

# Introduction

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Eric de Rothschild, Chairman of The Rothschild Archive Trust

The introduction to this, the seventh issue of the *Review*, is the first that I write as Chairman of the Trustees, our founding chairman, Emma Rothschild, having stepped down in accordance with our constitution. I wish first of all to pay tribute to Emma's leadership during the formative years of the Trust, and to express to her the gratitude of all the Trustees for her wisdom and guidance in the development of the Archive, and their delight that she will continue to serve on the Board.

Since the creation of the Rothschild Archive by Victor, 3rd Lord Rothschild in 1978, essentially for the English archives, our collection has considerably grown in scope, reuniting under our singular organisation the documents from other branches of the family, notably the French and Austrian Rothschilds.

The composition of the Board of Trustees now reflects this wider family approach. I am delighted that the Baroness Benjamin de Rothschild has accepted our invitation to join the Board, following the recent appointment of Julien Sereys de Rothschild, a son of Philippine de Rothschild.

The Archive today encompasses not only the Rothschild banking world but is also able to present the very varied interests that the family has always entertained in many other fields (science, art, horticulture, the Turf, natural history, etc.)

We look forward to the first colloquium which is organised by the Archive, *The Rothschilds and Eastern Europe*. This colloquium will take place in Roubaix in November 2006, to mark our close relationship with the *Centre des archives du monde du travail* which houses the French Rothschild archives that were transferred by gift to the Trust last year. Bringing together scholars from 13 countries, the colloquium will explore the activities of the Rothschild banks in state financing, railway development, mining and metallurgy and oil exploration from 1848 to World War II.

As reported in the last issue of this *Review* the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung (Köln) funded the research project hosted by the Archive, *The Jewish Community and Social Development in Europe, 1800–1940*. This year a further phase of the project, extending the scope of the research, was made possible thanks to a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). We are most grateful for this generous support.

I reserve a final word of thanks for the financial supporters of our organisation, first and foremost NM Rothschild & Sons but also Rothschild & Cie Banque in Paris and Château Lafite.