



# THE ROTHSCHILD ARCHIVE

REVIEW OF THE YEAR APRIL 2013 TO MARCH 2014

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# The Rothschild Archive Trust

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*Front cover*

Evelyn Achille de Rothschild (1886–1917) photographed in the dress uniform of the Royal Bucks Hussars.

The second of three sons of Leopold and Marie de Rothschild, Evelyn was mobilised with his regiment on the outbreak of war and arrived in Egypt in April 1915. While serving as temporary commander of the regiment at Gallipoli he was wounded and returned to Egypt. He later fought and fell in the charge on El Mughar.

RAL 000/360

*Frontispiece*

Unidentified men, Western Front, n.d. Detail from a photograph by an unknown photographer of soldiers by the frozen coast, probably winter 1916–1917, after the third Battle of the Somme during World War I. This image forms part of a small collection of photographs in panoramic style among files associated with Robert de Rothschild (1880–1946). The files had been looted in France during World War II and then taken to Moscow by Soviet troops at the end of the war from where they were returned to the Rothschild family in 1994. See pp.48–49 for other examples.

RAL 000/796

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## Introduction

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Eric de Rothschild, Chairman of The Rothschild Archive Trust

On behalf of my fellow trustees I am pleased to welcome you to the fifteenth issue of The Rothschild Archive's *Review of the Year*. We are delighted to note that our collections attract the interest of a wide range of scholars from all over the world who find material relevant to studies ranging from banking and financial history to horticulture. The constant discoveries they make help us all to learn from the past, and also to appreciate the importance of primary sources. Two of our visitors have contributed to this issue of the *Review*: Brian Cathcart offers a carefully considered account of the first news of the Battle of Waterloo in which he examines many of the myths surrounding this event. Francesca Murray explores the role played by several members of the Rothschild family in the development of orchid trade. I am grateful to them both for sharing the results of their work with us.

The Rothschild business in London provides us with superb accommodation for the storage of our collections and for their consultation. The Trustees value this important relationship. The Reading Room, the work of the Yorkshire family firm of Robert Thompson's Craftsmen Ltd., continues to attract admiration from our many visitors. The Archive is also supported by Rothschild family banks, vineyards and foundations and I thank them all, on behalf of the Trustees, for their continuing generosity.

Additions to our collections this year have arrived from Rothschild businesses, from members of my family and from organisations with which they have historical associations. I draw your attention in particular to the happy collaboration between the Archive and The Wildlife Trusts, which has led to the deposit of papers relating to the first national survey in the UK of wildlife sites carried out by Charles Rothschild in 1912. This relationship was enhanced thanks to the Rothschild Scientists project which featured in previous issues of the *Review*.

Finally I thank the staff of the Archive for their continued dedication to their work and their enthusiasm in promoting the collection to our many users.

*Orchis ericetorum* (spotted)  
growing at Ashton Wold,  
the home of Charles  
Rothschild, c.1905, from  
an album of Charles'  
own photographs.  
RAL 000/1325/8/5



# Review of the year's work

Melanie Aspey, Director of The Rothschild Archive

The nature and extent of research at the Archive continues to develop. Occasionally this is in predictable ways, linked, for example, to anniversaries such as the centenary of the outbreak of World War I or the forthcoming bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo. Even the predictable can produce unexpected results, such as those uncovered by Professor Brian Cathcart in his article on page 11. And then, the unexpected, such as the riches in the Archive available to the historian of the orchid, as revealed by Francesca Murray in her article on page 19. It is the aim of The Rothschild Archive to act as a hub for research into all aspects of the history of the Rothschild family and our London Reading Room provides the most congenial environment for this research to take place. Additionally our 'virtual reading room' – the Archive's website – continues to evolve under the management of Justin Cavernelis-Frost and with the creative support of Natalie Broad.

## Research Project

Our investigations into the lives and work of the members of the Rothschild family who pursued their scientific interests, occasionally in conjunction with a business career, led the project director, Dr Jenni Thomas, down some rewarding research paths. The Archive's exposure to a wide range of new communities as a result of this project has been a most satisfying outcome.

A fruitful relationship has been the partnership with The Royal Society and Kingston University (as reported in the last issue of this *Review*) which brings together historians, archivists and practising scientists to research women's participation in science and learned societies in Britain since 1830, inspired in large measure by our interest in the position of Miriam Rothschild in the scientific pantheon. The project, WISRNet, was formally launched during the 24th International Congress of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine at the University of Manchester in July 2013. The inspiring speech by Professor Ludmilla Jordanova to inaugurate the project is available on the project's website.<sup>1</sup> WISRNet developed a unique shadowing scheme, to pair up historians of science with working women scientists.<sup>2</sup> The historians spent two half days with their allotted scientist to discover more about the nature of their work and the challenges and obstacles before them in a scientific career. Aside from bringing a deeper understanding of the field to the historians, these conversations encouraged the scientists to reflect on their achievements, their hopes and expectations.

The Archive hosted two meetings of the WISRNet Steering Committee during the year.

## Outreach

The Archivist, Justin Cavernelis-Frost, participated in a local history festival in Aston Clinton, in the heartland of the Vale of Aylesbury where the Rothschild family began their long association in the middle of the nineteenth century. Conversations which began at that event led to the happy collaboration between the Archive and the Trustees of The Anthony Hall in Aston Clinton on the work to repair, copy and display the joint portrait of Constance and Annie de Rothschild, benefactors of Aston Clinton.<sup>3</sup>

RHS awards won by Lionel de Rothschild for orchids and cymbidiums. RAL 000/2227

The Director of the Archive made a presentation at a colloquium held by the Institute of Art & Law in London in January 2014. The colloquium was dedicated to the subject of restitution of works of art.

## Exhibitions

The Archive enjoys the opportunity to display some items from the collection in contexts which emphasise their significance. A recent acquisition, a gift from the estate of the late Leopold de Rothschild, was lent to Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, which held a retrospective exhibition on the career of René Lalique, the first to be held in the Netherlands.<sup>4</sup>

## Visits

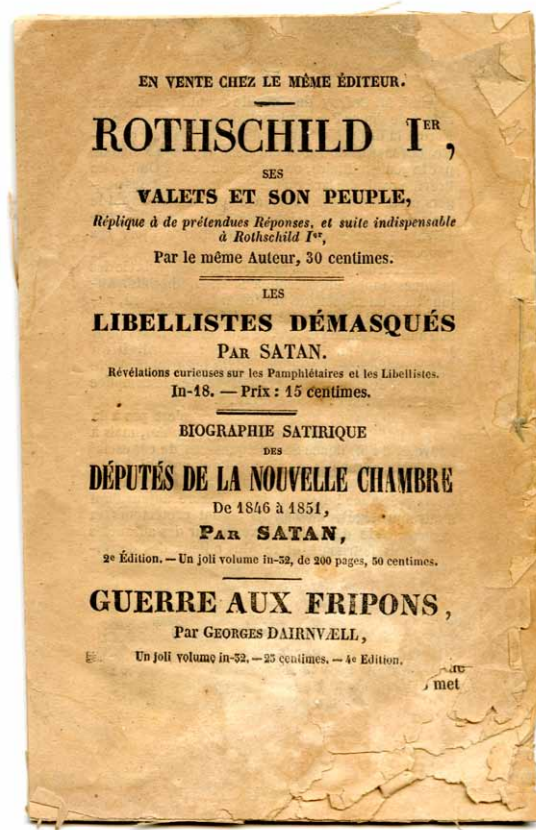
*The Archive welcomed numerous special interest groups from the international archive community.*

- Several members of the staff of The Parliamentary Archives visited The Rothschild Archive at New Court and were warm and generous hosts in return during our visit in April 2013.
- Archivists from the Salvation Army were welcomed to the Archive in December 2013.
- In June 2013 a group of members of the Vereinigte Westfälische Adelsarchive e.V. came to the Archive during their visit to the UK. The organisation was established in 1923 to ensure the preservation of the archives of family estates, to ensure their development and to make the resources available to researchers.
- The Director visited Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge in July 2013 at the invitation of the Master of Churchill College. The Centre's director, Allen Packwood, highlighted the many points of contact between the Rothschild and Churchill families in evidence in the collection.

## Archives at Roubaix

In March 2014 the Chairman of The Rothschild Archive Trust, Baron Eric de Rothschild, and the Director together visited the Archives Nationales du Monde du Travail (ANMT) in Roubaix, where the archives of the French family's activities are held on deposit. The Archive plans to carry on further research into the collections over the coming months and years, building on the cataloguing work that has already taken place by the staff at Roubaix and by employees and contractors of the Archive. The catalogue is accessible on the website of the ANMT with a link from the Archive's site.<sup>5</sup>





### Future plans

The Archive looks forward to working with colleagues from the Frankfurt Jewish Museum, which will close for a period of two years from summer 2015, as they develop their concept for the interpretation of the history of the Jews of Frankfurt in a new gallery. The Museum is currently housed in a former Rothschild property on the Untermainkai, which will be the base of the Museum's future permanent exhibitions.

The staff of the Archive looks forward to developing knowledge of the collections on deposit at the ANMT in Roubaix, and to making them better known to the research community.

*Above, from left*  
Back cover from the 1846 attack on the Rothschilds. See p.12. RAL 000/1604

Surviving papers of the Jewish War Services Committee. See p.36. RAL 000/358

### NOTES

1 [www.womeninscience.net/?page\\_id=297](http://www.womeninscience.net/?page_id=297)

2 [www.womeninscience.net/?page\\_id=462](http://www.womeninscience.net/?page_id=462)

3 Illustrated on page 56.

4 [www.gemeentemuseum.nl/en/exhibitions/rené-lalique-1860-1945](http://www.gemeentemuseum.nl/en/exhibitions/rené-lalique-1860-1945)

5 [www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/camt/](http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/camt/) and [www.rothschildarchive.org/collections/history\\_of\\_the\\_collections/history\\_of\\_the\\_business\\_records\\_of\\_de\\_rothschild\\_freres\\_paris](http://www.rothschildarchive.org/collections/history_of_the_collections/history_of_the_business_records_of_de_rothschild_freres_paris)

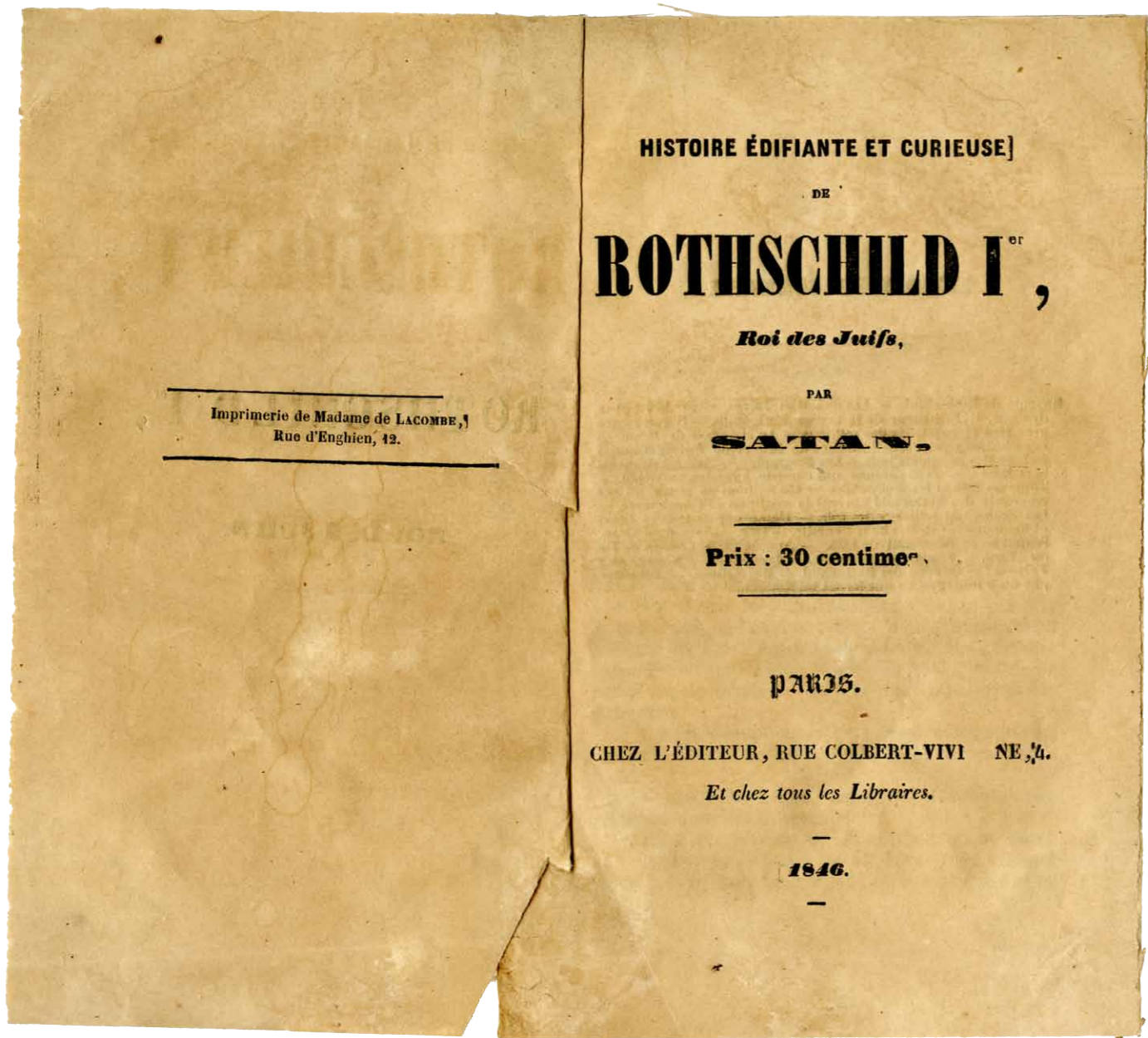
## Nathan Rothschild and the Battle of Waterloo

Brian Cathcart explores an enduring myth about a key period in Rothschild history.



That Nathan Mayer Rothschild (1777–1836) was the first person in London to know of Wellington's victory at Waterloo in 1815 has been asserted so often it is widely accepted as a historical fact. No less a historian than Elizabeth Longford repeated the claim in her great biography of the Duke in the 1970s, and more recently it appeared in Niall Ferguson's official history of the Rothschild family.<sup>1</sup> A second assertion is just as widely known: that Rothschild exploited his exclusive knowledge to make a killing on the Stock Exchange, probably employing some kind of deception to augment his profits. Versions of this have appeared in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*, in scores of histories of Waterloo, of the Stock Exchange and of British Jewry, in works on business practice and intelligence, and in novels.<sup>2</sup> In a more sinister vein it formed the basis of a 1940 Nazi propaganda film, *Die Rothschilds: Aktien auf Waterloo*, and it continues to find favour on neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic websites.



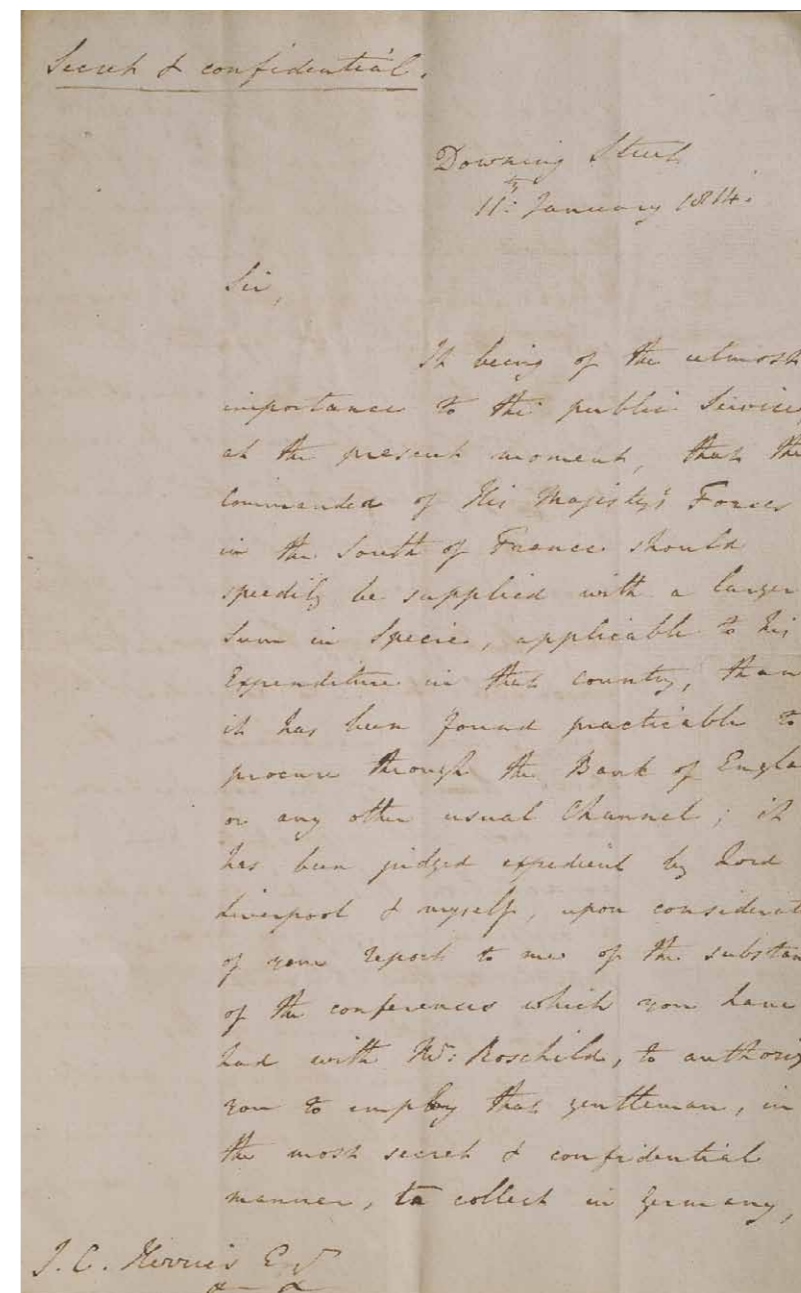


The story is more legend than fact. Not only is there nothing in the surviving historical record to suggest that Rothschild was the first in London to know of Waterloo, but we can say with some confidence that another man had that distinction. As for Nathan Rothschild making a killing, while it is likely that he made profits that week any gains can only have been modest by comparison with the fortunes made by others. And there is no question of trickery.

How such an ill-founded tale managed to gain currency and respectability is a curiosity in its own right, and there is no escaping the influence of anti-Semitism. As Victor, 3rd Lord Rothschild (1910–1990) found when he investigated these matters, the decisive event was the publication in Paris in 1846 of a pamphlet entitled *Histoire Edifiante et Curieuse de Rothschild Ier, Roi des Juifs*, whose author signed himself simply 'Satan'.<sup>3</sup> An attack on James de Rothschild (1792–1868) as a ruthless capitalist and enemy of the French people, it sold across Europe by

*Above*  
Title page from the 1846  
attack on the Rothschilds.  
RAL 000/1604

*Previous page*  
Nathan Mayer Rothschild  
by Moritz Oppenheim.  
NMR 234



*Above*  
Letter from Vansittart to  
Herries, 11 January 1814,  
commissioning Nathan  
Rothschild to become  
the Government's agent.  
RAL XI/52/30

the tens of thousands and it included the lurid tale of how James's brother Nathan profited from the deaths of Frenchmen at Waterloo. Nathan, it was said, witnessed the battle in person and rode in haste to the coast, where he bullied and bribed a fisherman into ferrying him to England through a terrible storm. In this way he reached London twenty-four hours before the official news and 'gained twenty million in a single coup' on the stock market. Such cynical opportunism at the expense of French people, insisted 'Satan', was typical of the Rothschilds: 'This family is our evil genius.'

As the wealth and fame of the Rothschilds increased in the subsequent decades, so did the curiosity and envy of others, and the 'Satan' story was frequently repeated and just as frequently embellished. Notably, the element of trading subterfuge was added. No sooner had Nathan reached the City of London, it was claimed, than he deliberately provoked a collapse





in stock market confidence by encouraging rumours that Wellington had been defeated. Only when prices were near to rock bottom, and after many investors had been ruined, did he begin to buy, and in this way he was able to double the gains he made when the victory became known. One historian remarked: ‘We cannot estimate how many liveried servants, how many Watteaus and Rembrandts, how many thoroughbreds in his descendants’ stables, the man by the pillar [Rothschild] won that single day.’<sup>4</sup>

This enhanced version of the story appeared in a 1913 history of the Rothschilds by the German author Ignatius Balla, but by then the narrative was under some stress.<sup>5</sup> One problem was that the *dramatis personae* of Waterloo were well established; anyone with knowledge of the battle was aware that Nathan Rothschild wasn’t there.<sup>6</sup> Another was that the Rothschild family and its friends were increasingly uncomfortable about this ugly tale. Alternative stories now surfaced to explain Rothschild’s early knowledge. Some of these, such as the claim that the news travelled by pigeon, were pure fantasy – there was no organised use of homing pigeons in England in 1815, nor is there any record of them in The Rothschild Archive at this time, or of the considerable infrastructure needed to support them. Two other stories, however, merit scrutiny, not least because they have proved the most enduring.

The first is that Nathan Rothschild had arranged a rapid communications channel from Brussels – relays of couriers overland and a fast cutter waiting off Dunkirk – to bring him news from the war front. This idea was promoted early in the twentieth century by Lucien Wolf, a journalist and historian who was friendly to the Rothschild family, and Wolf asserted that the evidence lay in the Rothschild records. His version appeared to be supported by the entry for 18 June 1815 (the day of the battle) in the diary of James Gallatin, an American then

In a familiar pose, Nathan Rothschild is depicted in this cartoon of the Rothschild Exchange by I.R. and G. Cruikshank, 1821. RAL 000/707

visiting London. This spoke of great public anxiety and noted: ‘They say Monsieur Rothschild has mounted couriers from Brussels to Ostend and a fast clipper ready to sail the moment something is decisive one way or the other.’<sup>7</sup> The Gallatin diary, however, has been shown to be a fraud concocted towards the end of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, nothing has been found in Rothschild’s business correspondence to support the notion that before Waterloo was fought he made arrangements for a fast communications channel.<sup>8</sup> The Lucien Wolf version of the story therefore fails the evidence test.

More complex is what might be called the Wellington version. On a number of occasions in the 1820s and 1830s, well before the ‘Satan’ story entered circulation, the Duke of Wellington asserted privately that the news of Waterloo was brought to Nathan Rothschild by an agent who learned of it at Ghent in Belgium, where the exiled French king, Louis XVIII, was staying. On the morning after the battle this agent saw a messenger deliver to Louis a letter announcing the victory and so he rushed to London by way of Ostend to inform his employer. Rothschild then did some profitable trading on the Stock Exchange before informing the government of what he knew.

This story, which only reached a wide public with the publication of various memoirs towards the end of the nineteenth century, has some foundation in recorded fact. Newspapers of the week that followed Waterloo reported that a ‘Mr C of Dover’ was present in Ghent when the news reached Louis XVIII on Monday 19 June and that he hurried to London, which he must have reached during the night of Tuesday to Wednesday – perhaps as much as twenty-four hours before the official word of the victory. This Mr C therefore has the distinction of having been the first person in London to know the French had been beaten – so far as the known, contemporaneous historical record states. But there is nothing in that record to connect Mr C with Nathan Rothschild. Only Wellington’s table talk provides that link, and Wellington, very obviously, was not in London when these events occurred. His evidence is hearsay at best, and analysis shows that his tale improved with the telling: early versions of it did not mention Rothschild at all.

Further, Mr C’s actions once he reached London scarcely accord with Wellington’s tale, because he appears to have shared his information freely and at the first opportunity. Again the newspapers of those days are our witnesses and they record that the gentleman who had come from Ghent was telling his story publicly in the City on Wednesday morning – reports of it were in print as early as noon. This is not consistent with suggestions that Rothschild exploited the information for purposes of insider trading. (There is a further tradition which identifies the gentleman from Ghent as John Roworth, a known employee and messenger for Nathan Rothschild. But a letter in The Rothschild Archive leaves no doubt that Roworth was in London on that Monday and so could not have been in Ghent.)<sup>9</sup>

A further reason exists for believing that Mr C was not, as Wellington claimed, a Rothschild employee. One surviving newspaper from the relevant days mentions Rothschild, and tells us that he did indeed receive early information of the battle. This was the *Caledonian Mercury* of Edinburgh, whose London correspondent wrote the following on the Wednesday evening, a few hours before Wellington’s messenger reached town with the official confirmation of the victory:

Good news – to be relied upon – Lord Wellington was joined on the 18th by 20,000 Prussians under Bülow and beat Bonaparte completely, taking nearly the whole of his artillery. Omnium is now up at 6. This I have from good authority – one who has seen a letter from Ghent, received by Rosschild, the great stockbroker whose information is invariably the best. He is now at the Foreign Office.<sup>10</sup>



Nathan Rothschild therefore received a letter from Ghent (and not a messenger) some time on Wednesday, 21 June. And significantly the piece of information cited in the newspaper report – relating to the Prussians – is not information that is attributed to Mr C in the earlier reports. In short, Rothschild had a different informant who sent him different information.

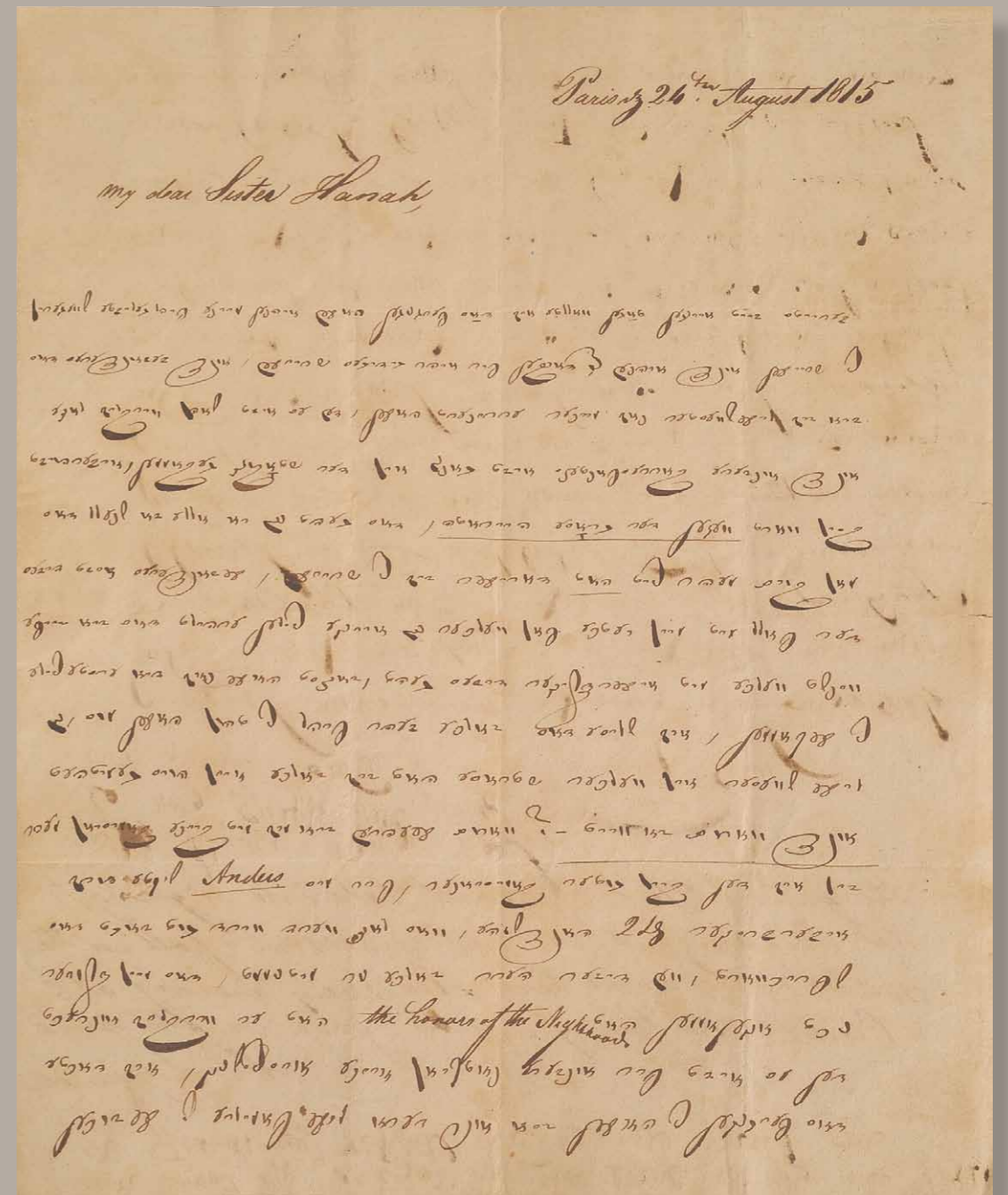
Let us take stock. Nathan Rothschild was not at Waterloo. There is no evidence to support the suggestion that he made special arrangements to have early news of the battle, whether by pigeon post or more conventional means. There is nothing in the historical record to suggest that he was the first person in London to know of the victory, indeed the evidence points firmly towards Mr C. Nor, despite Wellington's later assertions, do we have reason to believe that Mr C brought his news to Rothschild. What we do know, on the basis of contemporaneous evidence, is that Rothschild was one of a number of people in London who received private information about the battle before Wellington's official dispatch was delivered at about 11pm on Wednesday.

At what time on Wednesday he received his letter from Ghent we can't be sure. The *Caledonian Mercury* correspondent almost certainly composed his report with the view that it should be up to date to about 7.30pm, so that it could depart on the 8pm mail coach to Edinburgh. No news of Rothschild's letter had appeared in the London evening papers, which were avid for such information but which closed their final editions between 3pm and 4pm. Moreover the *Mercury* report speaks of Omnium, a government security, being 'up at 6', a price it did not attain until the afternoon.

A further clue indicates that it reached him before the close of trading on the Stock Exchange. John Roworth, the Rothschild employee mentioned above, subsequently travelled to Paris on bank business, and in late July he wrote a letter to Nathan which included the postscript: 'I am informed by Commissary White you have done well by the early information which you had of the victory gained at Waterloo.'<sup>11</sup> It is nothing more than an aside and it presumably refers to the letter from Ghent, but it may shed light on timings. For Rothschild to have 'done well by' the early information in the conventional, financial sense, he must have had time to conduct some business on the Stock Exchange on Wednesday. Thursday morning, after the overnight official confirmation of victory had sent stocks sharply upwards, would have been too late. In sum, the various clues suggest that Rothschild's letter from Ghent reached him in the course of Wednesday afternoon.

Consideration of Roworth's postscript brings us to the suggestion that Rothschild manipulated the market, and once again there is no evidence for this. In particular, the often-repeated claim that he engineered a panic and a slump in prices by spreading word of a defeat is disproved by the progression of the price of Omnium on the Tuesday and Wednesday. This was the government security whose movements were most closely linked to success or failure on the battlefield, and it never slumped. According to the daily stock reports in the *Morning Chronicle*, Omnium opened on Wednesday at 4-3/4 per cent premium, climbed to around 6 per cent and then slipped back to 4-3/4 per cent at the close. Why did it slip back? It is true that there were rumours of a defeat (as well as further reports of victory), and we also know that there was profit-taking, but the decline should be seen in context: Omnium fell no lower than its opening price on the day, and that in turn was the highest price it had reached up to that date. A stock that dips below its peak is not the same as a stock that slumps.

It appears likely, from Roworth's postscript, that Rothschild bought stocks on Wednesday afternoon. If he did so at around 5 per cent premium then he could have sold the next day at 8 per cent or more – a very handsome overnight return fully worth the description 'doing well'. But again context is required. Many investors made far larger profits that week. The original contractors to that month's government loan – at that time the largest ever raised –



In this letter of 24 August 1815 Nathan's brother James expresses his disbelief that Nathan could have turned down a knighthood offered by a grateful British Government in the weeks after Waterloo. He briefly abandons the Hebrew alphabet and German language to write 'the honors of the Nighthood' – third line from the bottom.

RAL XI/109/2/49

the honors of the Nighthood



had acquired Omnium at par and were able to take on holdings as large as they chose. Some made fortunes on a scale which Rothschild, arriving late in the market, was in no position to match.<sup>12</sup> In short, while Rothschild probably made a profit from his early news of Waterloo, it was by no means exclusive early news (Mr C's story could already be read in at least three newspapers), he did not engineer a market panic, and he did not make a great killing. If any of this had been true it would surely have surfaced in his correspondence with his brothers elsewhere in Europe, but it did not. Nor was it mentioned in any newspaper report during his lifetime, or in his obituaries. And the evidence in The Rothschild Archive that Nathan was offered a knighthood a few weeks after Napoleon's defeat (an honour he rejected) strongly suggests that he had done nothing that the government could have considered disreputable or potentially embarrassing.<sup>13</sup>

The legend of Nathan Rothschild and Waterloo is just that: a legend. As with most legends, there are underpinning elements of truth: he had relatively early information and he seems to have profited by it. The rest, however, is fiction, and not harmless fiction. The Nathan Rothschild of the legend is a Shylock, a Fagin, a Jud Süß – scheming, cynical, secretive and fanatically greedy. To stamp that character in the public mind was the aim of the writer who called himself 'Satan' and of the makers of *Die Rothschilds: Aktien auf Waterloo*. Of course others have repeated the tale with no anti-Semitic intent, but given its pedigree and the absence of supporting evidence it is probably time historians relegated this legend to the margins and the footnotes.

*Brian Cathcart is professor of journalism at Kingston University London and is the author of The Case of Stephen Lawrence (1999) and The Fly in the Cathedral: How a small group of Cambridge scientists won the race to split the atom (2004). He was also a founder of the campaign group Hacked Off. His latest book, The News from Waterloo: How Britain learned of Wellington's triumph will be published by Faber & Faber in April 2015.*

## NOTES

1 Elizabeth Longford, *Wellington: Pillar of State* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), 7–8; Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild* vol.1: *Money's Prophets 1798–1848* (London: Penguin, 1998), pp.98–9.  
2 See for example Bertrand Gille, *Histoire de la Maison Rothschild* vol.1 *Des Origines a 1848* (Geneva: Droz, 1965); Rory Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon 1807–1815* (Yale University Press, 1996); Neville Thompson, *Earl Bathurst and the British Empire 1762–1834* (Barnsley: Cooper, 1999); Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., vol. xxiii (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Encyclopaedia Americana vol.23 (New York: Americana Corp., 1977); Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1897); Richard Bookstaber, *A Demon of Our Own Design: Markets, Hedge Funds, and the Perils of Financial Innovation*, (New Jersey: Wiley, 2007); William J. Bernstein, *The birth of plenty: how the prosperity of the modern*

*world was created* (London: McGraw-Hill, 2004); Aaron Levine, *Case studies in Jewish business ethics Library of Jewish law and ethics* vol.22. (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV publishing, 2000). In modern times the story has been challenged in two works: Victor Rothschild, *The Shadow of a Great Man* (London: privately published, 1982) and Herbert H. Kaplan, *Nathan Mayer Rothschild and the Creation of a Dynasty 1806–1816* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).  
3 Rothschild, Shadow; 'Satan' was Georges Dairnvaell, a well-known left-wing activist and writer.  
4 Frederic Morton, *The Rothschilds: A Family Portrait* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1962), p.54.  
5 Ignatius Balla, *The Romance of the Rothschilds* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1913).  
6 See Notes and Queries v2, 4thS, (38) 19 September 1868, p.283.

7 James F. Gallatin, ed., *A Great Peace Maker: The Diary of James Gallatin, Secretary to Albert Gallatin* (London: Heinemann, 1914), p.76.  
8 Raymond Walters, jnr 'The James Gallatin Diary: A Fraud?' *American Historical Review* LXXII July 1957, 878–85.  
9 Letter from Nathan Rothschild to Carl Rothschild, 20 June 1815. RAL XI/82/7. The reference to Roworth is a post-script.  
10 Caledonian Mercury, 24 June 1815.  
11 RAL XI/112/51 and T3/341.  
12 David Ricardo and Bridges Trouwer were among those who made large sums. See Piero Sraffa, ed., (1951–73) *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951–1973).  
13 Letter from John Roworth, Paris, to Nathan Rothschild, London, 27 July 1815, XI/112/77.

# An Absolute Passion: The Rothschilds' orchid collections at Gunnersbury Park, Tring Park, Exbury Gardens – and London's East End

Francesca Murray reveals an unexpected link between nurseries and a refinery in her study of the Rothschild family's passion for orchids.

Orchids held a special fascination for the Rothschild family throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They were amongst a number of plants that the family collected; however, the orchid was exceptional, providing the beauty and varieties of form with the horticultural challenge of its cultivation, which made it a cherished family asset. The rarity of the orchid and its high price at auction was a fitting trophy for the richest family in England and its exotic flowers complemented the lavish interiors of the Rothschild houses. The orchids were also a pleasurable distraction from the business of banking and for sharing with friends.

The provision of manpower and horticultural expertise, together with the installation of the latest glasshouse technology needed to grow the orchids, was a demonstration of the wealth of the family and the high standards of excellence espoused by its members. But it also revealed their personal devotion to these new, peculiar plants that flooded into the nurseries of the early nineteenth century. Early exposure to orchids as a child led to Ferdinand de Rothschild's (1839–1898) patronage of the orchid expert Frederick Sander (1847–1920) and ensured the family were at the vanguard of the introduction of the genus into Europe and England.<sup>1</sup> Indeed some orchids were named after family members in appreciation.<sup>2</sup> It appealed enough to 1st Lord Rothschild, Nathaniel de Rothschild (1840–1915) and his son Walter (1868–1937) at Tring Park and later Lionel de Rothschild (1882–1942) at Exbury to join the group of orchidologists of the Royal Horticultural Society, namely the Orchid Committee, which gave them an opportunity to be involved scientifically. As orchid species became more rare, and in order to extend the orchid flowering period for cutting, orchid hybridisation became the objective in the professional and amateur glasshouses of England and Europe. The Rothschild gardeners were no exception, cultivating numerous orchid hybrids, which won many RHS awards.<sup>3</sup> A further step taken in the early twentieth century by Lionel de Rothschild at Exbury was to experiment in the germination of orchid seed, a field that had been thus far unsolved.

All of these were more than enough reasons for a Rothschild to become passionately attached to this genus. But, perhaps more fundamentally there was an emotional connection in England between the family and the imported orchid plants. Both the family and the orchid genus were outsiders, seen as exotic, curious and yet ultimately fascinating. Both were expensively bound in their uniqueness, subjects of envy, tricky to look after, with seemingly eccentric characteristics that needed special care and handling.<sup>4</sup> When cultivation and treatment of these exotic specimens was fruitful, the results were often breath-taking. Orchids collected from distant lands by plant collectors who often risked their lives searching for these unique specimens were part of global networks that as bankers the Rothschilds shared.

Gardening and collecting rare plants have many parallels to banking in terms of the planning, cultivating and growing, anticipation and legacy. And despite the limitations of their time, an interest in horticulture between Nathan Rothschild (1777–1836) and his four brothers for furnishing their gardens with the latest exotic plants available in new glasshouses, naturally included orchids.<sup>5</sup> Horticultural changes were afoot in England: the glass tax was abolished in 1845, the brick tax in 1850, and with an easing of the timber duty in 1851 new glasshouse suppliers sprang up from the 1850s.<sup>6</sup> The heating of greenhouses had changed with hot water boiler systems becoming popular to create the ideal environment for tender stove plants. The plants still had to get to the customer's glasshouse in one piece first. The invention around 1829 of the Wardian case helped transport the live plants to England.

In 1835 Nathan Rothschild bought Gunnersbury Park, a substantial and established estate near Ealing, just outside London, previously owned by Princess Amelia (1783–1810), George III's aunt.<sup>7</sup> After Nathan's untimely death in 1836, his widow, Hannah (1783–1850) followed by his son Lionel (1808–1879) and daughter in law, Charlotte (1819–1884) continued to develop Gunnersbury Park and expand the grounds. Charlotte's invitations were even more popular than the Queen's, who was a frequent visitor.<sup>8</sup> The garden tour was a feature for visitors and orchids and fruit were given away to guests as gifts. Leopold de Rothschild (1845–1917), Charlotte's son, gave George V a Fabergé vase dressed with orchids for his coronation and dinner tables were frequently decorated with orchids.<sup>9</sup>

The Rothschilds used their established international networks of bank agents to obtain rare and exotic plants including orchids for Gunnersbury.<sup>10</sup> Often these agents would have little knowledge of what they were being asked to source, and this sometimes led to impatience with seemingly unintelligible new plant names.<sup>11</sup> Orchids were grown in the extensive glasshouses and Charlotte published her own catalogue of her orchids at Gunnersbury Park.<sup>12</sup>

Committee of head gardeners of the estates of England, including James Hudson (1846–1932) of Gunnersbury House and George Reynolds of Gunnersbury Park, James Smith (1837–1903) of Mentmore, John Jennings of Ascott.

RHS Lindley Library

Since the sixteenth century, there had been a tradition of the rich and wealthy cataloguing their newly acquired exotic plant collections in richly illustrated books called *Florilegia*.<sup>13</sup> Charlotte's catalogue is modest and unillustrated, simply listing the thirty-four different species of orchid at Gunnersbury. However it is packed with contemporary detail of the world of orchid collecting. It notes the geographical origin of each orchid and states from whom the orchid was sourced with a short description of its botanical name giving clues to dating it to around the 1870s. The names include James Veitch of Chelsea, Dominy and Seden his orchid hybridisers; orchid hunters, Hutton, Lobb, and Ross; Lady Tankerville, the Duke of Devonshire (a celebrated orchid collector) and Joseph Hooker of Kew.<sup>14</sup> It demonstrates how exclusive her collection was whilst revealing an expert knowledge of orchids. The *Vanda teres* is also detailed in the diary of Thomas Hobbs, a gardener at Gunnersbury Park who noted over 200 of their blooms, a feat that was fêted in the *Gardener's Chronicle* and shared around the family. On 27 April, 1898 he sent '33 spikes for Lord Rothschild and 3 dozen for Newmarket'.<sup>15</sup>

Cultivation in the glasshouses was managed under the professional eye of the head gardeners, George Reynolds and James Hudson, who joined the estate when Leopold de Rothschild bought the neighbouring small mansion and consolidated the two gardens in 1899. Unusually Hudson and the older Reynolds continued to run the sites separately.

Famous orchids included *Dendrobium formosum giganteum*, *Odontoglossums* and *Vandas*.<sup>16</sup> They used different techniques and growing media for their orchid houses, which can be seen in their orders from Wood and Son, Reynolds preferring the old style sphagnum moss while Hudson tried out the newer orchid-growing medium.<sup>17</sup> The achievements of these gardeners demonstrated the standards that the Rothschilds expected in their gardens and also the trust they placed in their employees. The men wrote many articles for the gardening press on their interests as well as orchids including hybrid waterlilies, fruit production and floristry. The Rothschilds had become advocates of the science of hybridisation, underlined by the agreement of Leopold to host a visit from delegates of the RHS Conference of Genetics (where the term *genetics* was first coined) of 1906. The delegates visited Gunnersbury Park for tea and enjoyed a tour of the gardens and glasshouses.<sup>18</sup> Lionel de Rothschild (1882–1942) addressed the delegates at dinner, confident of this new scientific approach. He would later apply these early lessons at Exbury.<sup>19</sup>

Tring Park was given to Nathaniel de Rothschild, or 'Natty' as he was known, in 1872 by his father. It became known as a centre for the zoological research of his son, Walter, at his purpose-built private museum. However, in the glasshouses there was scientific experimentation too. Natty had a keen interest in botany and orchids were his favourite plant.<sup>20</sup> He was appointed Vice President of the RHS in 1902, an honorary post he held for 13 years and became known as 'a patron of the science of horticulture'. He attended meetings of the RHS Orchid Committee and even presented photographs of his newly flowered orchids.<sup>21</sup> Varieties cultivated by hand at Tring, such as *Cattleya Maroni* 'Tring Park' var, *Cattleya Hardyana* 'Tring Park' var, were awarded First Class Certificates and he was deeply involved in supervising their cultivation for year round spectacle.<sup>22</sup> Both his head gardeners served on the RHS Orchid committee: Edwin Hill (d.1904) and Arthur Dye, carried out pioneering work with the orchids especially the *Phalaenopsis* species for which Tring Park became well known.<sup>23</sup> Walter inherited an avid interest in orchids from his father. He wrote to Colonel Prain at Kew, 'rarities now growing are a number of *Lissochilus giganteus* and *Daryanthes gillfoylei* and numbers of rare *Bulbophyllums* *Cinnopetalums* and other orchids of botanical interest'.<sup>24</sup>

Fertilising orchids was not an easy task as Darwin himself had noted in his paper of 1862.<sup>25</sup> Walter Rothschild had been fascinated with fertilisation of orchids by insects and argued his theories in the *Orchid Review* with other orchid specialists.<sup>26</sup> The 1919 catalogue of Tring



THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE GARDENERS' DINNER, HELD ON SEPTEMBER 29.

J. F. McLEOD, H. MARRHAM, C. R. FRIEDER, GEO. NORMAN, G. REYNOLDS, J. SMITH, G. REEF, J. GOSNOLD, E. DEACON (HON. SEC.), C. JEFFERIES, GEO. WARDLAW, W. FYFE, C. DIXON, A. DEAN (HON. SEC.), OWEN THOMAS (CHAIRMAN), J. HUDSON, J. WILLARD, W. HOWE, J. JENNINGS.





View of Tring Park, where  
Nathaniel, 1st Lord Rothschild  
established his greenhouses.

*Photograph by Ricardo Cavernelis.*



Park orchids noted over 2,324 orchid hybrids developed at Tring, some of which may have been developed from plants shared by the Gunnersbury Park estate and from members of the family.<sup>27</sup> Walter was the youngest recipient of the RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in its inaugural year of 1897 for his orchid hybridisation. His brother Charles, an entomologist with a keen eye for the detail of classification, focused his orchid passion on native orchids in their natural habitats. An album of photographs taken by Charles of native orchids in situ shows a keen conservationist's eye.<sup>28</sup> As the heir of Tring Park he bequeathed the Tring orchid collections to Kew Gardens on his own early death in 1923, having contributed many plants and seeds to the Herbarium in his lifetime.

Lionel de Rothschild created his first garden at the age of five and he is well known for the rhododendrons and azaleas at his garden at Exbury. However he collected a number of other plant groups, of which orchids were of special interest.<sup>29</sup> He developed a substantial orchid collection, which included *Cymbidiums*, *Cattleyas*, *Odontoglossums*, *Cypripediums*, *Miltonias* and *Calanthes* some of which may have been brought to Exbury from Gunnersbury Park and also exchanged with those of Tring Park.<sup>30</sup> In 1928, he was invited onto the RHS Orchid committee by Sir Jeremiah Colman (1859–1942) of Gatton Park and was voted Vice Chairman in 1929.<sup>31</sup> Benjamin Hills became head of the orchid house which was housed in a large glass-house complex incorporating a specially built orchid laboratory.<sup>32</sup> Lionel took the new genus extremely seriously. He wrote to Colman saying 'my main aim is eventually to show only home grown orchids.'<sup>33</sup>

To do this he wanted to be able to successfully germinate and propagate more orchids himself. For an amateur to invest in scientific experimentation to germinate orchid seeds was ambitious, as they needed a sterile environment and scientific process of treatment. However, Lionel immediately set to the task. The financial rewards to solving this botanical conundrum would have been colossal, as even the commercial nurseries struggled with propagating some orchid species. In this, however, Lionel had one unusual and unexpected advantage. The Rothschild bank had operated the Royal Mint Refinery in the East End of London since 1852;



Left  
Orchid seedlings at  
Exbury Gardens.

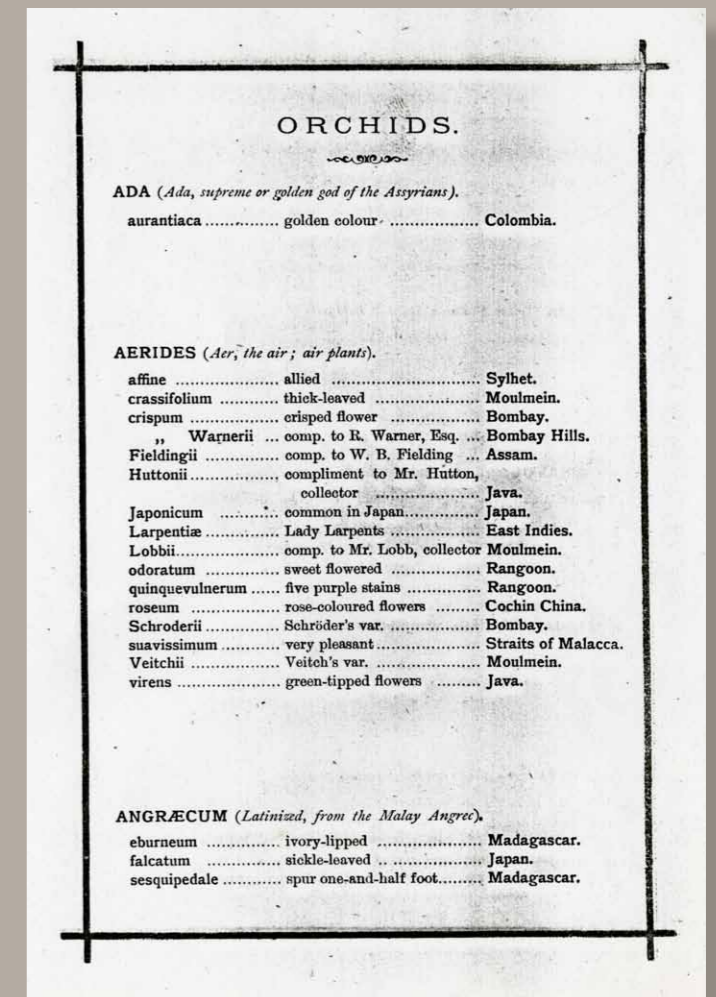


*Ophrys apifera* (bee orchid),  
*Cypripedium calceolus* (lady's slipper  
orchid) and *Neottia nidus-avis*  
(birds nest orchid) growing at  
Ashton Wold, the home of Charles  
Rothschild, c.1905, from an album  
of Charles' own photographs.

RAL 000/1323/8/5

A page from the catalogue of  
orchids of Charlotte de Rothschild  
at Gunnersbury.

RAL 000/529





from 1928 to 1933 a spare laboratory was used to test seeds of *Cymbidiums*, *Odontoglossums* and *Laelia Cattleyas*. Lionel's instructions to Mr Williams at the Royal Mint Refinery gave a specific approach to experimenting using different chemical formulae.<sup>34</sup> He had researched the latest scientific theories, both symbiotic (with fungi) and asymbiotic (with sugars), methods that had been developed by Lewis Knudson and E.A. White of Cornell University, Dr Malcolm Wilson a mycologist at Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh University, Professor Wuyts at University of Ghent and in Europe by Hans Burgeff and Noel Bernard whilst he also communicated with other amateur orchidologists to seek their advice.<sup>35</sup> He tried a carrot-based recipe from Edmond de Rothschild (1845–1934) who had carried out orchid experiments at Armainvilliers with his gardener Gaston Bultel who had been influenced by Bernard.<sup>36</sup>

Commercial suppliers such as Charlesworth and Sons had been trialing seed germination and Lionel paid them and others to supply him seed to grow as seedlings in flasks for Exbury.<sup>37</sup> He wrote to Colonel Durham at Kew in 1933 saying that he could successfully raise epiphytal orchids, namely *Cattleyas*, *Miltonias* and *Odontoglossums*.<sup>38</sup> At the Chelsea Show in 1933 a large display of orchids including *Cymbidiums*, which had been grown from seed at Exbury, greatly impressed the orchid community. Lionel's orchids informed his work on his rhododendron collection. As Chair of the Rhododendron Society, he urged his fellow rhododendron fanciers to follow the system of orchid classification for naming rhododendron hybrids.<sup>39</sup>

By 1939 Lionel's collection numbered 28,000 orchids in plant and seedling form, *Cymbidiums*, *Odontoglossums*, *Miltonias*, *Cattleyas*, *Vandas*, *Phalaenopsis*, *Cypripediums*, *Odontiodas*, but even he was unable to keep the collection going with the arrival of World War II. He started to approach buyers in America who had the financial resources to invest and no enemy bombs falling on their glasshouses.<sup>40</sup> His untimely death in 1942 changed the orchid collections of the Rothschild family forever. A Ministry of Agriculture edict allowed coal rations to be used to heat the *Cymbidium* glasshouse throughout the war.

After the war Lionel's son, Edmund de Rothschild (1916–2009) returned to Exbury and continued to cultivate *Cymbidiums* and to win RHS awards with his successful cymbidium hybrids. If the whole orchid collection had survived Lionel may well have been as renowned for his orchids as his woodland collections.

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## NOTES

- 1 The Windmill Hill Archive. Ferdinand de Rothschild, Reminiscences, 1897, p.21. 'I was taken to see the famous glasshouses of Mrs Lawrence, the mother of Sir Trevor [Lawrence, orchid enthusiast and later RHS president] and they much impressed me for at Frankfurt 'glass' was then unknown.'
- 2 *Cypripedium rothschildianum*, named by Frederick Sander after his patron and good client Ferdinand de Rothschild. Later reclassified in 1888 by Stein as

*Paphiopedilum rothschildianum*. For posterity Sander recognised this patronage in his *Reichenbachia*, the volume of orchids that he published in 1882–92, attributing over 12 entries of orchid species to the Rothschilds.

- 3 RHS awards for orchids included First Class Certificate's, Award of Merit and Botanical Certificate, Cultural commendation, Schroeder Cup, Cain cup, all awarded from 1889 when the Orchid

Committee was established.

- 4 Ferdinand de Rothschild, 'My partiality to orchids is based more on the eccentricities of their flowers than on their actual beauty.' RAL 000/26
- 5 Amschel de Rothschild, Frankfurt, 11 March 1817, 'God willing, I am building a small hothouse because I have no peace from the gentiles who are very cross that a Jew should have anything.' RAL XI/109/6/2/27

- 6 At Ascott Foster and Pearson built the carnation house to accommodate Leopold's 1,500 carnation collections. At Waddesdon Manor R. Halliday and Co. built 'Topglass', the glasshouse complex that housed Ferdinand's plant collections.
- 7 Loudon (1783–1843) had described it as 'a beautiful park studded with stately cedar, elm and forest trees' and provided a plan in 1834 for a new entrance driveway which was not carried out. (Gunnersbury Park Museum)
- 8 Stanley Weintraub, *Charlotte and Lionel: a Rothschild Love Story* (New York: Free Press, 2003).
- 9 www.royalcollection.org.uk/eGallery/object.asp?searchText=coronation+king+george+v&pagesize=20&object=8949&crow=64&detail=about. Ann Collett White and James Collett White, Gunnersbury Park and the Rothschilds, (London, 2007).
- 10 Letter from Lionel Davidson, agent and Rothschild cousin, Mexico to Lionel de Rothschild, 29 July 1843, 'You may tell your Mama that I shall send them to her, and I hope that among them may be found some specimens that will prove a valuable accession to the Conservatories of Gunnersbury.' RAL XI/38/76–7.
- 11 Frederick Huth, a Rothschild agent in Peru organising clerks to name *Oncidium*s who then give up trying with the rest of the shipment, to Lionel de Rothschild, 'generic name and common name, not to me to give it a name...' RAL XI/109/61/2/13. Those named orchids sent to Gunnersbury would later appear in Charlotte de Rothschild's orchid catalogue.
- 12 Charlotte de Rothschild, *Catalogue of Orchids grown by Baroness de Rothschild Gunnersbury Park*, n.d. Gunnersbury Park Museum
- 13 Alice Coats, *The Book of Flowers: Four centuries of flower illustration* (New York: Exeter Books, 1973).
- 14 RAL 000/84 Charlotte de Rothschild to Leopold de Rothschild, 12 May 1865. 'We went to see Mr. Veitch's flowers this morning, Natty and I, and there was, as usual much to interest us. –The perfume of the orchids was quite heavenly – and several novelties from distant lands arrested our attention.' John Dominy (1816–1891) was an employee of Veitch's nursery and the first to successfully create a hybrid orchid *Calanthe x domini* in 1851. Hutton and Lobb both collected for Veitch and Co. Hortus Veitchii, *A history of the rise and progress of the nurseries of Messrs. James Veitch and Son* (London: J. Veitch & Sons, 1906).
- 15 *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1 May 1897, p.282,

- '*Vanda teres*. This orchid is now to be seen in superb character at Gunnersbury Park. The plants...are now blooming abundantly, for there are fifty-four spikes of blossoms. The late Mr B.S. Williams once wrote of *Vanda teres* that it is a "shy blooming species" but shyness is hardly a characteristic of those under Mr Reynolds care... as they are decidedly floriferous.' It also won a Gold medal on 8 May 1900 from the RHS Orchid committee. Thomas Hobbs diary 1893–9. RAL 000/296.
- 16 *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, Orchid Committee Minutes, 11 October 1898. 'To Messrs de Rothschild Gunnersbury House, Acton (gr. Mr Jas. Hudson) Silver gilt flora medal, for a splendid group, consisting of thirty four plants, bearing together nearly seven hundred flowers.'
- 17 RAL XII/17/2 1907
- 18 Rev W. Wilks (ed.), *Report of the International Conference on Genetics and Hybridisation*, (London: RHS, 1906), p.21.
- 19 Ibid., p.88.
- 20 Obituary of Nathaniel de Rothschild, *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 10 April 1915, p.204: 'Orchids, were perhaps his favourite and several beautiful hybrids bear his name.'
- 21 'Lord Rothschild showed a life sized photograph of a large specimen of *Phalaenopsis Schilleriana* grown in his gardens since 1881...bearing eighty–eight flowers...' Journal of RHS Orchid Committee January 1905, CIVII.
- 22 *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 10 December 1904, p.397.
- 23 *Orchid Review*, 1929, p.154.
- 24 *Royal Archives Kew*, DC 1454, 25 September 1907.
- 25 Charles Darwin, 'On the various contrivances by which British and foreign orchids are fertilised by insects, and on the good effects of intercrossing' 1862.
- 26 'The fertilisation of *Ophrys speculum*, *O. lutea* and *O. fusca*' in *Orchid Review*, April 1925, p.99.
- 27 The Tring Park orchid collection 1919–1921. RAL 000/1323/25/3. An example was *Laelio crispa rosado* given to Lord Rothschild by the late Major Evelyn de Rothschild. RAL 25/2 NO.724
- 28 Album of black and white photographs by Charles Rothschild of native orchids in their own habitat, possibly Ashton Wold. RAL 000/1323/8/5.
- 29 Obituary of Lionel de Rothschild, *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 7 February 1942, p.63: 'He probably found the greatest pleasure in Rhododendrons and Orchids.'
- 30 Ibid., 62. Lionel grew up at Gunnersbury Park and the *The Gardeners' Chronicle* acknowledged his good fortune to obtain

practical knowledge from such famous men as George Reynolds and James Hudson. Merle A. Reinikka, *A History of the Orchid* (Portland OR: Timber Press, 1972).

- 31 Letter from Jeremiah Colman to Lionel de Rothschild RAL XI/15/86/1. Colman, author of *Hybridisation of Orchids, the experiences of an amateur* (1932) had a collection of over 25,000 orchids at Gatton Park and was the chair of the RHS Orchid Committee. His fortune came from the famous Colman's mustard. In his reply Lionel declares inexperience in the genus, which he was soon to fast track substantially.
- 32 Benjamin Hills was poached from Westonbirt by Lionel, where he had worked on the famous Holford orchids with H.G. Alexander.
- 33 RAL XI/15/66.
- 34 RAL XI/15/86. 'My very clever chemist at my precious metals refinery in London.' Williams would go on to manage the refinery 1937–1952. Michele Blagg, *The Royal Mint Refinery, A business adapting to change 1919–1968*, PhD thesis, King's College London, 2012. Procedure adopted at the RMR for the non-symbiotic germination of orchid seeds, compiled by Mr Williams. 5 May 1932. RAL 000/2201/2. This location was perhaps used as the resources were already in place, and Lionel could keep a close eye on progress, it being only a brisk walk from St Swithin's Lane to the refinery.
- 35 Using fungi that live at the base of the orchid, therefore 'mycorrhizal' association between fungi and the roots of the orchids to aid germination.
- 36 Marcel Gaucher, *Les Rothschild Côté Jardins* (Paris: Editions arts & systems, 2000), p.128. Marc-André Selosse, Bernard Boullard and David Richardson, Noël Bernard (1874–1911): Orchids to symbiosis in a dozen years, one century ago. *Symbiosis*, June 2011, vol.54 no.2, pp.61–8. In 1935, Bultel dedicated the orchid hybrid, x *Vanda-costylis-bernardii* (*Vanda teres* x *Rhynchostylis retusa*) to Bernard.
- 37 RAL XII/15/58.
- 38 Lionel de Rothschild to Colonel Durham at Kew, 4 October 1935. RAL XI/15/66.
- 39 RAL XI/15/115/2.
- 40 RAL XI/15/36/6.





‘King John of Portugal’ by Heinrich Abel Seiffert, 1802.

Rothschild, London NMR 186

## Unmasking ‘King John of Portugal’

Fiona McGarel-Groves reveals how the rediscovery of a portrait led to a deeper understanding of the Rothschilds’ early global business activities.

In a small room in the third New Court where, until 2004, the London price of gold was set twice each business day by five representatives from The London Gold Market Fixing Ltd., hung a small series of early nineteenth-century portraits, known as the ‘Crowned Heads’. These heads of state represented five of the countries for which the Rothschild brothers provided government loans in the two decades after the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815).<sup>1</sup> The portraits are identified by small brass labels as the Empress Catherine of Russia, King William of the Netherlands, Emperor Francis of Austria, King Frederick William of Prussia, and King John of Portugal. They now hang together with two other ‘Crowned Heads’ of significance – William IX, the Elector of Hesse, and Andrew Jackson, President of the United States – in a prominent corridor in the present New Court.

The ‘Crowned Heads’ were labelled some time after they were acquired. They were probably presented to Nathan Mayer Rothschild at the times of the various loans, and a 1917 inventory indicates that several of them were hung in the corridor off the main entrance hall of the mansion at Nathan’s estate at Gunnersbury, West London. King John is not mentioned in that inventory and it is unclear where this picture was in 1917. One can only imagine that, after two generations, a member of the family decided to label the portraits so that their subjects would not be forgotten, and that some guesswork was involved. After most of the pictures were correctly identified, the last picture and the last name were put together – erroneously as we now know.

It was established some time ago that the sitter with northern European features, labelled King John of Portugal, was unlikely to be that particular monarch. Known portraits of Dom João VI, King of Portugal, Brazil, and the Algarves (1767–1826) show him to have been a dark man with coarse facial features, (even accounting for the flattering work of court painters) and to be rather stout. The Portuguese Embassy in London recently described him as an ugly man.<sup>2</sup>

The correct identification was made possible thanks to a gift to the Archive, made by Baron Nathaniel de Rothschild in 2012, of a collection of nineteenth-century civil decorations, which had no accompanying documentation but were believed to have been awarded to James de Rothschild (1792–1868), founder of the Paris Rothschild house. Research revealed that the orders came from a number of European countries, as well as Turkey and Russia. The decorations have broadly the same citation, being awarded in appreciation for services to the country of origin.

The decorations were examined to establish whether they could be connected with some of the early Rothschild loans. For example, the Prussian loan of five million pounds in 1818 could be related to the Prussian Order of the Red Eagle in the box. King Frederick William III (1770–1840) (one of the Crowned Heads) used this as his highest-ranking royal order, generally awarding it for outstanding service. It is not unreasonable to think that this distinguished order could well have been given to James – and indeed Nathan – for their part in the negotiations for the loan, and perhaps to acknowledge the part the brothers had played in financing Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo in 1815.





The Order of the Red Eagle.  
RAL 000/2089



'King John' wears several Iron Cross decorations, known to be Prussian, on his coat. This medieval symbol of the Teutonic Knights was established as a largely, but not exclusively, military decoration by King Frederick William III in 1813 during the Napoleonic Wars. 'King John' wears the non-combatant version of the medal coupled with the prestigious Order of the Red Eagle, as does King Frederick William in our portrait, which suggested that this man could be a member of the Prussian Royal family, although no likeness could be found. However, he also wears the prestigious Order of the Red Eagle. A search for recipients of the Order of the Red Eagle, and a search of those names to find portraits, eventually revealed that this man was Karl August, Prince von Hardenberg (1750–1822), Prussian statesman and variously Frederick William's Foreign Minister, Chancellor and plenipotentiary. Why was he sufficiently important to be included among the Crowned Heads?

Hardenberg was essentially a senior civil servant with considerable diplomatic skills and an interest in political reform. King Frederick William II of Prussia (1744–97) made him Cabinet Minister responsible for negotiating peace with France in 1795. On the strength on this, after Frederick William III's accession in 1797, Hardenberg was appointed Foreign Minister, and then First Minister in 1804. France was then still at war in Europe, and Napoleon's overwhelming triumph at the Battle of Austerlitz meant that Prussia was compelled into alliance with France in early 1806. Napoleon then insisted Hardenberg be dismissed, knowing him to be a major opponent of France with a considerable influence over the King.



Frederick William III, King of Prussia  
by Heinrich Abel Seiffert, 1802. NMR 1406



In 1810 Hardenberg returned, as Prussian Chancellor. He and the Minister for Trade began a thorough programme of reform, in order to strengthen and modernise Prussia. They concentrated on radical social and political reorganisation: revising the military system, abolishing serfdom, developing municipal institutions and making the civil service and education available to all classes. By the time Napoleon had overreached himself with his 1812 Russian campaign, Hardenberg felt Prussia was ready for war with France.

Hardenberg now had a role within the close and powerful Quadruple Alliance of Prussia, Russia, Austria and Britain at the Congress of Vienna in 1814–18, where he was Prussia's chief representative. The Congress's object was to establish long-term peace for Europe, mainly by resizing, and thereby balancing, the main powers. In 1814 the king honoured him with the rank of Prince, for his achievements. The new Kingdom of the Netherlands was represented, as was Portugal, among others at the Congress. Five of these countries are reflected by our Crowned Heads. By 1831 the Rothschilds had raised a Government loan for each of these countries, such was the parlous state of Europe's finances after years of war, and in 1818 Hardenberg was the first statesman to sanction and negotiate a Government loan with the Rothschilds. He died four years later, in 1822.

Returning again to the mysterious 'King John', the Palacio Nacional da Ajuda in Lisbon kindly provided The Rothschild Archive with a digital image, which proves that Dom João looked nothing like the portrait with his name. J.A. Rogers (1883–1966), writer on matters of race, intimates that many of João's family and ancestors were of African appearance. He attributes this to historic intermarriage during the medieval Moorish occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. He quotes the Duchess d'Abrantès, wife of the French Ambassador to Portugal at the time of João's Regency, describing in her 1837 memoirs João's 'enormous head with its Negro hair, which moreover was quite in harmony with his thick lips, his African nose and the colour of his skin'.<sup>3</sup>

João was Prince Regent from 1799 to 1816 during his mother Queen Maria's mental illness, and King for a further ten years until his death. In the year that João assumed the Regency, Napoleon attempted to force Portugal to break her alliance with Britain and submit to France, or be invaded. João refused, playing for time as he signed a secret treaty ensuring British help for his court to flee to Brazil. By November 1807 invasion was inevitable and the British navy transported the royal family and an enormous retinue to Brazil. The government was left with a Regency, and a population which could not believe that their ruler had abandoned them.

João was welcomed in his American colony, and quickly set the tone for his reign with an 1808 charter opening Brazil's ports to trade with friendly nations on favourable terms. This was an important economic and political move as Brazil had previously only traded directly with Portugal. In return for its services to the Royal Family, Britain had negotiated an agreement to receive trade concessions from Brazil, in return for which Britain would endorse Brazilian independence. In fact it was a shoddy device which enabled Britain to manipulate Brazilian imports while paying almost half the duty charged to other countries, and inhibited Brazilian tobacco and sugar markets in competition with Britain's nearby producers.

Nevertheless, João transformed his chosen capital, Rio de Janeiro, with new buildings, imported luxury goods, and new standards of etiquette and fashion. His enormous retinue of aristocrats, civil servants, professionals, military and religious officials and skilled artisans, underpinned a new national administration. At the same time he nurtured the Bank of Brazil and more than one university, public services and cultural activities, and a new economy, which became the basis for Brazil's future independence. Brazil effectively ceased to be a colony and became a sovereign nation. Meanwhile, in post-occupation Portugal, the population

Dom João VI, King of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves.

By kind permission of the Palacio Nacional da Ajuda, Lisbon, Portugal.

Opposite and below  
The Royal Order of the Tower and Sword.  
RAL 000/2089



was starving and many emigrated. The country had effectively become a reluctant British protectorate, and in 1820 the population persuaded their king to return, but as a constitutional monarch. His son Pedro remained in Brazil to become the ruler in 1822.

Both Portugal and Brazil were clients of the London Rothschild house, receiving Government loans in 1823 and 1822 respectively. James's box of decorations holds the ancient Portuguese Order of the Tower and Sword, an order of knighthood and the pinnacle of the Portuguese honours system. João VI used it to reward services to the Crown by foreigners who were ineligible for other Portuguese orders due to their religion. This is another decoration that could well have been awarded to James and his brothers in acknowledgement of their services in furnishing the government loans.

The search to unmask King John and then discover why Hardenberg was included among the Crowned Heads, leads to a further interesting story. It appears that Nathan was doing business with these countries some years earlier than the various government loans, and that business, which was immensely significant, may well have given those countries the confidence to deal with the Rothschilds in such enormous amounts of money later on.



Northern Europe was in the grip of the Napoleonic Wars in the early years of the century. France's Continental Blockade made the movement of commodities and money around the Continent almost impossible for those countries which were not under her control. Nathan, who was dealing in specie and bullion in London, had extended his activities into Europe by smuggling by sea where Napoleon had no control. He was moving larger and larger sums successfully and making handsome profits in the process. His youngest brother James was working with him in England and France and together they established an impressive network of agents, dealers and couriers across Europe and as far afield as South America.

Meanwhile, the British Government had committed to financial support of her allies against Napoleon; Austria, Prussia and Russia received regular grants, but the blockade made the acquisition and movement of money increasingly difficult. 'The war was provoked by Revolutionary France, and Napoleon prompted Britain and other powers in Europe to form coalitions to defend themselves, and it was not until 1813 that they were prepared to go on the offensive. This took enormous amounts of money.'<sup>4</sup>

In 1812 John Herries, Commissary-General to the British Army, responsible for funding both the allies and the Army, noted Nathan's international financial operations. General Wellesley (later Duke of Wellington) and his Army, were beleaguered in the Iberian peninsula in urgent need of money. In July 1812 Wellesley had written to Earl Bathurst (1762–1864) Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, suggesting he stop depending on the Bank of England for money and employ a private agent to collect and deliver it straight to him.<sup>5</sup> Herries, with government approval, approached Nathan.

Nathan raised the money by his usual methods, and his agents delivered it to Wellesley. This successful operation gave the British Government confidence in Nathan, and Herries appointed him to raise the money for the allies' subsidies. Nathan again managed to deliver enormous amounts to assist the allies, some of whom were in desperate circumstances after twenty years of war. Financial transactions of this size could not go unnoticed, and Herbert Kaplan notes in *Nathan Mayer Rothschild and the Creation of a Dynasty*, that the British could only hope they would be interpreted as 'a private speculation.'<sup>6</sup>

Herries now recommended to the Prime Minister and Chancellor that the method of paying the allies be restructured and regularised. In addition, while Wellesley's army remained in France, 'a more regular and direct means of funding it' had to be found, together with 'a person confidentially entrusted with power to make arrangements to this effect ... the operations of an exchange agent of great power and extensive connexion, collecting funds regularly, and with constant regards to the interests of England through all the principal exchanges of Europe.'<sup>7</sup> The model 'exchange agent' for the task was Nathan. The Prime Minister and Chancellor approved; the Chancellor wrote to the Foreign Secretary about Nathan '... I have not met with any[one] capable of executing any operation on such a scale except those to whom I have referred.'<sup>8</sup>

After Napoleon went into exile in 1814, Herries made even greater use of Nathan as facilitator and paymaster, including using his resources to fund the return of Louis XVIII to France. A year later, Napoleon escaped from prison and raised an army. 'The threat of a resumption of war against Napoleon meant that Britain and its allies would once again require enormous amounts of money to pay for it. And once again the skills of the Rothschilds would be mobilised.'<sup>9</sup> The Chancellor wrote with satisfaction to the Foreign Secretary of 'Herries, who, with his Jew friends, will be our principal instruments in the management...'<sup>10</sup> Nathan's huge and complicated machinery again cranked into action as 'once again, Britain would pay dearly to defeat Napoleon, and, once again, the Rothschilds would become indispensable to the British Government, and even richer because of it.'<sup>11</sup> After Napoleon's defeat in 1815, the Congress

*Opposite*  
Examples of the bullion specie assembled by Nathan and James Rothschild to provide the British Army and its allies with funds to continue war with Napoleon.  
Rothschild, London

of Vienna ordered France to pay the Quadruple Alliance 700 million francs in indemnities, to each of the allies in five annual instalments. The Rothschilds were commissioned to manage the transactions for Britain, Russia and Prussia. As with all their other dealings with the British Government and the allies, these transactions were subject to 'a suitable and sizeable commission.'<sup>12</sup>

Kaplan believes that 'the contributions the Rothschilds made to a victorious British policy on the Continent were, when examined closely, actually far greater than the myths grown up about them.'<sup>13</sup> For a short while Nathan and his brothers stood at the centre of Europe's tumultuous events, with success or failure truly depending on them. It is notable that they confined their recompense to that 'suitable and sizeable commission' without request for personal gain, social realignment, or political favour apart from some petitioning to Hardenberg for Jewish rights in Frankfurt, when at the Council of Vienna in 1815.

The discovery of the identity of a portrait is a researcher's delight. For that subject to be unexpectedly distinguished, and for him to lead directly to the true breadth of Nathan's astonishing financial muscle in Europe at such a critical time, was an unlooked for and exciting ride. The story has added another dimension to the Rothschild Crowned Heads, helping us to a greater understanding of their importance to Rothschild history. This all begs the question: did Nathan Rothschild receive a portrait of King John? If he did, what became of it? Does it yet survive in a family collection somewhere? More research in the archives is in order.

*Fiona McGarel-Groves has worked at The Rothschild Archive since 2008. A graduate of the Open University, she completed her MA in the History of London at Birkebeck, University of London.*

## NOTES

- 1 www.rothschildarchive.org
- 2 Information communicated privately.
- 3 J.A. Rogers, *World's Great Men of Colour, vol.2* (New York: Touchstone, 1996, first published 1947), p.62.
- 4 Herbert H Kaplan, *Nathan Mayer Rothschild and the Creation of a Dynasty* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), p.99.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p.75.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p.87.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p.102.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p.103.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p.138.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p.139.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p.152.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p.103.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p.103.

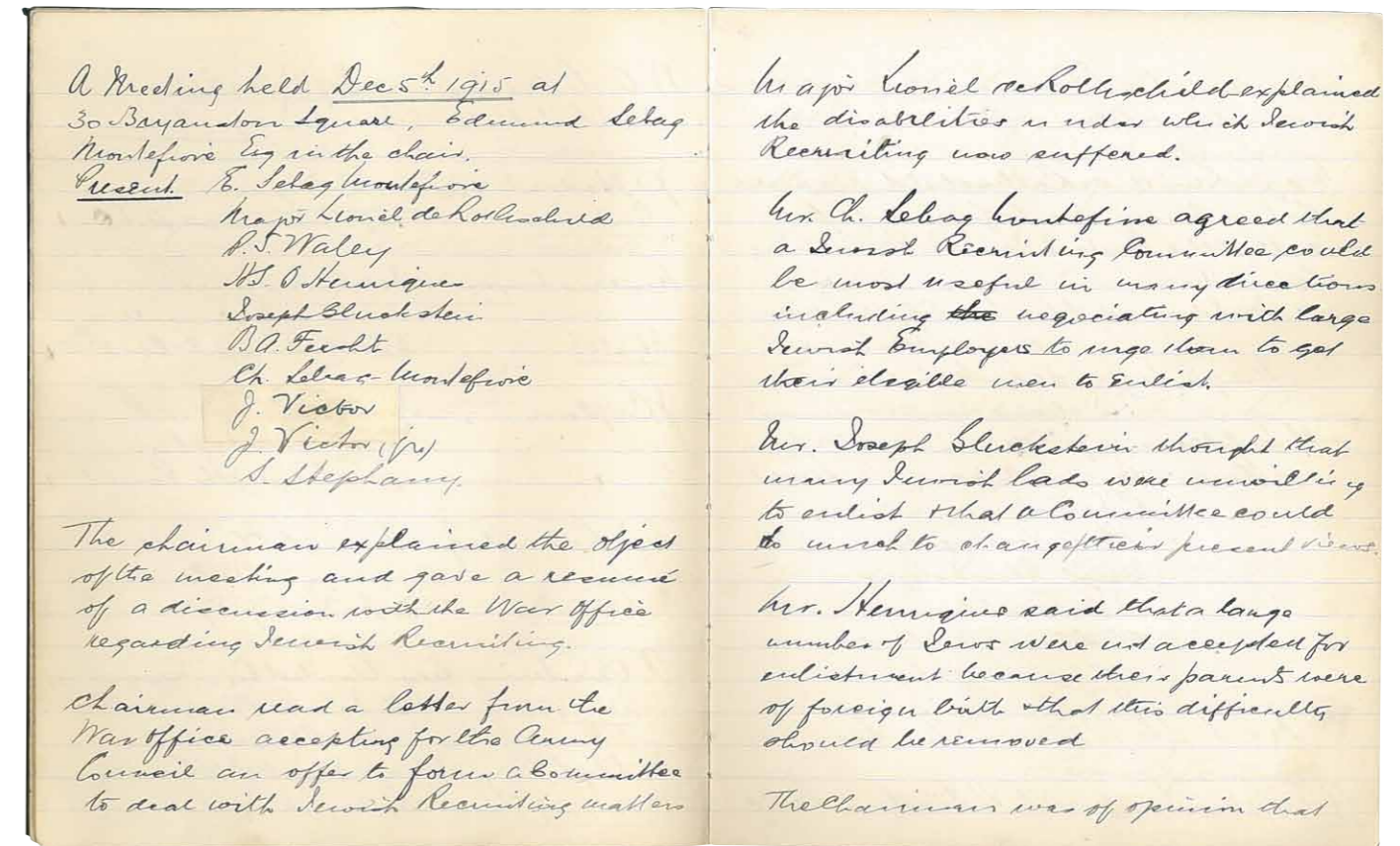




## ‘There are three types of men’: Lionel de Rothschild and The Jewish War Services Committee, 1915–1919

As many countries mark the centenary of the outbreak of World War I, Archivist Justin Cavernelis-Frost considers the role of New Court as a recruiting office for Jewish soldiers, and remembers the ultimate sacrifice the English Rothschild family paid in the conflict.

The Rothschild family, who had helped to create ‘modern’ Europe through their businesses and marriages linking the continent’s influential families, were deeply affected by the crisis of World War I. Like royalty, they were forced to abjure family solidarity and to give their loyalty to the countries of their adoption; England, France, Austria and Germany.<sup>1</sup> By 1919, 70 million military personnel had been mobilised in one of the largest wars in history.<sup>2</sup> Over a million men from across the British Empire lost their lives on active service between 1914 and 1918, and many thousands more suffered physical injuries and mental scars that affected the rest of their lives.<sup>3</sup> The war was the catalyst for major political and social changes, and by the war’s end, the German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires had ceased to exist, and the map of Europe had been re-drawn.<sup>4</sup>



Opposite, from left  
Studio photograph of  
Lionel de Rothschild  
(1882–1942) in Bucks  
Hussars uniform.  
RAL 000/360/232

Portrait photograph  
of Evelyn Achille de  
Rothschild (1886–1917)  
in uniform.  
RAL 000/360/139

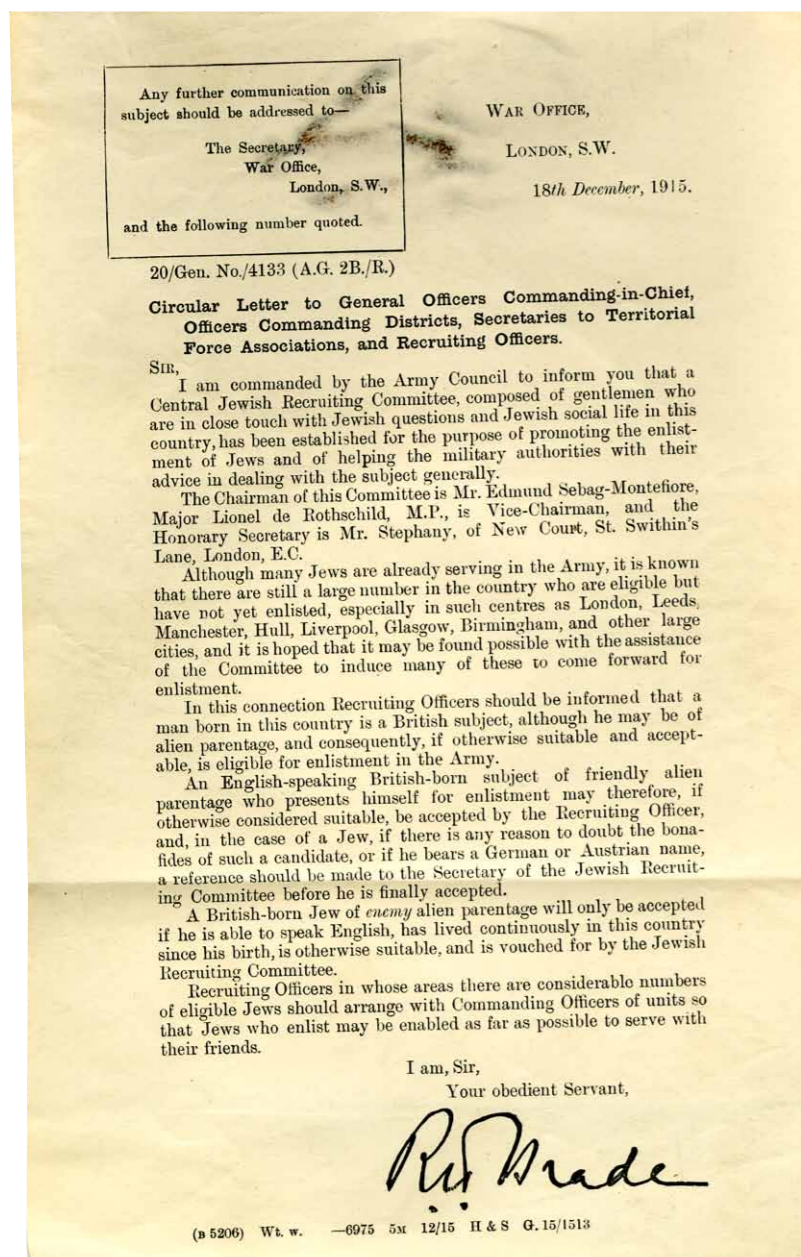
Above  
Record of the  
proceedings of the first  
meeting of the Jewish  
War Services Committee,  
5 December 1915.  
RAL 000/358

‘There are three types of men: those who bear the call and obey; those who delay; and – the others. To which do you belong?’ proclaimed a 1915 British recruiting poster.<sup>5</sup> Lionel Nathan de Rothschild (1882–1942) was certainly one of the first ‘types of men’, clearly hearing the call and, believing in the rightness of the cause and the necessity to go to war to protect the freedoms and future of Europe, he contributed to the war effort in very practical ways. Lionel was the eldest of the three sons of Leopold de Rothschild (1845–1917).<sup>6</sup> He was very close to his brothers Evelyn Achille (1886–1917) and Anthony Gustav (1887–1961).<sup>7</sup> Educated at Harrow and Trinity College Cambridge, Lionel took his place as a partner at New Court on 1 April 1915. In his later years, Lionel described himself rather self-deprecatingly as ‘a gardener by profession, a banker by hobby’, but this underestimates his achievements. As a young man he was adventurous, with a natural scientific curiosity, and he was a pioneer of early motoring and photography.<sup>8</sup> The young Lionel spent his summers at the family’s country estate at Ascott in Buckinghamshire, the area where many Rothschilds had settled, and where Lionel would later serve as MP for The Vale of Aylesbury from 1910 to 1923. When Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, Lionel was already a Major in the Royal Buckinghamshire Regiment.<sup>9</sup> His brothers Evelyn and Anthony immediately joined the British Army, also serving in the 1/1st Royal Buckinghamshire Yeomanry (Royal Bucks Hussars).<sup>10</sup>

Lionel, much to his frustration and regret, was not to see active service. Continuation of the business at home was as vital to the war effort as military service.<sup>11</sup> As the most senior of his generation of English male Rothschilds, he reluctantly gave in to pressure to remain with the family firm at New Court, assisting his two uncles, Nathaniel (‘Natty’) 1st Lord Rothschild (1840–1915) and Alfred de Rothschild (1842–1918), and his father Leopold, who by







Circular issued by the War Office, 18 December 1915, announcing the establishment of a Central Jewish Recruiting Committee.  
RAL 000/358

1914 was in poor health.<sup>12</sup> The decision was given added force by no less than the King himself, who is said to have personally requested that Lionel remain at New Court to direct the affairs of the London House.<sup>13</sup> It proved a wise course of action, for in March 1915, Natty died. Leopold died in May 1917 and Alfred in January 1918. Lionel rose to the challenge of leadership, but keenly felt the imposition of his responsibilities. His son Edmund later recalled the impact this enforced situation had made upon his father, 'the memory that he had remained in England during the war, while most of his friends and both his brothers had gone to the Front, was to haunt my poor father for the rest of his life.'<sup>14</sup>

Given the family's close associations with Buckinghamshire, they were inevitably involved with the local Volunteer and Territorial units, and as leading lay members of Anglo-Jewry, it seemed natural that Rothschild energies to support the war should be directed towards issues of the recruitment of Jews, and men from Buckinghamshire. In 1914, Jewish recruitment was

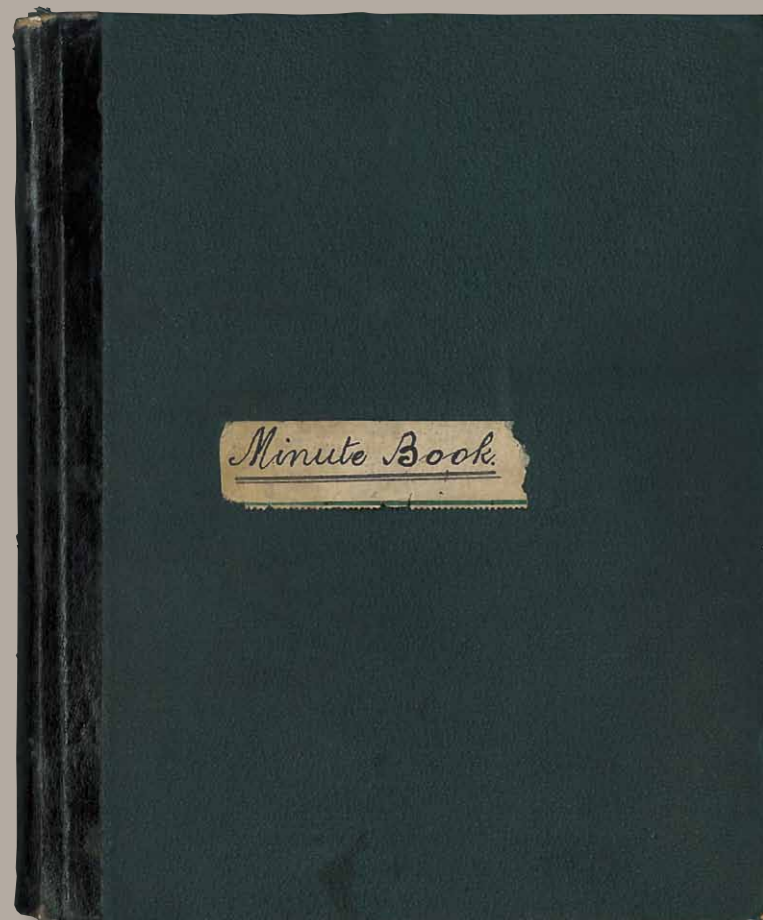
a serious concern. A high proportion of British Jews were either foreign-born or had foreign-born parents, and anti-German feelings in Britain often did not distinguish between Germans and persons with 'foreign' names. At the start of the war, there were reports of Jews being turned down at recruiting centres. In November 1915 *The Jewish Chronicle* reported cases of recruiting officers saying 'Lord Kitchener does not want any more Jews in the Army' and 'We are not enlisting Jews'.<sup>15</sup> There were accusations that Jews were not joining, and, on the Jewish side, complaints that they were being rejected at the recruiting offices. There was also confusion about the legal position of foreigners, and local recruiting officers were not consistent in their actions. Before conscription came into force with the passing of The Military Service Act in January 1916, many Jews had volunteered for service. Prior to the war there were an estimated thousand Jews in the British forces; by 1916, the number of Jews on active service has been estimated at about 10,000.<sup>16</sup>

Lionel's father Leopold had many personal contacts with the armed forces.<sup>17</sup> Before any official recognition of the issues of Jewish recruitment, the New Court Rothschilds had supported the enlistment of volunteers. In May 1915, Leopold provided the preface for the pamphlet *Jews and the War* which had been issued by The Central Committee for National Patriotic Organisations.<sup>18</sup> He called upon Jewish men 'to realise their duty as Jews... [and join] in unfaltering defence of the weak, and in vindication of those principles of justice, humanity and international good-faith which they, as Jews, have so much reason to cherish, and from which they have still so much to hope'.<sup>19</sup> Under Lionel's direction, a City recruiting office was established at New Court, probably in October 1915. Reporting on its opening, *The Jewish World* explained that 'Jews wishing to enlist there will be sent to suitable regiments... Major Lionel de Rothschild has succeeded in recruiting over forty Jewish youngsters for either the Royal Bucks Yeomanry, the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry (T.F.) and the Bucks R.A.M.C., in addition to many others'.<sup>20</sup>

On 18 December 1915, the situation concerning Jewish recruitment was clarified by the War Office. It recognised that although many Jews had signed up, there were large numbers of eligible men who had not yet enlisted. Circular 20/Gen. no./4133 (A.G. 2B/R), issued to 'General Officers Commanding-in-Chief, Officers Commanding Districts, Secretaries to Territorial Force Associations, and Recruiting Officers' announced the formation of a central Jewish recruiting committee 'composed of gentlemen who are in close touch with Jewish questions and Jewish social life in this country'.<sup>21</sup> The committee was established with 'the purpose of promoting the enlistment of Jews and of helping the military authorities with their advice in dealing with the subject generally.' Edmund Sebag-Montefiore was appointed chairman of the Jewish War Services Committee with Lionel de Rothschild as vice-chairman.<sup>22</sup>

The site of operations of the committee was New Court, and the Committee became known colloquially as 'Rothschild's Recruiting Office'.<sup>23</sup> The honorary secretary was Samuel Stephany, a senior clerk at the Bank.<sup>24</sup> Records of the committee survive in the papers held by the Archive, and a minute book, vouchers and receipts record its work.<sup>25</sup> The committee lost no time in beginning its task, meeting on 15 December 1915 at the Bryanston Square home of Edmund Sebag-Montefiore, where Lionel explained 'the disabilities under which Jewish Recruiting was suffered'. The committee met regularly, initially every three or four days, and later monthly. Early actions of the committee were to meet with the editors of Jewish papers to discuss the placing of recruiting advertisements, writing to synagogue leaders and persons of influence and organising the display of recruitment posters and literature in metropolitan areas. The committee issued its own recruiting circular, signed by Leopold in January 1916. By February 1916, the chairman reported that 'authorities at the War Office were very pleased with the committee's work'.





The Jewish War Services Committee.  
Agenda.

1. Minutes.
2. Additional Chaplain for France.
3. Chaplain for Canadian Troops.
4. Chaplains' reports to Committee.
5. Transit facilities for Chaplains.
6. Chaplain at Malta.
7. Care of Jewish graves at Salonika,  
Mudros and Mesopotamia.
8. Russian born Jews and Military  
Services.
9. Such other business as may occur.

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18th. April, 1917.

New Court,  
St. Swithin's Lane,  
London, E. C.  
January, 1916.

Dear Friend,

Central Jewish Recruiting Committee.

We have much pleasure in informing you that His Majesty's Government will now accept for the Army any eligible British subject born in this country, and therefore we cannot impress too highly upon you and other young men of the Jewish Faith that it is your duty (if you have not already done so) to enlist in defence of your country which has need of you.

A great number of Jews have already done so, many of them have won distinction in the Field, and we learn from the Jewish Chaplain, and gather from their own letters, that you may rely upon a hearty welcome from your fellow-soldiers of other denominations.

Pray respond to the call of your King and join at once!

Yours faithfully,  
(signed) Leopold de Rothschild.  
Swaythling.

N. B. There is a Recruiting Office at this address where all information can be obtained. You can either enlist at your local Recruiting Office or here where you will be accorded a hearty welcome by Major Lionel de Rothschild, M.P., the Recruiting Officer, any day (Saturday and Sunday excepted).



As the war continued, the committee's remit widened to consider questions of the religious and physical welfare of serving Jewish soldiers. The Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue was responsible for the spiritual needs of Jews in public institutions.<sup>26</sup> When Jews were officially recognised as a distinct religious body in the British army from 1889, the United Synagogue decided to extend its activities to serving members of the British forces, applying to the War Office to appoint a Jewish Forces Chaplain. Rabbi Francis L. Cohen was the first appointed in 1892, succeeded in 1904 by Reverend Michael Adler (1869-1944).<sup>27</sup> In January 1915, Adler was sent to France to assess the need for a Jewish chaplain at the Front. His subsequent report to the War Office showed a desperate urgency, and he returned to France. In March 1916, the Jewish War Services Committee invited two members of the Visitation Committee to join them, and began to lend its support to the holding of Sabbath services for Jewish soldiers, and petitions by Jewish soldiers to the War Office to request that they 'be put to military work that enables them to observe their religious rites'. Through the efforts of the committee, chaplains, beginning with Reverend Adler, were able to provide Jewish troops with some small measure of comfort, the first time that Jewish chaplains had formed part of the British Army on active service. Reverend Adler became known as 'The Chaplain in the Trenches' for his war work. In his appointments diary, he recalls the occasion on 11 August 1916 when he 'met a party of fifty newly-arrived Jewish soldiers belonging to the 1/1st Bucks Battalion - near a village called Bouzincourt, outside Albert. As the place was being bombarded, all troops were ordered into the open, and we found a vacant space in a cornfield where a square was formed and a brief service held.'<sup>28</sup> No doubt many of these men had been recruited at New Court.

By early 1916, the committee was considering a wide range of matters. In February, it assisted the West Central Jewish Working Men's Club to open a hostel for Jewish soldiers passing through London. The hostel had 30 beds, and one night's lodging and breakfast was free, a longer stay being charged at cost price. In the summer, the chairman announced that under the scheme of enlisting friendly aliens, tribunals would be set up for the purpose of hearing appeals against military service. In October the committee considered a letter from the Chief Rabbi asking for arrangements to be made for clergymen to visit enemy prisoners of war. As the war entered its fourth year in 1917, the expansion of the field of conflict and the great need of the troops for spiritual sustenance led to the full unification of the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue and the Jewish War Services Committee. Throughout 1918, the committee concerned itself with matters of the welfare of Jewish soldiers such as the supply of kosher food and the issue of Passover leave. The last meeting of the committee, on 6 May 1919 was after the Armistice when the final accounts record a deficit of £435, and the committee agreed to ask previous donors to renew their support to cover outstanding expenses. The final acts of the committee were to write various letters of thanks and to print 50,000 copies of *Reverend Adler's pamphlet on the War*.<sup>29</sup>

Working documents from the Jewish War Services Committee, formed in 1915. Above, agenda for a meeting held at New Court, 18 April 1917 and far left, a recruitment circular, signed by Leopold de Rothschild, January 1916. View of the second New Court building (1860-1962). It was from here that Lionel co-ordinated his war work. RAL 000/207



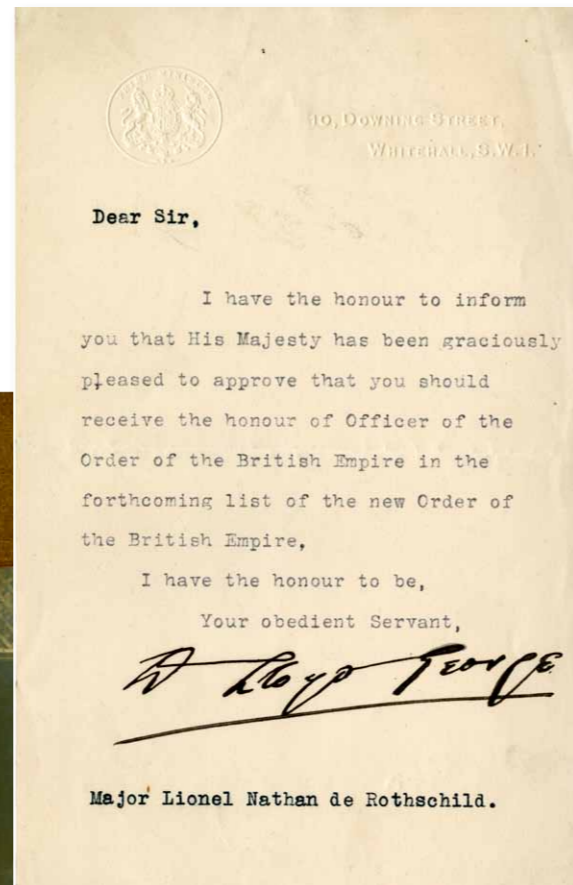
Lionel's brother Anthony served his country with distinction in the Buckinghamshire Yeomanry, was wounded at Gallipoli, and mentioned in Despatches. He ended the war as a Major with the General Staff. In 1917, the family (already mourning the death of Leopold in May) suffered a shattering blow, when, Evelyn, Lionel and Anthony's brother, was badly wounded on 13 November in the cavalry charge at El Mughar in the Palestine campaign and died four days later in the Citadel Hospital, Cairo.<sup>30</sup> A superb horseman, Evelyn was mobilised with his regiment on the outbreak of war, and in August 1914 had been promoted to Captain, leaving for Egypt in April 1915. Sent to Gallipoli, he was temporarily in command of the Regiment, but after three months was wounded and subsequently invalided out to the base. He was present at both Battles of Gaza, and was promoted to the rank of major in March 1917. In Evelyn's obituary, the officer commanding the Bucks Yeomanry described the battle: 'the Regiment was taking part in a mounted charge on the Turkish infantry, who were very strongly posted on some high ground, El Mughar[i]. I attacked with the Regiment in column of

*Opposite*  
Anthony de Rothschild  
and Evelyn Achille de  
Rothschild (centre) in  
uniform.

RAL 000/360/108

Letter from Downing  
Street to Lionel de  
Rothschild notifying  
him of the award of  
an OBE, 1917.

RAL 000/928



squadrons, and Evelyn was with the 2nd Squadron and was to take command of the two leading Squadrons on reaching the objective. We had some two miles of open country to cross, which was fairly swept by machine-gun and rifle fire. It was about half-way across this plain that Evelyn was struck down by a bullet. After all his death was a glorious one, killed when charging at the head of his men of Bucks'. Tragically, Neil Primrose, the son of Hannah Rothschild (1851–1890) who had married the Earl of Rosebery, and cousin of Lionel and his brothers was also killed in Palestine within days.<sup>31</sup> These tragic losses must have given Lionel's war work an added urgency and poignancy.

The Jewish War Services Committee fulfilled the need to deal with the issues of Jewish wartime recruitment. As the early patriotic fervour of the war diminished, the committee played a valuable role in providing succour to serving Jewish troops. These measures must have offered some comfort to counter the horrors of the battlefield. The number of men killed in the war who enlisted at New Court was 75 to which can be added a further 67 who enlisted at the neighbouring St. Swithin's Lane recruiting office, totalling 142.<sup>32</sup> After the war, Field Marshal Earl Haig praised 'the loyalty with which British Jews of every class came forward to fight for the country of their adoption and for the great human ideals which they shared with their Christian comrades in arms'.<sup>33</sup> When it became clear that the war was ending, the crucial task of rehabilitating Jewish soldiers into civilian life began, and the Rothschilds were at the forefront in remembering the fallen and helping the living through the creation of a 'Living' memorial.<sup>34</sup> Under the leadership of Robert Waley Cohen, and supported by Lionel and Anthony, a Jewish Memorial Council was established to support Jewish education and religious training.<sup>35</sup> Lionel was awarded an OBE in the Military Division in 1917.<sup>36</sup> In 1919, he inherited his Uncle Alfred's Buckinghamshire estate, Halton, and began to develop his estate at Exbury, Hampshire.<sup>37</sup> On 5 December 1920, Anthony de Rothschild unveiled the War Memorial in the churchyard of All Saints Church at Wing, Buckinghamshire honouring his brother and his Wing comrades. In 1931, Anthony named his new son Evelyn, in memory of his fallen brother.<sup>38</sup> Lionel died on 28 January 1942, three days after his sixtieth birthday.

The great upheavals of the war changed the map of Europe. During the war, intercontinental migration dwindled, but once the war was over, hundreds of thousands of Jews began leaving Europe. In the 1920s and 1930s, Rothschilds at New Court, led by Anthony and his wife Yvonne, again provided significant resources and support, assisting Jewish refugees from Europe. In December 1938, Anthony was appointed chairman of the Emigration (Planning) Committee, a subcommittee of the Council for German Jewry, which helped many Jews leave continental Europe to safety. The Central British Fund for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation was co-ordinated from New Court. Anthony led N M Rothschild & Sons as Senior Partner from 1942 until shortly before his death in 1961.

*Justin Cavernelis-Frost is Archivist at The Rothschild Archive. He is a member of the Board of Trustees, the Archives and Records Association UK and Ireland.*

## NOTES

1 This article concerns activities of the English family. See the article by Natalie Broad on p.45 for details of the family in the rest of Europe.

2 John Keegan, *The First World War*, (London: Hutchinson, 1998), p.8.

3 The War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War 1914–1920*, (London: 1922).

4 Although a resurgence of imperialism was an underlying cause, the immediate trigger for war was the assassination in

Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria. This triggered a diplomatic crisis and within weeks, the major powers were at war. See Keegan, *The First World War*.



- 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. Regrettably, 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.

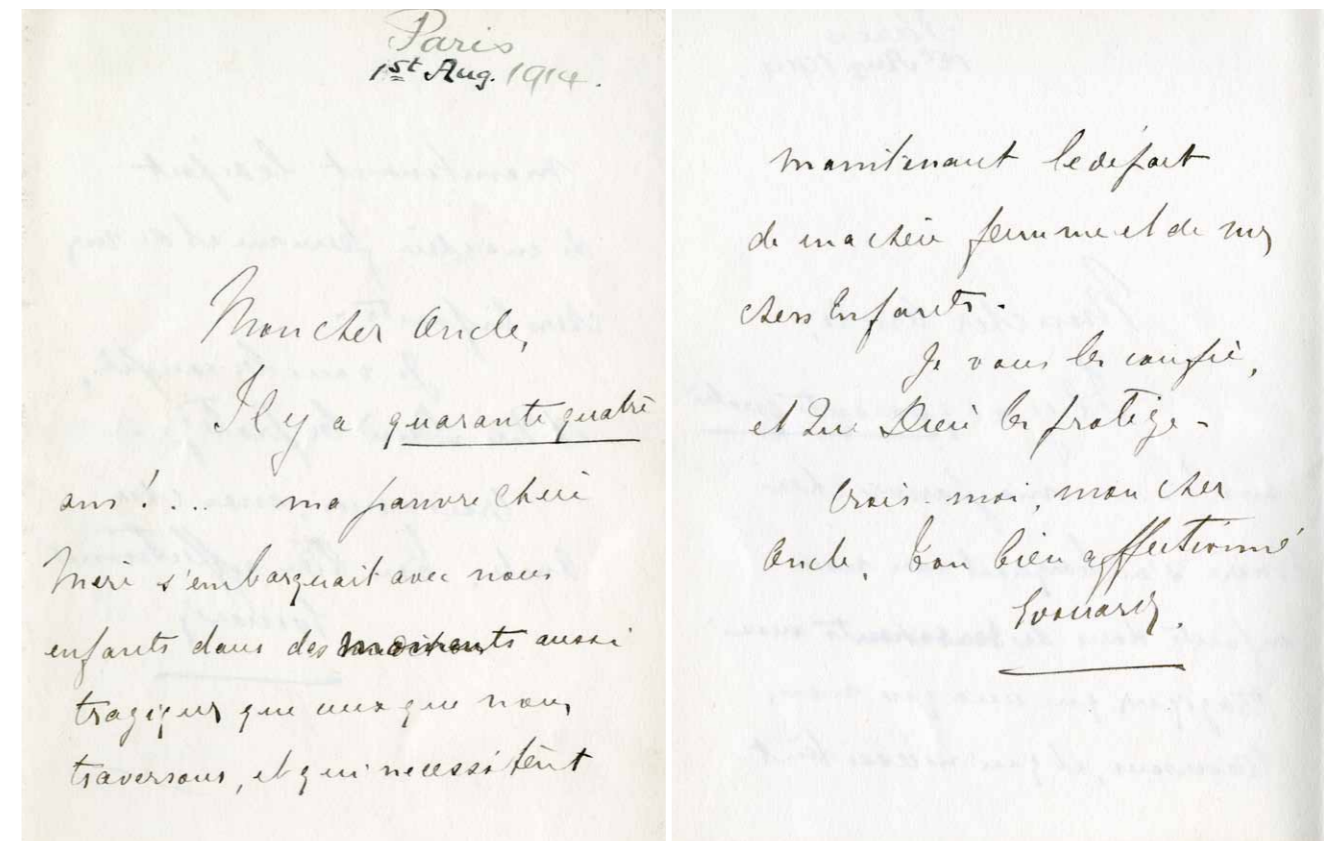
## Time is on our side: the Rothschild family in World War I<sup>1</sup>

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

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.<sup>2</sup> The Rothschilds on the continent were preparing to live in occupied lands again.

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





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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.



"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 reconnaissance 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.'

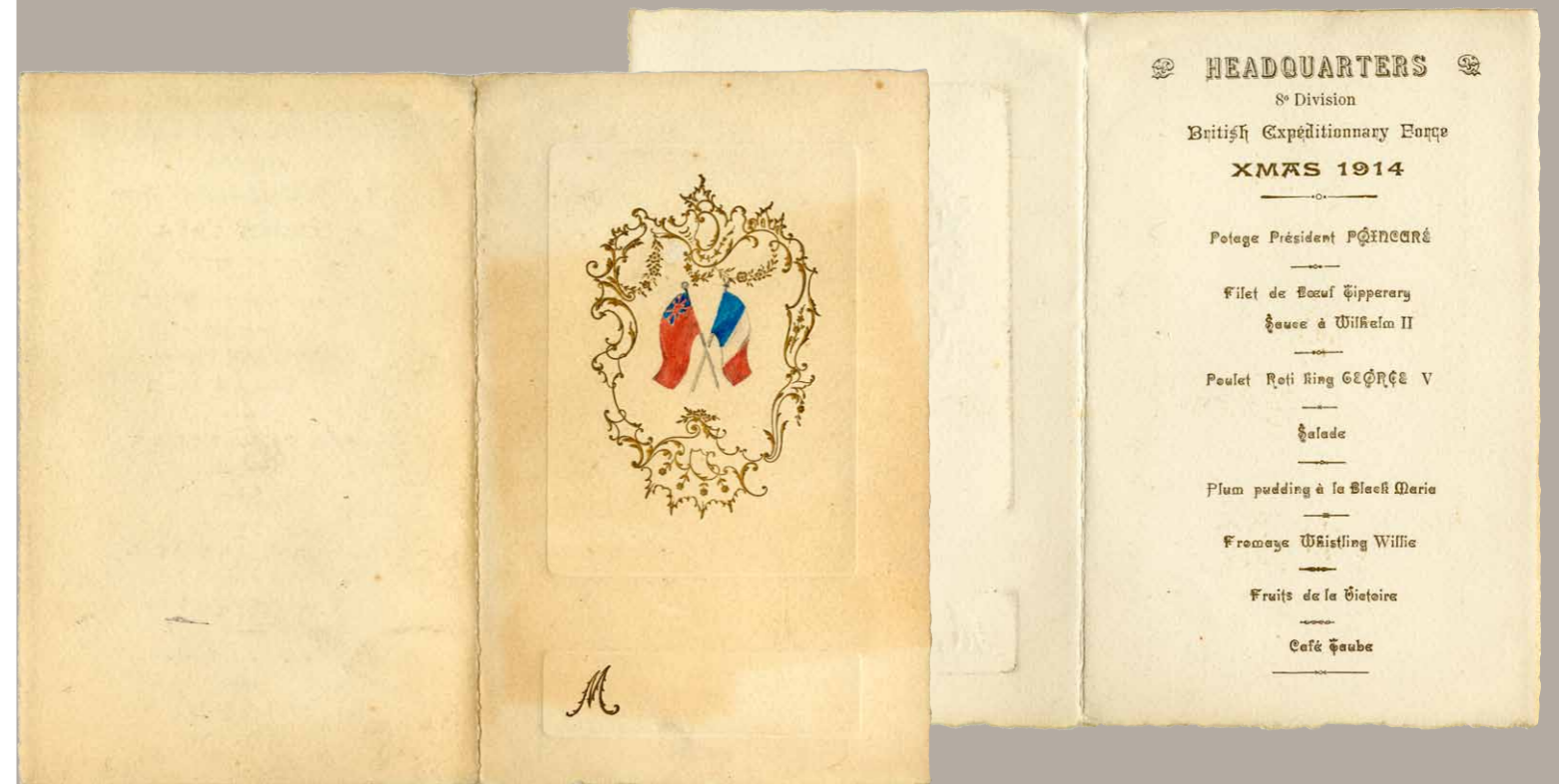


*Nh souvinte dei alles feste  
 pour futur bay!*

*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



HEADQUARTERS  
 8<sup>e</sup> Division  
 British Expeditionary Force  
 XMAS 1914  
 Potage Président PÉINCORÉ  
 Filet de Boeuf Piperary  
 Sauce à Wilheim II  
 Poulet Roti King GEORGE V  
 Salade  
 Plum pudding à la Black Maria  
 Fromage Whistling Willie  
 Fruits de la Victoire  
 Café Faube



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.<sup>5</sup>

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

*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.*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> '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.

<sup>3</sup> 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/](http://www.patrimoine.bm-dijon.fr/pleade/) and [www.centenaire.org/fr/tresors-darchives/fonds-publics/bibliotheques/archives/cuisine-de-guerre-menus-de-la-bibliotheque](http://www.centenaire.org/fr/tresors-darchives/fonds-publics/bibliotheques/archives/cuisine-de-guerre-menus-de-la-bibliotheque)

<sup>4</sup> Baronne James de Rothschild *Souvenirs de la Grande Guerre (1914-1918)* (Macon: Protat Frères, 1927).

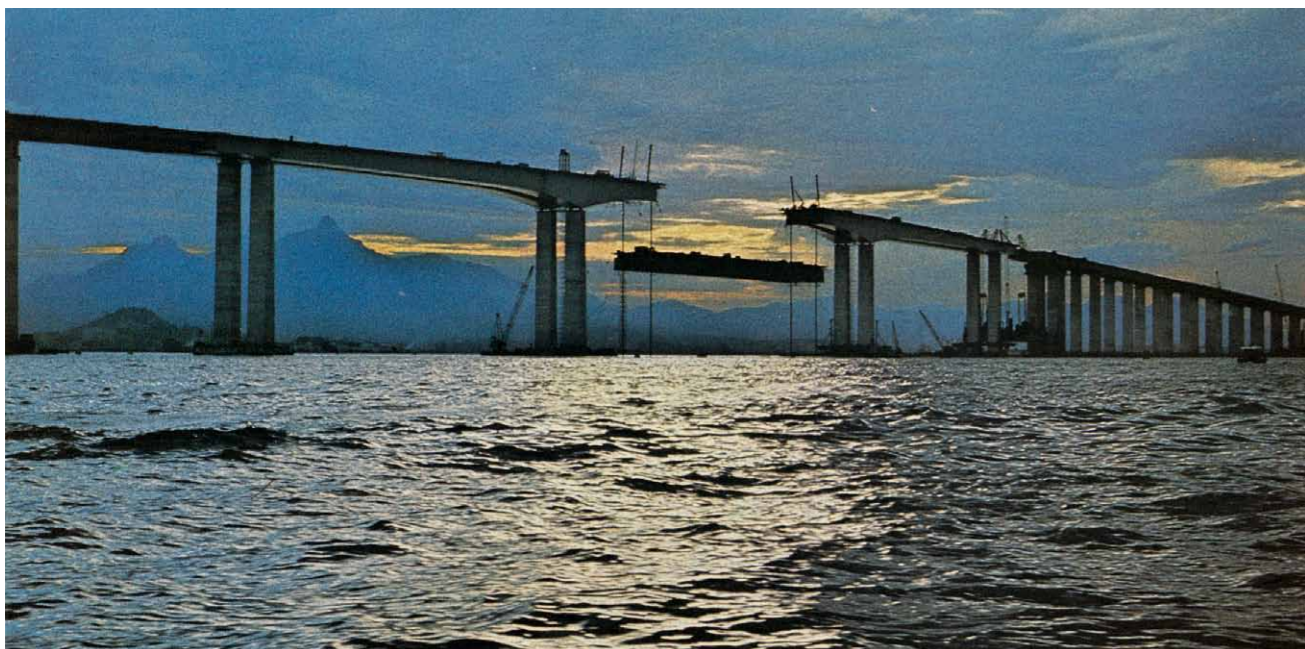
<sup>5</sup> [www.rothschildarchive.org/exhibitions/rothschilds\\_and\\_the\\_first\\_world\\_war/](http://www.rothschildarchive.org/exhibitions/rothschilds_and_the_first_world_war/)

## '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.







Readers of previous issues of this *Review* may remember that the first visitor to the Archive's new Reading Room at New Court was Leopold de Rothschild who was then in his sixth decade at the bank. His death some months after this visit was a cause of great sadness to so many: his family, his many friends, business associates, colleagues at the bank and fellow musicians and railway enthusiasts. In the last issue the acquisition by the Archive of the papers of Mr Leo, as he was most widely known, was recorded in the notes about principal accessions made during the year.<sup>1</sup> While the material is not yet available for research under the current conditions of access the archivists have been working on the papers to ensure that they are listed and stored properly.

Mr Leo's papers were maintained in immaculate order by a succession of secretaries including Jean Neal and, for 30 years, Jennifer Jacobs.<sup>2</sup> In turn they managed his office and his papers, consigning those no longer current to the system of records management at the London bank. From the 1920s each series of records within every department had been allocated a number which in Mr Leo's case was 54. There is no significance to this number: it is simply the next in the sequence used by the clerks receiving the files.

In common with the files of other partners of the bank – N M Rothschild began to trade as a company with limited liability only in 1970 and the partners became directors of the new company – the first file consists of letters of congratulations on becoming a partner. Mr Leo's papers are no exception to the general rule. Early on in his career he began to travel to Latin American countries, leading the bank's business expansion in Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela and Chile in particular. His files record the business trips he made and chart the development of many enduring relationships with business houses in the region. In London he chaired The British-Venezuelan Society & Chamber of Commerce and was closely involved in the bank's financing of the Rio-Niterói Bridge in Brazil, a product of two loans to the country organised in the 1960s.

*Above*  
The Rio-Niterói Bridge under construction.  
RAL 000/1267

*Opposite*  
Mr Leo at his desk in the third New Court building, 2007. Watercolour by Matthew Cook.  
RAL 000/2025

*Previous page*  
Leopold de Rothschild in the Partners' Room, New Court 1962.  
RAL 000/207

He had many external business interests. Like his great uncle, Alfred de Rothschild, Mr Leo served as a director of the Bank of England between 1970 and 1983. In 1969 he helped to found and chaired Rothschild Intercontinental Bank, a partnership with the National Provincial Bank, which then formed partnerships with other Rothschild financial houses, Banque Lambert, Pierson, Heldring & Pierson and banks in US cities.

These files offer a lesson in the development of communication methods since he began his working life. From the first file – hand-written letters of congratulations from friends and City associates on his partnership – to the print-outs of emails and voicemail messages, taking in typed letters, telexes and faxes on thermal paper. An early task, of course is to preserve the content of these evanescent formats.

Supplementing the written record are some audio-visual materials, recordings of interviews given to radio music programmes and his own account of the building of the Exbury Gardens Railway, each requiring its own particular conservation attention. To add to the record are the transcripts of oral history interviews conducted with the staff of the Archive and his own notes about his life.

These files demonstrate the balance of a full life as they record Mr Leo's engagement with many philanthropic and cultural organisations. He sang for 50 years with the Bach Choir and was its President.<sup>3</sup> His involvement with The Countess of Munster Musical Trust, Glyndebourne, English National Opera, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Royal College of Music and many more musical institutions is meticulously recorded in his papers.

Railways were a major passion in his life. With the help of his life-long friend, architect Sir James Dunbar-Nasmyth, he created the Exbury Gardens Steam Railway. Films and photographs of this much-cherished project will be preserved alongside the papers.

Until the records are released for research, they will rest in the Archive alongside the hundreds of files recording the history of the Rothschild business in the second half of the twentieth century and the life of one who made such a contribution to its success.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The papers have been accessioned with references RAL 000/2093, 2094 and 2096.
- <sup>2</sup> In 2009 Jean Neal's widower, Peter, passed on to Mr Leo for deposit with the Archive some of her papers relating to the time she worked at the bank.  
RAL 000/1985.
- <sup>3</sup> A short documentary about the June 2014 world premiere of 'Psalms for Leo' composed by Jonathan Dove is available on YouTube. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UBiskvae2M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UBiskvae2M).





# Principal acquisitions

## 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014

This list is not comprehensive but attempts to record acquisitions of most immediate relevance to research. Some items listed here may, 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.

### Rothschild business records

Letter copy books from de Rothschild Frères, Paris.

*Allemand* No. 76, 8 September–11 October 1858; *Allemand* No. 96, 24 August–29 September 1860; *Allemand* No. 98, 6 November–21 December 1860; *Allemand* No. 100, 28 January–23 February 1861; Madrid 6 April–5 August 1864; No. 88, 11 May–22 May 1891; No. 92, 22 June–1 July 1891  
000/2148

Exchange of letters between Evelyn de Rothschild and Victor, 3rd Lord Rothschild and former Prime Minister James Callaghan, June 1986, together with an uncashed cheque for twenty shillings.

The exact matter to which this exchange refers is not recorded, but it appears to have been a private joke shared between the correspondents. Evelyn and Victor (on behalf of N M Rothschild & Sons Limited offer the advice ‘ACCEPT THE NOTES’, to which the Rt Hon James Callaghan MP responds with thanks for the advice, enclosing a cheque, drawn on The Midland Bank, Lee Green Branch for the sum of twenty shillings (£1.00), as a token of the service provided, together with the advice ‘I do not doubt that if the partners transact other business in the same prompt manner, the name of Rothschild will become widely known to financial circles in the City of London and even in the continents of Europe and the Americas.’  
000/2161

Volumes of special instructions from the private accounts department of N M Rothschild & Sons dated 1889–1926, 1927–50, 1950–7. These volumes contains pasted original and copy letters of instruction from members of the Rothschild family and other individuals concerning financial transactions on their Rothschild accounts, and other matters dealt with on their behalf by N M Rothschild & Sons. 47/1–3  
000/2200

### Rothschild family papers

Transferred from the custody of N M Rothschild & Sons Limited

Artefacts and framed items from the offices of the late Leopold de Rothschild, (1927–2012) and items from the New Court vault. The items include framed photographs of yachts, choirs, Courts of Directors of the Bank of England and other business affairs.  
000/2205

A collection of files from the Partners’ Room, New Court.

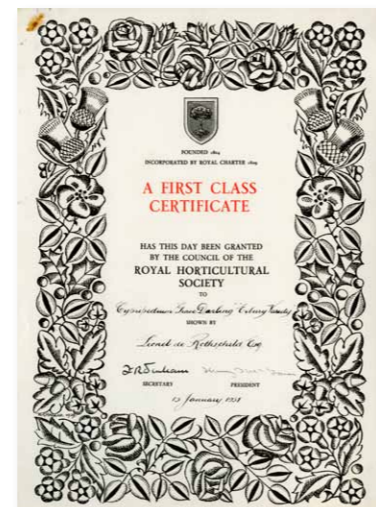
The files contain receipts for personal expenses for Lionel de Rothschild (1882–1942) for household goods and services (insurance, telephone, catering), utilities, food and wine, pharmacy supplies, clothing, motoring supplies, yacht supplies, guns, gardening equipment, plants, flower, seeds, books, camera equipment, cigars, cigarettes, watches, jewellery etc. from 1921–41.  
000/2208

A collection of papers concerning the Rothschild family and orchids, primarily 1927–33.

The papers document innovative experiments to cultivate orchids at the Royal Mint Refinery and contain receipt books, lists of plants, correspondence, catalogues and display cards from flower shows. There is also a typescript headed ‘Copy of Baron Edmond de Rothschild’s procedures for the aseptic germination of orchids’.  
000/2201

Photocopies of letters from the archives of The Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

The letters relate to Lionel de Rothschild (1882–1942) and his work with the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, when George Forrest died whilst on a plant hunting expedition in China. The letters refer to bringing back his seed collections to the UK.  
000/2165



### The Rothschild Reserves Archive

Archive of the survey conducted between 1912–5 by The Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves (SPNR).

The SPNR, (founded by Charles Rothschild) conducted the first ever national survey of wildlife sites in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The resultant documentation for 284 sites (which were to become The Rothschild Reserves) was stored in Rothschild Bank blue envelopes, usually contain a map showing the area in question and relevant correspondence. The archive remained in the offices of the SPNR (later renamed The Wildlife Trusts). In 2012, the survey papers were digitised and are available at: [www.wildlifetrusts.org/aboutthearchive](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/aboutthearchive).  
000/2146

Letters signed by James de Rothschild and Amschel de Rothschild.

There are 13 items in this collection which includes some receipts for purchases of stock and a small photograph of Ferrières.  
000/2169

Correspondence between Dame Miriam Rothschild and Professor Dianne Edwards, (then editor of the Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society) concerning the article ‘Cannabis sativa: volatile compounds from pollen and entire male and female plants of two variants, Northern Lights and Hawaiian Indica’  
000/2178

Collection of books and exhibition catalogues relating to the life of Jacqueline Piatigorsky (née Rothschild), her husband and son.  
000/2197

### Estate records

Estate papers and deeds from Ascott House. An extensive collection of documents relating to the development of the Ascott Estate from the sixteenth to the twentieth century.  
000/2206

### Printed materials

Broadside issued by the Chief Rabbinate Palestine, in Hebrew, exhorting the community to pray for Baron Edmond de Rothschild, 1934.

Getzel Kressel, *HaYishuv* [‘Father of the Yishuv’], Baron Edmond de Rothschild (1954)  
000/2151

Six books belonging to members of the Rothschild family, formerly in the collection at Ascott House, Wing.

J.W. von Goethe, Ein Roman, 1810, with an inscription. Name on verso is ‘Mrs N.M. de Rothschild’; Arthur de Rothschild, *Histoire de la poste aux lettres* (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1875); Hester Rothschild (trans.), *Prayers and Meditations for every situation and occasion of life* (London: P. Vallentine, 1895.)

Inscription on flyleaf reads, ‘To Master Evelyn Achille de Rothschild with best wishes for many very happy returns of the day. From your father’s little friend Willie Tebbitt, January 1899’.  
000/2167

Book published in 1843 by Avraham Menachem Mandel Maher to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Mayer Amschel Rothschild. The book is a history of the life of Mayer Amschel Rothschild and his children.  
000/2180

Alexandre Weill, *Rothschild und die europäischen Staaten* (Stuttgart, 1844). The text of the book is available on the website of Judaica Frankfurt: [www.sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/judaicaffm/content/titleinfo/1953498](http://www.sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/judaicaffm/content/titleinfo/1953498)  
000/2187

Hayin Alger and Jacob Cohen Solal, *Conte populaire en judéo-arabe*, (Algeria: Cohen Solal, 1854.) The book contains some references to the philanthropic activities of the Rothschild family.  
000/2207

Barnard van Oven, *Ought Baron de Rothschild to sit in Parliament?: an imaginary conversation between Judaeus & Amicus Nobilis*, (London: Effingham, Wilson, 1847). This pamphlet, arguing in favour of Jewish emancipation, was published in the year in which Lionel de Rothschild was first elected as a Liberal representative of the City of London.  
000/2210

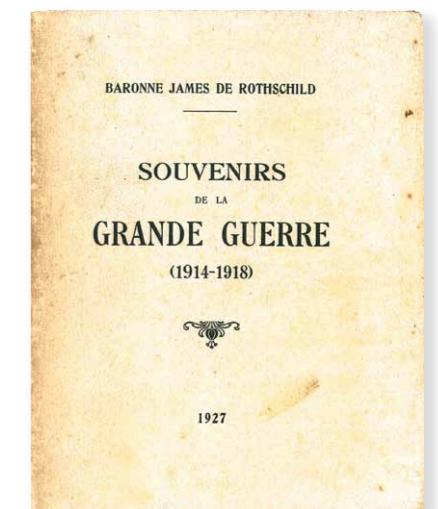
*Gedächtnisrede zur Erinnerung an Freiherrn Wilhelm Karl von Rothschild zu Frankfurt a. M., bei dem in der Synagoge zu Fulda 14 Schwat 5661/3 Februar 1901 veranstalteten Trauergottesdienst / gehalten von D.M. Cabn*, (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1901). Memorial address for Wilhelm Carl von Rothschild, 1901.

The text of the book is available on the website of Judaica Frankfurt: [www.sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/5455000](http://www.sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/titleinfo/5455000)  
000/2209

### Below

Baronne James de Rothschild (Laura-Thérèse) 1847–1931  
*Souvenirs de la Grande Guerre (1914–1918)* (Macon: Protat Frères, 1927). 215 pp.

Collected memoirs of Baroness James de Rothschild’s nursing service in the military hospitals set up at Gouvieux and Berck-sur-Mer during the first world war. The book contains anecdotes of individual bravery and courage shown by the wounded and their nurses, and is written in tribute to these people.







#### Artefacts

Two war memorials recording the names of the staff of N M Rothschild & Sons who served in World War I and World War II. The first memorial, in wood, was in place in the second New Court building, which was demolished in 1962. When the third New Court building was opened in 1965 a new memorial, in marble, was positioned in the entrance hall.

000/2157

Samples of plates and bowls from Rothschild family dinner services, many with the monogram RR (Robert de Rothschild, 1880–1946) or GR (Gustave de Rothschild, 1829–1911). Most of the plates are French porcelain, late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, made by Jacquelin in Paris and Pillivuyt, Mehun sur Yèvre, Cher and J V Heillard, Bordeaux and Sèvres.

000/2163

Metal safe, formerly in the offices of de Rothschild Frères at rue Lafitte, Paris.

000/2163

Marble bust of Baron James de Rothschild (1792–1868).

000/2163

Two watercolours by Eugène Lami (1800–90), one left unfinished, featuring Gustave de Rothschild and his daughters Juliette and Lucie. One of the watercolours was given to Lucie de Rothschild by the artist on the occasion of her wedding to Baron Lambert.

000/2168

#### Above

James G. Middleton (fl. 1826–72)

Portrait of Annie and Constance de Rothschild, 1860, oil on canvas.

This painting has been placed with The Rothschild Archive on permanent loan by the trustees of the Anthony Hall, Aston Clinton, where it has been since the early decades of the twentieth century.

000/2202

#### Page 54

RHS awards won by Lionel de Rothschild for orchids and cymbidiums. RAL 000/2227