

THE GRASSHOPPER PENSIONERS' CLUB



Website: www.martinsbank.co.uk

© gut informiert!

SECRETARY: David Baldwin, Lower Windle, Windle Royd Lane, Warley, HX2 7LY.

'Phone: 01422 832734. email: grasshoppers@btinternet.com

CHAIRMAN: Bernard Lovewell

TREASURER: Alan Thomond

WELFARE OFFICER: David Baldwin

DATABASE MANAGER: David Baxter

FUNCTION ORGANISERS:

Sue Williamson (Liverpool) George Hamilton (Manchester) David Baldwin (Yorkshire)

Spring Edition 2025

WE ARE STILL THERE!

BUT, FOLLOWING THE DEMISE OF OUR
COCKERMOUTH BRANCH WE ONLY HAVE:



But, as long as we have your support, we will continue to function as YOUR CLUB to remember the happy times we all had working for MARTINS as long as it is possible to do so.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

And two 'Red Letter' dates in particular!

2025 LUNCHES

LONDON	Thursday 27 th November
MANCHESTER	Wednesday 3 rd December
LIVERPOOL	Friday 12 th December
BINGLEY	Monday 15 th December

Which will be held at the following locations:

The Union Jack Club, Waterloo
The Pinewood Hotel, Handforth
The Racquet Club, Liverpool
Shipley Golf Club, Bingley

Wouldn't it be great if we had a record attendance for our **Liverpool Lunch**, which is being held on the date and day of the **56th Anniversary** of our demise? It's up to you to attend, but the location is already booked and is ready and waiting for us.

You could also spend the time between now and the summer persuading your former colleagues, who are not yet members, to join our Club.

A PLEA FROM JONATHAN

Our Webmaster, Jonathan Snowden, recently emailed me to say: *I forgot to ask you about*

something in the memorabilia: Have you seen within it anywhere a plastic bag/wrapper for 100 £1 notes, of the sort that used to be heat sealed and sent to cash centre? I have a note that I made without a date (or source; typical of my brain at the moment) that I had seen it somewhere. I think that possibly it was among someone else's stuff that was taken to that Christmas lunch I attended with you at The Racquet Club, Liverpool in 2019 for the 450th Anniversary, but I may be wrong.

Editor: I can only remember paper wrappers for various denominations in Martins. They were flat and 'gummed' and when folded they contained £500 in £1 and (possibly) £250 in 10/- notes, £2500 in £5s). They were finally sealed using a stick of Martins emblazoned sealing wax and a taper, but I could be wrong (as I usually am).

Can anyone help Jonathan with their memories of the polythene wrappers as I'm afraid that I am unable to do so?

More:

Thanks – it wasn't a note WRAPPER, it was the plastic bag that notes were sealed in to be sent off to cash centre. It was for £100 in £1 notes, and I think the printing on it was either red or orange. It had the name of Martins Bank on it. You would have folded over the end and put it in one of those electric heat sealers. It might even have been just prior to the merger, as some Barclays stationery was



actually printed with Martins Bank details – for example the form X2 remittance (as attached). I think I saw the cash

bag in the separate display of items that other people had brought along for the 450th lunch. No worries, it exists somewhere, and I am sure one will come along soon, there is always something new in this collection!

Jonathan continues:

I am still jaw-dropped by the Martins Bank cheque currently for sale on eBay for £25,000 – it is one of only two known to have been written by one Jimi Hendrix whose account was at 79 Edgware Road London. We have a digital image of his bank

statement, but I would love to have the real things if they were not so collectible!

[The Jimi Hendrix Experience - All Along The Watchtower \(Official Audio\)](#)



and a couple of the maestro's cheques for sale on eBay plus a 'restored statement' by Jonathan. Did any

of our members ever work at our 79 Edgware Road branch? It would be interesting to know if you did and remember Jimi.

JIMI HENDRIX 850				
IN ACCOUNT WITH MARTINS BANK LIMITED 79 EDGWARE ROAD LONDON N.W.2.				
DATE		DEBIT	CREDIT	BALANCE
23 JAN 43	BALANCE FWD			8.17.6CH
24 JAN 43		946.	5.0.0	3.17.6CH
25 JAN 43		501	15.13.0	11.17.6CH
27 JAN 43		946.	200.0.0	211.17.6CH
31 JAN 43		946.	35.0.0	
		500.	100.0.0	
		947.	20.0.0	
1 FEB 43				366.17.6CH
24 FEB 43		946.	61.0.0	322.2.6CH
27 MAR 43		214.	88.0.0	484.2.6CH
			1.10.0	
			13.2	
				485.19.6CH
				BALANCE FORWARD TO COMPUTER

Image © Martins Bank Archive Collections
Restored from original image 2019

And now:

More Martins Memories (in no particular order)



Seeing the photograph [Left], of **Bob Weightman** in last Spring's edition of the Newsletter, reminded me of my time with him, when he was Clerk in Charge of **Story Street, Hull** branch.

Above the branch was a flat occupied by an elderly lady. Some afternoons, when passing on his way home from school, a young lad would ring the doorbell to the flat, and Bob and I would hear the old lady slowly descending the stairs to find nobody at the door.

We discussed taking action, by waiting for the lad and then chasing him down the street with our round black rulers (so common at that time) in our hands.

On reflection, however, we thought it might not look too good, if seen by the 'Local Press' as it could be used to damage Martins' image as 'The Friendly Bank'.

Also at Story Street, Bob and I decided that our lady typist should be given the chance to work on the counter, and so she did (this in the time when ladies were not generally seen 'Front of House'). However, a less enlightened customer raised Hell, not being prepared to be served by a woman!

I don't want details of my finances broadcasting all over Hull!

Interesting times! **Wallace (Wal) Kaye**

(They certainly were back in those days Wallace and we all must have similar memories to those of Wallace which must not, and cannot be lost, to future generations so please feel free to share them with your former colleagues through our Newsletter.

A random view of last year's Liverpool Lunch at the Racquet Club to whet your appetite for this year's Lunch.



RETURNED MAIL

Mr D Millington, c/o Mrs R Doherty, Colchester

Can anyone provide us with further information about Mr Millington?

DEATH NOTICES

It is with regret that we have to announce the deaths of our following members and especially of those of Robert Bunn and Ken Quirk

QUIRK, Ken	on 1 st January, 2025
BUNN, Robert	on 6 th February 2025
EARL, C	in January 2025
WINSTANLEY Valerie	on 13 th February 2025
FOSTER, Edward 'Ted'	on 5 th December 2024 aged 95



I'm certain that everyone will remember **Ken Quirk**, who stepped in to be our Lunch Organiser and did an unbelievably excellent job for us in that role, yet wished to remain in the 'shade' (which was Typical of Ken). Ken was always

supported by his wife, Pam, who handwrote the place settings for our London and Liverpool Lunches, which they never missed. Ken died on New Year's Day following a short illness but made an extreme effort to attend our 2024 London Lunch, where he managed to enjoy a glass or two of red (which he said was the '*first for months*'), and meet old friends.

Ken was also a regular attendee of the Martins' Manchester lunches (the District where Ken began his Martins career) and will certainly be missed by all of his former colleagues throughout the country.

It is also with great sadness that we have to report the sudden death of our former Treasurer; **Robert Bunn**. Robert became our Treasurer following the resignation of Colin Redshaw, when we were struggling to



find someone to fill the role and held it until Ken 'persuaded' Alan Thomond when Robert felt it was time for him to retire. Following the death of Arthur Rowe (who was a member of the Union Jack Club and managed to obtain a 50% discount of the room hire for our London Lunches), Robert was in the process of becoming a member of the Club so that we could continue to enjoy our discounted rate, but suddenly died before his application could be completed.

Robert's Martins career was spent in various London branches and I am certain that many of our London members will have many fond and happy memories of Robert.

Please feel free to email (or write to) me should anyone have memories of both Ken and Robert so that they can be published in a future Newsletter.

Our Liverpool members will, no doubt, remember **Valerie (Val) Winstanley** who



worked at our Victoria ('Vic') Street, Liverpool branch, who died on 13th February this year. Valerie was the wife of Eric Winstanley and was Christened Valerie as she was born on Valentine's Day.

Valerie started her Martins career at

'Liverpool East' branch (*above left*), which confused me, until I found the following on our website: *Martins Branch at 1 Prescott Street Liverpool 7 is known simply (and perhaps somewhat confusingly to those outside the North West) as "East" Branch. Opened in April 1885 by the Bank of Liverpool, it survives for more than 100 years before being closed. The ornate tower can be seen from quite a distance in this part of the City, and this lovely image of East Branch is taken probably in the late 1930s or early 1940s* as 'Miss Valerie Lever' in 1958, before being transferred to 'Vic Street' just before Christmas in 1959 and worked there until 1967 when she resigned. Val was also a member of The Argosy Players:

<https://www.martinsbank.co.uk/The Argosy Players Menu.htm>

Jean Lovering advised me of the death of **Sally Elliott** nee **Hantsch**

Although not a member, Sally Elliot was a lifelong friend from her days at our **Bournemouth** branch. Sally, secretary to Mr. Allison passed away on Sunday 23rd March at the age 95. Jean writes:

Having a Swiss father, Sally spoke fluent French and took a great interest in local matters and was on the European Women's Committee, spending a great deal of time at the Houses of Parliament, as well as being involved in local political life. She was very intelligent, but, due to strict upbringing, Sally was not allowed to go to University. She passed all her Institute banking exams (Part One) first time. She was very kind and helpful and always active and had a happy marriage.

Jean Lovering (nee Vince)

NEW MEMBERS

Isn't it amazing that, after 55 years there are so many of us around and, especially, becoming members of our Club! It simply illustrates that the 'referendum' decision was correct!

This year, to date, we have 13 new members and our thanks must go to our top recruiter: Sue Williamson for her sterling efforts (no arm-twisting required) and runner-up; David Baxter.

In the hope that some, if not all, of our new members will be remembered by their former colleagues here they come with details of the branches at which they worked:

Shirley Lewis, nee Hargreaves who started her Martins career at Nelson branch in 1957.

John Christopher Lewis who joined Martins at our Burnley branch in 1953, spending time at Colne, Earby, Craven District Relief and Carnforth. John's National Service was spent at RAF Shawbury

Christine Butterworth nee Mawman in 1955 at Nelson branch

Barbara Cobley

N Howden nee Sheard Joined Martins in 1966 at Charing Cross and then Rock Ferry

B Swain nee Scott Starting her Martins career in 1968 at Woolton, transfers to Speke and Hunts Cross followed

Linda Campion nee Boardman Joined in 1967 at Liverpool City Office

Mary Bannister nee Moorman

Commenced working at our Lord Street branch in Southport in 1954 before transferring to Heywoods branch in 1960 and Liverpool Overseas in 1965

Averil Fitzgerald nee Quick Joined Martins in 1963 at Liverpool City Office

Barbara Adams nee McCarthy Like several of our new members, Barbara's career started at Liverpool City Office and, although not at Liverpool City Office, like mine in 1966

Jennifer (Jenny) Hardy nee Jenion Started earlier (in 1958) at Heywoods branch, followed by a transfer to Head Office Premises in 1967 and swiftly followed by yet other moves to Church Street then Head Office Secretary's Department in 1968 before ending her days at Clubmoor branch during Martins' days.

David Hardy Started in 1963 in Head Office Chief Accountant's Department, followed by a transfer to Kirkby and Clubmoor then a transfer to 99 Stanley Road, Bootle and finally, before the takeover, Liverpool City Office

John Hollingworth Joined Martins in 1960 on the 'sunny side' of the Pennines, at Elland branch before Dewsbury in 1964 then back to Elland and, finally Holmfirth in 1967.

John is currently in Australia, visiting his daughter, and wishes to be remembered to everyone who knows him.



John is pictured here on the extreme right of the back row in the 1966 Spring edition of the Martins Bank Magazine and Elland branch below.



Norma Valerie (Val) Broughton nee Parry Started her career at Canning Place (below) before her transfer to Liverpool University branch.



MORE MEMORIES and MEMORIBILIA

Marilyn was sorting through a box of old letters today and she came across one from a former colleague who still worked at Victoria Street Branch. It was sent shortly after the 'merger' and I am sending the part with a rhyme written by some former Martins employees who had gone on to work for Hill Samuel. I am not sure I felt suffocated by Barclays as eventually good career opportunities opened up but it does reflect the manner in which Martins was appreciated. *Bernard Lovewell*

Tom

Blundell came in to see us last week
he works at Lombard St now.
We have quite a few come in to
our branch from Hill Samuel, in Redcar
Row, they all used to work at Martins,
at Lombard St. They sent us a
cardboard box last Friday with a
bunch of anagrams in and a card
which read:—

Martins Bank is now deceased,
It's customers are not very pleased,
It was the best of clearing Banks,
For that at least, we give our thanks

Although in time all things decay,
Twas a sad way to pass away.
There are so many better ways,
Than suffocation by Barclays.

They came in on Monday all

And this, via Keighley Local History Group:



This signed slip from Fred Simpson acknowledging a loan of £50 from Mrs Jackson is dated 16th March 1922. "Also she has left

deeds at the Bank of Liverpool and Martins, Keighley, as bond for my account".

It also reminds us of times long gone, when every town had numerous Cinemas:

Oxford Hall was an entertainment building on Oakworth Road, opposite the end of Victoria Road. It was opened as Oxford Hall Picture House by local businessmen Fred Simpson in 1911. Simpson originally owned drapery and furniture emporiums in Keighley that had both burnt down. He made his own short films to show alongside mainstream offerings using local residents and locations. Its capacity is listed as being 500 in the Kinematograph Year Book, Program Diary and Directory of 1914.

By the 1920s, the cinema was one of seven in Keighley, alongside the Picture House on North Street, Regent, Cosy Corner on Low Street, The Palace, The Russell Street and The Market Cinema. The Oxford Hall cinema features in a couple of paintings by Stanley R. Boardman as part of his 1920's Boy series.

Simpson didn't manage to make a success of the enterprise and by 1927 was being pursued by investors who wanted their money back (including the grandmother of item loaner Desmond Jackson). He died in 1929. By 1935 the cinema was being run by the same people who ran the Picture House on North Street. Both cinemas were taken over by the Essoldo group in 1954 and the Oxford Hall cinema was finally closed for good in June 1959. It reopened as a bingo hall in 1961 and was badly damaged by a fire in 1973, although it continued to function as a bingo hall. The building still stands and in 2017 is occupied by Wedges hair salon and Workouts Health Club and Gym (which has been there since 1991).

The original item was loaned to the History Society by Desmond Jackson of Thwaites Brow in 2008. Additional, background information from articles on the Keighley News website and the Vale'n'Dale website. The contemporary photograph of Oxford Hall was taken by Tim Neal in 2019.

And memories from Robin Lucas

I joined the bank on 16th October 1961 having previously been interviewed at 68 Lombard Street by **Frank Gillham**, the London Staff manager. My first few weeks were spent at the London Training branch in **Waterloo Place**.

Another trainee on that same course was **Susan Childs** from **Fenchurch Street** branch who was subsequently assigned to **Oxford Circus** branch. We became friends, and we used to meet occasionally during the next few years.

After the Training Branch, I was assigned to 88, Wigmore Street branch (11-43-90), and



shown the branch routine by my predecessor for a few days. Repetitive things such as on a Monday in the Banking Hall, changing blotting paper, cleaning and filling inkwells, winding the clock, along with the daily tasks such as hauling the statements and ledgers up to the first floor from the basement on a rope lift, and all the other tasks the branch "junior" did, including manning the 6 line old fashioned telephone "doll's eye switchboard".

The manager was **Heber Matheson McKellar**, an avuncular man with *Brylcreemed* hair, and his daily routine would sometimes include what was known as "entertaining clients" in the late afternoon at the nearby Mandeville Hotel. He would often return to the branch after 6pm, sometimes later, after a rather convivial time and I always had to wait for him to take his time reading and signing correspondence.

As the branch junior, I had to wait until all the letters had been signed, before I could take the outgoing post to the Post Office, since the London and Head Office bags did not fit a normal post box. The District Office of the Post Office in Welbeck Street closed around 6:30pm, and if there was registered mail it meant I had to take the post to the 24 hour Post Office in Leicester Square. I then faced a trip on the underground out to West London, often arriving home some time well after 8pm.

Our most famous customer was Wilfred Pickles, who had a programme on the BBC Light program. In that program, he used to ask pensioners questions, and then tell his wife Mabel to give them 7/6d or ten shillings. The maximum was £2-0s-0d - his BBC cheque was £80 per programme!



Image © Martins Bank Archive Collections

Martins Bank Magazine doesn't visit the old Branch, but in the winter 1960 Edition, there is this photograph of BBC Radio's Wilfred Pickles and his wife Mabel, visiting 88 Wigmore Street. Mr Pickles is known for handing out the cash, but perhaps on this occasion the boot is on the other foot!

On the other hand, our most infamous customer was Samuel Bloom who was taken to court and convicted of some offences in the Mandy Rice-Davies and Christine Keeler mould. Apparently, he was accused of running a "*Stewhouse of vice*" and a "*Den of iniquity*" and was sent to prison!

One day, a member of staff took his lunch break, but did not return. Later in the afternoon, we had a visit from the Police to say that he had been arrested for attempting to rob a jeweller's shop!

After over two years at the branch, I decided to return to my home town, Birkenhead, and requested a transfer to the Liverpool District.

More on that next time!

Before and After



This (left) is a photograph of a long-lost branch, South John Street, Liverpool, which took a direct hit during the Second World War and the following newspaper clipping (below) is all that remained of the branch after the bomb hit. Even in the darkest hours,

we never missed an opportunity to sell the security of our bank!



Thanks must again go to Jonathan Snowden for his never-ending work on our website and another link to South John Street branch:

Much is said in the Twenty-First Century about "bankers' bonuses" - and most of it derogatory - we would do well to look at a time when such reward was fully justified, and not over the top either in terms of amount, or reason. In December 1941, following the loss of much of Liverpool's South John St - including Martins' Branch to the Luftwaffe, the Bank rewards Mr A Corkill, a member of the staff, with a bonus of £20. Under normal circumstances, the amount would be added to salary, but as Mr Corkill is serving in the armed forces, it can only be paid as a bonus.

Nevertheless, £20 at Christmas 1941 must have been most welcome, and will have probably paid for as good a Christmas as was possible under the constraints of Wartime Britain. According to the historic inflation calculator at www.thisismoney.co.uk, £20 in 1941 was worth around £1100 in 2019. Our thanks to friend of the Archive, Stephen Walker, for this copy of the letter written to Mr Corkill, advising him of his bonus. Note that by December, the Branch notepaper has been altered to give the temporary address of Liverpool City Office Branch. This will have remained in place until the sad decision was taken not to find alternative premises.



with thanks to Jonathan Snowden and the Martins Bank Archive)

COLNE BRANCH I was in Colne recently and took the opportunity of taking a look at our former branch in the Lancashire town. The



photograph (left) was taken in 1939 and the following (below). A mere 86 years separates the two but, with the exception of the street light and

the pristine stone of the original building, they could have been taken on the same day.

Although the Barclaybank cash dispenser has been removed,

the original Night Safe, sadly minus our Coat of Arms, still adorns the front of the building and I wonder how many of our members can



remember accessing the safe behind it every morning to extract the locked black and brown



night safe pouches before entering them in the Night Safe Book to await counting the contents and collection by our customers?

Does anyone remember WENDY REEVE?

My reason for asking being that Wendy recently posted a comment on our Facebook page in which Wendy wrote:

This was the year I joined Martins Bank, Hendon Central. I loved my time there until Barclays took us over



I have already asked Wendy to make contact but I'm still waiting. If anyone does know Wendy, could you try to recruit her as a member?

A SAD DAY IN SKIPTON

The former Head Office of The Craven Bank on Skipton High Street is about to become yet another 'Coffee House'.



Isn't it amazing how, previously thriving branches, have fallen foul of the 'Cashless Society' and how they

attract people attempting to see into them? I spent two great years in 'Securities' at Skipton (with Brian Horn and Malcolm Rhodes) during my Barclays years but even then (1972 to 1974) the majority of staff were still ex-Martins, as was the ethos under our Manager, John Bainbridge.

Other ex-Martians included Bertha Peacock, Graham Ellis, Diane Pickup, Carol Thornton and, I am certain others, however I am unable to confirm their heritage.

TYRREL STREET, BRADFORD



Originally opened in 1923 by the Bank of Liverpool and Martins, I had the dubious honour of closing the branch on 7th July 1982 after organising the transfer of its business to Barclays, 10 Market Street branch.



After more than 100 years of its existence, the Liver bird, above the front door,



still remains as vigilant as ever.



Some of our former colleagues, all of whom worked in some role during their Martins career (from top left): Denis Rotherford, Jack Tunnicliffe, Philip Lister, Bob Weightman, Fred Walker, and last but by no means least, Brian Pearse.