

## Mr Warren's photograph album: memories of a vanished Rothschild estate

Justin Cavernelis-Frost takes a look inside a recently acquired volume of unique private photographs to shed new light on life at Aston Clinton at the turn of the twentieth century. Further research has revealed the stories behind the images: the career of Mr Warren, Head Gardener; tragedy in the Warren family; efforts to improve public sanitation; and celebrations for the Coronation of 1902.



William Hedley Warren (1862–1928)  
Head Gardener at Aston Clinton.  
Photograph dated 1901. 000/2126

The collections of The Rothschild Archive are remarkable in their scope and variety. It is often the personal documents in the collection that repay detailed investigation. Such an item is accession 000/2126, the item known to us as *Mr Warren's photograph album*, acquired by The Rothschild Archive in November 2012, a volume that can immediately transport us through the years by showing us images frozen in time.

The landscape of England was once resplendent with large country houses. For an elite group of families, their wealth allowed them to acquire a collection of properties. So successfully did a concentration of Rothschild family members settle in the Vale of Aylesbury that in the nineteenth century the area acquired the soubriquet 'Rothschildshire'.<sup>1</sup> As important land-owners and commissioners of works, Rothschild patronage transformed the local landscape and the lives of the people employed on their estates. One such person was Mr William Hedley Warren, (1862–1928), Head Gardener at Aston Clinton for thirty years. The mansion at Aston Clinton no longer stands, and very few documents relating to the estate survive, making *Mr Warren's photograph album* an important new discovery for the history of this Rothschild property.

This fascinating volume, measuring 30 by 40 centimetres contains over 220 previously unknown private photographs of Aston Clinton. Compiled between 1896 and 1902 it is a tantalising glimpse into Mr Warren's life over these six years. The album contains Warren family photographs, views of buildings and views in Aston Clinton, and the joyful celebrations for the Coronation of 1902. Images of working life show Mr Warren and his staff, their horticultural triumphs, and activity on the estate through the seasons. The photographs are remarkable for their elegant composition and the clarity of the images.

The Rothschild connection to Aston Clinton began in 1849 when Sir Anthony de Rothschild bought the estate from the Marquis of Chandos.<sup>2</sup> Anthony Nathan de Rothschild (1810–1876) was the second son of Nathan Mayer Rothschild (1777–1836), founder of the London banking house.<sup>3</sup> Born at New Court, the family home and business address in the City of London, Anthony studied at universities in Europe, before serving an apprenticeship to the family firm, spending time in both the Frankfurt and Paris businesses. Becoming a partner in 1836 upon his father's death, a good portion of the responsibility for running the family business fell on Anthony's shoulders, and he was closely involved in the management of the family's continental railway interests, and the Rothschild gold refinery in London.<sup>4</sup> Anthony married Louise Montefiore (1821–1910) in 1840. Louise was the daughter of London stock-broker and financier Abraham Montefiore (1788–1812) and Henriette, née Rothschild (1791–1866). They had two daughters, Constance (1843–1931) and Annie (1844–1926).<sup>5</sup> The family first lived at 107 Piccadilly, dividing their time between London and Paris, before moving to an opulent home at 2 Grosvenor Place in 1847, the year Anthony was granted a baronetcy by Queen Victoria.<sup>6</sup> When the Aston Clinton estate came up for sale in July 1849, Anthony and his brothers Lionel Nathan (1808–1879) and Mayer Amschel (1818–1874) discussed a possible investment purchase, agreeing to pay no more than £26,000, as 'it is not like a fancy place'.<sup>7</sup> The property was finally purchased by Anthony in 1851 as his country estate, and the family took up residence in 1853.

The large mansion was situated to the south-east of the village of Aston Clinton, and from 1854, Anthony and Louise began to make alterations to the house. The architect George Henry Stokes, assistant of Joseph Paxton (who had designed the great Rothschild house Mentmore Towers for Anthony's brother Mayer de Rothschild) and the builder George Myers produced a neo-Classical design at the foot of the Chilterns.<sup>8</sup> Extensions included a 'Billiard Room building', dining room, offices and a conservatory.<sup>9</sup> George Devey took over from Stokes from 1864 to 1877, designing the park gates and various cottages on the estate.<sup>10</sup> Even after these building works, the house was not ostentatious, and was described by Lord Rosebery as 'the only Rothschild mansion that could be called a gentleman's house.'<sup>11</sup> External views in Mr Warren's album show a large neo-Georgian Italianate-style house with verandahs, a large porte-cochère and an elegant conservatory. By the time the Rothschilds sold the estate in 1923, the estate comprised 542 acres, and the house had grown from its humble origins to become a classical mansion with seven reception rooms, billiard room, ball room, thirteen principal bed and dressing rooms, seventeen secondary and servants' bedrooms, four bath rooms and complete domestic offices, with stabling for 32 horses.<sup>12</sup>

Louise de Rothschild was initially disappointed with the property, and wrote in her diaries 'the house is too small to be very comfortable'.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, she and her daughters came to love Aston Clinton and the family enjoyed a pleasant life in the country. The house and park were the setting for many entertainments, both formal and intimate. Anthony was a keen countryman and he became owner of a number of successful racehorses. Aston Clinton hosted shooting parties at which the Prince of Wales was a frequent guest, while artists, such as Sir Charles Hallé and Sir Arthur Sullivan, performed at the family's parties. Constance in particular had a great love for the house and the estate, and found it hard to leave when the family sold up in 1923. Her *Reminiscences*, published in 1922, recall her youth at Aston Clinton, and her views on the staff were clearly influenced by her Temperance beliefs:<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps it would not be out of place were I to state here that in those old days domestic service bore no stigma, as, unfortunately, some think it does now, but was an honourable, even an enviable, calling. From an early age village youths and maidens would aspire to serve in the 'big house' connected with the soil of their own county, and considered it a matter of justifiable pride to remain a lifetime with one employer, thus helping to carry on the traditions of that house, keeping warm the name it might have acquired for generosity and hospitality. I can speak, indeed, with grateful recollection of the many devoted men and women in my parents' household, whose excellent service was deeply appreciated. If, unhappily, there was a failure amongst them, the cause could generally have been ascribed to over-indulgence in the matter of drink, which in those days was not unknown in other grades of society.

When Anthony died in 1876, Louise continued to live in the mansion.<sup>15</sup> After the death of their mother in 1910, Constance and Annie used Aston Clinton as a holiday home, keeping the estate going until the First World War.<sup>16</sup> The estate eventually passed to Charles Rothschild, (1877–1923). When he died in 1923, his executors, concerned about the cost of the upkeep of Aston Clinton, put the estate on the market. The whole estate was disposed of in sales in 1923 and 1924, and again came to the market in 1932, when the 'freehold estate known as Aston Clinton Park' was auctioned, and purchased by a builder for development.<sup>17</sup>

At Aston Clinton, Anthony and Louise were noted for their enlightened views of the responsibilities towards their employees and tenants.<sup>18</sup> Shortly after arriving at Aston Clinton in 1853, Lady de Rothschild wrote in her diaries, 'let me not be carried away therefore by the indolent luxury of giving, but try to do real good at our little Aston Clinton'.<sup>19</sup> The whole family



Aston Clinton Infants' School, teachers and pupils, 1899. Ethel Warren is the little girl in the front row, sixth from the left. 000/2126

took a close interest in the development of the community, and the Rothschilds transformed the estate and village. A large number of workers' cottages were built and The Anthony Hall in the village was erected by Louise in 1884 in memory of her husband. Other schemes for the benefit of the village, such as a Library were established.<sup>20</sup> Both Rothschild daughters inherited their parents' sense of moral responsibility and devoted their time to education issues and other social welfare causes. Aston Clinton Infants' School was built by Anthony as a sixteenth birthday present for Constance, at her request. Constance was later to recall:

My family, whilst remaining true to their religion, established a firm footing in the social and political life of their country, and beyond that were recognised as being some of the best landlords that the county of Bucks had ever seen. Their sporting tastes made them popular amongst their country friends and neighbours, and my parents' genuine charity and kindness of heart endeared them to the clergy in their villages and to all those who were working for the welfare of the people.<sup>21</sup>

William Hedley Warren was Head Gardener at Aston Clinton from 1895 until his retirement in 1924.<sup>22</sup> During this period he and his family would have witnessed many of the changes wrought by the Rothschilds. Born in Salisbury, Wiltshire in 1862, William married Mary Elizabeth Horne (1866–1939) of Cardiff, in Christchurch, Hampshire in 1887. In 1889 their first child Charlotte Beatrice (known as 'Beattie') was born, followed by a son, also called William Hedley in 1891. In 1895, William took up the position at Aston Clinton, and a second daughter, Ethel Doris was born in Aston Clinton in 1896. The family lived in a substantial detached

cottage on the estate.<sup>23</sup> William Hedley Warren's obituary in 1928 records his distinguished career over 30 years. He was appointed by The Royal Horticultural Society as one of the judges at the exhibition at Chelsea, was a lecturer for the Bucks Education Committee, and was for many years a contributor to the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, the *Gardeners' Magazine* and the *Journal of Horticulture*. He was a judge at local horticultural shows, and during the First World War, acted as an adviser on war-time gardening. He held many positions of esteem in the local church and community including Rector's Warden of St Michael and All Angel's Church, Aston Clinton and he was an active member of the Parish Council.<sup>24</sup>

The Head Gardener was the most senior staff member of 'outdoor' staff after the Estate Steward, and was a 'management' position. Mr Warren was not only a skilled man who had learnt his trade as an apprentice to fine gardeners before him, but he was also a mentor to those who worked under his command. Photographs in the album show Mr Warren with his staff, posed with early lawn mowers and other tools of their trade.<sup>25</sup> The position was well paid and salaries of £100 per annum were not uncommon; a young gardener at nearby Halton House earned 16 shillings a week in 1900.<sup>26</sup> Mr Warren would have been responsible for ensuring a continuous supply of fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers from the estate garden to the Aston Clinton dining tables throughout the year, regardless of the weather. Constance recalled how the family valued the work of Mr Warren and the garden staff:

My dear mother found much happiness in bestowing gifts of fruit and flowers on friends and neighbours... but fruit and flowers and luxuriant gardens are not evolved by the waving of a magician's wand; they all need long and careful preparation, and to the gardeners who have produced these happy results, both in Bucks and Norfolk, my thanks are due.<sup>27</sup>



Garden staff, Aston Clinton, 1899. The Rothschild desire for quality extended to the garden: the gardeners are posed with a Green's 'silens messor' (silent cutter) a top-of-the-range lawnmower introduced in 1859. 000/2126



Opposite Aylesbury Cottagers' Show, November 1899. Events such as this one were often a source of intense rivalry and real pride. 000/2126

Haymaking, Aston Clinton, 1899. Cutting grass and curing it for hay was a labour-intensive process, undertaken in the few short weeks when the grass was at its most nutritious. 000/2126



No journals or gardeners' notebooks from Aston Clinton survive, but in the collection of The Rothschild Archive there exists a notebook of Thomas Hobbs, Gardener to Anthony's nephew (and keen horticulturalist) Leopold de Rothschild (1845–1917) at Gunnersbury Park. An entry for November 1894 gives an indication of the daily tasks a Head Gardener would have undertaken:<sup>28</sup>

November 1894

Nov

- 15 Cleaned and rearranged Orange House
- 16 *Passiflora princeps* and *Grevillea robusta elegantissima* brought in
- 20 Rose House pruned
- 23 12 Carnations Countess of Eve brought in also 6 carnations Queen Charlotte
- 25 Carnations cuttings put in, 100 Mrs L de R 14, Countess of Erne & 20 Sir H Calcraft
- 27 Cutbush had 160 plant of Carnation Mrs L de R. Cleaned cool Orchid House
- 29 *Calla Elliottiana* bought in
- 30 *Begonia Gloire de Sceaux* put in *Cattleya* House, Finish tying Rose House<sup>29</sup>

In Edwardian horticultural circles it used to be said that one could tell a man's status by the size of his bedding list; 10,000 plants for a squire; 20,000 for a baronet, 30,000 for an earl and 50,000 for a duke.<sup>30</sup> Testament to the fine work of Mr Warren can be found in the Catalogue of the 1923 sale of Aston Clinton. Lot 1 included 'gardens and pleasure grounds which include an Italian sunken garden, the park and kitchen and vegetable gardens with an extensive collection of glasshouses'.<sup>31</sup> The kitchen garden is described as being in a high state of cultivation and including a fig house, vinery, peach and cherry houses. A fine photograph in the album depicts tables at the Aylesbury Cottagers Show of 1899 groaning with prize-winning produce; another is captioned *Crop of Alicante grapes, 17 months from time of planting 1900*. However, by 1932, the kitchen garden had been cleared and the glasshouses demolished.<sup>32</sup>



Despite professional success and the achievement of respectable social standing, the life of the Warren family was overshadowed with sadness. The Warrens' daughter Beattie died tragically young in March 1896 aged seven (photographs in the album show her memorial in the churchyard of St Michael and All Angels Church, Aston Clinton). The cause of death was typhoid fever, to which five deaths were attributed in 1896 alone, a consequence of poor sanitation in the village. Such was local concern at the situation, a special Parish meeting was held in June 1896, 'for the purpose of taking into consideration certain statements which have been made reflecting upon the sanitary condition of the village'. Strong dissatisfaction was expressed with the efforts of the Rural District Council. Mr Warren attended the meeting and most stoically answered questions about his late daughter. Much was said about the poor state of drains, ditches and cesspits in the village. It was reported that Lady de Rothschild had paid for 'disinfectants' and 'a trained nurse' for the village, and that Lord Rothschild (of nearby Tring Park) had ordered an 'offensive ditch' on the main road to be converted with pipework. The meeting was in favour of creating a proper sewerage system for the village.<sup>33</sup>

Young William Hedley Warren (the finely dressed boy seen in many of the photographs) was born in 1891 in Christchurch and he appears on the 1891 Census, aged one month; however, his name does not appear with his family at Aston Clinton on the Censuses of 1901 and 1911. Clues to William's life are to be found in the photograph album which surprisingly contains images of the Royal Earlswood Asylum in Surrey and the nearby railway station, Redhill. Contemporary records of Earlswood list William Hedley Warren as an inmate in 1901, aged nine. It is likely that William was a child with learning difficulties, and records from Earlswood show that he died there of influenza in April 1919, aged 28.<sup>34</sup> William was interred with his sister Beattie (who had died 23 years earlier) in the churchyard of St Michael & All Angels, Aston Clinton. There is an interesting further Rothschild connection. Sir Anthony de Rothschild had been an officer of the project to found 'The Royal Earlswood Asylum' in 1847, the first establishment to cater specifically for people with learning disabilities (who had previously been housed either in asylums for the mentally ill or in workhouses). Earlswood was a step forward in the care of children with special needs, and we are left to speculate as to whether Lady de Rothschild suggested Earlswood to the Warrens as an alternative to institutions in Buckinghamshire, which at that time may not have been as progressive.<sup>35</sup>

The album also records happier times. Mr Warren served as 'hon. Secretary and organiser of the festivities in celebration of the Coronation of the late King Edward'.<sup>36</sup> On 26 June 1902, the Coronation of King Edward VII was cancelled because the King was taken ill, (the King was later crowned at Westminster Abbey on 9 August 1902).<sup>37</sup> However, the village celebrations went ahead with some alterations. The photograph album contains many images of what

*Above, from left*  
Celebrations for the Coronation, 26 June 1902. 000/2126

Aston Clinton mansion, view of the west flower garden c.1898. 000/2126

Aston Clinton Church choir, 1 August 1900. Mr Warren held various church offices during his lifetime. 000/2126

must have been a jolly summer event. In the cricket field, the Rector, Thomas Williams gave a speech on the history of the Coronation ceremony, and there were competitions: flat races, 'living wheelbarrow', 'jumping in sacks', and the egg and spoon race for children, a potato peeling competition for married women and a hat trimming competition for the men. In the evening, there was a Grand Illuminated Cycle Parade, and the album contains images of bicycles decorated with flowers, garlands and lanterns.

At the time of the sale of Aston Clinton house and park in 1923, several estate cottages were occupied by former Rothschild employees, including the Warrens. It was agreed that the sale should not be delayed by any of the cottages remaining occupied, and Mr Warren and his wife and daughter moved to a new house, 'Sunnymead' in Buckland, near Aston Clinton.<sup>38</sup> It was here that Mr Warren passed away in 1928, aged 65. He left an estate of £2,209 (c.£97,000 today). His wife Elizabeth died in 1939. Their surviving daughter Doris appears on the Electoral Roll of 1945 living at 'Sunnymead' but by 1949, another family is recorded living in the property.

The creation and maintenance of an exquisite garden was part of the portfolio of interests that enabled the Rothschilds to take their place as country squires. It was expected of them as responsible estate managers, and was another way in which they could display their wealth, fashionable taste and attention to detail; a finely planned garden could be used to entertain both friends and business contacts, and a good kitchen garden ensured a generous table. The gardens of the Rothschilds blossomed as their social status grew; Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839–1898) grew rare orchids at Waddesdon Manor, whilst his sister Miss Alice (1847–1922) planned the elegant parterre. At Halton, Alfred de Rothschild (1842–1918) grew exotic roses that were made to bloom out of season. In many ways, the Rothschilds arrived in in the Vale of Aylesbury regarding themselves as outsiders compared to the established landed aristocracy. At Aston Clinton, they sowed the seeds of kindness through their philanthropy and generous and careful management of the estate, which resulted in an appreciation of them that passed through the generations and is evident in the locality to this day.

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## NOTES

- In addition to Aston Clinton, Rothschild houses in the Vale of Aylesbury included Ascott House, Wing, Bucks, purchased by Lionel de Rothschild (1808–79) for his son Leopold (1845–1917) in 1873; Champneys, Tring, Herts, purchased by Nathaniel, 1st Lord Rothschild (1840–1915) as part of the Tring Park estate; Eythrope House, Waddesdon, Bucks, purchased in 1875 by Alice de Rothschild (1847–1922); Halton House, Halton, Bucks, built by Alfred de Rothschild (1842–1918); Mentmore Towers, Mentmore, Bucks built by Mayer Amschel de Rothschild (1818–1874); Tring Park, Tring, Herts, the country seat of Nathaniel, 1st Lord Rothschild (1840–1915); and Waddesdon Manor, Waddesdon, Bucks, built by Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839–1898).
- For a history of the Aston Clinton estate, see Diana Gulland, *Aston Clinton Manor House: From Moated Site to Classical Mansion*, Records of Buckinghamshire, vol.43 (2003).
- Born in Frankfurt, Nathan Mayer Rothschild (1777–1836) founded the London banking business at New Court, St Swithin's Lane in London in 1809. Remarkable success dealing in bullion and foreign exchange, including the famous Waterloo Commission, quickly established the Rothschilds as the pre-eminent bankers of their age.
- Anthony's eldest brother Lionel (1808–1879) worked at the bank but became more involved in politics, taking his seat as the first Jewish MP in 1847. Anthony's brother Nathaniel (1812–1870) settled in Paris and his remaining brother, Mayer Amschel (1818–1874) showed little interest in banking. Anthony was closely involved in the management of the Chemin de fer du Nord, the family's main railway interest in France, and with the financing of the Chemins de fer de Paris à Lyon et à la Méditerranée, and the Imperial Lombardo Venetian and Central Italian Railway Company as well as funding railway construction in Brazil. In the 1840s he was involved with investment in an ironworks in Mexico. The Royal Mint Refinery was the family gold refining business, which began in 1852 when the Rothschilds acquired the lease.
- Louise de Rothschild (1821–1910) was an outstanding figure of her generation, speaking several languages

and a talented artist. Constance ('Connie') de Rothschild (1843–1931) spent much of her early life with her sister in Paris, marrying the politician Cyril Flower, (1st Lord Battersea) in 1877. Annie de Rothschild (1844–1926) was briefly married to Eliot Yorke. All three women were noted for their charitable works for the causes of women and education.

6 Anthony was a hereditary baron of the Austrian Empire through the title bestowed upon his uncle Salomon von Rothschild (1774–1855) in 1822. In 1847, Queen Victoria created Anthony de Rothschild the 1st Baronet de Rothschild. On his death the title went to his nephew, Nathaniel Mayer Rothschild who was subsequently created 1st Lord Rothschild in 1885, with which title the baronetcy remains merged.

7 Letter from Frankfurt to Mayer de Rothschild from Lionel de Rothschild, 23 September 1849. RAL XI/109/72/3.

8 Henry Stokes, architect (1827/8–1874). 'The late George Henry Stokes', obituary. *Building News*, 10 July 1874, p.57.

9 Draft Indenture and Specification between Sir Anthony de Rothschild and George Myers, 1855, RAL 000/891 and Myers Accounts 1856–1857, RAL XI/2/0 and XII/41/1.

10 George Devey, architect (1820–1886). Devey was later to transform Ascott House, Bucks into an Old English style house Leopold de Rothschild (1845–1917).

11 Archibald Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery, 1st Earl of Midlothian, (1847–1929), British Liberal statesman and Prime Minister 1894–1895. In 1878, Rosebery married Hannah de Rothschild (1851–1890), who had inherited the Mentmore Estate from her father, Mayer de Rothschild (1818–1874).

12 Diana Gulland, *Aston Clinton House, Buckinghamshire*, The Rothschild Archive *Review of the Year* April 2002–March 2003 (London: The Rothschild Archive, 2003), pp.32–7.

13 Bound typescript volume entitled Selections from the *Journals of Lady de Rothschild* by Lucy Cohen. 1932. RAL 000/297.

14 Constance had taken 'The Pledge' in 1884 and there was a Temperance hotel in Aston Clinton called 'The Swan'. Constance, Lady Battersea, *Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan, 1922), p.16.

15 Louise was granted a life interest in the estate, in accordance with an agreement arrived at between Lionel and Anthony on 1 August 1875: RAL 000/53/1, RAL 000/107. Upon Louise's death in 1910, Aston Clinton reverted to the Rothschild Estate and the three sons of Anthony's

brother Lionel de Rothschild (1808–1879) jointly inherited the interest. By 1918, these three sons (Nathaniel, 1st Lord Rothschild (1840–1915), Alfred de Rothschild (1842–1918) and Leopold de Rothschild (1845–1917) had died, and the estate passed to Charles Rothschild (1877–1923).

16 During the First World War, the house was used by the Commanding Officer of the Twenty First Yorkshire Division, then encamped on the nearby Rothschild estate at Halton. Andrew E. Adam, *Beechwoods and Bayonets: The Book of Halton* (Whittlebury: Baron, 1992), p.80.

17 For a full account of the history of the estate after The Rothschilds sold it in 1923, see Diana Gulland, *Aston Clinton House 1923–1932*, Records of Buckinghamshire, vol.48 (2008).

18 Anthony was active in the Jewish community, supporting the Jews' Free School in London, and serving as presiding warden of the Great Synagogue, and President of the United Synagogue. Louise became president of the Jewish Ladies' Benevolent Loan and Visiting Society, established a convalescent home, and oversaw the direction of the education of the girls of the Jews' Free School. Constance was actively involved with the prison visitors of Aylesbury Women's Prison and Annie later became a member of the Education Committee of Hampshire County Council.

19 From the diaries of Lady de Rothschild, 15 May 1853. Lucy Cohen, *Lady de Rothschild and her daughters, 1821–1931* (London: John Murray, 1935), p.73.

20 Constance, Lady Battersea, *Lady de Rothschild 1821–1910: extracts from her notebook by her daughter Constance Battersea* (London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1912), p.17.

21 Battersea, *Reminiscences*, p.11.

22 John Taylor (1823–1896), Mr Warren's predecessor, served as Landscape Gardener and Land Steward to the Rothschilds at Aston Clinton for 43 years.

23 The Head Gardener's Cottage still stands and is now the West Lodge Hotel.

24 Obituary of Mr W.H. Warren, *The Bucks Herald*, Friday 16 March 1928. Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies.

25 Photographs in the album dated 1901 show Mr Warren with 18 staff. At the nearby Rothschild estate of Halton the garden staff numbered over sixty, c.1900. Adam, *Beechwoods and Bayonets*, p.62.

26 Idem.

27 Battersea, *Reminiscences*, p.17.

28 Notebook of Thomas Hobbs, Gardener to Leopold de Rothschild at Gunnersbury Park, covering the period 1893–1899. RAL 000/296.

29 Plants include the exotic *Passiflora princeps*

(passionflower), the Australian *Grevillea robusta elegantissima* (silk oak), *Calla e Elliottiana* lily and the hybrids (probably created by Hobbs and Leopold), named after Leopold's wife, Mrs Leopold de Rothschild (née Marie Perugia). The Cattleya House was an orchid house.

30 Adam, *Beechwoods and Bayonets*, p.62.

31 Aston Clinton Estate. Catalogue of mansion and estate by direction of N. Charles Rothschild, 1923.

32 *Particulars, Plan, Views & Conditions of Sale of the attractive Freehold Estate known as Aston Clinton Park*, Horwood & James, Aylesbury, 1932, RAL 000/2090.

33 Verbatim report of the *Minutes of Important Parish Meeting, held Aston Clinton, June 26th 1896*, printed in the *Bucks Herald*, Saturday 4 July, 1896. Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies.

34 Earlswood Lunatic Asylum Patient records, 1919. Surrey History Centre.

35 In the 1840s, Ann Serena Plumbe began a campaign to support the learning disabled. In association with Dr Conolly (of the Hanwell Asylum) and Rev Dr Reed (a philanthropist) they determined to educate such people, and in October 1847 the project to found 'The Asylum for Idiots' began. Lord Palmerston, Sir Anthony de Rothschild and Lord Ashley became officers of the charity. Financed entirely by public subscription, the Royal Earlswood Asylum opened in 1855, finally closing in 1997.

36 Obituary of Mr W.H. Warren, *The Bucks Herald*, Friday 16 March 1928. Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies. The events must have been a great success, for in 1911, Mr Warren was invited by the Parish Council to serve as secretary to manage the village festivities for the Coronation of George V. Minutes of Aston Clinton Parish Council, 1894–1915, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, PR829/1.

37 Jane Ridley, *Bertie: A Life of Edward VII* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2012), p.363. Two days before the Coronation was due to be held, Edward was diagnosed with appendicitis. Sir Frederick Treves and Lord Lister performed a then-radical operation of draining the infected abscess through a small incision. Two weeks later, it was announced that the King was out of danger.

38 Electoral roll records show that all but one of the cottages (including the Head Gardener's Cottage) were immediately vacated. The estate was sold to Dr Albert Bredin-Crawford, who intended to establish a school; the project was not a success and following the school's closure in 1931, and Bredin-Crawford's bankruptcy, a much reduced Aston Clinton estate was again sold in 1932.

## 'The book that started it all': art, archives and Austria

Melanie Aspey explains how a recent acquisition provides a valuable link in the chain of research into looted art and the collections of the Austrian Rothschilds.

A selection of over 3,000 cards documenting the objects looted from the family of Alphonse von Rothschild and identifying the place from which the object was retrieved. The index was compiled in the years after the end of World War II. 000/2135

One of the earliest issues of the Archive's *Review of the Year* brought news of the recovery of significant archives from Moscow, archives relating to the earliest history of the Rothschild family and businesses which had been 'twice looted', in the words of an expert in the field of restitution.<sup>1</sup> The first recipient of these papers was Mrs Bettina Looram, née Rothschild, who immediately transferred the entire collection to The Rothschild Archive Trust. A small but highly significant group of papers was missing from this collection: a correspondence between Salomon von Rothschild and Prince Metternich, the Austrian Chancellor, from the years 1848–1849. Readers will see elsewhere in this *Review* that these documents have themselves been recovered, thanks to the remarkable tenacity of archivists and colleagues from the Austrian National Archives.

