

Review of the year's work

Melanie Aspey, Director of The Rothschild Archive

The Archive has fully settled in to its new premises at New Court and the Reading Room, (the subject of an article by Natalie Broad in the previous issue of this *Review*) has been attracting researchers from around the world. Researcher numbers, in common with those of other archives in London, were slightly down on earlier years during the London Olympics.

Researchers

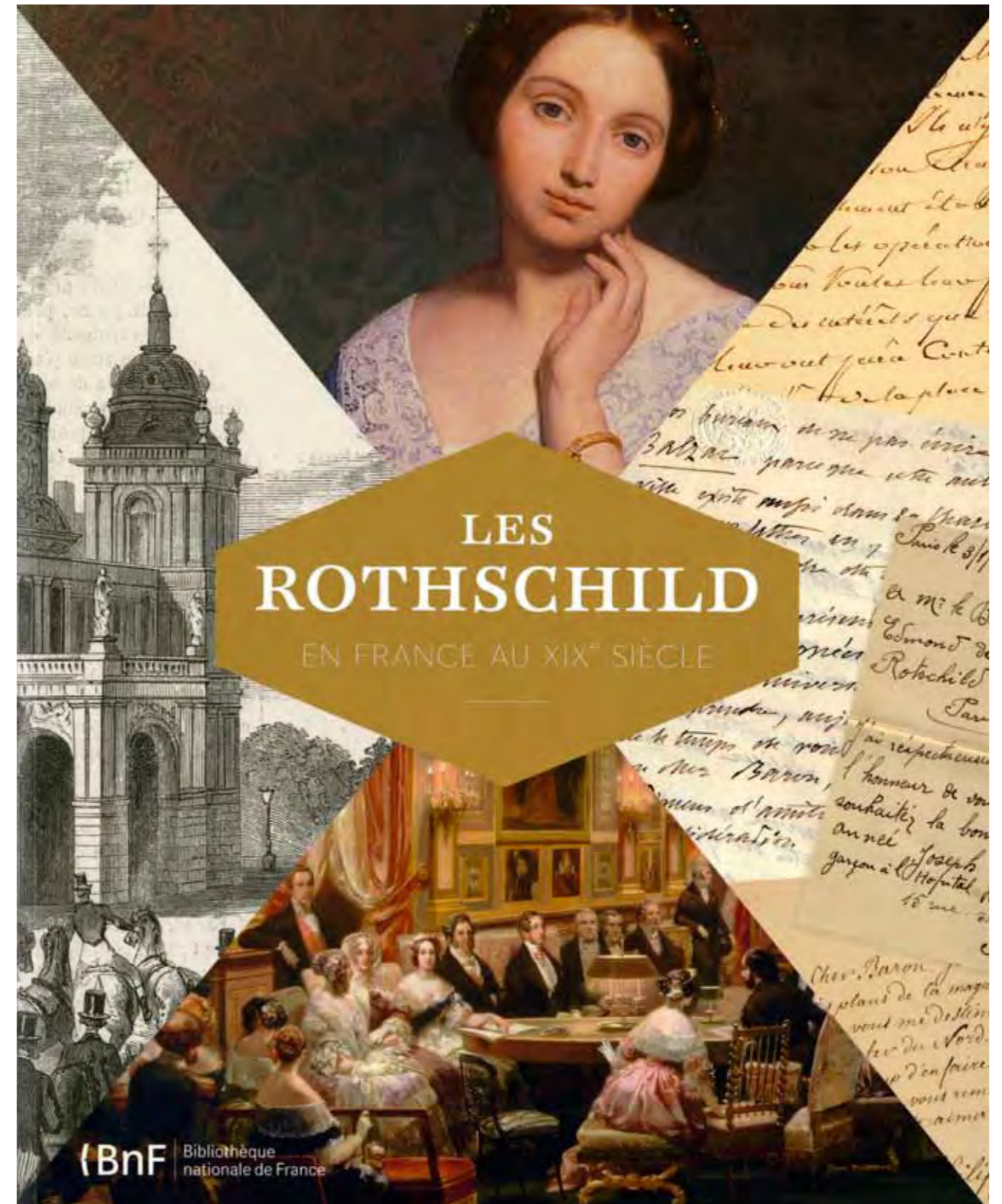
David Thomas of the University of Georgia was awarded a Rothschild Archive Bursary. Mr Thomas's PhD examines links between diplomacy and finance and he spent time at the Archive studying the correspondence of August Belmont, the US agent of the Rothschild banks in New York in the nineteenth century. Dr Jennifer Siegel of Ohio State University returned to the Archive to continue her research into the Rothschilds and Russian oil. Other researchers studied the banking system in Mexico; Latin American sovereign debt; the revival of French eighteenth-century interiors in English houses; the Hamilton Palace sale; bimetallism; Jewish banking networks and Rothschild collections in France. Hassan Malik and Evelyn Cohen write more about their research in articles in this *Review*.

Exhibition

The Archive played a significant role in an exhibition about the life of James de Rothschild (1792–1868), organised by the Bibliothèque nationale de France. The exhibition, *Les Rothschild en France au XIXe Siècle*, ran for 14 weeks from 20 November 2012 and aimed to present the Rothschild family in the context of other bankers of the era, notably the Camondo and Pereire families. A catalogue of the exhibition featured articles by Youssef Cassis, Michael Hall, Harry Paul, Claire-Amandine Soulié, Claude Collard and others, exploring the Rothschilds' financial and business ventures in France and their philanthropy in social services and the arts.



A major publication cataloguing the works of art that were donated or bequeathed by members of the Rothschild family to French institutions is being prepared by Pauline Prévost Marcilhacy. The catalogue, *Le mécénat des Rothschild*, will be published by Musée de Louvre editions. An interior of the Rothschild property at 47 rue de Monceau (left).



Cover of the catalogue of the Rothschild exhibition at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, published by the BnF in 2012. The first edition sold out within days of the opening of the exhibition.



Nelly de Rothschild, née Beer (1886–1945) in a recently discovered portrait by Philip de László. This image, painted in London, has been identified by scholars at The de László Archive Trust as a trial for a second portrait. Information about both portraits of Nelly, as well as other members of the Rothschild family, is available on the Trust's website.

Below

An image from the collections of the Library Company of Philadelphia, America's oldest cultural institution, founded by Benjamin Franklin. In October 2012 the Library Company hosted the conference *Foreign Confidence: International Investment in North America, 1700–1869*.



Views of the Archive's London Reading Room.

Conference

Foreign Confidence: International Investment in North America 1700–1860 was a conference organised jointly by The Rothschild Archive and the Program in Early American Economy and Society (PEAES). It was held at the Library Company of Philadelphia in October 2012. Cathy Matson, Director of the PEAES, is a member of the Archive's Academic Advisory Committee. The keynote speech, *Atlantic History and Financial History*, was given by Emma Rothschild and contributions to the two-day event were made by academics from the USA, the UK, Canada, France and Spain.

Library

A total of 71 new titles were acquired the Reading Room's library. The Bank of England presented the latest volume of its history, *The Bank of England: 1950s to 1979* by Forrest Capie and the Kronenburg Foundation in Poland presented *Heritage of the Kronenbergs*. Books acquired to support the *Rothschild Scientists* project include Kristin Johnson's *Ordering Life: Karl Jordan and the naturalist tradition* and Tim Sands' history of The Wildlife Trusts, *Wildlife In Trust*. Juliet Carey's *Taking Time: Chardin's 'Boy building a House of Cards' and other paintings*, published to accompany an exhibition on Chardin at Waddesdon Manor and Michael Hall's article on a treasure from a Rothschild collection, 'A splendid and probably Unique Pebble: the Benetier de Charlemagne' from *The Burlington Magazine*, June 2012 supplemented the Archive's body of works about the Rothschild family's art collections. Fritz Backhaus of the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt wrote a biography of Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744–1812) in the bicentenary year of his death. Thanks to Evelyn Cohen, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America made a gift of *The Rothschild Mahzor*, by Gerson D. Cohen.

Acquisitions

Elsewhere in this *Review*, Justin Cavernelis-Frost writes about an album of photographs of the former Rothschild property at Aston Clinton. The Trustees of The Rothschild Archive London would like to thank Ken Blackmore, Gillian Arney and Rosemarie Storr of Aston Clinton for their assistance in enabling the Archive to acquire Mr Warren's photograph album. Special thanks are due to Mrs Storr for sharing her unpublished research on the Warren family with The Rothschild Archive. Images from Mr Warren's album will be exhibited at the History of Aston Clinton exhibition to be held at St Michael's and All Angels Church, Aston Clinton, in July 2013.

Nina Burr, the daughter of the late Bettina Looram who died in November 2012, presented to the Archive a collection of papers assembled by Mrs Looram and her family in the wake of their return to Austria after World War II. Mrs Looram succeeded in securing the return to the family from Austrian national museums those works of art that had been retained at the war's end. The collection consists of lists of looted art, numerous files of the Nazi administration about their treatment and the negotiations with the successor authorities. Further details can be seen in the article on page 47 of this *Review*.

Among the many items presented to the Archive by Nathaniel de Rothschild is a portrait sketch of his grandmother, Nelly de Rothschild, née Beer by Philip de László. The Archive has been working with The de László Archive Trust so that the picture can be included in the online catalogue raisonné at www.delaszloarchivetrust.com.

A select list of principal acquisitions in the year is on page 53.

Outreach

- The Archive ran a summer school for young scholars in September 2012, following on from the success of that held in the previous year. The Trustees are grateful to the presenters on this course for generously participating in this event, and to Kathryn Boodry for organising it once more.
- The Director of the Archive spoke at the Society of American Archivists' conference Beyond Borders in August 2012. In the following month Claire-Amandine Soulié presented a paper at the Johannes Gutenberg Universität, Mainz on the history of Rothschild railways and commodities.
- The Archive continues to welcome groups of visitors to the Archive, in addition to individual researchers. Staff of the Archive participate in the Rothschild Corporate Social Responsibility programme by speaking to groups of students from schools and colleges and organising special events at the Archive for them. Groups of students from UCL, Cambridge and King's College London visited the Archive to learn more about using archives to support their research.
- Justin Cavernelis-Frost made a presentation to post-graduate archive students in an event organised by the Business Archives Council and he and Natalie Broad represented the Archive at the annual Meet the Archivists event, hosted this year by the British Postal Museum and Archive.
- The Archive also hosted a conference on behalf of King's College London on the Windsor Dynasty in November 2012.
- In recent years the Archive has produced postcards of items from its collection primarily but not exclusively to promote research projects. One of the most popular of these has been 'Baron Rothschild's List of Maxims', a list which used to sit on the desk of the late Edmund de Rothschild at New Court. Fiona McGarel-Groves, formerly of his office and now working with the Archive, chose this image and has made many other valuable contributions to the presentation of the Archive to staff and visitors alike.

The Archive has much to look forward to in the forthcoming year. The archivists have been working on catalogues of new material in preparation for their publication on the website which we hope will attract more visitors to our collections. The return of the last files looted from the family in Vienna in 1938, which were discovered in the store rooms of the Austrian National Archives, will take place in the coming months.

One of the Archive's most popular items: a list of maxims compiled at Frinton-on-Sea, 9 September 1911.

