

# THE ROTHSCHILD ARCHIVE

REVIEW OF THE YEAR APRIL 2007 TO MARCH 2008

# The Rothschild Archive Trust

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The Rothschild Archive, New Court, St Swithin's Lane, London EC4P 4DU

Tel: +44 (0)20 7280 5874 Fax: +44 (0)20 7280 5657 E-mail: [info@rothschildarchive.org](mailto:info@rothschildarchive.org)

Website: [www.rothschildarchive.org](http://www.rothschildarchive.org)

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*Front cover*

Hand-coloured lithograph by Franz Wolf printed by Johann Höflich, Vienna, 1837, depicting the first trial run of a steam train in Austria on the Kaiser Ferdinands Nordbahn on 14 November 1837. The engine 'AUSTRIA' pulled two carriages between Florisdorf and Deutsch-Wagram at a speed of 33 kilometres per hour.

Salomon von Rothschild financed the development of the railway line, working closely with Professor Franz X. Riepl who was convinced of the merits of the new technology as a means of bringing the natural resources of the eastern areas of the Austrian Empire into the capital. Riepl had visited England to study railway engineering, sponsored by Salomon and introduced to leading railway engineers through the London bank of his brother, Nathan.

The first proper service began on 6 January 1838, taking passengers between the new Nordbahnhof in Vienna to Deutsch-Wagram. In July 1839 the line had been extended as far as Brünn (Brno). The Kaiser Ferdinands Nordbahn was nationalised in 1906.

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# Introduction

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Eric de Rothschild, Chairman of The Rothschild Archive Trust

In writing the introduction to this, the ninth issue of our *Review of the Year*, I am conscious that 2008 is a significant year for the Archive. It was thirty years ago that Victor, 3rd Lord Rothschild, took the decision to make available to the scholarly world the collection of business records that had accumulated at New Court, the London bank's headquarters, and which had survived more than one reconstruction of the building during the course of almost two hundred years. Evelyn de Rothschild, Victor's successor as Chairman of N M Rothschild & Sons, built on this firm foundation by proposing the creation of The Rothschild Archive Trust, which he saw into being almost a decade ago in 1999. My fellow Trustees and I are keenly aware of the great debt that we owe to these two individuals in securing the future of the important collection for which we are now collectively responsible.

The establishment of an Archive and the creation of the Trust gave, in turn, great impetus to the development of the collection: thanks to the generosity of members of my family and many friends, the Archive has become recognised as the focal point for Rothschild history and the natural long-term home for the records of all branches of the family and its businesses. I should like to thank all of those who have made gifts of archive material during the year, further details of which can be found at the end of this *Review*. I would also like to thank the small but very efficient staff of the Archive led by Melanie Aspey, whose hard work keeps the reputation of our Trust high, both outside, and also within the group.

The diversity of the material which forms the Archive's collections is clearly demonstrated by the articles assembled in this *Review*: silver mining in Mexico, financial agencies in nineteenth-century America, war-time trading in the Napoleonic period, Parisian dining in the 1830s, and the history of pre-unification Italy represent a small sample of the subjects that can be studied in our reading room in London, through our on-line Rothschild Research Forum, and of course at the Archives Nationales du Monde du Travail where our French business archives are housed. We are committed to encouraging the use of our collections and have made available Rothschild Archive Bursaries to assist with the practicalities of travel and accommodation for those academics whose research relies extensively on our archives in London. More details about these bursaries can be found on our web site, [www.rothschildarchive.org](http://www.rothschildarchive.org).

As ever the Trustees are grateful to those institutions which have made generous financial donations to the Trust to enable us to secure the long-term future of our activities. This year I am particularly pleased to record our gratitude to the Fondation Maurice et Noémie de Rothschild and to Château Mouton who have joined our list of benefactors for the first time.