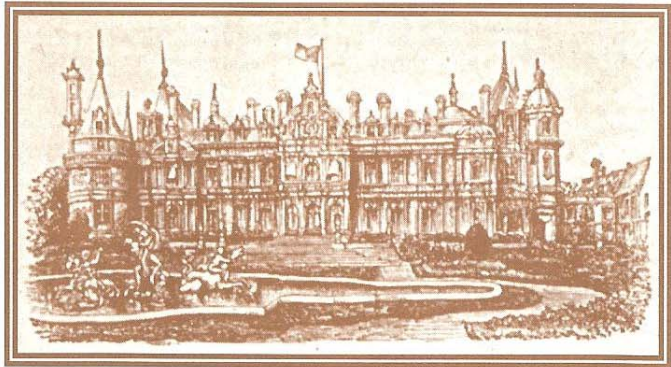




*Waddesdon Manor  
and the Rothschilds  
In England*



May 3<sup>RD</sup> – 7<sup>TH</sup>, 1998

Jessica Deutsch

# Waddesdon Manor and The Rothschilds In England

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**W**addesdon Manor is one of England's greatest treasure houses. Built by **Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild** its interior reflects the connoisseurship of a passionate collector and brings to life one of the finest eras in the history of cabinetmaking and craftsmanship. As Baron Ferdinand himself wrote "Whether it is to the credit of my family or not may be a matter of opinion, but the fact remains that they first revived the decoration of the eighteenth century in its purity, reconstructing their rooms out of old material, reproducing them as they had been during the reigns of the Louis".\*

Taking advantage of the two hundred year anniversary of the founding of the Rothschild bank in England, and a special exhibition at the **Museum of London**, this program will look at the story of the English branch of the Rothschild family, and their role as patrons and collectors. Led by an outstanding faculty we will examine archival material dating back to 1798 when **Nathan Mayer Rothschild** left Frankfurt's Jewish ghetto for England. At **Spencer House**, the former home of Earl Spencer, we will share the careful research involved in the restoration of the interior, made possible through the patronage of the Rothschilds. The main focus of our program however will be two days of private entrée to **Waddesdon Manor**, bequeathed by the

family to the nation. Here we will enjoy a unique opportunity for a case-study of the arts of the 18th-century.

Our exploration of Waddesdon will include the gardens and the exterior architectural features of the house, modeled on the ancient **Chateaux of the Valois**, and executed by the architect **Gabriel Hippolyte Destailleur**, whose family had been architects to the **Duke of Orleans**. The remodeling of Paris and demolition of houses in the 1860's enabled Baron Ferdinand to purchase carved oak paneling for the interior from places such as the hôtel of the banker **Pierre Dodun** or the convent of the **Sacré Coeur**. Participants will examine the brilliant integration of these architectural features with an eclectic collection that includes **Beauvais** tapestries, paintings by 18th-century English artists such as **Thomas Gainsborough** and **Sir Joshua Reynolds**, a **Sèvres** dinner service, **Savonnerie** screens and carpets, and superb examples of French, and German furniture. Included too will be a tour of the wine cellars and tasting, as well as a drive through the **Rothschild family estates**.

With accommodation and dinner at **The Ritz Hotel** in London, the opportunity to stay at the Baron's former lodge or **Hartwell House** in Aylesbury, and an Edwardian dinner such as might have been enjoyed at a late 19th-century country house weekend, this program offers participants the opportunity to enjoy the meaning of patronage and as Baron Ferdinand hoped to "reap the chief benefit of a work which to me has been a labour of love."\*♦

\*Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild's unpublished Reminiscences, written in 1897.

"The Rothschilds at Waddesdon Manor" Mrs. James de Rothschild, 1979.

## Schedule

### Sunday-May 3rd ~ London

Participants will be met at the airport and transferred to **The Ritz Hotel**, London. Opening dinner in The Ritz Hotel.

### Monday, May 4th ~ London

**Victor Gray**, Archivist to The Rothschild Archives leads a morning study of the exhibition "**The Life and Times of N M Rothschild, 1777-1836**" at **The Museum of London**. Included in the exhibition are portraits and personal possessions, Jewish ritual objects, business records showing the breadth of banking enterprises across Europe, and a Memorbuch recording life in the Frankfurt Jewish Community. Lunch in the City of London. Here **Niall Ferguson**, Fellow and Tutor in Modern History at Jesus College, Oxford and author of the forthcoming book "**The World Bankers-A History of the House of Rothschild**" will lecture on the subject. Afternoon visit with Mr. Gray to **The Rothschild Archives** where we examine material attesting to the history of the family over a two-hundred year period.

### Tuesday, May 5th

#### Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury

Depart for Aylesbury and check in to **The Five Arrows Hotel** (the Baron's former hunting lodge) or **Hartwell House**. Gather at **The Dairy**, set in the midst of the gardens on the estate at **Waddesdon Manor**. Lecture on "**Waddesdon Today**" by **Dr. Ulrich Leben**, Deputy Keeper, Waddesdon Manor. Lunch in the beautiful surroundings of the **Wintergarden** followed by lecture on "**Baron Ferdinand,**

**the Collector**" with Dr. Leben. We break for tea and then enjoy a lecture on "**The Art of Dining**" followed by a private study in the Manor on the Sèvres collection with **Selma Schwartz**, former Deputy Keeper of Waddesdon. The Sèvres dinner service is displayed in the Starhemberg Room and is arranged according to the sequence in which the pieces would have been used during a dinner at that time. Evening stroll in the gardens with the chief gardener followed by a tutored wine tasting including a first growth wine with **Marcia Waters**, Master of Wine. The wine cellars contain over 15,000 bottles of Rothschild wine, one of the foremost collections in the world. Supper on the estate.

### Wednesday, May 6th

#### Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury

Early morning drive by minibus through the grounds of the Rothschild Estate. We then enjoy a second exclusive day at the Manor. The greater part of the day will be devoted to up-close study of the collection with **Dr. Ulrich Leben**. He will discuss the interior architectural detail and décor, and highlight the most important aspects of the collection of both Baron Ferdinand and his sister Alice. Rare examples of furniture in the collection which include pieces by the foremost cabinetmakers of the 18th-century such as **Jean-Henri Riesener**, **Charles Cressent**, **Lacroix**, **Martin Carlin** (who specialized in furniture decorated with Sèvres plaques) allows for an examination of cross-currents of influence between 18th-century English, French, and German cabinet-makers. **Rosamund Griffin**, Keeper of the Collection, will give a presentation on the Centenary Restoration at Waddesdon. (cont'd)