

# THE GRASSHOPPER PENSIONERS' CLUB

## MARTINS BANK

Website: [www.martinsbank.co.uk](http://www.martinsbank.co.uk)

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CHAIRMAN: Bernard Lovewell

TREASURER: Robert Bunn

WELFARE OFFICER: Susan Sutcliffe

Membership Database Secretary: David Baxter

Main Lunch Secretary: Ken Quirk

Easter 2022 Edition

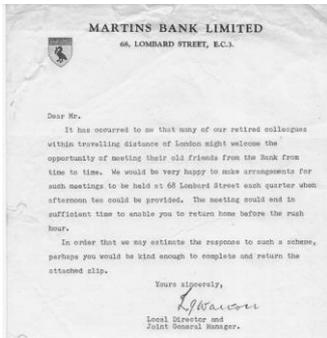


### IN THIS EDITION:

THE FOUNDING OF OUR CLUB,  
AGM DETAILS and WATER STREET.

2022 will mark the 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of our Club and, as with other significant dates, we would like to celebrate its founding by combining the Annual General Meeting with a celebration of the birth of our Club.

In early 1967 L.J. Walton, Local Director and



Assistant General Manager, wrote a speculative letter to London District Pensioners (left) with a response slip for the former staff to register their interest in forming a Club. A 'Geographical

Breakdown of London District Pensioners' was undertaken, which showed that there were 154 male pensioners and 35 female pensioners of which 58 male and 18 female pensioners lived in the London area (Including 'Near Home County Towns'). From between '140/150' letters mailed, 111 responses

Area	Male Pensioners	Female Pensioners
LONDON AREA (INCLUDING NEAR HOME COUNTY TOWNS)	134	18
Other Areas	20	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>35</b>

were received which, after all, was an excellent result for an initial mailshot. The analysis was broken down between 'Lombard Street' and 'District' as well as 'Ladies' and sub-divided between: 'Interested', 'Not Interested' and 'Borderlines'. Of the 111 responses, 76 were

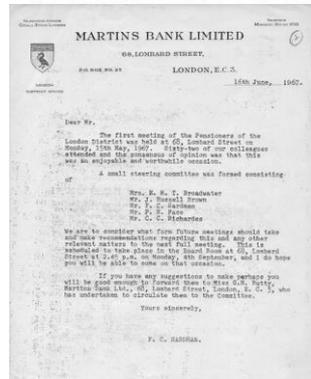
Interested', 30 'Not-Interested' and 5 'Borderlines'; which was similar to our recent referendum.

So that was it and the letter (below) was sent to all pensioners, within travelling distance,

Response	Lombard St.	District	Ladies	Total
Interested	30	41	18	89
Not Interested	9	35	6	50
Borderlines	1	5	1	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>146</b>

7th March, 1967

inviting them to attend the inaugural meeting in the Board Room on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of 68 Lombard Street. The end result was that 62 pensioners attended that first meeting of our Club as evidenced by the letter (left) and officers were elected. 55 years on, just look at us now; members



throughout Great Britain and even one in Spain! Does that qualify us to be called not only a 'National Club' but an 'International Club'?

### A SAD AND FINAL FAREWELL TO MEOLS BRANCH

After being a prominent building in Birkenhead Road, Meols, since its construction by The Bank of Liverpool & Martins in 1926, our art deco building, after being repurposed latterly as a beauty salon, finally met the 'Grim Reaper' and

is, sadly, no longer; as evidenced by this recent photograph taken by Brian A Browne (Below). Meols as it used to be:

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and more recently: Sadly gone for ever.



But, and this is a **BIG BUT**, as you will see when you read on, not everyone demolishes our old branches and some have actually started their project, just like **Kinrise** (with our Head Office building) albeit on a similar but smaller scale. To discover a heart-warming tale, read on as **David Phelan** writes: *Hi Dave, in April 2020, when Covid was taking the world by storm, what do you think I did? **I BOUGHT A DECOMMISSIONED BANK!*** To paraphrase the familiar strap line:



***This is not just any bank  
This is a  
MARTINS BANK!***  
Although I eventually paid



more than double the auction guide-price, I would happily have paid more)

as I loved it so much. For nine months following my purchase of the former **Martins** branch in **Grange-over-Sands**, (below opposite) I did little more than tidy the place which Barclays had left empty, except for a few old

coins worth about 50 pence in total, for 15 months.

Luckily, the structure was sound and on a full inspection it was actually in better condition than originally thought. So I started ....

On removing carpet tiles and lino, I uncovered the beautiful terrazzo floor in the main banking hall and spent almost 200 hours repairing it. I also paid a decorator to paint and stain the wood on, what was now, my high 'Tudor' ceiling (due to the amount of care and attention it needed).

The wooden flooring was quite patchy through years of wear and tear so that was replaced, like-for-like. The electrics were fine, current and modern and, luckily, the heating system had been replaced in 2018, just 12 months before closure after 143 years of service to the local community.

I didn't rush anything, as I needed to formulate the best plan of action since it was, and still is, a listed building which meant that its restoration needed a great deal of careful thought and planning.

All of the old fluorescent lights, alarm and fire panels were ripped out and sold, along with many internal window bars (more money to fund the project). All rooms are being repurposed, with no need to demolish or extend. The manager's office (obviously, becoming a bedroom due to the number of times the word **'NO'** would have been used in it). The back office has become the master bedroom.

After four months of ownership, I discovered a blocked-up doorway in the managers' office that would have given private access to the upstairs toilet, which I have now reinstated.

It took me 10 months of ownership before I submitted a full Change of Use Consent and Local Building Control applications but, in that time, I received the support of many locals who wrote letters of support and, more importantly, **NONE AGAINST**. In August 2021 I was given full residential permission for a single dwelling with the full support of the Conservation Officer and local Council.

After my Planning Application had been posted outside the building, I caught a lady reading my planning notice, who informed me that she worked at the branch in 1970 and retired from there in 2014.

I told her that she was the most important person I had met and sought her help and guidance as to what changes had been made since Barclays would not release any plans or documents. We are maintaining

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*contact BUT it would be great if there was anyone alive who was a Martins employee in the 1960s before the bank vault was extended in 1967.*

*This brings me to: **THE VAULT**. I decided that a hole needed to be cut through the vault wall which was easier said than done. I employed professional diamond drillers and cutters (who usually work on nuclear power stations and oil rigs) to cut a four foot by two foot six hole which took three whole days to cut. The cost? £3000, but definitely worth it as the vault is fourteen feet by eight and is now a great, well-lit, south facing room, albeit with a large metal door, which I will keep because of its position and weight.*

***GEORGE CLARKE**, the renovation guy on television, made contact in September, but lost interest when he realised that there was no real drama in the conversion. I own the building; I am not redesigning it; I have sufficient funds to restore it; I don't need to sell my home to fund the restoration AND my 70 year old wife refuses to live in a van on a muddy field or get pregnant mid project!*

***MOVING IN FOR CHRISTMAS?** I'm just not sure what year this will be as I am doing ninety percent of the work myself BUT it has helped to keep me busy and sane during Covid lockdowns. There still is lot of plumbing to do and decorating, as well as new bathroom and kitchen to be fitted, but it is taking shape and we will be in this year, or next, as long as I remain healthy.*

***THOMAS GRESHAM & ANNE FEARNLEY:***

*As the building is 'Tudor Revival' I decided to source portraits from 1563 to grace the walls of 'my bank' whilst adding gravitas. I have also collected some interesting memorabilia, which I have displayed in a cabinet.*

***CONCLUSION:** There will be more projects like this, as more bank buildings are sold, but to be a single home, like mine, without major change will be rare. This truly is a labour of love, and not a financial venture, so time is not that important. Watch this space ....*

*David Phelan*

*Martins Bank Limited,  
Grange-over-Sands.*

## **OUR LONG-AWAITED 2022**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

As a result of the Covid pandemic, it has been necessary for us to postpone our 2020 and 2021 Spring Lunches which, previously, had been held at the Barnsgate Manor Vineyard and Restaurant. However, with it becoming

insolvent in 2019, coupled with the fact that it was remote, your Committee took the decision that a more-central location would be beneficial for the majority of our members who, predominately, live in the south of England.

**The DRAFT Agenda for the 2022 AGM but with any additional matters that you would like to add.**

#### **AGENDA**

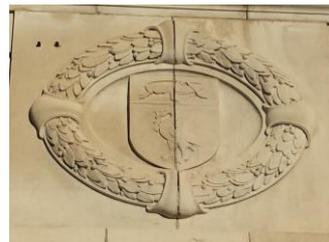
- 1. Welcome (by our Chairman; Bernard Lovewell)**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Minutes of 2019 AGM**
- 4. Matters Arising**
- 5. Chairman's Report**
- 6. Treasurer's Report**
- 7. Secretary's Report**
- 7. Welfare Officer's Report**
- 8. Election of Officers**
- 9. Election of Auditor**
- 10. Any Other Business**

**Should you wish to add further items for discussion at the forthcoming AGM please advise me (in writing) either by letter or email.**

Although our Accounts were completed for 2019, 2020 and have been for 2021, because of Covid, we have been unable to hold our planned AGMs during 2020 and 2021, but hope to this year, provisionally, on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022 where all three sets of Accounts will need to be accepted by our members present at the AGM.

### **ANOTHER THWARTED ROBBERY**

In our Christmas edition, **Robin Holland-Martin's** account of the **Lombard Street** theft triggered a memory of a similar incident at



Barclays Vicar Lane branch in Leeds, which was diagonally opposite our, then closed, Martins branch where our Grasshopper and

Liver Bird continue to maintain guard, with their proud and watchful gaze, after almost fifty two years since our demise and eighty four since they were first installed in their elevated position. You will remember that, in the early 70s, former military servicemen were recruited for various branch roles. One such person was (Major) Harold Whitehouse, who was by then the first cashier at Vicar Lane branch, when an armed robber entered the branch and demanded cash. Harold remained calm and collected and grabbed a cloth '£100 Silver' bag; whilst continuing his conversation with the robber. Harold managed to trigger the alarm whilst filling the bag with empty coin bags before handing it to the 'thief'. As he left the branch, Harold followed at a safe distance but

[Type here]

with the failed thief getting nothing more than a cloth bag full of empty coin bags. Now, **back to more-interesting photographs of Vicar Lane branch:**

[www.martinsbank.co.uk/11-88-80 Leeds Vicar Lane.htm](http://www.martinsbank.co.uk/11-88-80 Leeds Vicar Lane.htm)



1938 above and below (left)



2013 above

My 2013 photograph simply added to Jonathan Snowden's confusion, which you could possibly help to resolve by visiting the **Vicar Lane** page via the above link. Constructed on the north side in the east-end of 'The Headrow' (an art deco development) in Leeds, my personal view is that the bottom (left) photograph is correct, as the buildings in the distance behind the branch are clearly visible, and that the one (top left) has been edited, as there is a noticeable gap at roof level as well as the features on the left-hand side of the building appear to be the same as those on the right. Once again, your thoughts would be appreciated.

**MORE COMMENTS:** *Mike Stonebridge*



*emailed: I had never seen the 1971 film of Dad's Army, screened last night and was surprised to see it featured **Martins Bank!***

*[www.dadsarmy.fandom.com](http://www.dadsarmy.fandom.com)*

*Informs me that it was always intended **Martins Bank** be the location, but this was later changed to **Swallow Bank** and that the building was actually a pub, possibly in Chalfont St Giles High Street. There was a link to [www.martinsbank.co.uk](http://www.martinsbank.co.uk) which led to the **Martins Bank Archive**.*

*I actually thought the film was really good and was based on early episodes of the series. The introduction of the brass grille at 'No 68', reminds me of another story which lead to changes.*

*One Saturday morning in the 1960s at Guernsey, St. Peter Port branch, someone*

*dressed in yachting clothes appeared, claiming to be a Director of the Bank, with no identification whatsoever and asked to withdraw some cash. I believe it was the 'second man', (as there were only seven staff) who, being unable to satisfy himself that the person was who he claimed to be, refused to provide any cash. Shortly afterwards, the Bank issued all branches with a book containing the signatures of all senior members of the Bank! **Mike Stonebridge (only served at Guernsey branch)***

### **IVAN FLETCHER'S MEMORIES**

*I joined in 1953 at 16 straight from Bromley Grammar School on the introduction of **Arthur Jackson** a relief manager in London District (father of my best friend Paul Jackson) who was employed at **Farnborough, Kent** branch.*

***Frank Gillam, Staff Manager** posted me to **Tubs Hill, Sevenoaks**, a very small office run by **Jack Cotter**, a returned Naval Officer from*



*HMS Sheffield who was very hard of hearing caused by 16 inch gunfire during the War.*

***Michael Jeffrey and Robin Jessup** were the cashiers and I was the new trainee junior. Jack was an*

*extraordinary character, 'high octane' in every way!*

*My initiation was to take the very large Bankers Almanac to the strong room where I was offered the branch air rifle and invited to shoot at the book set against the thick steel door! My success was measured according to the number of pages holed by the 0.176 'slug' and was considered passable.*

*Part of my duty was to accompany Jack in his ancient Austin 7 to the town's Post Office with an HVP (High Value Packet\*) containing old banknotes for return to the Chief Cashier, whilst holding the broken car door closed as the lock had failed; not the best security to say the least.*

*Handwritten statements and ledgers were checked as we balanced the books at the year end, culminating with a quick ring of the alarm to alert the Postmistress, next door, who then arrived with whisky and mince pies to celebrate!*

[Type here]

*Two fun packed years before National Service in the RAF; a far more austere existence!*



*On demob, a posting to **Chislehurst** under **Reg Thorogood** where I ran the **Water Tower sub branch** (left and below), a vulnerable premises*

*where we were raided twice! The branch guard **Mr Willmot** accompanied me from the main branch, as I had to take cash in a case affixed to my wrist to top up the small reserve held there.*



*On arrival we were attacked by two masked men with pickaxe handles and ammonia. Being unarmed we decided to jettison our bags as a decoy (mine only held cheque books, as the cash was in my pocket and the guard lost his lunch of bread and sausages). Just imagine their faces on opening the bags! We escaped to the sanctity of the sub branch, shaken but not badly harmed.*

*Was a career in banking meant to be this hazardous? Promotion followed as "second man" at **Waterloo Place** under **Harold Glover** (right), another ex- military gunnery battalion officer whose father was the Chief Constable of Liverpool and a friend of **Mungo Conacher**, Martins Chief General Manager.*



*'Rusty' Palk* (left), replaced **Harold Glover** on his retirement, before he quickly became an Assistant General Manager in **Head Office**.



*When **Norman Bill** arrived, I moved on to **36, Curzon Street** just before the **Barclays** merger. As a footnote I went on to manage St. James's Street then to **Barclays 54** Head Office as a GMA and Local Director/Corporate Director at Nottingham LHO. I spent 17 out of 43 years service with **Martins**, retiring in 1996. Some of this may be of interest to my contemporaries. (Editor: I'm certain it will Ivan).*

*As a footnote I went on to manage St. James's Street then to **Barclays 54** Head Office as a GMA and Local Director/Corporate Director at Nottingham LHO. I spent 17 out of 43 years service with **Martins**, retiring in 1996. Some of this may be of interest to my contemporaries. (Editor: I'm certain it will Ivan).*

*Who can ever forget dripping molten red sealing wax on one's fingers when sealing the string around the brown paper HVP parcel before taking it to the local Post Office? **Julian Taylor** also shared his memories of HVPs: *In those days Tuesday was the day that surplus or old bank notes were despatched**

*\* **HVP**: With thanks to **David Baxter** and the link he provided to the: **Great Britain Philatelic Society** website where **Martins** is featured:*

*Next column: Back and front of **HVP** tags sent from **Liverpool** office to **Ambleside, Westmoreland** in 1956.*

*Who can ever forget dripping molten red sealing wax on one's fingers when sealing the string around the brown paper HVP parcel before taking it to the local Post Office? **Julian Taylor** also shared his memories of HVPs: *In those days Tuesday was the day that surplus or old bank notes were despatched**



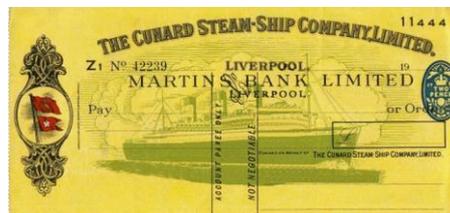
*to Head Office in **Liverpool**. This was done by post by way of **HVPs** (**High Value Packets**) Each packet contained £5000. Carefully parceled and sealed with wax by the **First Cashier**.*

***George Dale** (**Keighley's First Cashier**) would depart on foot to the **Post Office**, with one parcel under each arm, accompanied by a junior male clerk. The duo would leave the branch on the dot at 11.50 am to ensure the parcels could be deposited with the **Post Office** in time for him to catch his bus home for lunch. Most of the town were aware of this routine but no attack was ever threatened. (**Julian** might remember this **Riddlesden** service that **George** used to catch).*



*to Head Office in **Liverpool**. This was done by post by way of **HVPs** (**High Value Packets**) Each packet contained £5000. Carefully parceled and sealed with wax by the **First Cashier**.*

## CUNARD



*Delivering his latest memories of **Martins Bank** at our **London Lunch**,*

***Robin Holland-Martin** mentioned '**Cunard**', which triggered another memory from **Carmel Bradley** who wrote: '*it certainly brought back many memories of **Liverpool City Office** and my husband, **Roy Bradley**, paying the one million pound cheque for **CUNARD** which, I believe, was framed and now I wonder what happened to it?*'*

**Editor: Does anyone know?**

## IT'S BEEN LIKE WAITING FOR A BUS SINCE OUR CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER!

*By which I mean that memories have arrived like a blizzard. **Anthony Roe** emailed: *Many thanks for keeping we **Martian** survivors up to date with all matters **Martian**-fascinating records and reminiscences.**

*The pictures of **Liverpool City Office** showing the '**Horseshoe**' area struck a chord. I joined there on 14 Aug 1961 as a junior and the junior 'box' is top right: I can make out three juniors and believe I was the middle one if the pic was*

[Type here]

taken 1961-62. There were normally four juniors-Doug McKie was 'No.1', I was 'No.2', Barry Ward 'No.3' and Gordon Lithgow 'No.4'. My tasks included the 'walks'-delivering daily statements & paid cheques to Cunard, Brocklebank's, LIBS, Lewis', Sir John Holts plus others. I also did the daily large cheque clearing at the Bank of England in Castle Street. I remember the Chief Accountant was Leo Ward-I don't see him in the picture. Ken Dodd popped in now and again. Alec Tunnington was the Branch Manager whom one rarely saw (incidentally he lived not 400 yards from me in West Kirby). In some of my lunch hours I would pop into the original Cavern to see groups that would later become famous: The Beatles, Gerry and The Pacemakers, Swinging Bluejeans, The Fourmost and The Dakotas.

After a year I moved to **Liverpool University** branch where the Manager was **Kenneth Tarbuck (left)** of the '**Tarbuck Knot**' fame-this was used in climbing. The Bursar at Liverpool



University then was **Billy Liddell** of **Liverpool FC** fame and we saw him at the branch quite regularly. The Metropolitan Cathedral was under construction then-completed in 1967 and dubbed '**Paddy's Wigwam**'.

I went on to **Borough Road, Birkenhead** (Tranmere Rovers banked there), **Relief** and **almost all the Liverpool region branches** and also **Longtown, Bowness and Ilkley**. Barclays Inspection just on the merger in December 1969 then to Guernsey, Isle of Wight, Southampton LHO, Christchurch, Winchester and, finally, Southampton retiring as Senior Premier Banking Manager in 1997.

I still have my Martins tie and other memorabilia: statements, cheque book, book matches and some Martins Magazines. My wife, **Patricia**, joined Martins at **Birkenhead Park**, thence to **Birkenhead, Claughton Village and Meols**. I first met **Patricia Nolan** when I was involved in training cashiers at **Castle Street, Liverpool** training centre. She went with me to Guernsey post merger where she worked at what was then the old **Martins branch at Fountain Street (right)**.



## THE LIVERPOOL LUNCH

As mentioned previously, several members who attended the December Liverpool Lunch, were treated to a tour of the ground floor and either walked up the eight floors to the Board Room or took the easy route in one of the high-speed lifts.

**Barry Hopkins**, who attended the Lunch, also remembers his time in **Water Street** writing: *I had three stints in 4, Water Street/Liverpool City Office. The first in 1959, then a gap before I returned from 1961 until 1963 and was there during the 'so-called merger' when I was in 'Securities'. Then, in Barclays' days '83-ish as a Manager. I'm telling this because, in the two/three photos, I recognise almost everyone, except that I cannot magnify and may struggle with names...apart from mine!*

*It was a truly superb place to work: sense of space, lighting (part natural) was excellent, building cool in the hottest summers, warm in winter (heating in walls I believe), during the power strikes building has a generator, lighting/heat so no problem, and not least of all, LHO had a full catering staff, think 'Directors dining room' but of course, coffee in the mornings, two/three course (pre-pared on site) lunch one shilling and threepence, cheese and biscuits extra 6d?, tea in the afternoon.....what a life, no wonder I spent so much time there!*

*One amusing incident, was during the annual Manager's and wives drinks held in the boardroom, (the Directors' way of saying 'Thank you' to the Managers and their wives.. One such occasion, Catherine and I ended up with a Richard Talbot and his wife, as usual standing around and of course with plate for the sandwiches etc. plus a glass of wine which could be clipped onto the plate courtesy of a plastic holder. Well you could only do this for a period of time, okay chatting to different folk but eventually we 'four' decided we'd had enough and thought let's sneak out. Okay, for those having had any time in the splendid entirely wood-panelled room.....we 'homed in' on a door, assuming it an exit, getting nearer and nearer, Richard having glanced around, suddenly announced "Right let's go", door was opened Richard rushed out, we followed rapidly behind him, in fact piling on top of each other.....it was a packed BROOM Cupboard!! We had to sheepishly back out adjusting clothes etc., hoping no-one had seen us!*

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## DEATH NOTICES

**DIMALINE, Barry** On 24<sup>th</sup> December, aged 72



It is with sadness that we have to advise the death of **BARRY DIMALINE** who started his Martins career at **1, Market Place, Hull** in 1966, following which he moved to **Market Place's self-accounting sub-branch at Story Street (right)** in 1968. On learning of Barry's death, **Colin Redshaw** wrote: I did indeed know **Barry**. I was working at **Story Street** when he joined and, later, I worked with him on Inspection. We saw him at the **Leeds** and **London Anniversary Lunches** and although we knew he had not been well, didn't realise that he was still at risk. Very sad.



## RETURNED NEWSLETTERS

The Christmas Newsletter addressed to: **EJ Hatton of Hounslow** was returned with the reason: **Return to Sender** whilst that to **Mrs C Raven of Ipswich** was returned: **No longer at this address**. Is anyone aware of their new addresses?

## WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Eileen Grace SKELTON (nee HARRISON), Anthony DENTON and Terence MUDD**, who is



pictured (extreme left, seated) in The Argosy Players production of **Relative Values** by Noël Coward Staged: 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> December 1964 at Crane

Theatre Liverpool.

## SOME INTERESTING DONATIONS

The first items are from Clive Jones' collection:



(Left) An unused canvas 'Registered Mail' sack in pristine condition. Then, an original oval Bank of Liverpool & Martins 'Home Safe'



followed by one of the infamous orange plastic grasshopper money boxes with a copy of the original marketing flyers. Clive



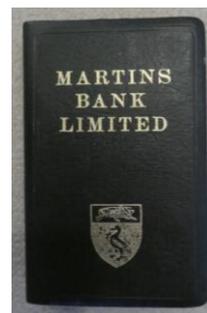
had also saved some of our 'book matches'



(bottom of previous column)

which, from my memory, rarely did what they

were supposed to do: **Light!** As their heads dropped-off when struck and you usually had to use several before success was achieved. Finally, yet another 'Home Safe', but not in the usual green; this one is black and all will be added to Jonathan's Archive.



## Annual General Meeting and Lunch

Planning for our long-awaited AGM and Lunch has commenced but we need an indication of how many members and guests will be attending to enable us to reserve the appropriately-sized room. The AGM will be held on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June**. If you intend to attend, can I ask you to either email or telephone me before February 12<sup>th</sup> bearing in mind that we are simply attempting to obtain an indication of numbers

## A RECENT 'POST' BY JONATHAN SNOWDEN

On Jonathan's **Martins Bank Facebook** site, he recently posted the following request:

*After the merger of Barclays and Martins, Martins Bank Operatic Society was allowed to continue, but with the word **BANK** removed.*

*Eleven productions were staged between 1970 and 1980. The Archive has programmes for all but*



*one of those years 1979 (the opera "Die Fledermaus"), and if you can help with a copy to either scan or donate, please email Martins Bank Archive from the Contact Us section at [www.martinsbank.co.uk](http://www.martinsbank.co.uk). Also, if you have memories of taking part in any of those shows, and/or have photos we can copy for the Archive please get in touch. The picture here (right) is the Programme for the 1976 production of "The Grand Duke".*

I must stress that *it is solely my personal view* but, how petty was it of Barclays to insist that our Operatic Society had to remove the word **BANK** from their title!

However, more to the point: **Can any of our members help Jonathan to complete his archived collection of our Operatic Society**

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**items?** And now, another article following our visit to our former Head Office building ....

**We thank Kinrise** for allowing us to once



again enter our former Head Office building where we were able to enjoy its amazing architecture and unbelievably rich colours, despite them being painted over 90 years ago, as the following photographs illustrate. Not having a 'fisheye lens' on my camera, I had to lay on my back to take the photograph (above) of the ceiling in the west lobby where one of the two high speed lifts are located to whisk both visitors and staff to the 8<sup>th</sup> floor, their actual position being indicated by an illuminated 'G' character (left).



One of the permanent security personnel, **Tommy**, mentioned that during the cleaning of the lift (right) the carved white line near to the top of the lift was discovered to be made of ivory which, in 1932, was not illegal to buy, sell or use.



The Manager's Office is located on the opposite side of the front entrance where its original fireplace appears to be in the same



condition as it was on the day that it was



installed. On closer inspection, it is yet another work of art in itself. Every part and element of the building is meaningful, whether it be related to money, Liverpool or the origin of our Bank: King Midas (previous page and detail, left and right) is featured in the centre of the face of



mantle supported by elaborate carvings of Liver birds in either corner. Moving into the banking hall, your eyes are drawn up to the ceiling (left) of the previous roundel (below right) paying homage to



Martin's Private Bank's grasshopper the Bank of Liverpool's Liver bird and Liverpool's maritime links (mermaids).



Moving to the back of the banking hall (below left), the

opulence continues with the different shades of gilt on the ceiling highlighting the raised relief of the plasterwork (detail below right) on it, where



mythical mermaids, shells and seahorses dominate. We must never forget King Neptune who is also featured throughout the inside and outside of the building.

After the ground floor, and enjoying



'refreshments' provided by **Kinrise**, we moved on to the 8<sup>th</sup> floor, some of us taking the stairs (forgetting the number to climb) whilst others

[Type here]

took the lift where we congregated in the Board



Room. Some of our members will remember the Portland stone fireplace which, like the ceiling is reminiscent of a French chateau, where mermaids are yet again featured on the face of the

mantle (below).

Next is a niche (second below) but, again, look at the iridescence of the colours and this is where our reminiscences of our Head Office building were recorded. For those members who have access to the

internet you can click on



the highlighted link in the Kinrise email to



enjoy the video taken on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Whilst on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor, I took the photograph (below) from one of the windows on the east side

of the building and then discovered another on



Jonathan's website (below) which identifies the



various buildings. However, without knowing the date on which the original photograph (possibly in the late 60s as the Metropolitan Cathedral and Radio City Tower are both evident) was taken, the skyline does not appear to have changed to any great extent in over 50

years. Great times remembered yet again and anyone who has ever entered the Water Street building will testify, once seen never forgotten.

**BACK TO THE PAINTING WHERE**, we thank Barclays' Archives for providing the following 'high definition' copy of the 47½" by 37½" portrait, painted by Edward Halliday and featured in the Christmas Newsletter, detailed as: around a table in an ante room next to the Board Room in Water Street. The identities of those Martins executives featured, who are (left to right);



**SIR JOHN M BROCKLEBANK (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN), SIR DOUGLAS CRAWFORD (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN), SIR CUTHBERT CLEGG (CHAIRMAN), DENIS O MAXWELL (CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER AND DIRECTOR), SIR JOHN HENRY KESWICK (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN).** But, who is missing?

**And now, yet another question:** Has anyone ever seen this label (below right), actually a cutting from *'The Echo'* which has been stuck on the reverse of a pen and ink drawing of 'The Liverpool Mail'? The text reads: *'The London to Liverpool Mail leaving the old GPO in Lombard Street, the site of the present Bankers' Clearing House. In the days of the old private banks, the London Royal Mail Coach travelled nightly from the old G.P.O. in Lombard Street to Liverpool, finishing its journey at The Talbot Inn, on the site on which the Bank conducted its business for a century. At 'The Sign of The Grasshopper' in Lombard Street, the principal office of the Bank in London, a banking business has been continuously carried on since 1563'.* Mike Cadwallader takes up the story: *I was the North Area Coordinator for CWIP. I think we*



[Type here]

were in the process of automating branch returns. The Darlington gang were based in the former LHO office to do the necessary, everyone else having vacated. This was the period when Barclays were "rationalising" the Regional Office network. Anyway, I called in to check progress and, while wandering through the empty offices, I noticed picture of the Liverpool to London coach. I asked whether the clear-out was finished. Answer "Yes". So, I asked if I could take this iconic picture, particularly when



I saw the backing paper being pieces from the Liverpool Echo. The picture must have originated in Liverpool and

been taken to Darlington to decorate the office, maybe by a senior bod who had transferred across the Pennines. Liverpool Regional Office had moved from **Water Street** to Moorfields, so I didn't feel any particular need to take the picture to the new office. Barclays Regional Office then closed in Liverpool and moved to Manchester [Bah!!]. **Even 4 Water Street branch was no more.** So, the picture stayed with me over in Cheshire.

**When we moved "home" to Liverpool (Water Street, in fact) the picture came with me. It has hung on my wall for 16 years; almost back where it came from. After several false starts, we now have a developer (Kinrise) who promise a sensitive restoration of the 4 Water Street office. On our first visit to the old place, I was happy to donate the picture, which, hopefully, will be installed in a display (in the Banking Hall?) dedicated to the history of Martins Bank in the 4 Water Street building.**

(Editor) The picture was drawn (?) by 'Ionicus': Joshua Charles Armitage (26 September 1913 – 29 January 1998) was an English illustrator under the pen name 'Ionicus'. But his main hobby was golf, to which he often turned his talent, and given his long membership of Royal Liverpool, it is no surprise that he captured Hoylake life in his inimitable fashion. The following link will take you to some of his artworks which are displayed at The Royal Liverpool Golf Club where he was a member: [THE ART OF IONICUS | Royal Liverpool Golf Club, Hoylake \(royal-liverpool-golf.com\)](http://www.royal-liverpool-golf.com)



## So, what of the original carvings covered by Barclays' Eagle logos?

Unfortunately, Barclays Archives have been unable to shed and light on the subject, apart from proffering the following information which was obtained from a supplement about **Martins Bank** published by 'The Architects Journal' in November 1932: *Based on pictures we have of the building and articles about the design and Architects Journal article from 1932 says this: The circular medallions show the liver (sic) and the grasshopper (emblems of the city and the bank) used also for the shield which occupies a central position on the façade, and frequently elsewhere as decorations. I would suggest it may have been a smaller version of the large roundels at the main entrance showing a liver bird and grasshopper.* **SO THE MYSTERY REMAINS.** Editor:



The supplement extends to 18 pages, and it is a pity that it is a monochrome publication, but it does remind us of the original state of the building, immediately after its construction. It also contains images and photographs, one of which I have copied (right), and will continue to publish extracts in future issues of the Newsletter. However, should you like a 'soft-copy' of the publication then please let me know and I will email a 'pdf' version. **Unfortunately, this offer will only be available by email.**

## FUTURE FUNCTIONS

Some members have responded to the request in the Christmas Newsletter about more-local locations for future functions following which I have undertaken an analysis by Post Code of our membership. This analysis has identified 'membership clusters' of locations outside reasonable travelling time of our current locations for potential future functions, obviously, subject to membership numbers (and their guests) wishing to attend. The potential locations are listed overleaf and, once again, could I ask you to let me know by whatever means is most appropriate for you, to advise me if you would be interested in attending a 'regional function'. In addition to our existing locations (London, Liverpool, Manchester and West Yorkshire, 'Clusters' have been identified in the following broad areas: **Northumberland, Kent/East Sussex coast; Birmingham/Coventry; Bournemouth/Poole; Portsmouth/West Sussex; Exeter/Plymouth; North Essex/Suffolk; Oxford; Guernsey.**

Finally: Ann Ashcroft donated various items of her personal memorabilia (more to follow in the Easter Newsletter).

