

THE GRASSHOPPER PENSIONERS' CLUB



MARTINS BANK

Website: www.martinsbank.co.uk
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DESPITE THE ONWARD MARCH OF THE GRIM REAPER THERE ARE



In this issue:

**OUR REMAINING BRANCHES
YOUNGEST & OLDEST (Update)
GOLDEN GRASSHOPPER (Update)
DEATH NOTICES
OBITUARIES and MEMORIES
OLD TRAFFORD BRANCH**

It would appear that this issue is becoming one of memories. But, is there anything wrong with that?

With only NINE of our original branches remaining open at the time of going to press, let us all remember them (in no particular order), starting with:



Bexleyheath
Is the last remaining branch of Martin's Private Bank and was opened on New Year's Day in 1886. Although not clear in this image, *check the Grasshopper on Pages*

4 and 5.

Carlisle, English Street

Opened in 1836 by The Carlisle and Cumberland Banking Company, our Carlisle branch has overseen and been directly involved in Carlisle's business growth during its almost 90 years of



existence. I'm certain that many of our Northern District members will be familiar with names such as Harry Lofthouse and Norman Mulholland. It will be yet another nail in our coffin when the branch finally closes.



Cockermouth



Yet another branch of The Carlisle and Cumberland Banking Company, Sadly, we don't appear to have a precise year during which the branch was opened, only 'Pre-1911' and



wonder if anyone can provide a precise year?

G.A. Bateson, our manger (left) was appointed in 1964 whilst F.E.

Burnett (right) was the manager from 1959 until 1964 when he was transferred to our Craven District branch in Guiseley as the manager of our Settle branch from where he retired.



Keighley



I have particularly fond memories of Keighley branch, as it is where I started my Martins' career in August 1966. Originally opened

by the **Craven Bank** in 1840, it will close on 9th August this year, following its service to Keighley's former industries and farmers for over 180 years. Some names to remember for our Liverpool, Northern and Craven District members (not forgetting our wider golfing fraternity) are: Frank Wade, Eric Shackleton, Geoff Brogden, Julian Taylor, Eric Ellison, Ray Hopwood, Deryk Ingham, Ken Marsden, Bert Denton and Lindsay Mason.

Kendal



We are fortunate in having two photographs of our Kendal branch, which must surely be our oldest branch still in existence (at least for the time-being). Opened on 1st January 1788 by

John Wakefield & Sons and immediately had local competition from Maude, Wilsons &

Crewdsons Bank, which opened on the same day. Competition must have been too great as they amalgamated in 1840 to create Wakefield Crewdson and Company, The Kendal Bank (not a name that easily flows off your tongue) but



shortened to The Kendal Bank. Customers included High Street names; K Shoes and Provincial Insurance. Names that you might remember are: C Clark and John Burnside. So, after almost 240 years of serving the local community its days are numbered.

Llandudno

One of our 'youngest' branches and the last in Wales. Opened in 1938 and managed for 14

years from 1952 by RTM Williams. He is remembered in the Autumn 1957 edition of The Martins Bank Magazine:

In the Queen's Birthday Honours List the award of OBE to Mr R T M Williams, Manager of our Llandudno Branch, appears. Mr Williams has been invited to represent the 53rd Welsh



Infantry Division (TA) at the annual war memorial service at Hertogenbosch in Holland on 25 October, being the anniversary of the liberation of the town in 1944 by his division, a battle in which Mr Williams took part. On Sunday 28 July, the BBC visited the Ancient Borough of Flint in the "Down Your Way" programme. One of the calls was at the castle where the 372ND Flint and Denbigh Yeomanry have a Battery Headquarters. As Officer Commanding, Colonel R T M Williams was asked to meet Franklin Engelmann to talk about the Regiment and about the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the conferment of the Freedom of the Borough upon it, which took place on 31st August.

Preston, 38 Fishergate



Sadly, no longer the original building, which was opened in 1869 as the Head office of the Preston Union Bank before merging with the Lancashire and Yorkshire

Bank in 1874. It was demolished in 1963 when

the branch moved to temporary premises at 19 Lune Street and reopened two years later in shiny new premises and still open as one of our 6



branches which remain today. I would imagine that the new branch would have been a great place in which to work



Were you a member of staff in this photograph which was taken on the day that the new



branch opened? If you were, how about sharing your memories with our members and have them archived by The British Library for future generations?

Ramsey, Isle of Man



The former branch of the Manx Bank was opened in 1882 before becoming a branch of The Mercantile Bank of Lancashire in 1900 and The Lancashire & Yorkshire Bank in 1904 and finally amalgamating with Martins in 1928.

Although I don't think that we still have

many members living on the Isle of Man, perhaps some of our Liverpool colleagues might have served there and remember RA Henry who worked at the branch between 1964 and 1968. More memories would again be appreciated from any member who worked there or at other Isle of Man branches.



Which brings us, finally, to our last remaining branch:

Worcester, 54 High Street

Then



A relatively 'young' branch, having been opened on 30th March 1937, it was closed on day of our takeover (12th December 1969). But, like a 'Phoenix rising from the ashes' in 1975, we will have to wait and see if it is akin to the mythical bird that was given a new life and hope for the future. Only time will tell and **Now:**



And so we move on to a happier subject:

YOUNGEST AND OLDEST

Although I have received several emails from lady members who had hoped to be crowned as our 'Youngest Member' I still await a claim from our 'Oldest'. I wonder if that might be **Don Evans?** (PLEASE SEE Page 6)

But let's return to the YOUNGEST, which has been a close-run thing as you can see:

Hi

I was born in June 1952. Started work at Cheetham branch in August 1968. I don't know if I am the youngest but certainly am one of them.

Kind regards

Sue Windeler nee Ogden

However, to date, it would appear that **HILARY CURRAH** is currently our youngest member as evidenced by her email and also her

memories, which have been taken from our Archive. But first Hilary's email:

Dear David

Reading the Spring edition of the Grasshopper Magazine and the above article the "Youngest" & the "Oldest", I think I can beat the youngest, May 1952.

I was born in the 'Coronation Year' in August 1953, which makes me 70!

I started my career at Martins Bank, Sale branch on 6th August 1969. I submitted a story of my first day at work sometime ago, I'm not sure if it was ever included in past newsletters.

I hope I can beat 1952. No doubt you will let me know. Hilary Currah

Well, Hilary, you are still our youngest member and, possibly, the youngest ex-member of Martins staff. Who knows?

Now Hilary's memories with additions from Jonathan:

Definitely a TRUE Martini!

I suppose I can't really call myself a true Martini as I didn't join Martins Bank until 6th August 1969, when I started to work there four months before the merger in December 1969. I was*

*told to present myself at Sale branch on Northenden Road for 9am, but when I arrived the doors were firmly closed. No-one had explained they didn't open until 9.30am! Panic, what do I do now? Luckily a member of staff turned up and let me in. So began my first day of work for Martins Bank. I was taken under the wing of **Barbara Slater** nee Griffin who along with **Hugh Oldham** showed me the debit clearing. After that was listed and dispatched, Barbara explained how debits and credits worked, which seemed to take all day and by the end of it I was none the wiser!*

As a Junior (that was your title when you first joined the Bank), I had to make Tea and Coffee for the rest of the staff, list the rems and balance them, and make up the post. By the end of the day at 5pm, I was ready to go home. Wrong again! No-one had told me you only went home when everything balanced. About 6pm the phone rang, it was my Mum wondering where I was. Unfortunately the Manager **Arthur Jackson** (who made exceedingly good cakes) answered the phone (he did that frequently) and he was not happy! He basically told me in front of the whole branch no-one went home until everything was balanced and put away. Eventually we were done and I went home exhausted. Here ended my first day.*

*As well as the normal Junior duties, making drinks, balancing the rems, doing the post and every week balancing the stamps (they never did!) I had to make up Customer's statements. As this was in the days before Computerisation they had to be prepared by hand and the envelopes addresses accordingly. In those days customers had their cheques and dividends returned with their statements, invariably there would be at least one statement missing an item, usually for a business account customer. As they all wanted their statements at the same time, usually lunch-time, it was like juggling with snow! Mr Jackson was given the statements to check they were made up properly and the envelopes addressed correctly. Woe-betide you if you spelt a name wrong or a customer's address was incorrect or incomplete. My biggest faux pas was when preparing statements one day for a well-known business account was to send one of the Director's personal statements to them "c/o The Secretary". I didn't make that mistake again. By then Mr Jackson had retired and our Manager was **Jim Kay** he wasn't best pleased with me. The most important thing to remember when doing statements was to tear off the side piece making sure you had written the final balance on it along with the customer's name, then leave it on a spike for the machine room girls to prepare a new statement.*

It really doesn't matter how long you worked for Martins Hilary, it's simply the fact that YOU DID that matters and you remember that you did.

I wonder if any of our members also worked at Sale branch and remember Hilary's colleagues, which I have highlighted in red?

Our former Lancaster University Branch ..

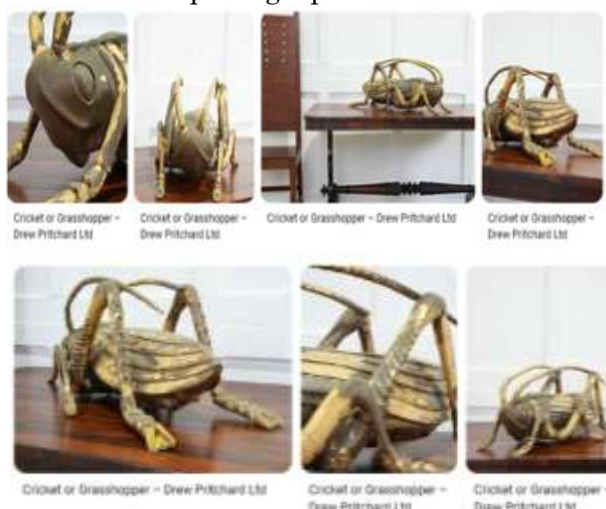
Where the 'Golden Grasshopper' stood guard over the Night Safe (as featured in our Spring Newsletter) in the bottom left of this photograph:



and taking pride of place again on the 50th

Anniversary of the founding of the University.

Once again we move on: Sold at Auction by 'Drewatts Auctioneers', it was purchased by Drew Pritchard before being on-sold to one of his clients and photographed below:



It certainly has seen better days, but read on about another Grasshopper:

Back to Bexleyheath:



Although not too clear in the left-hand image, the Grasshopper appears to bear a close



resemblance to that featured in our **Spring 2024 Newsletter** (above right). Could this design be unique to the former Martin's Private Bank branches? What do you think? Please let me have your thoughts.

DEATH NOTICES

Burd, Joan M	via Liverpool Pensioners' Club
East, John M	20 th January 2017 aged 88
East June	13 th May 2023 aged 94
Empson, David	2018
Whiteley, Donald	27 th December 2023 aged 91
Willis Clive C	19 th March 2024

Memories

Please feel free to share any and all of your memories with your fellow former colleagues via our Newsletters as I am certain that they will take us back (as Jonathan Snowden says) to those halcyon days pre 12th December 1969.

Obituary : Allan Townsend



Gloucester Rugby was saddened to hear of the passing Allan Townsend, a past President and captain of Gloucester Rugby. Allan was born in Cheltenham in 1933, played for the town club

from 1951 to 1959, and was captain from 1957 to 1959. Over that period, he won five Gloucestershire caps, playing in all four of the County's games in 1954-55. He played once for Gloucester in September 1956 against Bucharest, who were touring the country at the time. Allan left Cheltenham to join Gloucester permanently for the start of the 1959-60 season. He was an immediate success and became the regular tight-head prop. That season Gloucester won 13 consecutive games (a club record), and Allan was an essential part of that team. In just five seasons Allan made 196 appearances. He was club captain in the 1961-62 season. His final appearance was on 24 October 1964 against Coventry.

Allan also played a total of 18 games for Gloucestershire; his final one being in 1964 against Lancashire in a Championship semi-final.

Allan served on the Gloucester committee from 1983-96. He was also a member of the Gloucestershire committee for 18 years, and member of the RFU committee from 1991-97.

Allan Townsend was President of Gloucester Rugby from 2008 to 2013.

Words kindly provided by the Gloucester Rugby Heritage team.

(Gloucester RUFC)

David Empson

Dave died 20th March 2018 aged 80. He was an expert gardener and used to organise an annual "Garden swap" for local Barclays Pensioners, which was always well attended. As well as the opportunity to swap plants, David was happy to impart his extensive gardening knowledge to those less able - and there was the added bonus of free coffee and cake!

His wife Joyce pre deceased him - she died in October 2013.

Clive Willis

I am sorry to hear that Clive Willis has died. He took over as Manager at Bruton Street when Mike Summersgill moved on, during my time there. He and his wife gave me 6 grapefruit spoons as a wedding present in 1973. When I left Bruton Street he took me out for lunch at his "club", I think it was called the Spanish club and I really felt that he was sorry to lose me.

The branch was refurbished during his time and we had a party with customers, the fizz flowed like water. As the party was coming to an end, one of our customers, Don Ward, said "Let's all go back to my club", we were all 3 sheets to the wind so about 10 of us went. His club was the Nell Gwynne/Gargoyle club in Dean St, Soho (later the Comedy club) We were served sandwiches etc. by topless ladies and then Don lead us in for the show. It consisted of bare bosomed ladies in some costume miming along to 1950's hits like "I'm an Indian Too", [Betty Hutton - I'm An Indian, Too \(1950\) \(youtube.com\)](#) Fairly camp stuff if I'm honest, anyway Mr and Mrs Willis were sitting

in the row behind us (girls from the 'mech room' and counter) and I remember hearing her say "Do you think this is appropriate for these young girls Clive?" I thought he would probably be in trouble when they got home. Happy Days.

(Anne Onymous)

Joan M Burd

This notice came from Barclays today.

Joan M Burd (maiden name) was one of 20 or more young ladies in Martins Victoria Street Liverpool in 1959 when I was there. Not sure if she is on the Grasshopper lists.

Best wishes Brian Roberts

I'm afraid not Brian, but I'm certain that many of our Liverpool members, who worked at 'Vic Street' will.

Clive Charles Willis

Dear Mr Baldwin,

I regret to inform you of the death of my father, Clive Charles Willis, on 19th March 2024 He enjoyed keeping abreast of the news from your association in your newsletters, but his time for reading them is now done.

Yours sincerely, Andrew Willis

New Members

Although it is always sad when I am advised of the death of a member or any other of our former Martins colleagues is received, but life goes on and I still hope to receive membership applications as I have recently from:

PAMELA RUSCOE (nee Gradwell)

Emailed me to say: *Alan Thomond told me about the Grasshopper Pensioners Club. He said you could send me the information. I worked at Martin's Bank in 1966 in Spring Gardens.*

MAUREEN WALKDEN

Who wrote: *'One or two other memories of the 1960's Although Accrington Branch was a beautiful building - it was not the same downstairs where we had to cook and eat our dinner. It was a basement with hot water central heating pipes round the ceiling with the occasional mouse that ran through. There was a very old gas cooker - when I went to local clearing I would be given a list of shopping - quite often a lamb chop from the butchers which would be grilled on the cooker. Another favourite was a gooseberry pie (delicious).*

I was a very inexperienced 16 year old and when I was asked to get a self certification stamp while taking the post a very kind post office staff told me it was a bit like getting a glass hammer!

That's all for now, MAUREEN

And welcome them to our Club!

AND SURELY OUR OLDEST MEMBER!

Mervyn Evans noticed our request and emailed me. Yes, it's that man again! Born in November

1922 makes Don 101! Can anyone else beat that?

IRONIC OR WHAT?

*The dictionary definition of: **PILLORY** is: a device made of a wooden or metal framework erected on a post, with holes for securing the head and hands, used during the medieval and renaissance periods for punishment by public humiliation and often further physical abuse.*



And the bank branch in question on the plaque? **SKIPTON**; which members might remember from our previous Newsletter was featured in the local newspaper 'The Craven Herald'. You might have a different opinion to me but surely it must be a sad day when Barclays resorts to a handwritten 'A' board in its banking hall prior to its closure.



OUR FREE LUNCHES

Since our last Newsletter, I have only had contact from two areas (Birmingham and East Sussex) in connection with our '**FREE LUNCH**' offer, for members who are unable to make it to our regular locations of **Bingley, Liverpool, London and Manchester.**

As our average spend per member/guest per function is no more than **£50 per head**, our Committee believe that a maximum '**FREE SPEND**' per **MEMBER** should not exceed this figure and that **GUESTS** will still need to pay **£30**, be that by our member (being their guest) or themselves. This still offers great value for our members and guests alike and we hope that as many members as possible will take up this offer to remember the 55th Anniversary of our demise.

There is still time if you would like to arrange a Lunch in your local area. Just let me know and I will include it in the next Newsletter when a Reservation Slip will be included.

Wednesday	20 th November	London
Wednesday	4 th December	Manchester
Thursday	12 th December	Liverpool
Monday	16 th December	Bingley

AND FINALLY:

I recently stumbled on a Facebook page titled: **'THE TOURIST HISTORIAN'**, and was intrigued by the reference to Martins Bank and his inaccurate comments about our history. That apart, I found that his photographs of our



Old Trafford branch were extremely interesting and that you will also.

Starting with the location: Dare I say 'unique'?



Old Trafford was a branch with two entrances, one on **Talbot Road** and the other on **Chester Road**, as evidenced in this contemporary Post Card (above) of the area. It would appear that this was the



Talbot Road entrance (left) to the branch in Martins days and this (right) is the branch in its original state following its opening by The Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank

Talbot Road entrance (left) to the branch in Martins days and this (right) is the branch in its original state following its opening by The Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank



And so we move on in time to a date (unknown) when it was still open as a Martins branch and VR Norman was the



manager in 1969 and its demise following closure on 31st July 1992.

The following photographs, of the inside of our Old Trafford branch have all been taken by 'The Tourist Historian' and will, no doubt, bring back



many happy memories to those members who worked there and used to walk through

these doors every day.

Isn't it amazing how the branch appears to have been frozen in time? Did it ever have the



impersonal Counter Screens or simply the highly-polished wood and glass moveable cashier-position privacy 'dividers'?





If you have memories of your time working at Old Trafford branch and you would like to share them with our members, in the next issue, please let me have them by either letter or email.

Although many of the fixtures and fittings in these photographs are original, some are obviously later additions and possibly during its life as a Barclays branch.

We must thank:

‘THE TOURIST HISTORIAN’
for his devotion to one of our former branches:
OLD TRAFFORD

There are more photographs of the branch on his **Facebook** page which can be visited by clicking on the following link:

[\(20+\) Facebook](#)



Once again, feel free to share your copy of our Newsletter with as many of your former colleagues so that they too might become members of our Club and please contact me with your memories of working for our truly great Bank.