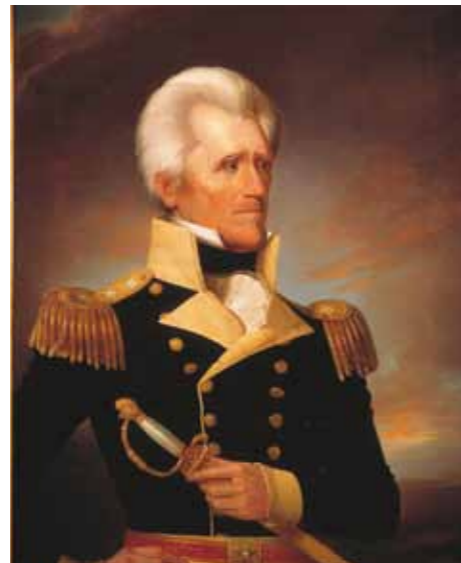


NOTES

- 1 Nathan Rothschild to his brothers, London, 2 January 1816. RAL: XI/109/4/1/05.
- 2 Michael Hall 'Nathan Rothschild as an owner of paintings', in *The Life and Times of N M Rothschild 1777–1836*, eds. Victor Gray and Melanie Aspey (London: N M Rothschild & Sons, 1998), p.73.
- 3 RAL II/10/1 N M Rothschild and Sons, London to Messrs J. J. Cohen, Baltimore 6 September 1836.
- 4 See Leland Jenks, *The Migration of British Capital* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1927), Peter Austin, *Baring Brothers and the Birth of Modern Finance* (London: Pickering & Chatto Limited, 2007) and Ralph Hidy, *The House of Baring in American Trade and Finance: English Merchant Bankers at Work, 1763–1861* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949).
- 5 See Caroline Shaw, 'Rothschilds and Brazil: An Introduction to Sources in The Rothschild Archive' in *Latin American Research Review* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 40:1, February 2005), pp.165–185.
- 6 For a contrasting viewpoint see Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild Volume 1: Money's Prophets 1798–1848* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p.354.
- 7 David Armitage, 'Three Concepts of Atlantic History', in David Armitage and Michael Braddick, eds. *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p.11.
- 8 Two illuminating works on methodological approaches in Atlantic history are Armitage and Braddick, *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*. The chapters on economy, migration and 'Three conceptions of Atlantic History' are especially pertinent. Also Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). Both works confine themselves predominantly to a British Atlantic perspective, (suitable to our purposes here) but restricted to a world in motion before 1800. These both stand in pointed distinction to Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (London: Verso, 1993) which considers the Atlantic as an autonomous and extra-national space of ideational exchange. Albion's *The Rise of New York Port* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939) or *Square-Riggers On Schedule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938) are both literally centred in a nineteenth century Atlantic world of exchange, trade and finance.
- 9 See Douglas Cecil North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790–1860* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965).
- 10 See Douglas North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790–1860*. See also Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962), pp.34–36. On the scarcity of specie in the North see Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts 1780–1860*, Cornell University Press, 1992. On the South see Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*, Wesleyan, 1988. See also Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*, New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978. On the growth of banks see Larry Schweikart, *Banking In The Antebellum South From The Age of Jackson to Reconstruction*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987.
- 11 For a discussion of these letters see Elaine Penn, Elaine Penn, 'Interfered with by the State of the Times', *The Rothschild Archive Trust – Review of the Year*, (April 2002–March 2003), pp.25–31
- 12 On the Browns see Brown, J. C. (1909). *A hundred Years of Merchant Banking: a History of Brown Brothers and Company, Brown Shipley & company and the allied firms, Alexander Brown and sons, Baltimore; William and James Brown and company, Liverpool; John A. Brown and company, Browns and Bowen, Brown Brothers and company, Philadelphia; Brown Brothers and company, Boston*. New York, [s.n]. Kent, F. R. (1925). *The story of Alexander Brown & Sons*. Perkins, E. J. (1975). *Financing Anglo-American trade: the House of Brown, 1800–1880*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. Killick, J. R. (1977). 'The Cotton Operations of Alexander Brown and Sons In The Deep South, 1820–1860' *The Journal of Southern History* vol. 43, no. 2 (May, 1977), pp.169–194. On the House of Baring, see Ralph Hidy, *The House of Baring in American trade and finance; English merchant bankers at work, 1763–1861* and Peter Austin, *Baring Brothers and The Birth of Modern Finance*.



The gift to Nathan Rothschild of this portrait of President Andrew Jackson, by R E W Earl, arrived eight days before he died.

Opposite
A Robert Thompson mouse in the Reading Room door.

Mice in the Reading Room: a new home for the Archive

Natalie Broad describes the development of the Archive's new Reading Room.

*'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring, not even ... a mouse.'*¹

23 December 2011 will live long in the memory of the current generation of Rothschild archivists: the day on which the last book was placed on the newly polished oak shelves of the Reading Room. After months of planning, preparation and packing, The Rothschild Archive was finally in its new home in the impressive New Court building; and had a striking new Reading Room to match.

Most archivists would despair at the thought of a mouse in their reading room, yet at The Rothschild Archive we are proud to boast not one, but 12 mice! The Reading Room bookcases and furniture were designed, crafted, and installed by the prestigious North Yorkshire based company, Robert Thompson's Craftsmen Ltd, also known as 'The Mouseman of Kilburn'. A small, family run business, Robert Thompson's pieces are based on the company's ethos derived from its founder Robert Thompson (1876–1955): dedication to the craft of carving and joinery in English Oak. The Rothschild Archive takes pride in joining the ranks of other custodians of Mouseman pieces, most notably Ampleforth College, York Minster, and even Westminster Abbey.²

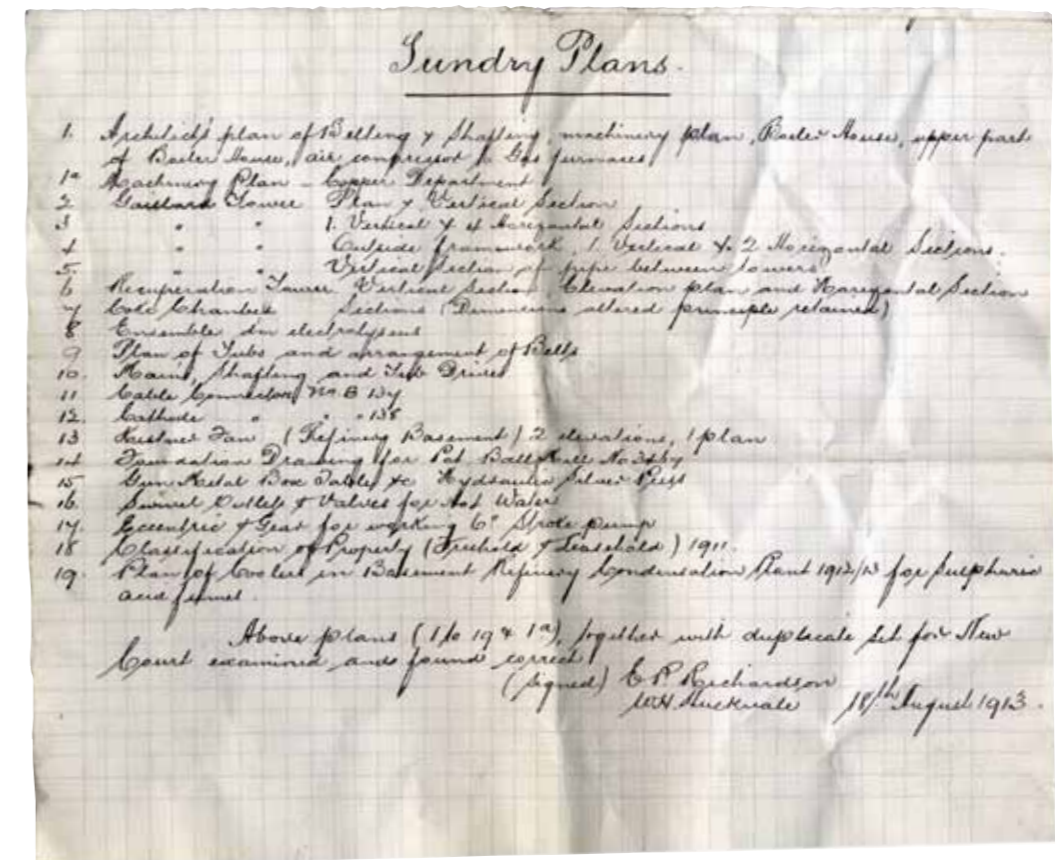
Thompson's use only the best quality sustainable oak and skill to create the finest pieces. The same hand tools are used today to create the pieces as were originally used by Robert Thompson in the late nineteenth Century. Each craftsman can recognise his own mouse individually amongst others. The well-known mouse motif has, what Thompson's describe as, an 'uncertain history'.³ It is claimed that the motif came about accidentally around 1919 following a conversation between Thompson and a colleague who had described them as being 'as poor as a church mouse'. By chance, Thompson carved a mouse onto the cornice of a church screen he was working on, and the mouse motif remained as part of his work from then on. Continued by the family and Thompson trained craftsman, the coveted mouse motif is highly valued as a sign of quality and distinction. Thompson's only work with seasoned oak; each tree is carefully selected before purchase to guarantee the best quality. The oak comes from managed estates that are certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council, an international organisation created in 1992 which strives to ensure long-term timber supplies as well as protecting the environment.⁴ The provenance and heritage of each Thompson piece is traceable. The oaks used in The Rothschild Archive Reading Room were sourced from the 3000 acre Hirsell Estate in Berwickshire; the historic seat of the Earls of Home and residence of former British Prime Minister and 14th Earl of Home, Sir Alec Douglas-Home. The trees were dated to be around 200 years old, which means they were likely to have been planted in 1812, three years after Nathan Mayer Rothschild (1777–1836) had established himself at New Court. 1812 was an eventful year for Nathan. It saw the birth of his third son, Nathaniel Mayer Rothschild (1812–1870), at New Court on 2 July, and the death of his father, Mayer Amschel Rothschild, the founder of the Rothschild banking dynasty, in Frankfurt on 19 September. Being able to make such historic connections adds to the character of the Reading Room. The use of traditional values and techniques made Thompson's an ideal partner in the creation of The Rothschild





Opposite
 Ian Cartwright and his team at work constructing the Reading Room shelves in October 2011.

A discovery made during the move: documents relating to the Rothschild's Royal Mint Refinery.



Archive Reading Room, which stands at the heart of a striking new building for Rothschild.

The latest building to stand on the New Court site was designed by OMA, Office for Metropolitan Architecture, headed by the eminent Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. OMA's vision for the fourth version of New Court was inspired by the idea of 'heritage in the City', and with this in mind, the archive team was involved with the design process from the outset. The Reading Room was always intended to be a key feature of the dramatic modern glass and steel design which opened a view of Christopher Wren's St Stephen Walbrook church, hidden from the City for so many years. Incorporating the heritage of Rothschild on this site was a significant factor, and the Archive had more than enough heritage to offer. The visibility of the bank's heritage is now substantial thanks to OMA's manifestation of the five Rothschild brothers on the Reading Room window. The manifestation can be seen by both employees and visitors, being positioned opposite the banks' main reception, as a bold statement of a proud heritage. Indeed, the Reading Room actually occupies the space where No.2, New Court originally stood. In 1809 Nathan Mayer Rothschild (1777-1836) acquired the lease of No.2, New Court for £750, as a home for his family and as the centre of his London business interests. OMA themselves are no strangers to designing spaces for information services; most notably winning the national American Institute of Architects Honor Award for Architecture in 2005, for the creation of the innovative Seattle Central Library. The Reading Room needed to be a multi-functional space, with the ability to house the Archive's ever-growing library of books, secondary sources and finding aids. With OMA and Robert Thompson's joint esteem for heritage, planning commenced. The results were not disappointing.

Robert Thompson's believe that The Rothschild Archive's Reading Room is 'one of its most prestigious, secular commissions of recent times.'⁵ The bookcases alone used 19 English oaks, took 5,500 hours to produce, and over 1,000 hours to install; a testament in itself of the



conscientiousness and level of workmanship involved. The table, which is two meters in length and comprised of eight oak planks from a further oak tree, weighs three quarters of a tonne, and took ten men to lift and install. Also included in Thompson's design are pull out book rests with concealed lamps for illumination, lockable drawers to house the most precious books, and seven chairs each with their own mouse motif. The design enables us to accommodate 11 readers at one time around the table, as well as large groups to whom we present some of our most valuable objects, securely and in comfort. The space grants us the opportunity to speak to a variety of individuals and groups about the value of archives, and in particular the vast range of information our collection holds. It is also a suitable venue for workshops and meetings for groups with whom the archive is closely connected, for example AHRC students, King's College London groups, and those in connection with 'The Rothschild Scientists' project, mentioned elsewhere in this review. One such event to which The Rothschild Archive has offered its new facility is in connection with Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee year. 'The Windsor Dynasty Conference' led by Matthew Glencross of King's College London will be a one day conference, hosted by The Rothschild Archive, in November. The conference seeks to explore a hundred years of The House of Windsor through papers by several eminent academics. King George V (1865–1936), the British Monarch responsible for establishing the House of Windsor, often attended social occasions both hosted and attended by the Rothschild family. Indeed the Archive holds many items of Royal memorabilia, predominantly collected by Leopold and Marie de Rothschild, including a very touching letter from the King to Marie upon the death of her husband in 1917.⁶ We are very grateful to have such a flexible and inspiring space to work in, which was ultimately achieved through the dedication of the archive staff, and moving team.⁷

The move to new premises was a challenging time for the archive staff. Constant planning, reviewing, packing and unpacking became a way of life for over a year. The move both separated and reunited material; the vast bookcases allow us to display secondary sources and finding aids that had previously been kept in the archive stores due to previous space restrictions. The accessibility of these secondary sources and finding aids is new to both staff and visiting readers, who are encouraged to explore the open bookshelves. Excitingly, the new Reading Room allows us to display more of our artefacts than we had previously been able to. Busts, framed ancient cheques, antique clocks, and tin trunks, once used to safeguard important documents of both the bank and private clients, are now all on display. Both the beauty and the story of these artefacts can be communicated to, and appreciated by, a much wider audience than before. The new archive store is PD5454:2012 compliant, and in conjunction with the Reading Room, allows the continuing development of The Rothschild Archive. In fact many new accessions to



The Reading Room table being conveyed from St Swithin's Lane into the building.

Below
Natalie Broad with Jonathan Callender and Bernie Mason, unpacking some of the Archive's artefacts.

the collection from the bank have been transferred via the Corporate Records Department as a direct consequence of the move. Indeed, it could be said that through the move, the richness of the collection has once again come to light

One highlight as an archivist is the ability to identify which researcher would benefit from the discovery of an artefact or set of records. During the move a dented tin container marked 'Royal Mint Refinery' re-surfaced in our Corporate Records store. Immediately, Michele Blagg, a regular researcher at the archive, sprung to mind.⁸ There is nothing quite like the excitement of opening a container, and peeking at the contents for the first time. Upon further investigation we learnt that the tin contained thirty-four detailed drawings from 1914 produced by William Huckvale, an Architect from Tring, for a copper plant.⁹ Through Michele's assessment of existing records in the collection, we knew that Rothschild had alluded to a desire to operate a copper establishment. It had been presumed that the existing Refinery site, located near Tower Hill, was unable to accommodate the additional activity. However, the drawings revealed that





the copper plant was destined to be built on land purchased at Wembley. This solved another mystery over the purchase of the land. Rothschild decided, due to an economic downturn, not to proceed with the new venture and the site was later sold. The ‘find’ expanded both knowledge of the business activities and the decision making process of the Bank. This was just one of various discoveries made during the course of the move which, hopefully in time, will intrigue another researcher or inspire another project for the archive.

The new Reading Room, it is hoped, will be a space of inspiration to scholars, of interest to our patrons, and a secure place for the Archive’s collection to develop. As a team, we hope in the future to continue to receive and welcome researchers and enquiries so that we too can have the opportunity to investigate and learn about the collection further from the comfort of our new Reading Room. Robert Thompson’s own motto is quite pertinent for the space that now displays his company’s craftsmanship; ‘industry in quiet places.’ So remember, when you visit The Rothschild Archive Reading Room, see how many mice you can spot!

Natalie Broad joined the staff at The Rothschild Archive in 2009 as Archive Assistant. She assumed the role of Assistant Archivist in May 2011 after completing her Postgraduate Diploma in Archives and Records Management at University College London. She gained her Bachelor of Arts in Theology and Religious Studies from the University of Winchester and has a continuing interest in this area.

The table being set up in the Reading Room watched closely by members of the project team.

Below
One of the mice in the Reading Room.



NOTES

- 1 Clement Clarke Moore, *Twas the night before Christmas* (New York: New York Sentinel, 1823).
- 2 Ampleforth College was the first Robert Thompson commission thanks to the then headmaster, Father Paul Nevill. Father Nevill was a great patron of Mouseman, and asked Thompson for more works which now include the library, most of the main building and the College houses.
- 3 Robert Thompson’s Craftsmen Limited. (2012), *A Brief History*. Available: www.robertthompsons.co.uk/visitor-centre/history.html Accessed on 10 May 2012.
- 4 Forestry Stewardship Council International Centre. (2012). Homepage. Available: www.fsc.org/index.html Accessed on 10 May 2012.
- 5 Great Northern Books (ed.) (2012). *Newsletter No.7 Winter 2011*. Bruton, Somerset: ionriver design.
- 6 RAL 000/924 and 000/2019, The Ascott Collection.
- 7 Particular thanks must go to Jackie Cooper, our space planner, who worked tirelessly with us to optimise the space for both our current and future collections.
- 8 Michele Blagg is a PhD student at King’s College London. Her project is one of the Collaborative Doctoral Awards funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in partnership with the Institute of Contemporary British History and The Rothschild Archive. The project charts the business history of the Royal Mint Refinery, a gold and silver refinery operated by N M Rothschild and Sons from 1852 to 1967.
- 9 RAL 000/2064.

Principal acquisitions

1 April 2011 – 31 March 2012

This list is not comprehensive but attempts to record acquisitions of most immediate relevance to research. Some items listed here, however, remain closed to access for some time and for a variety of reasons. Researchers should always enquire as to the availability of specific items before visiting the Archive, quoting the reference number which appears at the end of each entry.

Business records

Files from the Administration and Staff Department of N M Rothschild & Sons, including ‘Staff Matters: Staff records pre-1914’ containing staff lists and salaries 1874–1915 and a number of staff lists from 1963 to 1992. (000/2067)

File from the Partners’ Room, relating to staff of New Court during their time in service, 1940–1946. It contains correspondence between staff members and Mr Bevington, head of staff at the bank. (000/2069)

Special correspondence of Edmund de Rothschild relating to the Royal Mint Refinery, 1947–1968. (000/2059)

Plans of the Royal Mint Refinery c.1914. (000/2064)

Correspondence and family history of the Belmont family. Presented by a descendant of the Belmont family, the collection consists of copies of a book entitled ‘Feist-Belmont History 1775–1877’ and letters between August Belmont, the Rothschild agent in New York from 1837, and members of the Rothschild family. (000/2086)

Family records

Papers and photographs of Pannonica de Koenigswarter. (000/2088)

Papers and artefacts relating to the family of Elie and Liliane de Rothschild. (000/2089)

Aston Clinton Estate sale particulars, 1932. (000/2090)

Artefacts and illustrations

Ivory statuette of Don Pedro II of Brazil. (000/2078)

Commemorative metal cup for the Rio-Niteroi Bridge 1974, financed by N M Rothschild & Sons. (000/2078)

Mounted engraving of *The chain bridge of Pesth*, by W H Barlett. Captioned on reverse in pencil ‘Stahlstich von Wallis nach Bartlett, um 1854’. (000/2060)

Library

The following are some of almost fifty publications, books, pamphlets and off-prints added to the Archive’s library during the year.

David de Rothschild, *Plastiki: Across the Pacific on Plastic: an adventure to save our oceans* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2011)

Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: an eighteenth century history* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011)

Philippe de Rothschild, *Paris-Paris: Instantanés d’Amérique* (Paris: Cahiers Libres, 1931)

Jean Porcher, *La Bibliothèque Henri de Rothschild* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1949)

Pascal Torres Guardiola, *The Edmond de Rothschild Collection at the Musée du Louvre* (Paris: éditions du Louvre, 2010)

John Cooper, ‘Nathaniel Mayer Rothschild (1840–1915) the last of the shtadlanim’ in *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, vol. 43 2011 (London, 2011)

Paul Blanc, *Jockey chez Rothschild* (Paris: Seplo, 1965)

Colin Amery, *Windmill Hill, Waddesdon, Architecture, Archives & Art* (Waddesdon: The Rothschild Foundation, 2011)

[Anon.], ‘L’atelier et le laboratoire de photographie de Mme la Baronne Ad. de Rothschild’ in *Prestige de la photographie* no. 3, April 1980 (Paris: Editions e.p.a., 1980)

Victor Gray, *Sotheran’s of Sackville Street* (London: Henry Sotheran Ltd, 2011)

Stella Tillyard, *Tides of War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2011)

Charles Lyte, Frank Kingdon-Ward, *The last of the great plant hunters* (London: John Murray, 1989)