.
- 24 Strother MacMinn, 'The de Rothschild Hispano-Suizas', *Automobile Quarterly* Volume 25, Number 4 (New Albany: 1987).
- 25 The cars passed into separate private ownership. In 2004, they were reunited, and displayed at the 54th Annual Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in California for the Hispano-Suiza anniversary. The cars are today owned by the Robert M Lee Trust.
- 26 Philippe de Rothschild & Joan Littlewood, *Milady Vine* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984). p.75.

The Rothschilds and the Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) Consular Service¹

Rudolf Agstner reveals the extensive ties of the Rothschild family and their agents in the diplomatic sphere.

The Austrian consular service began comparatively late. Only by the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation of Passarowitz on 17 July 1718, after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, were consulates established in Ottoman ports and it was not until 1752 that the Empress Maria Theresia ordered the same consulates to be created in the West.² Thereafter Austria mostly relied on honorary consuls, many of whom were from the Jewish community.³ In 1784 Raphael Picciotto, a Jewish merchant from Livorno (Leghorn), is mentioned for the first time as Imperial Royal (I.R.) honorary consul in Aleppo, beginning a dynasty of Picciottos as Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) consuls ending only in 1894 – the longest period of any family serving the Emperor as honorary consuls.

London

The question of whether Jews were eligible to serve as Austrian honorary consuls had already been decided when on 15 February 1818 Prince Metternich sent the following note to Ritter von Stahl,⁴ President of the Commercial Court Commission: ‘... that apart from their religious denomination no other reservations prevail against the Rothschild brothers; and this latter point would seem not to stand in the way of their appointment as I.R. Consuls General in London and Paris, as according to my knowledge in both places commercial agents do not enjoy admission to the court; in such a way any diplomatic inadequacies will be cancelled out as a matter of course’.⁵

A further two years were to pass until, in 1820, the century of four Rothschilds as Imperial Austrian – from 1867 Imperial & Royal Austro-Hungarian – Consuls General in London began. The advantages to both parties, the Austrian Government and the Rothschilds, were significant. On 31 March 1820 Nathan Mayer Rothschild was appointed I.R. honorary consul in London with the role being clearly defined.⁶ The first of 41 paragraphs of his instructions of 8 May 1820 read

It is the task of the Austrian Consul in London, to further and promote the already existing trade relations between Austria and Great Britain, and to protect the Austrian merchant flag on ... every occasion, and to maintain sovereignty as established by international law⁷

It is difficult to imagine anyone better qualified to promote trade relations.

On 16 January 1823, Emperor Franz I appointed Nathan Mayer Rothschild honorary Consul General, reiterating ‘that the rule that a consulate should not be granted to an Israelite, remains in force’.

When Nathan Rothschild died on 28 July 1836 in Frankfurt his brother Salomon immediately turned to Prince Metternich requesting him to see to it that the role ‘... of Consul General be transferred to the oldest son of [my] late brother, Lionel Nathan Baron Rothschild’. However, it took until 12 December 1837 before Emperor Ferdinand I appointed Lionel as his honorary Consul General. In 1850 the consular network in the United Kingdom was reorganised and from 1851 to 1914 the Rothschild honorary Consuls General were assisted by an experienced career consul as ‘head of chancery’.



Letters patent creating
Nathan Mayer Rothschild
Austrian Consul in
London.
RAL 000/274

When Lionel de Rothschild took his seat in the House of Commons on 26 July 1858, the I.R. minister Count Apponyi reported: 'Baron Lionel de Rothschild has informed me, off the record, that [...] he will no longer be able to discharge scrupulously his duties as Imperial Consul General, and thus he had to decide to renounce this post ...'. Apponyi informed Vienna that Lionel's younger brother Anthony 'would be prepared and very much honoured, if the imperial Government were to feel motivated to appoint him to the post ...'. Apponyi saw 'the biggest advantage of having a Rothschild as Consul General' in the 'influential, respected position which this house has in the local trade, and in its useful and wide-ranging connections with the highest political circles...'.⁸

The Austrian Trade Ministry followed Apponyi's reasoning and requested that 'with regard to the great importance the house of Rothschild attaches to the fact that said honourable position be again awarded to a member of this house, and in view of its wide-ranging connections in British trade and in particular its longstanding, important connection with the financial operations of the imperial house', Anthony de Rothschild be appointed. On 26 August 1858 Lionel de Rothschild's resignation was accepted by Emperor Franz Joseph 'with the expression of the particular supreme satisfaction' and Anthony, Baron de Rothschild was appointed unsalaried Consul General. Before Anthony died on 4 January 1876, Lionel de Rothschild submitted the candidacy of his son Alfred, a proposal that met with the approval of the I.R. Ambassador in London, Count Beust, 'in view of the reputation this worldwide house enjoys, as well taking into consideration the custom of many years that a member of the house of Rothschild is invested with the dignity of this honourable office...'. Within a matter of weeks, on 16 February 1876, Franz Joseph appointed Alfred de Rothschild, then 34 years old, his Consul General in London. He held the position until 12 August 1914 when the United Kingdom declared war on Austria-Hungary.

From the beginning the consulate was located in two small rooms '8 paces long and 6 paces wide' at 29, St. Swithin's Lane.⁹ In 1881 it quit these premises and moved to four rooms in Mansion House Chambers, 11 Queen Victoria Street, Alfred de Rothschild contributing to the annual rent.¹⁰ In 1896 vice-consul Princig von Herwalt complained that 'the Austro-Hungarian consulate-general continues to be housed in five [*siz*] dark, evil-smelling and low rooms of an extensive apartment building of the city, which counts no less than 670 offices.' In the same year Alfred de Rothschild rented rooms at 22 and 23 Laurence Pountney Lane, where the chancery remained until 12 August 1914. Alfred Charles de Rothschild, the last Rothschild Consul General, died on 31 January 1918.¹¹

Paris

As Prince Metternich was unable to suggest a 'more suitable individual' than James de Rothschild for the new position of I.R. honorary Consul General in Paris, Emperor Franz I appointed him to this post on 11 August 1821. James de Rothschild had bought from Joseph Fouché, once Napoleon's police minister, his palais at 21 Rue Laffitte where the Rothschild Bank and the Consulate General in Paris were located. James remained Consul General until his death on 15 November 1868. Just as in Great Britain, a review of the consular service in 1850 led to the appointment of a civil servant at the consulate as head of chancery to take care of daily consular business. Following James's death, on 28 December 1868 Emperor Franz Joseph I appointed his son, Gustave de Rothschild, honorary Consul General. In turn Gustave held the position until his death on 28 November 1911 which brought to an end nine decades of Rothschild service as the Emperor's Consul General in Paris. Vienna made use of the opportunity to change the status of the Paris consulate: '[...] it would be in the interest of the service to refrain in future from appointing an honorary head of the office, and notify the present deputy Consul-General [...] as head of office to the French authorities by issuing him a new consular patent'.¹² In 1912 the office moved to an apartment at 89A Boulevard Haussmann.

Circular

v o n d e m

k. k. N. De. Kreisamte B. U. W. W.

Bestellung des Freyherrn Anselm von Rothschild zum General-Consul zu Frankfurt am Main.

Laut des durch hohes Regierungs-Decret vom 29. v. M. J. 11938, hierher eröffneten hohen Hofkammer-Decretes vom 25. Februar d. J. J. 1181, haben Seine Majestät mittelst Allerhöchster Entschliessung vom 20. v. M. die Errichtung eines k. k. unbefoldeten General-Consulats für das Gebieth der freyen Stadt Frankfurt am Main Allerhöchst zu genehmigen, und den Anselm Freyherrn v. Rothschild, Sohn des Freyherrn Salomon v. Rothschild und Gesellschafter des Banquierhauses M. M. v. Rothschild und Söhne in Frankfurt am Main, zum k. k. General-Consul daselbst allergnädigst zu ernennen geruht.

Wien den 17. März 1836.

*Was bekam Metternich für diese Auszeichnung auf den Triumph
des Fürsten?*

Carl Edler von Seydel,

k. k. N. De. Regierungsrath und Kreishauptmann.

(18.)

Circular announcing the appointment of Anselm von Rothschild (1803–1874) as Austrian Consul General in Frankfurt am Main, issued in Vienna 17 March 1836.
RAL 000/2014

Frankfurt

In 1835 Salomon Mayer von Rothschild, always close to Metternich, suggested establishing an I.R. consulate general in Frankfurt and appointing his son Anselm, a resident of that city, to this position. Ritter von Eichhoff,¹³ President of the Court Chamber Commission, seeking Metternich's consent, advised him that

appointing a Consul General in such an important trading place in Germany as Frankfurt/Main, where until now no representative of Austrian commercial interests exists, would be highly desirable if no costs were involved for the treasury [...] Under the circumstances the proposal and request of Baron Rothschild seem desirable [...]¹⁴

Anselm von Rothschild was therefore appointed honorary Consul General on 20 February 1836. After he moved to Vienna in 1855, he was succeeded by Wilhelm Carl von Rothschild on 16 July 1856. As a result of the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 Austria had to leave the German Federation, Frankfurt was annexed to Prussia, and diplomatic missions there were closed. This

prompted France, England, Italy, Russia and the USA to appoint career Consuls General in Frankfurt. On 28 February 1867 Chancellor Beust suggested to Emperor Franz Joseph that 'Austria, whose political, commercial and financial interests in Frankfurt are of importance, cannot remain without an efficient representation there [...] would make a career consulate general desirable. However, as the House of Rothschild attaches the greatest importance that one of its members in Frankfurt continues being entrusted with the Austrian consular representation there' another solution had to be found.¹⁵ The Emperor approved allocating an experienced consular official to Wilhelm von Rothschild, following the example of London and Paris. When Wilhelm died on 25 January 1901, his son in law Maximilian Goldschmidt-Rothschild was appointed honorary Consul General on 11 August 1901, remaining in office until the Austro-Hungarian monarchy ended on 12 November 1918.

Rothschild in-laws as honorary consuls

In 1851 the Consulate General in London suggested 'appointing an agent in Manchester who should report on developments and occurrences in the field of industry [...]'. An appropriate candidate for the post was found in August Sylvester Sichel. The reasons for this choice were delicate and can be found in a letter by Lord Westmorland¹⁶ to Foreign Minister Count Buol-Schauenstein:¹⁷

[...] I transmit to you highly confidentially a letter of Lord Clarendon,¹⁸ containing a request, which he [...] would like to see fulfilled. You are aware, that Mr. Sichel during the long period since his arrest in Milan and as long as his case was on trial has acted with the greatest propriety refraining from any incitement of emotions, be it through the press or by causing a debate in Parliament, which could have caused the greatest troubles. Lord Clarendon therefore would request that as Mr. Sichel has undoubtedly incurred a considerable loss¹⁹ due to his long imprisonment, that he might be given an honourable distinction. Mr. Sichel is related to Baron de Rothschild, your consul in England. Mr. Sichel senior would thus request to be appointed consul or vice-consul under his relative Baron de Rothschild.²⁰ I believe that you have no consular agent in Manchester, and if this respected merchant could be appointed by his relative to this post, I am convinced that you [...] would do a favour to Lord Clarendon and grant compensation to a person, who [...] has been dealt with very harshly...

Augustus Sylvester Sichel was a partner in Sichel Brothers, cotton merchants of Manchester. Two months after Lord Clarendon's letter had reached the Ballhausplatz,²¹ on 30 November 1853 Emperor Franz Joseph appointed Sichel his honorary vice-consul in Manchester. The office was located at 7 Port Street. When Augustus Sichel died in 1858, his son Julius Friedrich Sichel succeeded him in the position on 6 March 1859, serving until October of 1874.

In Edinburgh, a new honorary consulate was established in Leith in 1867 following 'the offer of banker George Worms²² in London, to assume the post of unsalaried consul in Edinburgh. Worms [...] will soon establish a branch office of his business in Edinburgh, where he intends to spend part of the year [...].²³ During Worms' tenure, lasting until 30 July 1877, the office was located at 44 Constitution Street.

Rothschild's agents as honorary consuls

The most prominent agent of Rothschild and Austrian Consul General was August Belmont,²⁴ an employee of the Frankfurt branch sent in 1837 to Havana to head the local Rothschild agency. Travelling via New York, he stayed there, established August Belmont & Company and became Rothschild agent in New York. Acting Austrian Consul General from 26 August 1845, he was appointed I.R. honorary Consul General in New York on 13 September 1847, remaining in this position until 14 July 1853.²⁵

The clerk who eventually set up the Havana agency, Carl Franz Joseph Friedrich Scharfenberg was himself appointed honorary consul in Cuba.²⁶ The file on him notes that he was ‘executing tobacco and cigar shipments from Havana on behalf of the local wholesale establishment of S.M. von Rothschild to the I.R. Tobacco Régie. In this capacity, he has laudably contributed to the favourable success of carrying out these shipments at any time.’²⁷ On 2 November 1853, Emperor Franz Joseph appointed him honorary consul in Havana ‘as in Cuba the need for a regular, qualified consular official has from year to year become more manifest [...]’. Carl Scharfenberg resigned his post in 1867.²⁸ On 8 January 1868 Wilhelm Scharfenberg was appointed honorary consul, and promoted to honorary Consul General on 9 October 1871. His resignation was accepted by Franz Joseph on 16 May 1875.²⁹

Passport for Charles
Stuber, 1825, signed by
Nathan Mayer Rothschild.
RAL 000/274

Metternich informed his ambassador in St. Petersburg, Franz Count Colloredo–Wallsee,³⁰ on 6 March 1847 that the Rothschilds had despatched Benjamin Davidson to St. Petersburg. The ambassador on 26 March reported: ‘Mr. Davidson, sent here by the House of Rothschild, has called at this I.R. Embassy. [...] I will not fail to grant him if possible necessary assistance. One of the reasons of his presence here is, according to reliable sources, to entrust the representation of the local business of the House of Rothschild or at least part thereof to a St. Petersburg merchant [...]’. Colloredo recommended Austrian [honorary] Consul General, Mr. James Thal,³¹ and suggested Metternich’s ‘intervention with the House of Rothschild would certainly result in Mr. Thal being entrusted this important and profitable business [...]’.³² Thal had considerable expenses in paying for the transport of destitute Austrian subjects to the Austrian border for repatriation; a position as the Rothschilds’ representative would have eased this financial burden. On 8 April 1847, in a letter to Salomon Mayer Rothschild, Metternich recommended Thal. Rothschild replied on 10 April 1847, ‘As the activities of an individual acting on behalf of the House of Rothschild in St. Petersburg have to be agreed with all of its branches, mainly with those in Paris and London, I cannot alone express a decisive opinion, I however do not wish to conceal that I will bring the content of [...] letter immediately to their attention. I am confident, that my brothers and nephews will, if this should be the case, be glad to also make use of Mr. Thal’s assistance.’ In the end, Colloredo’s scheme did not work out.

Fifty years later, a businessman with close connections to the house of Rothschild was appointed honorary vice consul in Baku in today’s Azerbaijan. Heinrich Goldlust,³³ merchant of first order in Baku, enjoyed the protection of the Rothschilds when he was appointed Austro-Hungarian honorary vice-consul on 28 June 1898. His son-in-law Arnold Feigel was heading the Rothschilds’ various enterprises in Baku.

The era when members of the Rothschild family or employees of the Rothschilds served to mutual benefit as honorary consuls for the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary came to an end with World War I. Although the consular network of the Republic of Austria relies to an even larger degree than the Austro-Hungarian on honorary consuls, no Rothschild has ever expressed interest in serving as Austrian honorary consul.

Rudolf Agstner joined the Austrian Foreign Service in 1977, serving in Paris, Brussels, Tripoli, New York, Cairo, Bonn and as Austrian Ambassador to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union (2006–2009). He is an authority on the history of the Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) Foreign Service and the Austrian presence in the Middle East and East Africa; author of over 20 books and over 200 articles on the history of the Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) Foreign Service and on the Austrian presence abroad; co-editor of 6 books of a 14-volume edition of political reports of the Austrian Embassy, Tel Aviv, Israel. Since 1978 he has been a contributor of biographies of diplomats and consuls to the Austrian Biographical Lexicon 1815–1950 of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. From 2001 to 2003 he was lecturer with the University of Innsbruck’s Institute of Contemporary History.

No 854



Austrian Consulate General
in
LONDON.

These are to certify to all whom it may concern,
that the bearer hereof Charles Stuber
47 Years old. Height about five
feet inches. Hair dark Eyes dark
is a native of Carlsruhe and a Baden
Subject, and as such ought to be suffered to
pursue his way to Carlsruhe via Ostende
& Frankfurt without any
hinderance whatsoever.

Witness my hand and Seal of Office,
this sixteenth Day of September 1825

In the absence of the minister
resident of H. R. H. the Grand Duke of Baden
The Austrian Consul General.

J. J. J. J.

Signature of the Bearer
Charles Stuber

NOTES

- 1 Revised version of a lecture on 'The Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) Consulates in the United Kingdom' presented on 15 September 2009 at a reception held at The Rothschild Archive.
- 2 Pozarevac, Serbia.
- 3 In 1763 ten of 27 consular posts were run by honorary consuls; in June 1914 the ratio was 364 of 474 consulates.
- 4 Philipp Georg Ritter von Stahl, b. Bruchsal, Baden/Germany 1760, d. Vienna 26 January 1831, President of Commercial Court Commission 1816–1824.
- 5 Metternich to Stahl, 15 February 1818, State Chancery, communications to the Commercial Court Commission 1817 VII–1819 V, box 205, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv / Family, Court and State Archives Vienna (HHStA hereafter).
- 6 Stahl to Metternich, 4 April 1820, letters from Commercial Court Commission 1819 VIII–1820 V, State Chancery, box 216; Rudolf Agstner, *Die Freiherrn von Rothschild als k.k. (k.u.k.) Generalkonsuln in Frankfurt, London und Paris, in Die Gemeinde*, Nr. 541, Vienna, September 2002, pp.60–61.
- 7 Meeting of 10 April 1820, folio 125 ex April 1820, Commerz, 17, red 1199, Hofkammerarchiv / Court Chamber Archive (HKA) Vienna,
- 8 Apponyi to Count Buol-Schauenstein, 28 July 1858, Legation London XLVI A–E, box 293, dept. 4, HHStA, Administrative Registry (AR hereafter), Vienna.
- 9 Consulate General London XVI adm of 22 September 1880, box 162, dept. 8, AR, HHStA.
- 10 Consulate General London, annex to report XV adm of 26 November 1881, box 162, dept. 8, AR, HHStA.
- 11 For details see HHStA, State Chancery, Consulates, London, box 30; AR, Dept. 8, boxes 2, 50, 161, 162.
- 12 HHStA, Cabinet Chancery (KZ), 1912, No. 245/1912, Imperial resolution of 4 January 1912.
- 13 Peter Joseph Ritter von Eichhoff, b. Bonn, Germany 16 April 1790, d. Vienna 1 January 1866, President, Court Chamber 1835–1840.
- 14 Eichhoff to Metternich 26 December 1835 HK 8057/PP, correspondence from Court Chamber 1835 X – 1836 IV, State Chancery, box 152, HHStA
- 15 File Schwarz-Senborn, box 310, dept. 4, HHStA, AR.
- 16 John Fane, 11th Earl of Westmorland, b. 2 February 1784, d. 16 October 1859, British Ambassador to Austria 1851–1859.
- 17 Lord Westmorland to Count Buol-Schauenstein, 28 September 1853, box 317, file Sichel, dept. 4, AR, HHStA
- 18 George William Frederick Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon, British Foreign Secretary in 1853.
- 19 According to the Sichel file in HHStA around 7000 Lst.
- 20 Bernhard Judah Sichel (b. 1780, d. 1867) had married Belche/Isabelle Rothschild, daughter of Mayer Amschel Rothschild and sister of Nathan Mayer Rothschild on 17 February 1802.
- 21 Seat of Austrian Foreign Ministry 1720–2005.
- 22 Elder son of Salomon Benedikt Worms; born in 1827; upon the death of his father succeeded to the title of Baron de Worms in 1882. Related to Baron Rothschild as on 28 October 1795 Schönche/Jeannette Rothschild had married Benedict Moses Worms (b. 20 August 1771, d. 25 February 1859).
- 23 Imperial resolution 30 November 1853, box 19, Ministerial Chancery (MCZ hereafter), 3578/1853, HHStA
- 24 Born Alzey, Hesse/Germany 8 December 1813, died New York City 24 November 1890.
- 25 Rudolf Agstner, *Of consuls and co-nationals – Austria (– Hungary) and her consulates in the United States of America 1820 – 1917*, Austrian Embassy Addis Ababa Occasional Paper No. 2/2007, Addis Ababa 2007
- 26 Born Bremen/Germany? 26 May 1812.
- 27 I.R. Finance Ministry to I.&R. Foreign Ministry ref. 32355 of 31 December 1875, file Carl Scharfenberg, box 299, dept. 4, AR, HHStA.
- 28 Imperial resolution of 2 November 1853, box 19, MCZ 3627/1853, HHStA
- 29 Details are difficult to ascertain, as the consulate's archive was handed over in 1921 to the Spanish Legation in Havana.
- 30 Austrian Ambassador to the Imperial Russian Court 13 June 1843 – 7 November 1847.
- 31 Thal was a Russian citizen, merchant of 1st order, honorary citizen of St. Petersburg and president of the Stock Exchange Committee; appointed honorary consul general on 12 December 1843.
- 32 Colloredo St. Petersburg No. 50 of 26/14 March 1847 to Metternich; Metternich to Rothschild, 8 April 1847; Rothschild to Metternich, 10 April 1810, box 349, Thal, dept. 4, AR, HHStA.
- 33 Born Tarnow, Galicia /Tarnów, Poland 2 June 1837, died Vienna 2 September 1909.

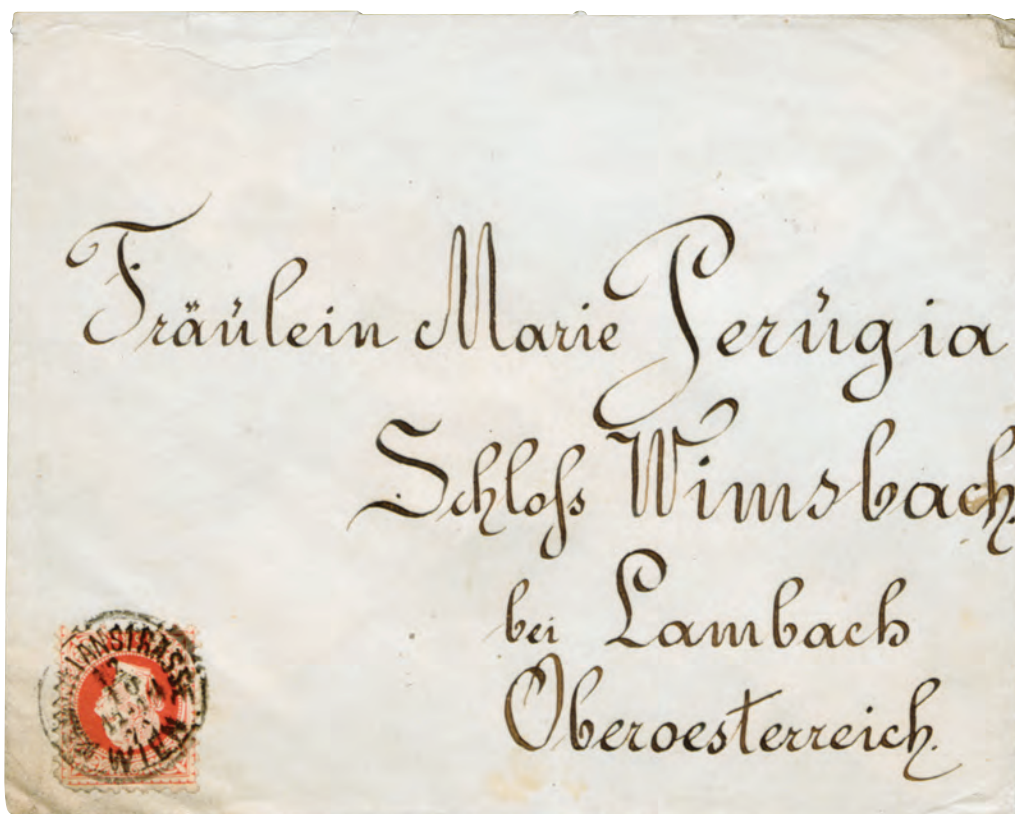
Right

Austro-Hungarian
consular flag, 1868–1918.



‘Hugs from your sincere friend Thildi’: Letters from Mathilde Lieben to Marie de Rothschild

Lisa-Maria Tillian introduces the subject of her research based on new material at the Archive.



*My dear Marie! The weather is getting more miserable every day and I must really summon up all my strength so as not to become totally melancholic; I need not mention how much our correspondence helps me with this. [...]*¹

Envelope in the hand
of Mathilde to Marie, at
the Schloss Wimsbach.
RAL 000/924/17

With these words, written in 1878, 17-year-old Mathilde Schey (1861–1940) begins one of her many letters to her cousin Marie Perugia, the future Mrs Leopold de Rothschild (1862–1937). It was at the end of September; the summer vacation of the Schey family in their villa near Vienna was reaching its end; the autumnal weather darkened Mathilde’s mood. But almost daily contact through letters with her cousin Marie contributed to raising her spirit. This intense practice of writing, fostered during childhood, was both the expression and the product of the bourgeois culture that the two girls were surrounded by. Part of this culture, and part of the lifestyle of the German educated middle classes, was ongoing private correspondence that went well beyond the mere exchange of information. In the nineteenth century, the composing and receiving of letters was part ‘of the good form of social life’.² The regular exchange of letters



between relatives, friends and acquaintances was therefore customary for the members of the German bourgeoisie. Writing letters was part of daily life. The girls kept up various ‘correspondences’, and with the years, the circle of those with whom they had to maintain regular correspondence enlarged.

In June 1879, Mathilde wrote:

[...] My correspondence (not with you) has grown to a size this year that is something frightful; I must write letter after letter. Everyone wants to have news. [...]³

The fact that Mathilde’s numerous letters to Marie – together with others, for example from Marie’s mother Nina – have been preserved to this day and are now kept at The Rothschild Archive, is due in large part to Marie’s descendants. Her son Anthony in particular developed a passion for archives and family history and took care to preserve the family’s archive. Marie’s grandson, Anthony’s son Evelyn, continued his father’s efforts and has been a supporter of the foundation which is today The Rothschild Archive.

Mathilde’s letters, which cover the period from 1872 to 1937 and were mainly characterized by personal and very intimate content, represent valuable sources for historical research. The documents provide fresh perspectives and opportunities for asking new questions, for instance in relation to the family and social network of each of the two ladies, as well as to the cultural and religious practices of the Jewish bourgeoisie. Last but not least, the letters – written from one woman to another – provide insights into female lifestyles and spheres of interest within

Above

Letter in the hand of Mathilde to Marie, written from the Schloss Wimsbach. RAL 000/924/17

Tilly Schey as a young girl, from a Perugia family photograph album. RAL 000/93/1

Opposite

Monogram of Mathilde Schey. RAL 000/924/17

Marie Perugia, Mrs Leopold de Rothschild, by Cyril Flower c.1885. RAL 000/360

that circle. They will be of particular interest in researching role models, expectations, self-perception, and positions within the family and society at large. Mathilde's hitherto unknown letters help broaden and fill gaps in the current state of research. Furthermore, the numerous documents allow the girl and woman Mathilde Schey/ Lieben to be placed at the heart of the presentation of my research into the daily life of Jewish women in Austria. In the first stages of my research I have been primarily and deeply engaged with the letters from the years 1878 and 1879 on which this essay is based.



Mathilde and Marie: The family environment

Both Mathilde and Marie were descended from what might be seen as typical Jewish bourgeois families, which had merged into one extended family through strategic marriages.

On the one side there was the Landauer family, from which line came the girls' mothers, Hermine and Nina. Hermine (1822–1904), Mathilde's mother, and Nina (1825–1892), Marie's mother, were two of the fifteen children of Josef Landauer (1793–1855), a merchant, and his wife Rosalie, née Bauer (1796–1864). Josef Landauer, like his parents, was among the 'tolerated' Jews of Vienna,⁴ which meant that they had a residence in the city in return for an annual payment (*Toleranzgebühr*, tolerance fee). Josef Landauer sought to maintain and strengthen the economic and social position of his family and business, among other things by marrying his children to members of other rich Jewish families. For example, his daughter Nina married the merchant Achille Perugia of Trieste by whom she had six children. Marie was the youngest daughter of the Perugias.

On the other side was the Schey family, from which Mathilde's father Friedrich (1815–1881) descended. In the 1830s, he came from the Hungarian town of Güns to Vienna and worked as an employee for the Landauer company. Schey subsequently married three daughters of the Landauer family, one after another. His first wife Emilie died in 1840 of childbed fever. His second wife Charlotte died in 1842 in giving birth to her first child. In 1846 he was married, for the third time, to Hermine Landauer; their union produced Mathilde and six other children. How close the relationship to the Landauer family was and how fully integrated Friedrich was with the family can be deduced from a passage in the last will of his father-in-law, Josef: '[...] therefore I recommend also to my children, among whom I include my good son-in-law Fritz, whom for years I have loved as much as my sons, always to be obedient, affectionate to their mother [...].'⁵ In 1855, Schey founded his own wholesale company, which was, nevertheless, tightly connected to the Landauer enterprise, and he became a successful entrepreneur and banker. In 1859 his uncle, Philipp Schey, was elevated to the peerage, the title being inherited by Friedrich, since Philipp was childless.⁶ From the 1860s onwards, the Schey family lived in an imposing palace on the Ringstrasse, immediately adjoining the Imperial private gardens which today is the publicly accessible Burggarten.⁷ For a while, Marie and her mother Nina lived on the fourth floor of the house. Mathilde sent her a few letters there in March 1879, while Marie had measles and the girls were prevented from personal contact:

In 1846 he was married, for the third time, to Hermine Landauer; their union produced Mathilde and six other children. How close the relationship to the Landauer family was and how fully integrated Friedrich was with the family can be deduced from a passage in the last will of his father-in-law, Josef: '[...] therefore I recommend also to my children, among whom I include my good son-in-law Fritz, whom for years I have loved as much as my sons, always to be obedient, affectionate to their mother [...].'⁵ In 1855, Schey founded his own wholesale company, which was, nevertheless, tightly connected to the Landauer enterprise, and he became a successful entrepreneur and banker. In 1859 his uncle, Philipp Schey, was elevated to the peerage, the title being inherited by Friedrich, since Philipp was childless.⁶ From the 1860s onwards, the Schey family lived in an imposing palace on the Ringstrasse, immediately adjoining the Imperial private gardens which today is the publicly accessible Burggarten.⁷ For a while, Marie and her mother Nina lived on the fourth floor of the house. Mathilde sent her a few letters there in March 1879, while Marie had measles and the girls were prevented from personal contact:



[...] By the way, how are you, poor girl? Perhaps commiseration won't help you much, but at least you should know that I feel very sorry for you and it makes me furious not to be able to go upstairs, all the more as I am convinced I would not be infected. [...] Send Pipsl [Marie's dog] to me if he needs to go for a walk. [...]⁸

Undoubtedly, the families of both Mathilde and Marie were part of the Jewish upper class of Vienna and Austria. With her marriage in January 1881, 19-year-old Marie Perugia was, however, able to raise her social status still further. She married Leopold de Rothschild (1845–1917), her senior by 17 years, and thus became a member of the English branch of the most famous Jewish family of the nineteenth century. The fact that Edward VII of England, Prince of Wales, was a friend of Leo's and attended the marriage ceremony in London's principal synagogue, made the wedding a spectacle of international interest. In a tender letter to his mother-in-law, Nina Perugia, Leopold referred to the wedding that had taken place shortly before:

Dear best Madam Perugia [...] dear mother-in-law. I hasten to repeat in writing what I have already told you several times. I will try to make your dear Mary as happy as I can. [...] She herself has written to you how [...] our neighbours [...] welcomed us. Despite the snow, hundreds of people were there, celebrating. [...] I cannot write to you in German everything that I ought to say [...] I can only add that I will always do everything to be pleasant to you. [...] Leopold de Rothschild.⁹

From this marriage came three children: Lionel Nathan (1882–1942), Evelyn Achille (1886–1917), and Anthony Gustav (1887–1961). The family lived, of course, in England, dividing their time between different places: their London town house at 148 Piccadilly, Gunnersbury Park near London, and then Ascott in Buckinghamshire as their country seat and Palace House near the Newmarket racecourse. The Rothschilds were an integral part of English high society and Marie and Leo accordingly entertained the best society. In a letter dated July 9, 1881, Marie's mother Nina showed a great interest in a recent invitation:

[...] I am very happy that the dinner went well and that the Prince enjoyed himself; this is always a satisfaction for hosts, and it certainly must be a joy for Leo. Did you have your cook and servants come from Ascott to Newmarket, or how exactly are such dinners arranged? [...]¹⁰

Like Marie, Mathilde married according to her status. In 1887 she became the wife of Adolf Lieben (1836–1914), 25 years her senior, from the prominent Jewish Lieben family in Vienna. Adolf was the son of the wholesale merchant Ignaz Lieben (1805–1862) and his wife Elise, née Lewinger (1807–1877). Besides having traditional professions in business and finance, the Lieben family played an important role in science. With the donation of a sum of money to the Imperial Academy of Sciences in 1862, the foundation was laid for a prize from which young Austrian natural scientists were to profit, and which still exists today.¹¹ Some members of the family themselves undertook scientific careers: Richard Lieben (1842–1919) and his brother-in-law Rudolf Auspitz (1837–1906) were important Austrian economic theoreticians.¹² Their nephew Robert Lieben (1878–1913) invented the so-called Lieben Tube (*Lieben'sche Verstärkeröhre*).¹³ Nor should Mathilde's husband Adolf be left out in this context. After studying chemistry and earning his *Habilitation* in 1861, he worked as a university professor in Palermo, Turin and Prague. Because of his Jewish heritage, he was denied the chance of a professorship in Vienna; only in 1868 did the complete legal equalisation of Jewish and non-Jewish citizens take place, bringing with it complete freedom to practise a profession.¹⁴ Finally, Adolf Lieben was an important and distinguished chemist in Austria. In 1871, he became a professor at the German University in Prague and, in 1875, became director of the second university laboratory of the University of Vienna.¹⁵

Right
Leopold de Rothschild.
RAL T36

Miniature of Marie
de Rothschild, 1880s.
RAL T13



Three children resulted from the marriage of Mathilde and Adolf Lieben – Fritz (1890–1966), Heinrich (1894–1945), and Edith, who died as a 2-year-old in 1894. In an autobiographical note from 1906, Adolf referred to his marriage to Mathilde: ‘A very important event for me was my marriage to Baroness Mathilde Schey of Vienna in December 1887. I may have married late, but the experiment turned out very happily, and two adolescent sons enliven our house.’¹⁶ At first, the family lived in an apartment in the 9th District of Vienna. After Adolf’s retirement, they moved to the attic floor of the house Mölterbastei in the 1st District which was built as a back wing of the Palais Ephrussi. The couple constructed a roof garden, an absolute novelty at that time in Vienna.¹⁷ In his memoirs of 1960, Fritz Lieben mentions that his mother Mathilde ‘[...] ran [...] a socially active house, and later it will be seen that it would not be wrong to speak of it as a salon in the years between 1890 and about 1937, a salon upon which she stamped the character of her personality, and acted as the leading force.’¹⁸

The letters

One of the earliest letters preserved in the archive from Mathilde to Marie is dated 1872. Though Mathilde wrote as an eleven-year old girl, her language, the content and the structure of the letter make it clear that she had certainly studied letter-writing, and that this was part of her daily routine. No letters from Marie to Mathilde have yet been discovered in any other archives. We encounter Marie only in a few letters at The Rothschild Archive composed by her and mainly addressed to her mother.

Naturally the contents of Mathilde’s letters changed over the course of time. The eleven-year-old girl was preoccupied with different topics from the growing adult woman. In the 1870s, for example, Mathilde reflected upon her role as a girl and young woman, upon expectations and ideas, while also revealing personal wishes. In June 1878, she wrote:

My dear Marie! Today I have spent a long time in the kitchen, harbouring the intention of seriously learning to cook. The two of us will be exceptionally good housewives, won’t we? On a more serious note, I am convinced that I would do quite well in a small inn where I would have to help out, and that I would be happy at it – of course on condition that I had the kind of husband I wanted [...]¹⁹

Mathilde seemed to be able to identify with a middle-class image of women that did not necessarily correspond to the image – prevalent in bourgeois circles – of a ‘lady of the house’ who had no need to work.²⁰ She could very well imagine putting her hands to work in her household, and confidently articulated her ideas and wishes. It might be that Mathilde was also covertly criticising arranged marriages, which were common in her immediate circle, and in which, on occasion, personal feelings were not allowed to play a part. Beyond the religious criterion, in wealthy business circles it was also of utmost importance to maintain or elevate one’s own social position through an appropriate marriage.²¹ Without necessarily assuming the absence of an emotional connection, there were several examples in Mathilde’s immediate environment of marriages in which social and financial considerations played a significant role. Her half-sister Emma’s first marriage was to the London banker and merchant Anton, Baron de Worms; Mathilde’s brother married Julie of the Brandeis-Weikersheim banking family; and another brother, Paul, married their cousin Evelina Landauer.²² Mathilde was especially critical of the marriage of Paul and Evelina (though here, sisterly jealousy might have played a role):

[...] I took a walk along the Ring. Among the few acquaintances we encountered were Baron and Baroness Paul Schey, who, in the street, appear truly married, while indoors look rather ridiculous, especially because they have kept their own individual patterns of behaviour. [...] ²³

In another letter dated the same year, she discusses her cousin Julius Morpurgo, and stresses the importance of love in marriage:

[...] I really feel sorry for him; it would be best for him if he could find a good wife, which is admittedly not an easy thing, for love should be the main ingredient on both sides.²⁴

In many of Mathilde’s letters, it becomes clear how the culture, ideals and attitudes of the bourgeoisie were adopted and experienced. Various statements on Judaism and religious practices from the years 1878 to 1879 do not leave any doubts that Mathilde wanted nothing to do with traditional Jewish rites, even finding them ridiculous or repulsive. Distressed, she wrote about an Orthodox funeral in October 1878:

[...] The funeral seems to have been quite appalling and I could hardly listen to Josef’s remarks. Lackenbach [*one of the Siebengemeinden, the seven largely autonomous Jewish communities established after 1670 by Paul I, 1st Prince Esterházy of Galántha, in what was then western Hungary and is today Burgenland, Austria*] is in fact a hamlet whose inhabitants consist only of the most repulsive Jews, where everything is done according to the severest Orthodox custom, which I myself find very disgusting. That the dead bodies are buried without pomp as performed by the Catholics is all right, but one should at least not begrudge them a coffin. I’m reluctant to tell you further details, I can only say that I was scandalized by the people there, and actually still am. It must have been awful for our dear father, but thank God he is well. [...] ²⁵

In June 1879, Mathilde wrote in a similar manner of the circumcision of her nephew Albrecht, son of Stefan and Julie Schey:

[...] You can’t imagine yesterday’s Jewish assembly. Such an awful thing. I couldn’t eat anything although I had rather the best place at the table, between Gusti Pick and Albert Boschan. At the peak of this wonderful society were Jellinek, Sulzer, Dr. Spitz and some kind of a master of ceremonies; among the relatives (thank God not from our side but from Julie’s) Mr von Brandeis, Aurelie with her husband, Sigmund Goldschmidt, Albert Brandeis, Hermann and Dora. Finally, Sulzer sang an endless prayer, during which I had to think of Phillip all the time, hardly able to stifle my laughter. [...] ²⁶



Monogram of Marie’s mother, Nina Perugia.
RAL 000/93/1

Mathilde's inferred attitude in these quotations is quite typical and fits the image and value system of the liberal Jewish bourgeoisie. Most of the affluent, acculturated Jews rejected the rules of Orthodoxy, while favouring a secularised version or culture as a substitute for religion.²⁷ Mathilde did not renounce Judaism during her lifetime, although conversions and renunciations were common in her environment toward the end of the nineteenth century. To what degree she saw herself as being Jewish, what distinctions of 'Jewish' she perceived in her environment, how she judged them and with what kind of Judaism she was able to identify cannot be unambiguously determined. What is certain is that researching the letters and working carefully with these valuable sources presents the opportunity of exciting perceptions and insights into the life of Mathilde Schey/Lieben.

Lisa-Maria Tillian is currently studying for a PhD at the University of Vienna. She has used the sources at The Rothschild Archive extensively for her research.

NOTES

- 1 Mathilde Schey to Marie Perugia, 29 September 1878. RAL 000/924/17 Marie de Rothschild: Letters from her cousin Mathilde Lieben (née Schey) 1872–1937.
- 2 Rainer Baasner, 'Briefkultur im 19. Jahrhundert. Kommunikation, Konvention, Postpraxis', in *Briefkultur im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rainer Baasner (Tübingen 1999), pp.1–36, p.14.
- 3 Mathilde Schey to Marie Perugia, 11 June 1879. RAL 000/924/17 Marie de Rothschild: Letters from her cousin Mathilde Lieben (née Schey) 1872–1937.
- 4 Margit Altfahrt, 'Friedrich Schey – eine Annäherung,' in *Studien zur Wiener Geschichte. Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien Bd. 60*, ed. Ferdinand Opll (Vienna 2004) pp.13–50, p.23.
- 5 Testament of Joseph Landauer, 11 September 1855. The Rothschild Archive, Box 18 000/924 Material relating to the Landauer and Perugia families.
- 6 Altfahrt, 'Friedrich Schey – eine Annäherung,' pp.20–27.
- 7 Otto Schwarz, *Hinter den Fassaden der Ringstrasse. Geschichte – Menschen – Gebeimnisse* (Vienna: Amalthea Signum Verlag, 2007), p.105.
- 8 Mathilde Schey to Marie Perugia, March 15, 1879. RAL 000/924/17 Marie de Rothschild: Letters from her cousin Mathilde Lieben (née Schey) 1872–1937.
- 9 Leopold de Rothschild to Nina Perugia, 20 January 1881. RAL 000/924/18 Material relating to the Landauer and Perugia families.
- 10 Nina Perugia to Marie de Rothschild, 9 July 1881. RAL 000/924/15 Marie de Rothschild: Letters from her mother, Nina Perugia 1879–1892.
- 11 Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz, 'Eine ewig neu bedrohte Stellung. Die Liebens – 150 Jahre Geschichte einer Familie,' in *Die Liebens. 150 Jahre Geschichte einer Wiener Familie*, ed. by Evi Fuks and Gabriele Kohlbauer (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2004) pp.39–53, p.42.
- 12 Peter Rosner, 'Untersuchungen über die Theorie des Preises. Ein bahnbrechendes Werk von Rudolf Auspitz und Richard Lieben,' in *Die Liebens. 150 Jahre Geschichte einer Wiener Familie*, ed. by Evi Fuks and Gabriele Kohlbauer (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2004) pp.113–123.
- 13 Hans-Thomas Schmidt, 'Unendliche Gedanken denken. Robert von Lieben – ein großer Erfinder,' in *Die Liebens. 150 Jahre Geschichte einer Wiener Familie*, ed. by Evi Fuks and Gabriele Kohlbauer (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2004) pp.141–162.
- 14 Werner Soukup, 'Adolf Lieben – Nestor der organischen Chemie in Österreich. Über den Initiator des Lieben-Preises,' in *Die Liebens. 150 Jahre Geschichte einer Wiener Familie*, ed. by Evi Fuks and Gabriele Kohlbauer (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2004) pp.125–139, p.127.
- 15 Marie-Theres Arnbom, Friedmann, Gutmann, Lieben, Mandl und Strakosch. *Fünf Familienporträts aus Wien vor 1938* (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2002) p.195.
- 16 Adolf Lieben, 'Erinnerungen an meine Jugend- und Wanderjahre,' in *Festschrift Adolf Lieben zum fünfzigjährigen Doktorjubiläum und zum siebenzigsten Geburtstag von Freunden, Verehrern und Schülern gewidmet* (Leipzig: C. F. Winter'sche Verlagshandlung, 1906), pp.1–20, p.20.
- 17 Marie-Theres Arnbom, 'Man will wohnen an der Ringstrasse. Die Häuser der Familie Lieben,' in *Die Liebens. 150 Jahre Geschichte einer Wiener Familie*, ed. by Evi Fuks and Gabriele Kohlbauer (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2004) pp.55–67, p.64.
- 18 Fritz Lieben, *Aus der Zeit meines Lebens. Erinnerungen von Fritz Lieben* (unprinted manuscript, Vienna 1960), p.20.
- 19 Mathilde Schey to Marie Perugia, June 21, 1878. RAL 000/924/17 Marie de Rothschild: Letters from her cousin Mathilde Lieben (née Schey) 1872–1937.
- 20 Andrea Schnöller / Hannes Stekl (eds.), 'Es war eine Welt der Geborgenheit...'. *Bürgerliche Kindheit in Monarchie und Republik* (Michael Mitterauer / Peter Paul Kloß (eds.), *Damit es nicht verlorengeht ...*; 12) (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 1999), p.31.
- 21 Marie-Theres Arnbom, 'Heiratsverhalten des nobilitierten Wiener Bürgertums im 19. Jahrhundert,' in *Bürger zwischen Tradition und Modernität (= Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie*, 6), ed. by Robert Hoffmann (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 1997), pp.134–161, p.149.
- 22 Altfahrt, 'Friedrich Schey – eine Annäherung,' pp.40–46.
- 23 Mathilde Schey to Marie Perugia, October 22, 1878. RAL 000/924/17 Marie de Rothschild: Letters from her cousin Mathilde Lieben (née Schey) 1872–1937.
- 24 Mathilde Schey to Marie Perugia, September 5, 1878. RAL 000/924/17 Marie de Rothschild: Letters from her cousin Mathilde Lieben (née Schey) 1872–1937.
- 25 Mathilde Schey to Marie Perugia, October 11, 1878. RAL 000/924/17 Marie de Rothschild: Letters from her cousin Mathilde Lieben (née Schey) 1872–1937.
- 26 Mathilde Schey to Marie Perugia, June 27, 1879. RAL 000/924/17 Marie de Rothschild: Letters from her cousin Mathilde Lieben (née Schey) 1872–1937.
- 27 Altfahrt, 'Friedrich Schey – eine Annäherung,' p.50.

Travels in Europe: 'Stray Leaves From My Journey, 1867'

Melanie Aspey explains how one of the highlights among new accessions provided the excuse to revisit some of the earliest material deposited in the Archive.

The abiding interest in photography of generations of the Rothschild family – as commissioners, collectors and practitioners – will be well known to readers of previous issues of this *Review*.¹ Baron Lionel de Rothschild (1808–1879) appreciated the potential of photographs as evidence in litigation, as he tried to prevent the planting of unsightly telegraph poles by the United Kingdom Electric Telegraph Company. His wife Charlotte (1819–1884) was most probably responsible for assembling an album of works by photographic pioneers such as Oscar Reijlander, Roger Fenton and Julia Margaret Cameron. She was certainly the recipient of a print of Cameron's *The Kiss of Peace*, which the photographer inscribed to her and which is one of several examples of her work in the album.² The couple's grandson, Lionel (1882–1942), left proof of his talents as a photographer in his collection of autochromes taken in the years before World War I.

Did this fascination with photography skip a generation? We now know for certain that it did not, with the arrival in the Archive of a back-breakingly impressive volume with the rather nonchalant title, 'Stray Leaves From My Journey, 1867'.³ The volume was compiled by Leopold de Rothschild (1845–1917) – son and father of the Lionels above – and contains photographs and prints of European cities, often captioned in Leopold's own hand. The images clearly mark a progression east – from Hamburg to Stockholm, then Moscow to Sebastopol with a handful of places in between.

Lithograph of Moscow:
Couvent de St Simeon
from 'Stray Leaves From
My Journey', compiled by
Leopold de Rothschild,
1867.
RAL 000/2019



Of value for its own sake as an item of interest and beauty the volume brings to life, and is enlivened by, documents that were already in the Archive: the letters written on the journey in 1867.⁴ Enthusiastic as they were for photography, many Rothschilds were also ‘inveterate scribblers.’⁵ The researcher can rejoice that they have also been inveterate collectors: business letters, private letters, photographs and prints open up a multidimensional view of the past.

Leopold’s journey in the late summer of 1867 was made in the company of his cousin and brother-in-law, Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839–1898). Ferdinand’s wife, Evelina, had died in December giving birth to their first child. The younger of the two men, Leopold was fresh from Cambridge University where his application to his studies had been somewhat less than enthusiastic. His mother often reminded him of his future responsibilities at the bank, and, a highly intellectual woman herself, expressed frustrations over her son’s negligent approach to the educational opportunities available to him at Cambridge. She frequently urged, ‘pray read and study and make the best use of your time’, and hoped, ‘that you will study conscientiously.’⁶ In May 1867, his Cambridge days behind him, she wrote, ‘It seems sad, and such a waste of youth and golden opportunities, and many rare and precious gifts and talents to fritter time away. I trust you will come back to study languages and art.’⁷ The ‘Grand Tour’ was perhaps devised for the benefit of both parties: to correct a perceived drift in Leopold’s life as he prepared himself for duty in the family firm, as well as to divert Ferdinand from his grief.

The letters of Leopold and Ferdinand, which provide colourful impressions of the places they visit and the people they meet, reveal that the two of them are also representing the business and undertaking specific commissions for family members. From Stockholm, Leopold wrote on 2 September:

Your message to the Bank of Sweden dear Papa seems to have created great excitement amongst the Directors, the chief of whom, Mr Schwan, proposed a fete in our honour and I believe would have organised a grand entry for us but fortunately for us Mr Guillemot prevented these grand doings.⁸

On the following day, Ferdinand presented his own impressions to his father-in-law.

Mr. Guillemot [*sic*] has overwhelmed us with civilities, he does all in his power to make himself useful, and as he is a clever man and has plenty to say for himself, he proves to be a useful auxiliary. Mr. G does much business with the Paris and Frankfurt houses and he is most anxious to enter into business connections with you. He told me that there was a great deal of money to be made here. Sweden is (comparatively) rich and certainly a very prosperous country. He said he would do all in his power to please you; every day he renews his offers to me and I think, if I may venture to express an opinion, that as the Paris house does business with him, you might do the same. He makes them remittances and gives letters of credit on them.⁹

The travellers were conducted on a tour of the Royal Palace and State Rooms by Count Corti, already known to the family, whom Leopold described in his letter of 2 September as ‘not much changed in looks or in character although he has now a beard and a good many white hairs, still we fancy that he no longer deserves the name of white negro.’ Leopold reported that while the paintings by Swedish artists were all ‘dawbs’, the king painted fairly ‘for a monarch’ and displayed his pictures to anyone who wished to see them.

The two men found time to visit some of Stockholm’s antique dealers and jewellers, one of whom hoped to convince the two Rothschilds that they should snap up his collection of ‘bric-a-brac rubbish’ (Leopold’s words) built up over twenty years in the hope of tempting the king to buy the whole lot. Leopold remarked that not even the Bond Street dealer, Joseph, would be so foolish as to make the man an offer. Joseph, it is clear from the letters, is but one of the



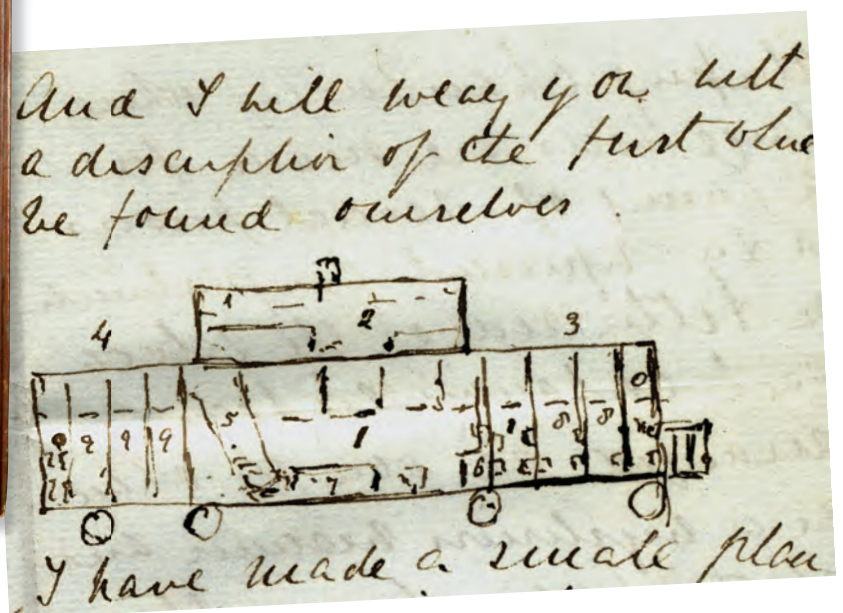
dealers whom the travellers encountered as they made their progress across Europe. By the time they reached St Petersburg, the competition for bargains had intensified. Ferdinand wrote to his father-in-law, 'The only friends I met were a trio of curiosity dealers, Durlacher, Spritzer and Wetheimer. I hear that Davis and Joseph are living two streets off. Considering the presence of these Bond St. robbers I shall not even attempt to look out for curiosities, and shall be glad to save both time and money. They have all come to buy Princess Galitzine's Collection. Durlacher is to take me to see it.'¹⁰

Ferdinand picked up some useful insights at the Galitzine museum, hearing from the director that the dealer Davis paid £600 for a vase and offered it to the Rothschilds for £1600.



'Stray Leaves From My Journey', a volume containing photographs and prints compiled by Leopold de Rothschild, 1867. RAL 000/2019

Sketch of a Russian train from Leopold's letters to his parents. RAL 000/22





Hand-coloured lithographs forming a panorama of Moscow from 'Stray Leaves From My Journey', 1867. RAL 000/2019

Arriving in Moscow Leopold and Ferdinand were welcomed by the British consul, a 'pompous gentleman', who provided them with an interpreter and a suggested itinerary. The sheer scale of the city overwhelmed them, Ferdinand admitting that his literary skills were not up to the task of describing the place: 'it would require the pen of my dear Aunt [Charlotte] to do justice to the wonderful panorama of this town'.¹¹

Leopold made sure that their impressions of Moscow were captured by more than just their pens. He acquired a dazzling series of ten richly coloured views of the city to add to a collection of photographs and prints acquired at each of the places they stayed, which now form a stunning centrepiece of his 1867 album.

The process of travelling is described in detail too. Much of it was tedious, some of it – as on the Russian railways – was unexpectedly luxurious, as Leopold reported at length to his parents from Moscow.

The journey here was most interesting as we had plenty of opportunity for watching the luxury of the Russians travelling arrangements.

The train is composed of several long carriages but all are differently arranged.

1. the ordinary first class
2. the sleeping carriage
3. the ordinary second class
4. the sleeping carriage

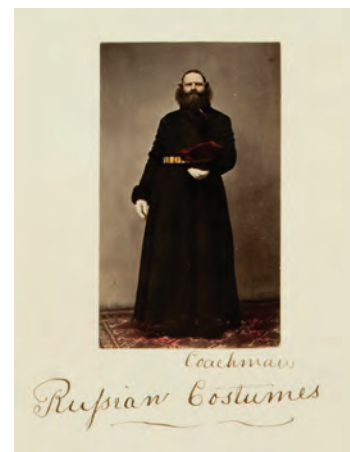
and I will weary you with a description of the first where we found ourselves.

I have made a small plan but I fear it is rather complicated, however, it may serve to give an idea of the dimensions. The middle compartment (1) represents a section of the saloon, in which (7) is a large divan and an elaborate side board with a piece of glass over wax candlesticks, the staircase (5) leads up to a sleeping chamber (2) where large beds are made for a family of several persons; 8 and 9 represent compartments on either side of the saloon, each containing six beds arranged one over the other in a mysterious manner and at the proper hour the corridors 3 and 4 afford a small promenade for the nervous traveller and at the last extreme of each wing is a oo [sic] in perfect condition and arranged as well as in the most private houses. A silent servant with noiseless motion administers to all ones wants, and has in his stores every imaginable object, cards, cigarettes, cushions, iced water, soap, towels, a complete wash-stand etc. all of which disappears in a second after it has been used – and when one considers that the price of all these comforts amounts to 2 roubles one is fairly astounded.¹²

Travelling in Russia around the time of the New Year, Leopold and Ferdinand had to make plans for the holidays and arranged to spend the time with the Karaite Jews. The letters provide further details of encounters with their co-religionists as their arrival in successive towns caused minor sensations. Leopold gleefully told his parents that he had managed to deflect one suppliant in Ferdinand's direction, answering him truthfully that his name was Leopold, and 'Rothschild' was his travelling companion.

Not unsurprisingly the letters also confirm that opportunities to speak up on behalf of the repressed or unrepresented communities of Jews were never lost. Even as a young man, Leopold was aware of the privileges of access to political power that the family's business activities could bring. '...it is more than probable that we shall see his Imperial Majesty and as such our opportunity ought not to be lost we should like to know if there is anything particular that you would wish the Czar to remark. Ferdy thinks that he might say something about the poor Jews, as the Chief Rabbi came to us at St Petersburg and said that although there were many Israelites in Russia especially in the army and the navy that as yet there was no place of worship!'¹³

It is often the archivist's privilege to be the first to open the pages of a book, or to unwrap tightly bound packages of paper, which have sealed in the experiences of generations past and to experience the thrill of discovery. Bringing together letter and photograph, receipt and object, collection and collection is a satisfying enough process in itself; associating researcher with research material is more rewarding still. The collections in the Archive described above offer endless questions to historians in many disciplines. Was the tour recorded in the journals of those that the Rothschilds met? Did the dealers keep accounts of their purchases and sales? Are there articles in the press noting the events they attended? How rare are the photographs?¹⁴ We eagerly await the answers.



NOTES

- 1 See Anthony Hamber, 'New Boundaries: Baron Lionel, photography and the United Kingdom Electric Telegraph Company', *Review of the Year 2003–2004* (London: The Rothschild Archive, 2004), pp.44–51 for an example of commissioned photography; Colin Ford, 'Hannah, Charlotte... and Julia', *Review of the Year 2001–2002* (London: The Rothschild Archive, 2002), pp.32–36 for more on the Rothschilds as collectors of photographs; Victor Gray, 'The colours of another world' *Review of the Year 2005–2006* (London: The Rothschild Archive, 2006), pp.14–19 for a description of Lionel de Rothschild's autochromes.
- 2 RAL 000/924/24.
- 3 RAL 000/2019. The album, like the one attributed to Charlotte de Rothschild, was also formerly at Ascott House.
- 4 RAL 00/22 (Leopold) and RAL 00/26 (Ferdinand).
- 5 Charlotte de Rothschild, London, to Leopold de Rothschild, Switzerland, 25 August 1874. RAL 000/84.
- 6 Charlotte de Rothschild, London, to Leopold de Rothschild, Cambridge, 16 and 20 March 1866. RAL 00/84.
- 7 Charlotte de Rothschild, London, to Leopold de Rothschild, 22 May 1867. RAL 00/84.
- 8 Leopold de Rothschild, Stockholm, to Lionel and Charlotte de Rothschild, 2 September 1867. RAL 00/22.
- 9 Ferdinand de Rothschild, Stockholm, to Lionel and Charlotte de Rothschild, 3 September 1867. RAL 00/26. The Paris Rothschilds had begun a regular correspondence with the firm of Guillemot and Weylandt around this time, but the London bank did not follow suit.
- 10 Ferdinand de Rothschild, St Petersburg, to Lionel and Charlotte de Rothschild, 10 September 1867. RAL 00/26.
- 11 Ferdinand de Rothschild, Moscow, to Lionel and Charlotte de Rothschild, 18 September 1867. RAL 00/26.
- 12 Leopold de Rothschild, Moscow, to Lionel and Charlotte de Rothschild, 18 September 1867. RAL 000/22.
- 13 Leopold de Rothschild, St Petersburg, to Lionel and Charlotte de Rothschild, 15 September 1867. RAL 000/22.
- 14 I am grateful to Anders Perlinge for his observations on the Stockholm photographs.

Above
Photographs collected
by Leopold in Russia.
RAL 000/2019

The English Rothschilds and the Vale of Aylesbury

Nicola Pickering presents some preliminary research since embarking on a PhD project looking at the collecting tastes and influences of the Rothschilds in the Vale of Aylesbury.

My study focuses on the English branch of the Rothschild family, from about the 1830s to 1880, specifically the family's activity in the Vale of Aylesbury. My completed thesis will survey several of the properties built in the area by the family and the collections of furniture, *objets d'art* and paintings housed within them. The brief historical introduction which follows will be a necessary preliminary to a broader study of these other aspects of the Rothschild presence in the Vale of Aylesbury.

Following on from this introduction to the family in the Vale of Aylesbury, the main purpose of my thesis will be to produce a more detailed study of the architecture, interiors and collections of each of the Rothschild houses in the Vale, something which has not been attempted by any other author to date. There is a need for a more wide-ranging and in-depth examination of each property in the Vale, in the context particularly of the time in which they were built, and in which the collections they housed were created. The properties under consideration are: Mentmore Towers, Aston Clinton, Ascott, Tring Park and Halton House. My research will enrich and add significantly to our understanding of the family and their collections in this area and should also act as a case study contributing to our understanding of nineteenth-century country houses, the lifestyle of a country gentleman, his collections and collecting activities. The documents held at The Rothschild Archive will be an invaluable and principal source for this project; I will call on family correspondence, wills, inventories, contracts, estate records and deeds, accounts, photographs or sketches, and catalogues.

Cover of an album
recording the grandeur
of Halton House
photographed by S G
Payne, Aylesbury, 1887.
RAL 000/887





Left
 South Drawing Room,
 Halton House, (built by
 Alfred de Rothschild) 1880s.
 RAL 000/887

Opposite
 The Morning Room, Tring
 Park (country residence
 of Nathaniel, 1st Lord
 Rothschild, and Emma,
 Lady Rothschild, from an
 album of photographs by
 H. Bedford Lemere, 1890.
 RAL 000/880

The association of the Rothschild family with the Vale of Aylesbury began with the second generation to reside in England. Three brothers of this generation, Lionel Nathan (1808–1879), Anthony Nathan (1810–1876) and Mayer Amschel (1818–1874), began to buy up large tracts of land in the Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire countryside from the 1840s onwards. The extent of their land holdings and their noteworthy social standing by the end of the century were such that the Vale of Aylesbury was often referred to as ‘Rothschildshire’. In the course of time the Rothschilds of this and subsequent generations managed to establish themselves in the area as model English country gentlemen, maintaining a renowned stag hunt, an eminent stud farm and acting as exemplary landlords. They were also actively involved in local politics, serving as County Sheriffs, JPs and Lieutenants, as well as representing the Vale of Aylesbury in the House of Commons. In addition they bought and built great country houses, which they adorned with magnificent collections of pictures, furniture and *objets d’art*, in a very particular way.

Copious correspondence provides good evidence that the family visited each other frequently and genuinely enjoyed one another’s company whilst resident at their country properties. They enjoyed hunting and shooting on each other’s land and were attentive in dinner and party engagements. It is also abundantly clear that they shared a preference for a certain style in their homes – most family members filled their residences with fine furniture, pictures and *objets d’art*, generally creating an impression of what has been labelled *le goût Rothschild*. The overriding preference was to collect objects of the French fashion, from the time of Louis XIV, XV and XVI, to create a feeling of opulence in the interiors of their various residences.

One might wonder about the circumstances which first brought Lionel and his brothers to the Vale of Aylesbury. Some writers have suggested it began when their father, Nathan Mayer (1777–1836), rented Tring Park mansion in Hertfordshire, in the 1830s as a country retreat for his family. There is, however, no existing evidence to support this claim. The only surviving evidence connecting Nathan Mayer with the area is an insurance document issued to William



Kay for the manor of Tring Park and its contents by the Alliance Assurance Company, a company established by Nathan in 1824.¹ There is a somewhat different explanation for the association of the family with the Vale. George Ireland has shown that as early as the 1830s the brothers were familiar with several foxhunts and stag hunts in the Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire countryside and had been hunting and socialising with local landowners.² It was these early hunting experiences which encouraged the brothers to form their own pack of staghounds and begin a serious association with the Vale of Aylesbury in late 1838.³ Lionel bought an existing pack of hounds – the Astar Harriers – and kennels from a Mr Adamson at Hastoe near Tring Park in 1840, and agreed to rent the ‘Tring Park Mansion Stabling and Coach Houses’ and the ‘Stabling in the Estate Farm Yard’ for fifteen shillings a week and the horses’ manure.⁴ The Rothschilds’ pack received a warm welcome from the local sporting gentry and was a popular addition to the hunting scene.⁵

There soon appeared some difficulties with this rental arrangement however. The hounds at least once escaped their kennels and attacked the tame deer in the park at Tring. The family, moreover, needed somewhere to stay as their enthusiasm for the hunt grew still greater: it was not ideal to have to travel from London more than once a week, even if the trains were so fast. Nathaniel wrote in 1840:

Follow my advice, and do not let the opportunity slip of getting out [of stock] at fair prices so that when the season comes we may have a little hunting without sweating and bothering ourselves in the railway carriages.⁶

Lionel was the first to contemplate the purchase of land in the area in the late 1830s. Land in the Vale was of good quality and reasonably priced at the time. Lionel made enquiries about Tring Manor itself and several other estates soon after 1836. His brothers continued his interest and looked over or made enquiries about a number of properties in the area in the 1840s.

Yet it was Mayer who made the first major step in the purchase of land in the area, probably owing to the fact that he was somewhat freer than his brothers to do so; he played a less major role in running the bank at New Court. In addition he genuinely enjoyed country life and enthusiastically wanted to invest his time, energy and money in land, farming and stockbreeding. In September 1842 he purchased a small estate of several farms and cottages in the parishes of Mentmore and Wing (less than ten miles north of Tring Park) from a Mr Warner for £5,000, as well as some parcels of land at Ledburn, in Mentmore parish, from Eleanor Villiers.⁷

It was from this initial purchase that the three brothers' estates in the Vale would take form. Soon, instead of merely looking for land upon which to hunt, it is evident they gained a taste for country life and looked to the purchase of property or landed estates. Thus began the enormous investment in land holdings in the Vale of Aylesbury by the Rothschild family that would continue for generations to come.

In the months and years following his initial purchase, Mayer sought to expand his holdings and continued to acquire neighbouring lands.⁸ By 1850 he had secured a seven hundred acre estate together with 'manor and advowson' of Mentmore for £12,400.⁹ The existing mansion on the estate was not thought quite grand enough and he decided to mark his entrance into the Vale of Aylesbury by designing and erecting the first of the great Rothschild houses in the area. The house was to be a magnificent statement of opulence and country living, built on an 'eminence which commands a fine view of the Vale of Aylesbury, the Dunstable downs and the Chiltern and Barnham hills'.¹⁰ He chose Joseph Paxton, architect and gardener to the Duke of Devonshire, fresh from his triumphs at the Great Exhibition, as his architect (along with Paxton's son-in-law George Stokes). Paxton conceived a 'superb mansion' in the Jacobean style.¹¹ The completed house was noted to have a 'beauty rivalling its size'.¹² It was not only a sumptuous statement in its exterior; Mayer filled his new country residence with an enviable collection of furniture, paintings and *objets d'art*, expressing faithfully and splendidly *le goût Rothschild*.

Anthony was less at liberty to move to the countryside in a style such as his brother had chosen. It was not until 1853 that he and his wife Louisa were able to spend their summer months in the Vale of Aylesbury, as the demands of business in London eased. In July 1849 a 'newly erected residence suitable for a family of respectability, with offices, gardens, orchard, pleasure ground, and a small park' at Aston Clinton, about six miles south of Mentmore House, had come on to the market.¹³ The brothers together decided to purchase the 'Sporting Residence' and estate of one thousand and eighty three acres with '900 acres of productive land, abounding with game' for £26,000 from the second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.¹⁴

It is not clear exactly who, or which of the brothers in combination, provided the money for the estate. Nathaniel declared in 1851 that he would 'willingly take ¼ share in Aston Clinton as well as the former [Halton]. I hope Sir Anthony will look well after it and get the rentes [*sic*] paid as well as the shooting up'.¹⁵ Much evidence suggests it was Lionel however who held the rights to the estate.¹⁶ Lionel was certainly buying other parcels of land in the Aston Clinton area in the 1850s.¹⁷

Yet, although not technically owning the estate, it fell to Anthony to take up residence in the new property. Unable to compete with Mentmore, Anthony and Louisa set about enlarging and improving the eighteenth-century Aston Clinton house for their needs. They again engaged Sir Joseph Paxton to carry out the work, but it was under the supervision of George Stokes that the house was significantly altered and extended. After some initial misgivings, the house, 'remade beyond any wild dreams', became a country home which Anthony and Louisa and their two daughters, Constance and Annie, loved dearly.¹⁸

Lionel did not follow his brothers in assuming residence in the Vale of Aylesbury. He had expressed his interest in the area through purchases of land, but had not chosen to establish a home here. His largest purchase was an estate of one thousand four hundred acres (along with a few other farms) at Halton just five miles west of Tring Park, in the 1850s. Lionel made an initial

agreement in 1850 to purchase the estate from Sir George Henry Dashwood (who had inherited the estate with over £10,000 of bad debts from his father, Sir John in 1849).¹⁹ The negotiations were lengthy and ran into legal disputes.²⁰ Lionel made two separate purchases of land adjoining the Halton estate in 1851 before finally settling with Sir George at £47,500 in June 1853 for the estate itself.²¹

Lionel's position took a slight change in 1872 when the 'very capital, valuable and highly desirable Tring Park Estate' came on to the market and he decided to purchase the almost four thousand acre estate along with the manor house.²² Yet this purchase of another substantial house in the Vale of Aylesbury was intended not for himself, but for the enjoyment of his eldest son, Nathaniel Mayer or 'Natty' (1840–1915), who took up residence here by 1874. The house was rumoured to have been built by Sir Christopher Wren in the 1670s, and was described at sale as:

[M]ost substantially built and of uniform elevation, with handsome Portico, covered Entrance, and flight of stone steps, which occupies a commanding position on a slight eminence in the midst of a Beautiful Deer Park of nearly 300 Acres.²³

Servants' Wages Book
(Men and Women), 1909,
from Tring Park, home
of Nathaniel, 1st Lord
Rothschild and Emma,
Lady Rothschild.
RAL 000/848

Men		1909			
Servant's Name.	Capacity.	Wages per year.	When due.	Amount Paid.	
Robert Paul	Head Chef	350	Quarterly		
Josephson E	2 nd Chef	125	"		
W. Lead	Butler	145	"		
Fitch	2 nd ditto	44	"		
Spinks	Kitchen Man	70	Halfly		
Sheppard	Thomas Butler	250	Halfly		
Brunden	J.J. Inn- & Porter	200	15		
Inon	Charles Under Butler	75	"		
Butch	L.H. 2 nd ditto	55	"		
Sharrer	Henry Footman	65	"		
Leahy	do	50	"		
Robson	J. Oldman	44	"		
Johnson	X. London	40	"		
Leahy	James Young	60	"		
Ducker	G. Hill, Porter (London)	60	"		
Cooper	T. Laundry Laundry	50	"		

Women		1909			
Servant's Name.	Capacity.	Wages per year.	When due.	Amount Paid.	
Anderson	Mrs E. Housekeeper	80	Monthly		
Edel	Annuit	42	"		
Law	Porter	25	"		
Under	Porter	20	"		
Higgins	House	26	"		
Langley	ditto	26	"		
Law	Housemaid	28	"		
Blower	Agd.	26	"		
And	Mrs E. Housekeeper	100	Quarterly		
Jeanes	Marche	26	"		
Conni	Emily	28	"		
Ball	Ellen	26	"		
Smith	Elizabeth	25	"		

Natty, with his father's input, set about alterations in such earnest that by the 1890s the older structure was almost entirely obscured. The resulting outcome, probably guided by the architect George Devey, was a considerable red-brick house in the eighteenth-century French style, with stone dressings and slate mansard roof.

Thus, by the mid-1870s, Lionel, Anthony and Mayer all owned or resided in properties with associated estates in the Vale of Aylesbury. The Rothschilds' encroachment into the area did not end there: yet more members of the family moved into the area in the following decades.

Lionel ensured that, after his death, each of his sons would be provided with an estate of his own in the Vale of Aylesbury. Lionel's second son, Alfred (1842–1918), was presented with the estate at Halton upon his father's death in 1879.²⁵ By this time, the estate covered approximately one thousand five hundred acres but lacked a dwelling of any significant size and Alfred promptly decided to build a grand new residence. The site chosen was about half a mile from the village of Halton, on a hilltop commanding views of the surrounding area. The house was constructed with remarkable speed. *Country Life* was impressed:

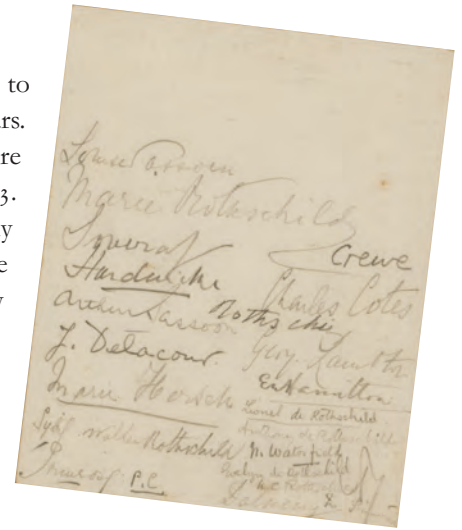
When we reflect but that a few years ago that beautiful sweep of country which lies on the slope of the Halton hills [...] was worked by the plough, or given up only to the feeding of cattle, we cannot be but overcome with surprise that so magnificent a house should have risen on the spot, invested with the charm of artistic completeness, and lying in the midst of beautiful gardens.²⁶

Since the late 1850s Lionel had also been buying land around Ascott, and continued to enlarge the estate with small purchases of land and stabling over the next eighteen years. Eventually the cottage or farmhouse at Ascott itself (around two miles north of Mentmore House) and about ninety acres which adjoined the Mentmore estate, were acquired in 1873. Leopold (1845–1917), Lionel’s third son, took over the estate in 1874 and eventually inherited it in 1879. He oversaw the enlargement of the cottage, which dated from the seventeenth-century, and turned the house into a fashionable hunting box and country residence. George Devey drew up plans for an Old English or Jacobean style house, taking the original farmhouse as the core. The final product was pleasing to *Country Life*:

Neither imposing or stately, like some palatial abodes, it has just the character of a comfortable country home [...] There is abundant charm in the quaint timbered gables and walls, the deep tiled roofs, the bold chimney stacks.²⁷

Other members of the family also decided that the Vale of Aylesbury was so suitable an area in which to settle that they too built new properties. Ferdinand James (1839–1898) of the Vienna branch of the family, Lionel’s nephew, had settled in England in the 1860s and had married his cousin, Lionel’s daughter Evelina (1839–1866). In 1874, after the death of his father, Ferdinand wasted no time in purchasing almost three thousand acres at Waddesdon from the Duke of Marlborough.²⁸ Soon after, he began work to build his famous château, situated about thirteen miles from Tring Park.

Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, the Rothschild family had built or purchased and extended seven substantial properties in the Vale of Aylesbury; the examination of several of these properties, their interiors and collections forms the basis of my wider thesis.



Nicola Pickering is a PhD student based at the Centre for Contemporary British History, working under the supervision of Professor Richard Roberts and Dr Peter Mandler. Her research project is the second of three Collaborative Doctoral Awards to be hosted at The Rothschild Archive Trust in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Centre for Contemporary British History.

Left
Menu for a New Year’s Eve Dinner held at Mentmore Towers, 1900. The frame incorporates images of horseracing. The reverse of the card was signed by the guests (*above*).

RAL 000/2019

NOTES

- 1 Insurance agreement: Alliance Assurance Company to William Kay Esq. for Tring Park House and contents, 5 April 1824. Rothschild Archive London (RAL hereafter), oversized accessions, box 1.
- 2 George Ireland, *Plutocrats* (London: John Murray, 2007), pp. 106–122. For example they were already acquainted with Harvey Combe and his Old Berkley foxhounds, and so already knew the hunt country around Tring. Ireland also asserts that by the 1840s Lionel and his brothers were hunting with the Royal Buckhounds from Ascot who frequented Buckinghamshire.
- 3 Originally fox and hare hounds, the Rothschilds instead chose to employ the pack as staghounds.
- 4 Lionel to Edmund Carrington and J. Gleinster. RAL XI/109/43; Ireland, *Plutocrats*, p. 122.
- 5 J. S. Brown to Mayer, 26 January 1844. RAL XI/109/56/28.
- 6 Nathaniel to his brothers, Paris, (undated) 1840. RAL XI/104/0, ink no. 76, pencil no. 279.
- 7 Conveyance of a messuage lands and tithes at Ledburn in the County of Bucks, Mrs Eleanor Villiers to the Baron Mayer Amschel Rothschild, 29 September 1842. Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (CBS hereafter), Bucks D94–26; Covenant for production of deeds, Mrs Eleanor Villiers to the Baron Mayer Amschel de Rothschild, 16 September 1842. CBS, Bucks D94–26; Richard Dawes to Mayer, 15 October 1842. RAL XI/109/52; Hannah Rosebery, *Mentmore* (Privately printed, 1883).
- 8 See for example CBS, D94–1; D94–6; D–94–8; D94–10; D94–11; D94–12; D94–18; D94–21; D94–24; D94–25; D94–26; D94–49, all of which contain deeds relating to the sale of land in the area to Mayer, between 1842 and 1851; see also plans and references of the estate of the late James Field, 1843. Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS hereafter): the plan of which is marked with the lands of ‘Barons Rothschild’. See also Thomas Hart to Mayer, Ascott, 7 August 1849. RAL XI/109/72/2; Lionel to Mayer, Frankfurt, August 1844. RAL XI/109/48A/1/57; Sir Henry Verney to Mayer, Claydon House, Bucks, 6 May 1845. RAL XI/109/52A/2/42; J. S. Brown to Mayer, 26 January 1844. RAL XI/109/56/28: for letters relating to the purchase of lands by Mayer.
- 9 Conveyance of the Manor and Advowson of Mentmore in the County of Bucks and of Certain Lands in that Parish, William Henry Frederick Cavendish Esq. to the Baron Mayer Amschel de Rothschild, 26 November 1850. CBS, D94–6; Richard Dawes to Mayer, 15 October 1842. RAL XI/109/52; Hannah Rosebery, *Mentmore* (Privately printed, 1883).
- 10 ‘Mentmore’, *The Builder*, xv (1857), 738–40.
- 11 H. E., ‘Mentmore Towers’, *The Gardener’s Chronicle*, 21 June 1879.
- 12 ‘The Premier’s Country Seats’, *The Illustrated London News*, 24 March 1894.
- 13 ‘Property’, *The Times*, 9 June 1849.
- 14 Particulars and conditions of sale of the Manor of Aston Clinton, 27 September 1836. RAL, Horwood and James Papers, s.62; Diana Gulland, ‘Aston Clinton Manor House: from moated site to classical mansion’, *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 43 (2003), 196–207.
- 15 Nathaniel to his brothers, Paris, 5 July 1851. RAL XI/109/77/4.
- 16 For example deeds between Lionel and local landowners after the purchase of the estate, and documents between Lionel and Anthony establishing a life interest in the estate for Anthony’s wife after his death: Indenture between Baron Lionel of New Court and Charles Edward Gee Barnard of 35 Lincolns Inn Fields in the County of Middlesex and the Reverend Charles Watkin Wynne Eyton of Aston Clinton, 25 December 1854. CBS, 666/28; Indenture between Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild of Gunnersbury Park and Sir Anthony Nathan de Rothschild of No 2 Grosvenor Place Houses, 1 June 1875. RAL 000/107; Copy deed between Lionel Nathan de Rothschild and Sir Anthony Nathan de Rothschild, 1 June 1875. RAL, Horwood and James Papers, L.119.
- 17 See for example: Abstract of the Title of Major Lionel Nathan de Rothschild to hereditaments forming part of the Halton Estate in the County of Bucks, 1918. RAL 000/765; Conveyance of land at Aston Clinton in the County of Buckinghamshire, Mr George Harriott and his wife to the Baron Lionel N de Rothschild, 3 June 1851. RAL 000/68/3; Copy conveyance of houses, lands and hereditaments in Aston Clinton, Gerard Warwick Lake to Baron L. N. de Rothschild, 23 January 1857. RAL, Horwood and James Papers, s.27; Draft conveyance of two closes of meadowland at Aston Clinton, George Saunders to Baron Lionel de Rothschild, 23 September 1858. RAL, Horwood and James Papers, s.70; Plan of land at Aston Clinton for sale, Trustees of G. Robinson to Baron L. N. de Rothschild, 23 September 1858. RAL, Horwood and James Papers, B.20; Plan of Homestead and close at Aston Clinton, Lord Leigh and others to Baron L Rothschild, 4 January 1859. RAL, Horwood and James Papers, B.22.
- 18 William J. Lacey, ‘Two Rothschild Homes in Buckinghamshire’, *The Woman at Home*, CCXXX (1912), 103–107.
- 19 Conveyance of land, Sir G. H Dashwood to Baron L. N. de Rothschild, 24 June 1853. RAL 000/681; bond of indemnity and for quiet enjoyment, Sir G. H. Dashwood Bart to Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, 24 June 1853. RAL 000/69/2, bundle 9.
- 20 Correspondence regarding sale of Halton estate by Sir George Dashwood to Baron de Rothschild, 1851–4. CBS, D–D/2/58.
- 21 Abstract of title of Mr Lionel de Rothschild to hereditaments forming part of the Halton Estate in the County of Buckingham, 30 September 1879. RAL Horwood and James Papers, L.18.
- 22 ‘Property’, *The Times*, 20 July 1820, p.4; particulars and conditions of sale, Tring Park Estate, 7 May 1872. CBS, DX258/13.
- 23 Particulars and conditions of sale, Tring Park Estate, 7 May 1872. CBS, DX258/13.
- 24 Roger North (1653–1734) in his treatise *Of Buildings* stated that Tring Park was built c.1670 for Henry Guy, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to King Charles II by Sir Christopher Wren. *Of Buildings. Roger North’s Writings on Architecture*, ed. by Howard Colvin and John Newman (Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, 1981), p.172.
- 25 Draft Deed of Partition of Estates Held by Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, 30 September 1879. RAL, Horwood and James Papers, J.36: Includes details of the division of his lands at Halton, Aston Clinton, Buckland, Ascott, Wing, Linslade, Drayton Beauchamp, Marsworth, Cheddington, and Pitstone between his three sons.
- 26 ‘Country Homes: Halton’, *Country Life Illustrated*, 1 (1897), 664–666.
- 27 ‘Country Homes: Ascott’, *Country Life Illustrated*, 11 (1897), 210–212.
- 28 Ferdinand de Rothschild, *Waddesdon* (Privately Printed), 1897.

Principal acquisitions

1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010

This list is not comprehensive but attempts to record acquisitions of most immediate relevance to research. Some items listed here may, however, remain closed to access for some time and for a variety of reasons. Researchers should always enquire as to the availability of specific items before visiting the Archive, quoting the reference number which appears at the end of each entry.

Collections presented by members of the Rothschild family

Family papers relating to the lives of Leopold and Marie de Rothschild, formerly at Ascott House.

LEOPOLD DE ROTHSCHILD

Album of photographs and prints assembled during a European journey, 1867; presentation from the employees of Hamilton Place, Ascott, Palace House and Gunnersbury Park, on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday, 22 November 1895; papers relating to his public and military offices, 1880–1912; presentation albums from the *Jewish Chronicle* and the United Synagogue on his seventieth birthday, 22 November 1915; diary and reminiscences; inventory of plate etc., and other miscellaneous items; papers relating to the war in South Africa 1899–1902, including details of contributions made to the Red Cross; material relating to the Derby win of his horse, St Amant, 1904; press cuttings at the time of his death, 1917.

LEOPOLD AND MARIE DE ROTHSCHILD

Letters from their sons Lionel, Anthony and Evelyn and their school reports, c.1887–1937; correspondence with family, friends and employees, 1914–1918; material relating to the war, including correspondence, scrapbooks, press cuttings, 1914–1918; letters and other documents relating to their marriage, 19 January 1881; material relating to their silver wedding anniversary, 1906; collection of letters and photographs from and of the Royal family, souvenirs from coronations, jubilees and funerals, 1883–1936; photograph albums of family and friends, racing, foreign travels.

MARIE DE ROTHSCHILD

Diaries 1885–1937; notebooks, photograph albums, 1871–1937; letters from her husband Leopold, 1880–1917; letters from her son Anthony, 1914–1937; letters from her grandchildren Rosemary, Edmund, Naomi and Leo, 1916–1936; letters from her sister Louise Sassoon; letters from Lord Rosebery, Hannah Rosebery, Harry Dalmeny, Neil and Victoria Primrose, Lord and Lady Crewe and Charles and Sybil Grant; letters received in response to family events, 1884–1926; letters received on death of Leopold, 1917; papers relating to her death, 1870–1937

LOUISE SASSOON

Album of photographs, lists of guests, cartoons etc., from Tulchan Lodge.
000/2019

Portrait of Rozsika Rothschild, née Wertheimstein, London, December 1914, oil on board, Philip de Laszlo.
000/1983

Jockey's cap in Rothschild colours by Hermes of Paris, bearing name tag of Baron J [possibly James Armand] de Rothschild.

Watercolour of Gustave de Rothschild at a race meeting talking to a jockey wearing Rothschild colours.
000/1991

Collections of papers assembled by Baron and Baroness Elie de Rothschild.

Papers relating to the military career of Robert de Rothschild including discharge papers, and a menu for Anglo-French Christmas meal, 1914.

Papers of Elie de Rothschild relating to his time as a prisoner of war in Colditz. The collection contains an account of his capture and interrogation; letters during captivity from family members; documentation prepared for his marriage by proxy to Liliane Fould-Springer.

A collection of articles, mainly from the French language press, about the Rothschild family, assembled by Liliane de Rothschild, 1970s – 1990s.

Various photographs, including the Rothschild family's Green Shield house in the Judengasse, Frankfurt, by Mylius and a joint portrait of Gustave and Cecile de Rothschild.
000/2032

Opposite page

From family papers previously held at Ascott House: Walter Rothschild's election address for the Mid-Bucks election, 1906.

Telegram of congratulations received by Walter.
RAL 000/2019

Following page

Tin trunks formerly containing Rothschild family documents c.1880–1920. Now on display at N M Rothschild & Sons Limited.

Items transferred from the Corporate Records Department, N M Rothschild & Sons Limited

Items relating to the political interests of members of the Rothschild family, from the papers of the Partners' Room.

Printed copy of the Register of Electors for the Aylesbury Parliamentary Division of the County of Buckingham, Autumn 1919. (Formerly 18/1)

Volume with manuscript entries entitled 'City Electors list' 1847. (Formerly 18/2) 000/2027

File containing copies of private telegrams and correspondence with the Brazilian government 1910-1912. (Formerly 224/1) 000/2028

File of correspondence concerning The Central British Fund for German Jewry, including banking slips and accounting details, 16 May - 28 December 1933. (Formerly 189/1) 000/2030

Two files of bullion revenue figures, 1954-1955 and 1956-1959. (Formerly 193/2 and 193/3) 000/2031

Papers relating to the Royal Mint Refinery (Formerly the series 148) 000/2035

Marble bust of Lionel de Rothschild (1808-1879) by R C Belt, 1880. 000/2001

Items acquired by gift and purchase

Printed circular announcing the appointment of Anselm von Rothschild (1803-1874) as Austrian Consul General in Frankfurt-am-Main, Vienna, 17 March 1836. 000/2014

Letters written by or addressed to Salomon von Rothschild including a correspondence between Salomon and his clerks at the Viennese bank about property in the Renngasse, which had been the subject of a bid by the banking house of Sina; letters of thanks to the clerks for their good wishes on various occasions, especially his seventieth birthday in 1844; a letter written from Paris thanking the clerks for their loyalty, which names them as Wertheimstein, Goldschmidt, Goetzl, Seligmann, Zerkowitz, Bilhuber, Kehrer, Neustueck, Puzin and Holt. Further letters written by Carl and James de Rothschild. 000/2013

Four photographs, the work of Yaacov Ben Dov, recording a visit by Baron Edmond de Rothschild to Palestine, 1924. 000/1994

Portrait study of Miriam Rothschild as a young girl, watercolour by Elsie Burrell signed and dated 1914. 000/2008

Papers of the late Mrs Jean Neal, née Grant, secretary at New Court 1947-1959 and later to Leopold de Rothschild. The papers include correspondence about Mrs Neal's employment at the bank, her marriage and her social interests as well as a collection of photographs, of members of the Rothschild family and their houses, staff of the bank and the bank's offices. 000/1985

Shaarei Dimoat, Hebrew eulogy and biography of Simon Wolf [Wilhelm Carl von] Rothschild (1828-1901) by Emmanuel Krengel, Krakau, 1901. 000/1994

Printed circular concerning the handling by the Rothschild and Gontard banks in Paris of French indemnity payments to Austria, issued Vienna 21 August 1817. 000/1994

