

- 5 Over 54 million copies of 200 different posters were distributed by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee over the course of the war. The psychological element of the early poster campaign was much criticised.
- 6 Leopold de Rothschild (1845–1917). Educated at Cambridge, Leopold served at New Court, and was popular in horse-racing circles. He married Marie Perugia in 1881, and supported many Jewish charities.
- 7 Anthony Gustav de Rothschild (1887–1961) joined the family firm in 1913, after earning a double first at Cambridge. He married Yvonne Cahen d’Anvers (1899–1977) in 1926. Anthony was Senior Partner from 1942 until 1961. Evelyn Achille de Rothschild (1886–1917) attended Cambridge and entered the business at New Court in 1907, visiting Brazil and Chile in 1913.
- 8 For information about these interests, see Martin Harper, *Mr Lionel: an Edwardian episode* (London: Cassell, 1970) and The Rothschild Archive, *The Colours of Another Age: the Rothschild autochromes, 1908–1912*, (London: 2007).
- 9 Lionel was promoted Captain in 1910, Major in 1914, and retired from the regiment in 1921. Kelly’s Directories Ltd, *Kelly’s Handbook to the titled, landed & official classes*, (London: 1925), p.386.
- 10 For a history of the Royal Buckinghamshire Yeomanry see Brigadier E.A. James, *British Regiments 1914–18*, (London: Samson Books Limited, 1978).
- 11 In August 1914, the Chancellor, Lloyd George, invited Natty to the Treasury to discuss what measures should be adopted to keep the currency steady. Despite previous rivalry between the two, Natty was clear that the Rothschild business would play its part in the dealing with coming crisis. See Niall Ferguson, *The World’s Banker*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1998), p.965.
- 12 Nathaniel Mayer, 1st Lord Rothschild (1840–1915). The elder statesman of the City and the first Jewish peer, Natty took over the senior partnership in 1879. Alfred de Rothschild (1842–1918) was the first Jew to be elected a director of the Bank of England in 1868, and he arranged numerous meetings to promote Anglo-German relations.
- 13 Leopold had moved in royal circles as a young man, mixing with the Prince of Wales’ set whilst at Cambridge in the 1860s, and the Prince had famously attended Leo’s wedding to Marie Perugia in 1881.
- 14 Edmund de Rothschild (1916–2009) In the World War II, he served with distinction with the Royal Bucks Yeomanry. A partner in the business from 1947, he became senior partner in 1960 and chairman of the bank in 1970, stepping down in 1975, to

- spend time at his beloved estate at Exbury. *A Gilt-edged Life*, (London, 1998), p.102.
- 15 The Jewish newspapers noted specifically the difficulties that Jews had in joining London regiments, but the same was true of other units. *Jewish World*, 14 October 1914, pp.7–8.
- 16 Many Jews attested as Christians when enlisting, resulting in various figures being reported for Jewish recruitment. *British Jewry Book of Honour*, (London, 1922).
- 17 Leopold had got to know Sir Douglas Haig when the two men were taking a cure at spa on the continent, and it is said that Haig first learned the news of his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in France in 1915 from Leopold. Edmund de Rothschild, *A Gilt-edged Life*, (London, 1998), p.16.
- 18 The Central Committee for National Patriotic Organisations was established in November 1914 with the objective of keeping British public opinion informed and to lay before neutral countries a clear statement of the British case.
- 19 The Central Committee for National Patriotic Organisations, *Jews and the War*, (London, 1915).
- 20 *Jewish World*, 4 August 1915, p.11.
- 21 *Circular 20/GEN. no./4133 (A.G. 2B/R.)* issued by the War Office on 18 December 1915, on the command of The Army Council. The circular informed Recruiting Officers that a man born in the UK was a British subject, even if of alien parentage, and was thus eligible for enlistment in the Army. It also explained the circumstances in which British-born Jews could be accepted for service.
- 22 Edmund Sebag–Montefiore (1868–1929). Member of the Montefiore family of diplomats and bankers. Sir Moses Montefiore (1784–1885) was a business partner of Nathan Mayer Rothschild (1777–1836), and Moses’ brother Abraham (1788–1824) married Nathan’s sister Henriette (1791–1866).
- 23 Anne Patricia Lloyd, (2009), *Jews under fire: the Jewish Community and Military Service in World War I Britain*, University of Southampton, Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Science, PhD Thesis, p.84.
- 24 Samuel Stephany was a loyal and trusted member of the New Court senior staff, spending his entire career with the firm.
- 25 Records of The Jewish War Services Committee, 1915–1919, RAL 000/358. Regretfully, correspondence and other papers of the committee do not survive in the Bank’s records.
- 26 The Rothschild family had been associated with The United Synagogue since 1835. Leopold held the Presidency of the United Synagogue between 1915 and

- 1917 and Lionel from 1917 until 1942.
- 27 Reverend Michael Adler (1869–1944) was the Minister for the Central Synagogue in London. He held a commission as Territorial Chaplain from August 1914 until January 1915. In France, he was known as the ‘wandering Jew’, since he ministered to Jews in scattered units. He was awarded the DSO for his war work.
- 28 *Papers of Revd Michael Adler, 1915–1918, MS 125*, Hartley Library, University of Southampton.
- 29 This pamphlet was later published as *‘Experiences of a Jewish Chaplain on the Western Front (1915–1918)*, British Jewry Book of Honour (London, 1922).
- 30 Evelyn was buried in the Holy Land at Rishon-le-Zion, with General Allenby accompanying the cortège.
- 31 Neil James Archibald Primrose (1882–1917). British Liberal politician and soldier. The second son of former Prime Minister Lord Rosebery, he served as MP for Wisbech, 1910 to 1917 and served as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1915 and joint-Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury from 1916 to 1917.
- 32 *Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919 (CD Rom)*, (Naval and Military Press, 1998).
- 33 *The Jewish Memorial Council: A history 1919–1999*, Alexander Rosenzweig (The Jewish Memorial Council, London: 1998), 1.
- 34 Letter from Robert Waley Cohen to Lionel de Rothschild dated 5 May 1919 discussing proposals to erect a war memorial and create a fund to support the traditions of Judaism and British citizenship, RAL 000/1994/5. Lionel served as President of the Jewish War Memorial Council from 1919 until 1942.
- 35 Robert Waley Cohen (1877–1952) was a British industrialist and prominent leader of Anglo-Jewry, and a descendant of Levi Barent Cohen, whose daughter Hannah married Nathan Mayer Rothschild in 1806.
- 36 Letter from Lloyd George to Lionel de Rothschild informing him of the honour. RAL 000/928.
- 37 The estate at Halton played its own part in the conflict. See Andrew Adam, *Beechwoods and Bayonets: The Book of Halton*, (Baron Birch, 1992). Lionel sold the estate to the Ministry of Defence in 1919.
- 38 Sir Evelyn Robert Adrian de Rothschild, Chairman of N M Rothschild & Sons Limited, 1976–2003.

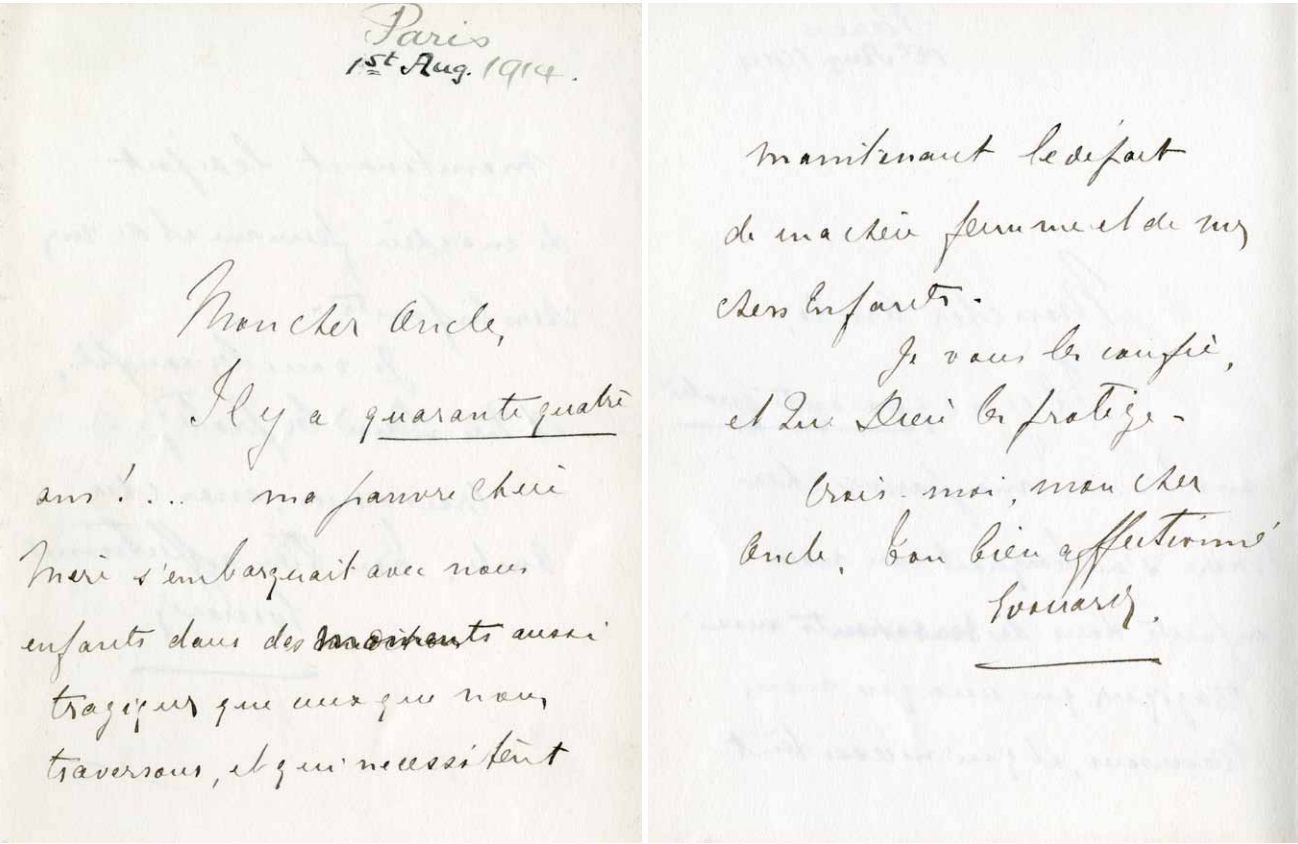
Time is on our side: the Rothschild family in World War I¹

Natalie Broad highlights the role played by members of the Rothschild family in Europe during the conflict that divided the continent.

Letter from Edouard de Rothschild to his English uncle Nathaniel, 1st Lord Rothschild entrusting his wife and children to Natty’s care, 1 August 1914.
RAL 000/1323/33

In his article about the Jewish War Services Committee earlier in this *Review*, Justin Cavernelis-Frost outlined the role that various members of the Rothschild family in Britain played during World War I. It can easily be imagined that the outbreak and effects of the war were devastating for the family. The Europe which they had helped to build in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars a century before was irrevocably changed. Most of the older generation did not live to see the conclusion of the conflict, but feared its immediate and long-term impacts, both for their extended family and for the next generation who were to lead the business into the new world of the twentieth century.

The sense of dread and fear that must have pressed down on everyone in Europe is palpable in a letter sent from Edouard de Rothschild (1868–1949) in Paris to his uncle, Nathaniel, 1st Lord Rothschild (1840–1915). The letter, written two days before the declaration of war between Germany and France, serves as a stark reminder of the short passage of time between the Franco-Prussian war and August 1914.² The Rothschilds on the continent were preparing to live in occupied lands again.



Edouard's cousin, Robert (1880–1946) served as an interpreter. He was twice awarded the Croix de Guerre and was mentioned in Despatches. Together with other French officers he attended the 1914 Christmas dinner of the 8th Division, British Expeditionary Forces, to which he was seconded.³ Whilst Robert was dispatched on classified missions his wife, Nelly, (1886–1945) nursed at their property at Laversine, which had been converted into a hospital. James (1878–1957) and his brother Maurice (1881–1957) were both attached to the British Army as liaison officers. Henri (1872–1947) turned over his car factory to the production of ambulances. Having witnessed some of the horrors of the injuries suffered by servicemen in the trenches he developed a burns unit which could travel by ambulance right to the battle zone front. He also worked on devising airtight containers for the men's rations to prevent contamination. Henri's son, James, (1896–1984) served in the French air force as a combat pilot and both his wife Mathilde (1874–1926) and his mother, the Frankfurt born Laura-Thérèse (1847–1931), nursed during the conflict.⁴

The Austrian cousins who were eligible also signed up at the outbreak of war. Three brothers, Alphonse (1878–1942), Louis (1882–1955) and Eugène (1884–1976) fought for their country in several capacities. Louis was left in charge of the business built by Salomon von Rothschild (1774–1855) in Vienna, whilst Alphonse was sent as an Oberstleutnant to the Italian front, where his brother Eugène was also serving. Eugène found time to keep his family informed of his activities. On 18 May 1915 he sent a picture postcard of himself standing in a trench [see below] to his sister Valentine (1886–1969), writing:

I wish you all the best on your birthday and hope that you receive this one card in your 29th year! Things are going well for me, as you can see, and I have a lot of things to do.

Eugène's levity in his notes to his sister disguises the tensions of the stalemate at the Italian front for most of the war where there were heavy casualties at every attack. Though Austria shared in the humiliation of defeat in 1918, the three brothers were no doubt thankful to return to their families, their business and to their European cousins.



Left
Eugène von Rothschild
on active service on the
Italian Front.
RAL 000/1336/31

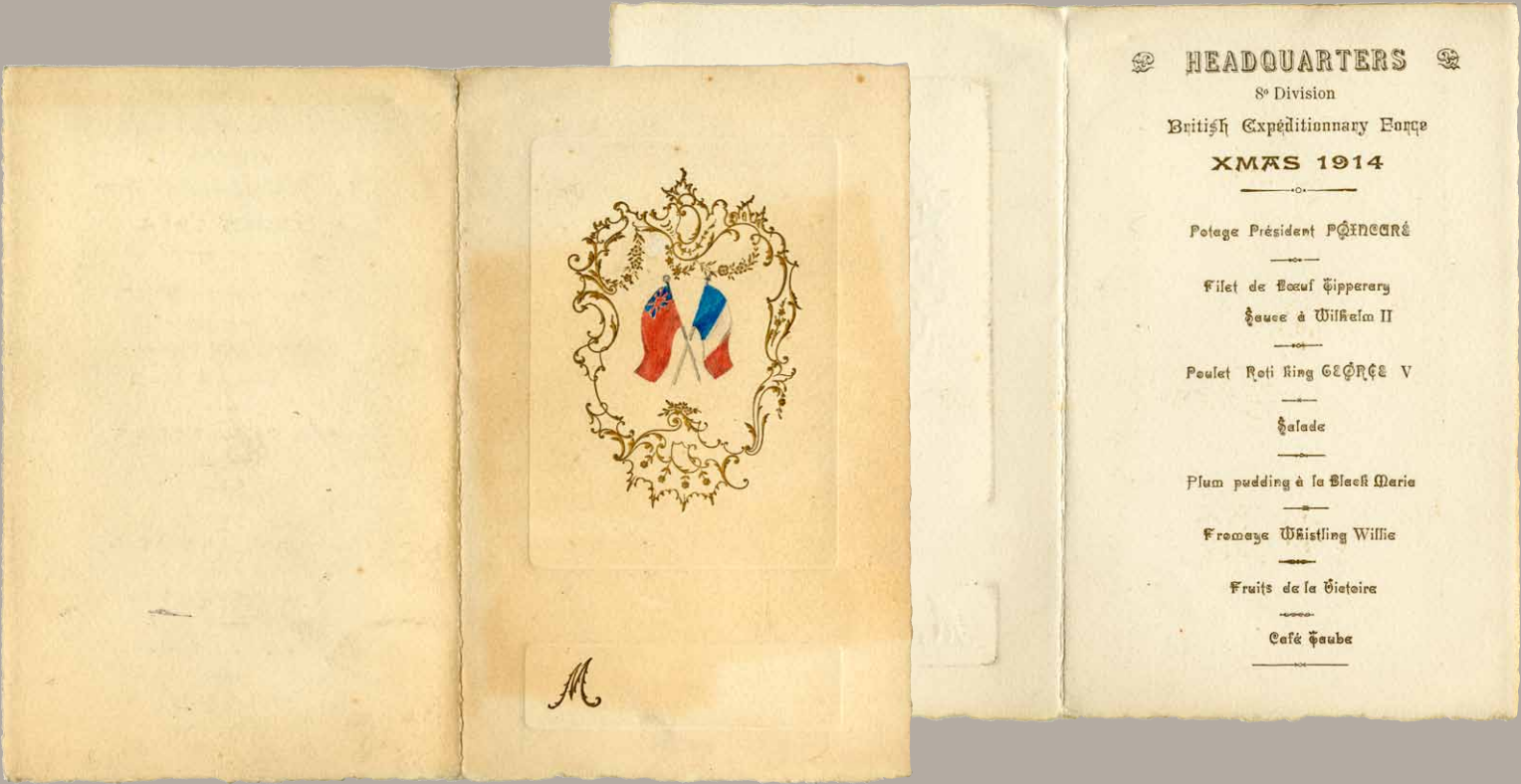
Opposite
Robert de Rothschild in
uniform, August 1914.
Robert served as a French-
English interpreter during
the War.
RAL 000/930 (58-1-225)

Menu for Christmas
dinner 1914 which Robert
and other French officers
attended with the British
Expeditionary Forces.
RAL 000/2032



"Très bon officier interprète. Actif, plein d'entrain, ne
"demandant qu'à marcher et à se rendre utile.
"A plusieurs reprises, a fait preuve de cranerie et de mépris
"du danger au cours de missions de liaison et de reconnaissances.
"Le 19 juillet 1917, en particulier, a participé à une reconnais-
"sance en plein jour d'un canal situé entre les lignes françaises
"et allemandes, reconnaissance qui a rapporté des renseignements
"très précieux."

Robert de Rothschild's war
service record, above, describes
him as 'on several occasions
having demonstrated a defiance
of danger in liaison missions
and reconnaissance.'



Scenes from the Western Front from a file associated with Robert de Rothschild which includes private documents, such as travel passes, allowing access within the British Army occupied areas, 1914. RAL 000/796





Research into the experiences of so many members of the Rothschild family during World War I has allowed us to re-examine many of the collections at the Archive and to link together material which reached us from diverse sources. A comprehensive account of the family's lives and description of the sources is available on the Archive's website.⁵

Detail from one of the panoramic photographs, in the file associated with Robert de Rothschild. RAL 000/796

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NOTES

- ¹ The title of this article is taken from a letter written by Winston Churchill to Nathaniel, 1st Lord Rothschild in January 1915. RAL 000/848/37. The text is based on a longer piece in the Rothschild Pensioners' Newsletter published in London.
- ² 'Paris. 1st Aug 1914. My dear Uncle, Forty four years ago ! my poor dear mother embarked with us children in times just as tragic as these we are

- experiencing and which now necessitate the departure of my dear wife and my dear children. I entrust them to you, and may God protect them. Believe me, my dear Uncle, your very affectionate, Edouard.' RAL 000/1323/33.
- ³ Thanks to Caroline Poulain, curator at the Municipal Library of Dijon for information on menus from World War I and to Gisèle Kaiser for assistance with the interpretation. Further examples of

- menus can be found on the websites www.patrimoine.bm-dijon.fr/pleade/ and www.centenaire.org/fr/tresors-darchives/fonds-publics/bibliotheques/archives/cuisine-de-guerre-menus-de-la-bibliotheque
- ⁴ Baronne James de Rothschild *Souvenirs de la Grande Guerre (1914–1918)* (Macon: Protat Frères, 1927).
- ⁵ www.rothschildarchive.org/exhibitions/rothschilds_and_the_first_world_war/

'Beloved friend to so many': the papers of Leopold de Rothschild (1927–2012)

Melanie Aspey describes the process of collecting and arranging an archival collection for future historians.

