

Review of the year's work

Melanie Aspey, Director of The Rothschild Archive

Research

The recorded numbers of researchers using the Archive's resources in 2005 to 2006 saw an increase over the previous year. Scores of enquiries reached the Archive via the web site and the archivists answered questions for researchers on a diverse range of topics. Financial and economic historians researched French loans to Russia, Rothschild oil interests, the relationship between the Rothschild and Warburg banks and a history of early letters of credit. Art historians found useful resources in the Archive to support research into pictures by van der Meulen, Degas, Gainsborough and van Huysum, as well as photographers, cabinet makers, interior decorators and art dealers associated with members of the Rothschild family. Enquiries about the history of Rothschild properties were also numerous, such as Boulogne and Grasse in France, the Luisenhof in Frankfurt, and the Pleasaunce in Norfolk.

Over 50 individuals worked in the Archive's London reading room during the year. The results of research undertaken by Professor Richard Smethurst (for a life of the Japanese politician Takahashi) and Dr Jonathan Conlin (for a history of the National Gallery) are presented in this *Review*. Bob Pullen of the University of the Arts London made a detailed study of the Archive's photographic collections for inclusion on a web-based directory of photographic resources in the UK.¹ His research identified a number of unusual and notable items in the Archive's photographic holdings.

The Archive's web site carries information about Rothschild Archive Bursaries, which are available to researchers in full-time education and engaged in projects that involve extensive use of the resources of the Archive. Jessica Lepler, a doctoral student at Brandeis University, was awarded a Bursary to enable her to continue research on the subject of '1837: Anatomy of a Panic'. Ms Lepler's examination of the primary sources at the Archive enabled her to challenge previous assumptions made by scholars about the causes of the panic.

The website and Rothschild Research Forum

A substantial amount of new content has been posted to the web site this year and advertised to members of the Rothschild Research Forum in a quarterly 'newsletter' sent by e-mail. Among new materials published during the year was a guide to the records of all the Rothschild businesses, bringing together the disparate lists and indexes of the known sources for the records of the five Rothschild banks, including the records of the French and Austrian family branches that were returned from archives in Moscow following war-time capture. A combined listing of the correspondence of the Rothschilds' major agents, Belmont, Bleichröder, the Davidson family, Lambert and Weisweiler and Bauer based on material available at the Archive and in the records of de Rothschild frères at the Centre des archives du monde du travail provides a useful assessment of the material at both locations.

The release of files relating to the history of the Austrian Credit Anstalt underlines the commitment of the trustees of The Rothschild Archive to extend access to the collection beyond 1930, and it was particularly appropriate that the Credit Anstalt files were the first to be made available in the year of the 150th anniversary of the bank, as they have always been the subject of intense researcher demand. Introductory pages on the Research Forum provide researchers with links to a summary history of the connection between the Rothschild banks and the Credit Anstalt; listings of relevant series of records; a guide to secondary sources in the collection and

A page from a seventieth birthday address to Wilhelm Carl von Rothschild from the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft, Frankfurt, 1898. The image has been adopted to promote the Jewish philanthropy research project. The text is psalm 92.



fr. G. Widmann.

extracts from the diary of Samuel Stephany, the senior member of the London bank who was most closely involved with the crisis of 1931.

The Director submitted a short note about this material to the *Bulletin* of the European Association for Banking and Financial History, which was distributed at its May 2005 conference, hosted by Bank Austria Creditanstalt.

Promoting the Archive

Members of the Archive staff participated in a number of conferences during the year. Caroline Shaw was invited to present a paper on the subject of The Rothschild Archive and research into the economic history of Brazil at the sixth Brazilian congress of economic history and the seventh international business history conference which took place at Conservatória in September 2005. In November Melanie Aspey delivered a paper on research initiatives at the Archive during the conference 'Future of the Lost Cultural Heritage' held in Český Krumlov, organised by the Documentation Centre for Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WWII Victims. *Die Frankfurter Judengasse. Jüdisches Leben in der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Fritz Backhaus, Gisela Engel, Robert Liberles, and Margarete Schlüter, (Frankfurt: Societätsverlag 2005) contained a paper on documentary sources at the Archive of interest to historians of the Frankfurt Judengasse. 'Die Rothschilds und die Judengasse: Neue Dokumente aus dem Rothschild-Archiv zur Geschichte der Familie' by Melanie Aspey was first presented at a conference on the Judengasse organised by the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University and the Frankfurt Jewish Museum.



Adelheid, Baroness
Edmond de Rothschild
(1853–1935)
photographed by Nadar.



From Henri de Rothschild *La lignée française de la famille de Rothschild 1792-1942: étude historique et biographique* (Porto: Costa Carregal, 1943).

Acquisitions

One major accession during the period under review was an exceptional collection of correspondence mainly addressed to James and Betty de Rothschild by, among others, members of the Orléans family and statesmen from France and other European countries. The collection of over 200 items, which was acquired for the Archive by a group of family members, demonstrates the interplay between business and social networks and the central role played by the Rothschild family in the life of mid-nineteenth century France. The papers are described in more detail elsewhere in this *Review*. Ariane, Baroness Benjamin de Rothschild made a particularly welcome gift of a collection of photographs of the Rothschild family and their social circle, largely relating to the branch of the family associated most closely with Edmond and Adelheid de Rothschild.

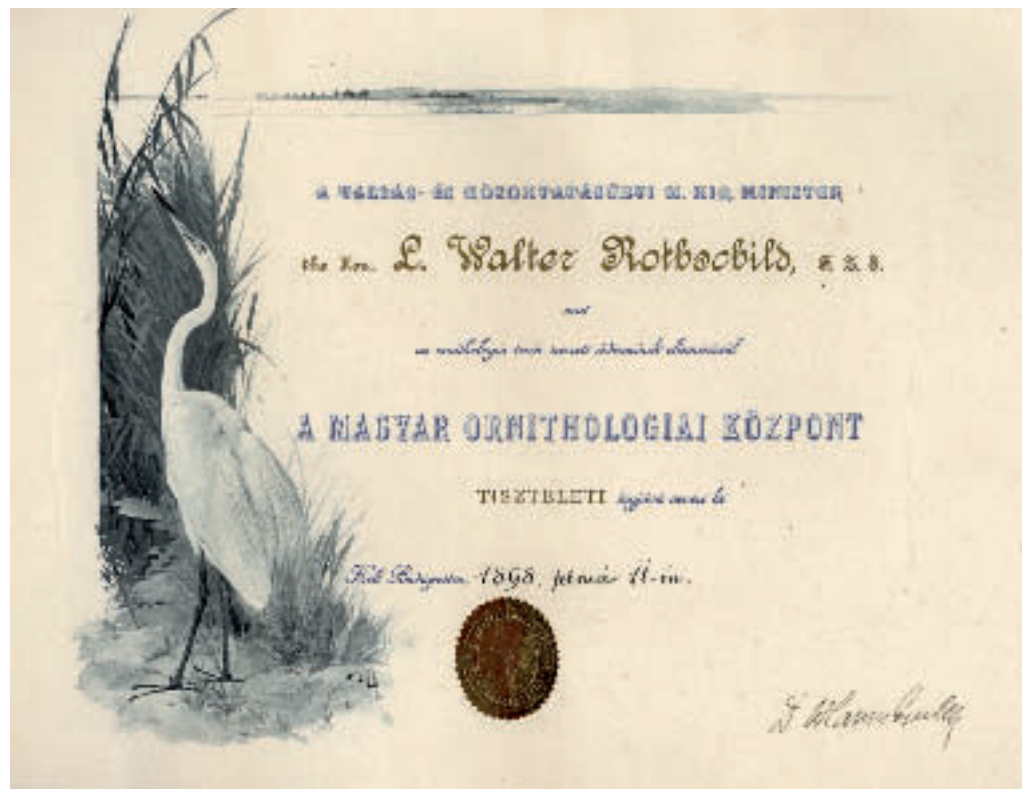
The natural history interests and contacts of Walter Rothschild are reflected in items that form part of a generous gift from the Natural History Museum at Tring, originally Walter's creation, which takes the form of a collection of certificates and awards from a range of scientific societies.

A total of just over 100 separate accessions was recorded during the year. A listing of principal acquisitions can be found on page 54 of this *Review*.

Library

The Archive's library collection of works by members of the Rothschild family records 450 examples of publications by various individuals. 122 of these are books; 230 are articles published in journals; the others are chapters from multi-authored books, music, pamphlets and other more ephemeral items. Collection of this material is ongoing. During the current year a number of books and pamphlets have been acquired, including the important work by Henri de Rothschild *La lignée française de la famille de Rothschild 1792-1942: étude historique et biographique* (Porto: Costa Carregal, 1943), much sought after by researchers, as well as his biography of his

Certificate presented by the Hungarian Minister for Religion and Education to Walter Rothschild making him an honorary member of the Hungarian Centre of Ornithology in honour of his contribution to ornithology.





The Ospedale Adolfo Carlo de Rothschild, Naples, one of the many examples of Rothschild charitable foundations studied by the Jewish philanthropy research project.

wife, *Une dame d'autrefois: la Baronne Mathilde-Henri de Rothschild* (Paris: Imprimeries Réunies, 1946). Maurice de Rothschild and Henri Neuville's *Recherches sur l'okapi et les girafes de l'Est africain* (Paris: Masson, 1910 & 1911) with three very attractive colour plates was also added to the collection.

The vast number of prints and drawings presented to the Louvre from the collection of Edmond de Rothschild has been the subject of a number of exhibitions and catalogues, of which the following were purchased during the year: *Le XV^e siècle européen: gravures et dessins du Cabinet Edmond de Rothschild, Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1965), *François Boucher: gravures et dessins provenant du Cabinet des Dessins et de la Collection Edmond de Rothschild au Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1971) and *Graveurs français de la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle. XIII^e exposition de la Collection Edmond de Rothschild* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1985).

Three studies of specific aspects of Rothschild history were presented to the Archive by the authors. *La casa Rothschild en España* by Miguel Lopez Morell (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2005), *Nathan Mayer Rothschild and the Creation of a Dynasty: the critical years 1806–1816* by Herbert Kaplan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005) and *The Life and Legacy of Baroness Betty de Rothschild* by Laura Schor (New York: Peter Lang, 2006) all draw substantially on the Archive's resources.

Research project

The research project based at the Archive, Jewish Philanthropy and Social Development in Europe 1800–1940, made a successful application for funding to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The generous support makes possible the development of the project in several ways, building on the phases supported by Hanadiv and by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung (Köln) as reported in previous issues of the *Review*. Under the terms of the funding from AHRC, a Project Co-ordinator, Claire-Amandine Soulié, was appointed in January 2006. Ms Soulié, who lectures at the University of Essex on nineteenth- and twentieth-century European and Russian history, is responsible for consolidating the reports of the members of the research team working on resources in France, Germany, Austria and Italy, the countries where the Rothschild family established branches, and for building the database to which all members of the team have access via the Archive's web site. One further researcher was recruited to deal with a source that is of great significance to the project: the records of the Viennese Israelitische Kultus Gemeinde (IKG), which have been deposited with the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem.



A hitherto unknown photographic image of Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839–1898) from a collection acquired during the year.

The Fritz Thyssen Stiftung (Köln), which funded the first stages of the work of the research team, also gave financial support for a workshop entitled ‘Concepts of “Welfare”, “Philanthropy” and “Charity”’, which took place at the Archive in October 2005.

Members of the project team took part in the Social Science History Conference in Amsterdam on 25 March 2006. Dr Klaus Weber, Project Director, joined a panel entitled *Theory and Practice of Charity and Welfare: France, Britain, Switzerland and Germany compared, c.1800–1930*. Researcher team members Céline Leglaive and Ralf Roth gave papers entitled ‘British and French Theory and Practice in the Sector of Social Housing: London and Paris, c.1850–1930’ and ‘Jewish Philanthropy and the Making of Universities. The examples of Frankfurt, Hamburg and Manchester’.

Klaus Weber presented a paper on the project’s background and findings to date as part of the Modern Jewish History Seminar Series at Oxford University.

Future plans

As already reported, in September 2005 Caroline Shaw presented a paper in Conservatória at the invitation of Dr John Schultz who kindly hosted her visit and furthered contacts with a number of academic bodies. The richness of the Archive’s collections generated during the extensive relationship between the Rothschild bank and Brazil combined with the hurdles preventing the majority of Brazilian scholars from travelling to London to use them has prompted the Archive to adopt a new strategy to satisfy at least some of the demand. Over the next year significant parts of the collection will be digitised to enable remote access to them through the Rothschild Research Forum.²

In 2007 the Archive’s exceptional collection of Autochromes will form a central part of a centenary exhibition about the photographic process created by the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television. Victor Gray writes about the collection in this *Review*.

Projects based on the Judendeutsch letters written by the Rothschild brothers who founded the banking network in the nineteenth century are being discussed with academic partners. Although the focus of transcription and translation work at the Archive has been the family letters, there remains a substantial body of correspondence from other merchant houses in the same format that has not been studied, but which deserves scholarly attention.

The Archive will issue a new publication in the autumn of 2006. *‘The Necessary Security’: an illustrated history of Rothschild bonds* by Caroline Shaw describes the evolution of this significant part of the Rothschild business.

Together with colleagues from the Centre des archives du monde du travail the archivists have prepared a programme for a joint colloquium to take place in November 2006 entitled ‘The Rothschild Banks and Eastern Europe’.³ Their work has been directed by Professor Alice Teichova and Professor François Crouzet who chair the organising committee. Papers will be presented on Austrian and Hungarian state loans in the nineteenth century, the banks’ involvement with mining and metallurgy, the development of railway networks throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the oil industry in Russia and the financial system in the era after World War I.

NOTES

1 http://directoryphotographcollections.ac.uk.virtualservers.ch/beta/pub/apps/about_directory/index.php

2 A finding aid is already available at www.rothschildarchive.org/research/?doc=/research/articles/Brazilguide1

3 The programme is available at www.rothschildarchive.org/ta/