

## Rothschild in the news

*Melanie Aspey explains how one of this year's acquisitions helped the Archive to fulfil its aim of providing in its London searchroom access to collections from around the world of relevance to Rothschild history*

The Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, (StuB), in Frankfurt am Main houses the former Carl von Rothschild Free Public Library, one of its founding constituents.\* This library, based on the collection of Mayer Carl von Rothschild (1820-1886), was opened to the public by his heirs in 1888 and used the English free library system as a model. The collecting policy of the librarian, Carl Berghoeffer, built on the strengths of the holdings, which might be termed 'arts and humanities' – art, architecture, literature, philology, geography etc. Additionally he collected works by or about the Rothschild family – much as the Archive does – and subscribed to a newspaper cuttings service, which ensured that a copy of every 'Rothschild' article appearing in the international press was sent to the Frankfurt library where it was pasted into an enormous ledger. These cuttings, covering the period from 1886 to 1928, were of interest to us in the Archive, since they provide a chronological narrative of Rothschild activities during this time.

The reports give a good indication of the shifting impact of the Rothschild family on the world at

large. In the 1880s and 1890s, the deaths of Mayer Carl and his widow, Louise, were widely reported with detailed biographies and descriptions of their political and social activities. By contrast, the closure of the Frankfurt House in 1901, while noted in dozens of papers throughout the world, generated relatively little interest beyond the simplest of statements.

The Press reports have often provided the Archive with previously unknown information, enabling gaps in our knowledge to be filled. As an example, one week at the end of January and beginning of February 1908 produced reports about the International Conference on Marine Motoring and a meeting of the Alliance Assurance Company, both of which took place in London on the same day and were attended by Lionel de Rothschild, an enthusiast for motorboats, and Natty, 1st Lord Rothschild, respectively. A couple of days later, some sea elephants went on display at the Walter Rothschild Museum at Tring and in Vienna the premises of the Nathaniel von Rothschild Hospital, for the treatment of patients with nervous diseases, were extended. On 7 February Lord Rothschild



*The interior of the Carl von Rothschild Free Library, recorded in the 'Neue Kleine Presse', Frankfurt, 1892*

laid the foundation stone of a new wing of the Royal Buckinghamshire Hospital.

The volumes of cuttings have been used extensively by researchers in Frankfurt and we considered that the collection would be of significant use to both archivists and researchers in the Archive's London searchroom. With the support of the Director of the StuB, the collection of fragile volumes was microfilmed and this version is now available in Frankfurt and London. This partnership project has served the purposes of both the Rothschild Archive and the StuB,

simultaneously making more widely available a valuable collection and helping to conserve fragile original material.

This collection is one of the largest that the Archive has acquired so far as part of its continuing initiative to identify and acquire Rothschild-related information from other repositories. Valuable on its own merits, it also helps us to identify organisations with which the family were connected, and which might also hold records of interest to us.

\*The Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek is at Bockenheimer Landstr. 134-138, 60325 Frankfurt am Main (<http://www.stub.uni-frankfurt.de>)

## List of the Microfilms

000/838 - Microfilm of the newspaper cuttings collection from the Carl von Rothschild Library

Reel 1	1886-1894/I - 1895/III/582
Reel 2	1895/IV 583 - 1895 I/1168
Reel 3	1896 I/1169 - 1896 III/1741
Reel 4	1897 I/1742 - 1898 I/2326
Reel 5	1898 I 2327 - 1899 I/2905
Reel 6	1899 I/2906 - 1901/3486
Reel 7	1901/3487 - 1902-1903 I/4044
Reel 8	1902-1903 I/4045 - 1905-1906 I/4630
Reel 9	1905-1906 I/4631 - 1907-1908/5211
Reel 10	1907-1908/5212 - 1919/5782
Reel 11	1910/5783 - 1912/6369
Reel 12	1912/6370 - 1914-1916/6949
Reel 13	1890-1928/6950 - 1890-1928/7135

The final reel is a collection of cuttings about the library itself