

Review of the year's work

Melanie Aspey, Director of The Rothschild Archive

Acquisitions

Since April 2006 almost 100 new acquisitions were recorded in the register of accessions, varying from large collections to single items which were presented or purchased. The Archive is grateful to Mr Edmund de Rothschild CBE, the late Baron Guy de Rothschild, Kay Atwood, Friederike Griessler and Joanna Ryan for their most welcome gifts. Sir Evelyn de Rothschild drew the attention of the Archive to a painting of Victor, 3rd Lord Rothschild, by the Hungarian artist Joszi Arpád Koppay, which was being auctioned in London and after discussion with members of the family, a successful bid was made. The picture dates from the summer of 1914 when at least one other of Victor's siblings was also painted by the same artist during the family's visit to the von Wertheimstein estate in Hungary. Another of Koppay's portraits, of Walter, 2nd Lord Rothschild, is to be found at the Natural History Museum.

The Archive continues to receive business papers of N M Rothschild & Sons, transferred after appraisal and assessment in consultation with the Corporate Records department of the bank. While these records remain closed for immediate research, the archivists prepare finding aids for them so that they may be consulted in due course.



Philanthropy Research Project

The first funded phase of the research project Jewish Philanthropy and Social Development in Europe came to an end in February 2007 and the project director, Dr Klaus Weber, began working on the monograph that is based on materials that he and the research team have assembled for the project database. Together with Dr Rainer Liedtke, a member of the project's Academic Advisory Committee (AAC), Dr Weber is editing papers for inclusion in the volume based on the workshop held at the Archive in 2005 on the subject of definitions of welfare, charity and philanthropy.

One further researcher was recruited to the team 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.

One of the outcomes of the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded phase of the project will be a conference to be held in January 2008 and the AAC has proposed that the conference should focus on philanthropists, comparing Jewish with non-Jewish individuals, in European and non-European contexts.

The AAC agreed that Dr Weber should accept an invitation to co-author a reader on the history of Germany's involvement in the slave trade, based on his earlier work on the history of transatlantic trade in the eighteenth century.

Brazil Online Archive Project

The aim of this project is the digitisation of core components of the Archive's collections concerning the business conducted by N M Rothschild & Sons in Brazil between 1809 and 1940 in order to encourage and facilitate use of these materials.

During the summer of 2006 temporary staff were employed to scan 2,430 images, mainly of correspondence series from the early nineteenth century, and in February 2007 the Archive commissioned an agency to continue the work. The Archive has worked with the IT team of N M Rothschild & Sons to design and implement the online delivery of these images, allowing ample testing time before a launch in January 2008.

The Rothschilds and Eastern Europe

The joint colloquium, which was organised in conjunction with the Archives Nationales' Centre des archives du monde du travail, united researchers who had worked in London, in Roubaix and in archives across Europe to examine the role of the Rothschild banks in eastern Europe. Delegates were introduced to the history of Roubaix, one of the most prosperous towns in France during the boom years of the textile industry, by Madame Claude Dewaepenaere, an experienced and passionate guide to her home town.

The following papers were presented: Mika Arola, University of Helsinki: the house of Rothschild and Finland; Professor Albert Broder, Emeritus Professor, University of Paris XII: relations between the London and Paris Rothschild banks in eastern European affairs; Professor Peter Eigner, University of Vienna: the Austrian Rothschilds as pioneers in state financing, banking, industry, railway construction and society, 1855–1938; Professor Youssef Cassis and Ileana Radianu, University of Geneva: the position of the Rothschilds in the continental banking world; Jonathan Dekel-Chen, Hebrew University, Jerusalem: business and philanthropy – reasons for disengaging from business in Russia; Dr Neil Forbes, University of Coventry: N M Rothschild & Sons and economic reconstruction in Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, 1918–1930; Pierre Jaloustre, Lycée Français de Bruxelles: the Russian oil interests of the Rothschilds, 1883–1911; Emin Karimov, University of Paris IV: the Rothschilds and the oil industry in Azerbaijan; Damir Jelić, University of Leicester: the development of the Rothschild entrepreneur network in central and south eastern Europe, 1867–1913; Clemens

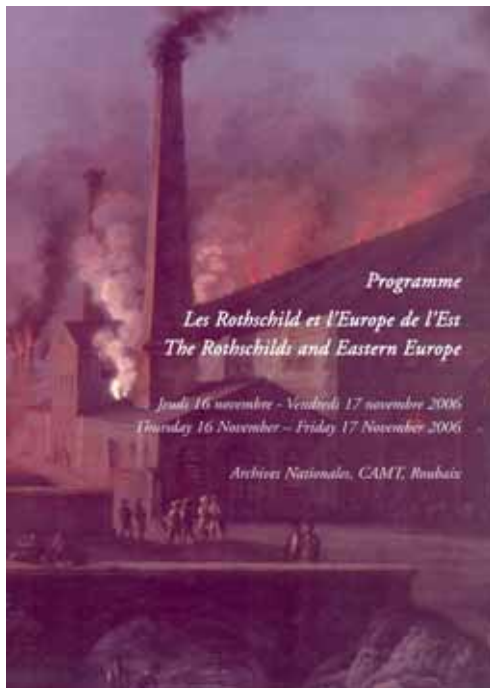
Pen and ink sketch by Annie de Rothschild of Charles Dickens reading from *Nicholas Nickleby*, from an album of Annie's sketches recently acquired by the Archive.

Jobst, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris: the Rothschilds, the Austro-Hungarian Bank and the 'nationalisation' of Austrian foreign exchange, 1890–1914; Professor György Kövér, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest: the Rothschild consortium, the Hungarian General Credit Bank and Hungarian government debt, 1873–1914; Professor Eduard Kubů, and Jiri Šouša, Charles University, Prague: the Czechoslovak state loan 1922 granted by the consortium of three private British banking houses including Rothschilds; Dr Amelie Lanier: the Rothschild bank and the loans of post-civil war Austria; Professor Milan Myška: the House of Rothschild's economic and financial activities in Moravia and Silesia; Professors Alain Plessis and Olivier Feiertag: the Paris Rothschilds and interwar public loans in central and eastern Europe; André Straus, CRNS: the French Rothschilds and Russian loans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; Dr Ágnes Pogány, Corvinus University Budapest: the relationship of the Hungarian General Credit Bank to the Rothschild banks in the interwar years; Jadwiga Wala, University of Paris: the Rothschilds and the Polish question, 1918–1939; Dr Ihor Zhaloba, Kiev International University: the Rothschilds and railway construction in the north east region of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1840s–1860s; Ulrike Zimmerl, archivist, Bank Austria Creditanstalt: the Viennese Rothschilds from 1938 to 1945.

Professor François Crouzet, Roger Nougaret, Dr Rainer Liedtke and Professor Jean-François Eck chaired the sessions and steered the debates. The papers were delivered in English and French and they, and the debates which followed them, were facilitated by interpreters from Alto International, including Marc Viscovi and Daniel Ungar.

Madame Martine de Boisdeffre, the directrice of the Archives de France, made the closing address, and noted that the catalogue of the papers of de Rothschild frères would be ready for printing in the course of the forthcoming year.

Following their meeting at the colloquium, Dr Neil Forbes and Dr Ágnes Pogány began plans to work together on a research project entitled 'The City of London, Rothschilds and the reconstruction of Hungary in the interwar years'. Dr Forbes' paper at Roubaix was based on his research at the Archive in London, while Dr Pogány's research was based on Hungarian sources. A review of the colloquium by Caroline Shaw appeared in the *Bulletin* of the European Association for Banking and Financial History.



Programme for the conference 'The Rothschilds and Eastern Europe'.

Cover of the Archive publication *The Necessary Security*.

Publications

The Necessary Security: An Illustrated History of Rothschild Bonds by Caroline Shaw was published in November 2006.

The German historical magazine *Damals*, dedicated its August 2006 issue to the history of the Rothschild family and featured articles by the staff of the Archive on the development of the Rothschild business and the role of the Rothschild women in the business and in society at large. Dr Klaus Weber contributed an article on Rothschild philanthropy; Dr Rainer Liedtke wrote about Nathan Mayer Rothschild and Dr Michael Hall, who writes in this issue of the Review, presented the results of his research into the collections of Hannah Mathilde von Rothschild.

Researchers

In the calendar year of 2006 a total of 261 days were spent by 62 researchers in the London reading room, an unusually high number. Some of these research visits were made in connection with the colloquium held at Roubaix, but other aspects of the collection were accessed by researchers investigating Jewish diplomatic activity; Greek merchants; Betty de Rothschild, for a biographical novel; the Great Exhibition, 1851, and the Rothschilds' role; the Rothschilds and the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857; the life of Otto Schiff; stock exchange tokens, and many other subjects.

Additionally, the Archive received visits from groups associated with a diverse range of organisations: volunteers of the Weiner Library, London; American Friends of the Hebrew University; Jewish Special Subject Network; University of Aberystwyth postgraduate archive students.

Library

Particularly welcome gifts for the Archive's library were made by individuals whose research at the Archive had underpinned their work. Marco Rovinello of the Università degli studi di Napoli Federico II presented a copy of his thesis, *Un grande banchiere in una piccola piazza: Carl Mayer Rothschild e il credito commerciale nel regno delle due Sicilie*; Dr Rainer Liedtke's *N.M. Rothschild & Sons: Kommunikationswege im europäischen Bankenwesen im 19. Jahrhundert*, based on his Habilitation thesis, was published by Böhlau; George Ireland's biography of the four sons of N.M. Rothschild, *Plutocrats: A Rothschild Inheritance* was published by John Murray in February 2007.