

THE GRASSHOPPER PENSIONERS' CLUB



**MARTINS
BANK**

Website: www.martinsbank.co.uk

© gut informiert!

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Spring Edition 2024

**CLOSURES OF OUR FORMER
BRANCHES CONTINUE TO REDUCE
OUR ONCE COMPREHENSIVE
NETWORK BUT**



**WHO SAID THAT THERE IS
'No such thing as a free lunch'**

Well, whoever said that is wrong!

**THIS YEAR THERE IS A
FREE LUNCH**



FOR OUR MEMBERS!

**We urge all of our members, if they are
able, to ensure that they come to one of our**

55th ANNIVERSARY

REMEMBRANCE LUNCHES

Although slowing now, our membership continues to increase, which is quite remarkable given the fact that 12th December 2024 will mark the 55th Anniversary of the last day of Martins' existence in its own right.

There must surely be some, if not many, of your former colleagues who are still not members so please do everything within your persuasive powers to ensure that they become members before 12th December and they too will enjoy a

FREE LUNCH

but the sooner, the better for all.

55TH ANNIVERSARY

'REMEMBRANCE LUNCHES'

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

ANY OTHERS VENUES?

It's 'Over to You', our members:

Even if you are unable to travel far, or wherever you call 'HOME', if you would like to invite former colleagues to wherever you live then your Club will pay for the function, whether it be a Sit-Down meal, a buffet or simply Afternoon Tea.

If required, and you can obtain permission, then it will be advertised and we will do the rest.

THE YOUNGEST and THE OLDEST

In a previous Newsletter, we attempted to identify our oldest member but had little success.

Arthur Rowe, who sadly died last year, was 96 and we are aware of a 94 year-old, so can anyone beat our **94 year-old** member?

However, we have been asked if we can identify who might be our youngest member?

To date, we know of a young lady who was born in **May 1952** and wonder if anyone can beat that?

Anonymity will be preserved (should you so desire). Don't be shy and please let me know if you believe that you can claim to beat:

**MAY 1952 AS THE MONTH OF YOUR BIRTH
OR**

YOU ARE OLDER THAN 94

NEW MEMBERS

Although Membership is restricted to former members of Martins' staff and their partners, we have been asked by their children if they are able to continue to receive our Newsletters which they obviously can; just send me an email and I will add you to a separate family distribution list.

In this issue, we welcome:

Margaret Swain (née Scott), who joined Martins in September 1966 at **Liverpool City Office** before being transferred to Head Office Staff and Premises



Department.



Alfred Quinney Gatfield; I joined the staff of Martins Bank in **Peel, Isle of Man sub-branch** in October 1958, retiring in June 1996 at **Ellesmere Port** branch after 38 years 8 months service. I was a

colleague of **Brian Constable** (a correspondent of yours) at **West Kirby** branch for many years and I'm still a member of our local, informal monthly **Martins Lunch Club**, which currently meets in **Heswall**.

David Tomlinson: Joined Martins in 1956 at **Liverpool City Office** before moving to **Seacombe** then being 'Called-Up' for his **National Service** and returning to be a member of the **Liverpool Relief** team before being transferred to



Liscard in the final years of his Martins' life then **Ellesmere Port** and **Little Sutton**.

Anne Watson (née Graham)
208

Kensington High Street



David Furness and his wife **Wendy Furness (née Pickles)**, both joining Martins in the old **Manchester District**. Wendy started with Martins at our **Elland** branch, followed by stints at **Sowerby Bridge** and **Hebden Bridge** before returning to **Elland**, where she met David. David started his Martins Career at **Holmfirth** (made famous by 'Last of the Summer Wine') before moving down to **Skelmanthorpe** and eventually **Elland**, where they first met.

And Finally, as **Alfred Gatfield** reminded us, there are many **Local Martins Groups** that meet on a regular basis. If you are a member, as well as a member of one of these groups then please encourage your former colleagues to become members of our Club in this, our 55th Anniversary year when they too can enjoy a

FREE LUNCH

MEMBERS' MEMORIES

It is always interesting, when a new member joins our Club, to learn of their experiences

outside Martins, and the older the better (no offence intended **Michael**). But it is equally so to learn of their experiences at work and the colleagues they remember.

In the New Year edition of the Newsletter, we welcomed **Michael McMinn** and I had hoped to publish Michael's memories but couldn't find them in time. However, I have now and Michael has provided his insight into 'Life in Martins (and before)'. So here they come in Michael's words and I hope that you will find them as interesting as I did. I'm also certain that the names of Michael's former colleagues will also help Jonathan to further-populate his 'Staff Gallery' at the branches where Michael worked. So, over to you Michael:



May 1951. I joined **Martins** at our **Otley** branch

My career was chosen through a complete fluke – merely because I used to collect the chemistry master's weekly meat order from **Middlemiss' butchers** on my way to **Otley Grammar School**. That day, **David Nealy**, a Martins' customer had been contacted by the local Martins branch manager asking if he could recommend a pupil to start work as a junior clerk replacing **Barry Pickles** (who had broken his leg playing rugby and was going to be off for months). Don't ask me why relief staff were not



available but, with the proviso that I was prepared to start immediately, after interviews at the branch and **Liverpool Head Office (Messrs Price and Pickering?)** I shortly found myself, at age 15, a bank clerk, and I might add, extremely grateful to Mr. Nealy, who recommended me and who kept in touch with me for many years following my career until his death.

The manager was **Raymond Bolmer Barrett**, who lived in **Harrogate** and brought his dog to the office every day. A kindly man but I can't recall ever seeing him without a cigarette in his mouth.

Pro Manager was **Doug Tindall (right)**, father of **Phillip (Phil) Tindall** (who also later joined the bank) and grandfather of **Mike Tindall MBE** who had an outstanding rugby career as an **England International** and, of



course, married the late Queen's Granddaughter Zara Phillips.

First cashier was **Norman Milner** (ex RAF) who later became manager of **Longtown** branch. He



came to work on his motor-assisted bicycle. Sub branch clerks were **Stuart Brearley** (left) and **Frank Bamford** (both ex RN). It's hard to imagine in today's security conscious society that

Stuart travelled to the subs at **Menston** and **Burley in Wharfedale** on his Velocette LE motor bike, with the cash bag strapped on the passenger seat! Stuart's sister **Nancy Brearley** (also ex- RN) and **Geoff Vickers**, a rugby player and also, ex-Otley Grammar School, were on the staff together with **Pam Wood** (married to Mick Wood with whom I played cricket).

Life as Junior Clerk comprised tea and coffee making, topping up ink wells and changing pen nibs, the daily Local Clearing and the dreaded voucher room, where the day's work was sorted into customer files ready for the 'Paid' cheques to be posted out with the monthly statements. A weekly accompanied-walk to the local Post Office with an HVP: All fairly routine really, but on a salary of £110pa. (I didn't get on to £120pa until I was 16 in the August) what do you expect?

Occasional work on junior clerk relief at nearby branches was good at both **Guiseley**, where **Bert Kershaw** (above right) and **Ilkley John Spensley** (left) and were managers and made welcome changes of scenery until:-

October 1953, when **2712350 AC McMinn** was called for National Service in the Royal Air Force, at 28/- per week. I was posted to Cardington for



kitting-out, then Padgate for square bashing and basic training, followed by Yatesbury for six months before qualifying as a Ground Radar Mechanic. Then followed my posting to

RAF Inverbervie, part of the East Coast early warning radar chain, with occasional attachments to RAF Buchan and RAF Leuchars. I was then promoted to the **dizzy heights of SAC**. I played a lot of cricket in the Strathmore Union opening the bowling with Montrose CC. Overall National Service was a wonderful experience.

November 1955: Back to Martins; Otley by now managed by **Harry Sharp**. I'm now allowed to post ledgers, write up passbooks and statements and type Supplementary Statements for The Wharfedale Farmers Auction Market which exercise taught me the basic layout of a keyboard, a skill carried forward to this day. Then eventually; cashiering at Otley (which I enjoyed tremendously). Later periods spent on **Head Office Relief** were good fun: I can't remember



Harry Sharp



John Russell



Geoff Vickers

the exact dates but welcomed a spell based at **Morecambe Manager, Harry Halstead (Pro Manager), Paul Coman, Brian Vosper, Maggie? etc.)** working at some stunning branches such as **Keswick, Bentham and Grange over Sands** together with various **Liverpool** branches. Selected for the Liverpool, Craven and Northern cricket team at the annual Martins cricket festival for four or five years. Happy days all round!

December 1963: Aged 28, I married Christine by which time I had been transferred to **Guiseley Branch** as First Cashier. Initially with



Jack Hardcastle, (right) who soon retired, replaced by **Ken Baxter**;

(left) a good manager who taught me a lot of management skills. **Ronnie Bates** was 'Number Two'

and subsequent colleagues included:



Gilbert Hoyle



Philip Tindall



Avril Outtersides



Yvette Servino



Jane Brumfitt

I loved Saturday mornings when the men wore sports jackets and, at close of business, we all went across the road to the Station Inn for a couple of pints.

(Great times Michael. From Keighley [led by our First Cashier, Lindsay Mason] we used to decamp to the Conservative Club to 'thrash the bandits' with our hard-earned 6d in the forlorn hope of dropping the guaranteed £5 Jackpot!)

I passed my bankers' examinations whilst at Guiseley and Martins marked the occasion with a £100 bonus (at least I think it was). On results day I had booked a day at the Headingley Test Match (either to celebrate or cheer me up!) After a few years **Ronnie Bates**

(below right) was appointed assistant manager at Nelson branch and I was delighted to succeed him as **Ken Baxter's**

number two. Shortly after that came a **Domestic Course** for six months or so at **Head Office**. Entering 4 Water Street every day was exciting and working with many people who were or then became legendary bankers.

April 1967: My first appointment as **Pro Manager** at **Colne**, (**Salary £1,725p.a.**)! Coincidentally, the position that **Ken Baxter**

had held, before coming to **Guiseley**, and also **Bill Long** (right), before becoming **Assistant Manager** at **Nelson** branch, a few miles down the road. My boss was **Frank Dixon** who rapidly moved on to higher things and eventually became a **Local Director**. He was replaced by **Raymond Hopwood** (left) and I enjoyed my time with him. **Colne** was a great branch socially (**Derek Wyness**, **Ronnie Tustin**, **Jean**, **Barbara**) with an excellent spread of good customers. We lived at Fence, a few miles away and during my three years there, Christine had our first child Nigel, born in the, then new, Edith Watson Maternity unit, Burnley. My cricketing friends in Yorkshire never forgave me for allowing a boy to be born in Lancashire as, at that time, he could never have been selected for Yorkshire!



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And three years after my arrival at Colne, my Martins career had drawn to a close and a new Barclays chapter opened.

Finally, I look back to the time as a fifteen year old when I used to fetch the Chemistry Master's weekly meat order and thank my lucky stars for allowing such a great teacher to point me in the right direction and a career which I have greatly enjoyed; all 42 years of it!

Michael McMinn. February 2024.

DEATH NOTICES

It is with regret that we have to report the deaths of our following former colleagues, some of whom were not members, although it is still appropriate to remember them.

Gallagher, Geoffrey Stanley	on 5 th March 2023 aged 92
Hooper, A	on 17 th March 2024 aged 86
Taylor, Julian	on 29 th January 2023 aged 84
Willis, Betty	on 15 th December aged 93
Willis, Clive Charles	on 19 th March 2024 aged

Betty Willis of Dover, wife of our former **Rochester** Manager, **Norman Willis**, died on December 15, 2023, aged 93. I wonder what Norman would have thought about his former branch were he



still alive today? Apart from the



apparently standard 'change of use' to a bar/restaurant, do any of our members, who live near Rochester, know what has happened to our Coat of Arms above the original front door? Has it simply been painted over?

GEOFFREY STANLEY GALLAGHER



Geoffrey S Gallagher started his career at **Victoria Street**, Liverpool in 1946 where he spent two years before being 'Called-Up' for his National Service. Returning to **Toxteth**, in 1950, then **Mossley Hill** and

Booker Avenue. After completing both his Institute of Bankers and Chartered Institute of Secretaries Examinations, Geoff was transferred to **District Office** and then appointed **Head Office Superintendent of Branches** before his transfer to our **Midland District Office** as an **Inspector** and then

Manager of **Edgbaston**. Back to **Manchester** (as **Superintendent of Branches**) for a year before Geoff's final appointment as Manager of our **Wolverhampton** branch.

(DAVID) JULIAN TAYLOR (by his son, Mark)



As is so often euphemistically said: 'He had a good innings,' (David) Julian Taylor died with quiet dignity on 29th January 2024 and much like fellow Yorkshire man, Geoff Boycott, he had a very good innings indeed.

Julian was an only child born on Christmas Eve 1939 to loving parents Elsie and Norman, Braithwaite Edge Road, Near Keighley, West Yorkshire

Julian enjoyed growing up in the Keighley area and it was during his time in Braithwaite that he made lifelong church-fellowship and school friends. Some of which entered the banking world much like Julian.

Julian left school at 15 and joined Martins Bank. When talking about his early career, he would often remember travelling from sub-branch to sub-branch, having to tramp through snow in the harsh winter months to get the branches open and, later, working on the mobile branches at agricultural shows. He even recalled a story of having to travel with a colleague to the Colne branch for a major 'cash run' as security companies were still a thing of the future.

So, off Julian and his colleague went in a clapped-out old car with an empty Gladstone Bag, unknown to the local bank, to collect £52,000 – just short of £1.5 million today. Sure enough, after a phone call to Head Office they travelled back to Keighley with the hefty sum on the back seat.

Julian met Denise at a Valentine's Dance in 1963 and they were married on the 26th September 1964 in Keighley Parish Church.

Julian proved himself very quickly within the bank and after 7 years of night school study he gained the qualification **Associateship of The Chartered Institute of Bankers**.

Promotions soon led after that with a family move to Harrogate and onto Ilkley three years later.

In Barclays' days, further promotion took the family out of the Yorkshire Dales and all the way to Penzance as Branch Manager. Many happy years were enjoyed in Cornwall. As branch manager, Julian played a significant role in the fundraising strategy following the

tragic events of the **Penlee Lifeboat Disaster** in December 1981.

Julian was always determined to be his own man; honest and with integrity, plain speaking, principled, welcoming and generous, witty and clever, caring, and sensitive to others.

He was always friendly, always appreciative, and always full of thanks and gratitude.

He was a gentleman in every sense of the word.

David **Julian** Taylor 24.12.1939 – 29.1.2024

(Editor: Starting his career at Keighley branch, Julian also worked at Cross Hills, on Mobile Branches, Silsden before being transferred out of the Craven District to Leeds District Office)

CHARLES CLIVE WILLIS



Andrew Willis, Clive's son, advised me of his father's death adding: *'He enjoyed keeping abreast of the news from your association in your newsletters, but his time for reading them is now done'*.

Clive joined Martins at **Kingston upon Thames** in 1960, transferring to **Hanover Square** and then **London District Office** in 1962. Promoted to Pro Manager at **Eltham** in 1967, Clive returned as Pro Manager at **Hanover Square** in 1968.

SADLY, CONTACT HAS BEEN LOST WITH:

Mr D EMPSON	of FLITWICK
Mrs E PREEDY	of ORPINGTON
Mrs A HARPOLE	of SHENFIELD
Mr A TOWNSEND	of GLOUCESTER

If you are aware of the above-mentioned members' new contact details, could I ask you to advise me so that I can ensure that they continue to receive their Newsletters?

Emailed Newsletters sent to:

davlinXX@XXX

are also being rejected. Could I also ask members who can identify the recipient, from the first 6 alpha characters of the above email address, to make contact with the owner and ask them to email me with their correct email address?

EMAIL SCAMS

Please ensure that you know the originator of every email that you receive and especially when there is an attachment requesting that it is opened.

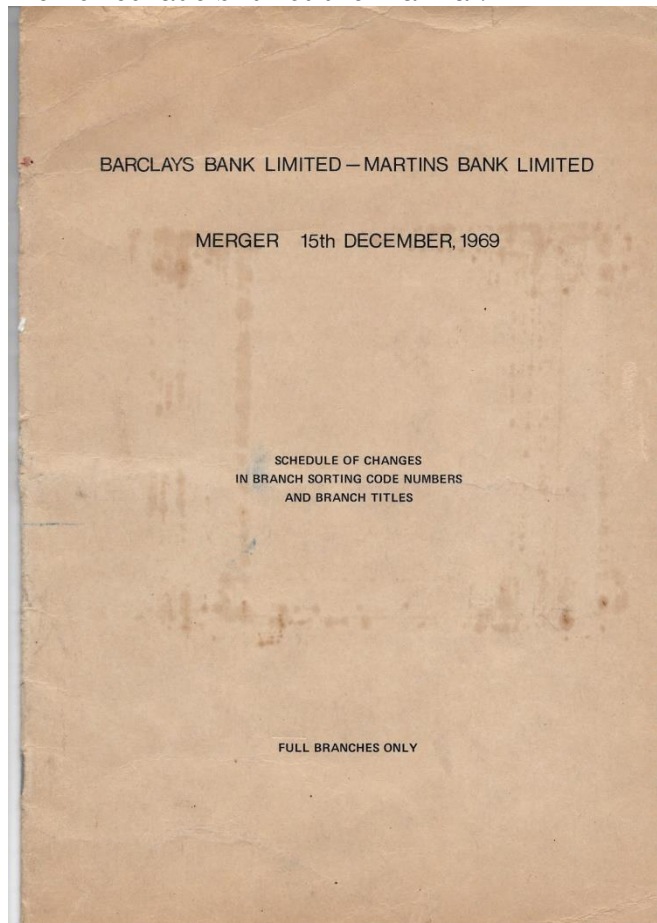
My reason for mentioning it being that I receive several emails every day addressed to my 'Grasshoppers' email address, but none of my other addresses, which leads me to believe that one of our members has had their computer

accessed and a virus planted in it. Should you receive a 'phishing' email then please report it immediately to:

report@phishing.gov.uk

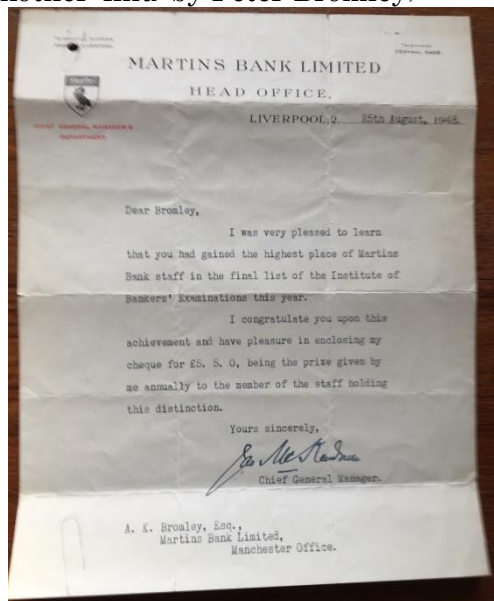
THE FATEFUL DAY

Memories fade but not the Manual.



MORE FROM KEN BROMLEY'S SON

Yet another 'find' by Peter Bromley;



(Dated: 25th August 1948)

*Dear Bromley,
I am pleased to learn that you had gained the highest place of Martins Bank Staff in the final*

list of the Institute of Bankers Examinations this year.

I congratulate you on this achievement and have pleasure in enclosing my cheque for £5.5s.0d. being the prize given by me annually to the member of the staff holding this distinction.

Yours faithfully,

Conversion: The value of a 1948 £ today

According to the Bank of England's inflation tables, in 1948, £1.0s.0d had the value of £45.57 today. Applying this value to Ken Bromley's £5.5s.0d. Had the cheque been awarded today (which is doubtful), Ken would have received the magnificent sum of £239.24.

Yet more from: JEAN WHEELER

Last Monday I visited **Sheffield** city centre with my brother, sister-in-law and my husband, for the first time in roughly 55 years. We were on the tram and I pointed out Martins **West Street** branch (a very unusual building, worth a picture) [*Just as Martins did Jean, we continue to: 'Go to extremes to be helpful'*] as being the main branch in Sheffield, when I worked there, and that I had had my initial interview there with Brian Pearse. My husband was mystified, he piped up "I always thought Fitzalan Square was the main branch?" Of course, being a Barclays' man, he had totally forgotten about life pre Barclays takeover!

Here it comes Jean (but with a different tram):



and some faces that you might recognise:



R.N. Weightman



B. Whiteley



Brian Pearse

And **DAVID ASHBY** David contacted me recently saying that he didn't want his memorabilia to be thrown away and wanted it to be 'cared for'.



I have gratefully accepted it and will deliver it to Jonathan Snowden in the near future.

David also copied his photograph, which Jonathan can now upload to our website, and I took the above photograph of his memorabilia, which I'm certain must bring back many happy memories for all of us, especially the pen set!



**YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP!
FROM THIS**



Once the Head Office and pride of The Craven Bank, then Martins (and finally Barclays), 49, High Street, Skipton, used to be the 'Lead Bank' in Skipton, where John Bainbridge was the respected and 'go-to' manager by farmers and most other businesses in the area, as his farming knowledge was unparalleled, as well as his positive view on developing business by reputation.

[https://www.martinsbank.co.uk/11-90-70 Skipton.htm](https://www.martinsbank.co.uk/11-90-70%20Skipton.htm)

TO THIS (But not yet!)



Which can only be complemented by Spok's (from Star Trek) paraphrased comment: **'It's banking Jim,**



but not as we knew it' However,

there is another problem as Barclays can't even find anywhere to locate their wonderful (?) 'Pod'



and have resorted to: **The Swadford Centre** (which has been a vibrant 'Community Hub' for many years and described as: *..a meeting place and social*

engagement hub. It aims to combat dementia and loneliness by providing a space for community members to connect and interact and is a community hub and café run by Age UK North Yorkshire & Darlington.

Now, Barclays' opening times are: Monday to Friday, 9.30-12.30 and 1.00-4.00

[Local - Skipton \(barclays.co.uk\)](http://barclays.co.uk)

A recent letter to The Craven Herald follows:

My wife and I had the recent misfortune to visit Barclays 'new' Local', Swadford Hub, Swadford Street, Skipton. (MP opens new 'Barclays Local' in Skipton, Craven Herald, March 11).

More stairs than you can shake a stick at to climb! Once we had reached the top of Everest, we proceeded to go inside to the room, where two staff sat with customers at their respective desks.

After five minutes we were asked to leave the room and sit outside, to give those customers some privacy. Even though once sat in the room, there is little or no privacy anyhow. A squalid room bereft of any discernible features. No senior staff around, just two poor souls left to hold the fort and take the inevitable flak. Clearly this is how Barclays see their customers now, an irrelevance. No-longer wanting to be customer-facing.

I first opened my account in my home town of Wells Next Sea, Norfolk, some 40 years ago, of course that branch has long since closed! Looking around that sorry state of an excuse for a 'Bank,' I thought has it really come to this?

Imagine my surprise when I then ventured into Skipton Building Society, my first time, and was greeted with a smile and hello, a fresh and airy building, a professional approach. I was even offered a tea or coffee, after that experience at Barclays I really needed a Scotch!! Name and location provided originally with the letter.

We all remember when we had our small 'giveaway' note pads and:

Martins go to extremes to be helpful

was our 'strapline'. (*I remember that in Skipton it worked both ways: A cobbler customer used to collect shoes that members of staff needed repairing when he banked his takings on Tuesdays and returned them, after repairing them the following Tuesday.*) How times have changed.

MARTINS MEMORABILIA (OR NOT?)

Robin Holland-Martin emailed me with the following images. *Dear David - I was cheeky and did not alert you about an auction at Dreweatts of Newbury this week when Lot 346 was sold on 5 or 6 March - it was a large (29cm x 74cm x 72cm) moulded plastic grasshopper very much in the vein of the Bank design, with long antennae flowing backwards. My first cousin left a bid for it (we were keen to buy it), but the price went quite high: £700 versus the £150-250 estimated range. Maybe someone knew about its history - perhaps your Archivist?! If you hear news of it, do let me know.*

Recently auctioned and described as:



A LARGE MOULDED PLASTIC MODEL OF A GRASSHOPPER OR CRICKET 20TH CENTURY 29cm high,

26cm wide, 72cm deep Condition Report: Wear, marks, knocks and scratches as per age, handling, use, and cleaning. Gilded surface has worn down to browner underpaint in raised areas, and yellow plastic in some areas such as rear feet, later plinth mount.



Estimate: £150 to £250. Closing Bid: £700

My personal opinion was 'NOT', until I saw this in



Jonathan Snowden's latest Martins Bank Archive Facebook post. Then: [Phil Dunster](#)

The grasshopper still exists, we borrowed it back for the uni 50th anniversary, was almost new when saved by archive as the merger was not long after uni was opened...



Does anyone remember similar Grasshoppers elsewhere? They must have been a late addition to our various symbols.

BUT THIS ONE DEFINITELY IS and described as:



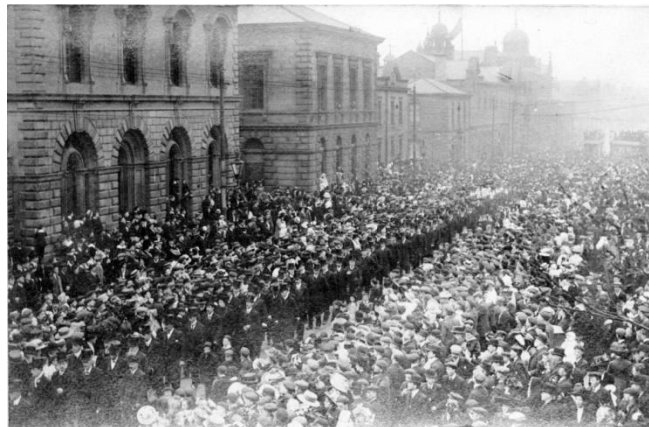
An early 20th Century gilt metal and wrought iron grasshopper 'shop' sign for the Grasshopper

Bank.

Comment: The first bank in London was established by Thomas Gresham in 1563 at the sign of the Grasshopper in Lombard Street. The bank later evolved into Martins Bank and every branch had its Grasshopper.

Footnotes: In 1968 (sic) Martins Bank was taken over (precis) by Barclays and the Grasshoppers were removed. This survivor is believed to have come from the branch in Africa House, Kingsway, London Sold on 30th March 2022 for £2,805 (including Buyer's Premium)

KEIGHLEY BRANCH 1906



Our Keighley branch is scheduled to be closed on 9th August but is featured in this 1906 photograph and the reason for the crowds? The funeral of Harry Myers, (a Keighley rugby league player who died after an accident playing against Dewsbury).

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS NEWSLETTER AND ASK EVERYONE TO CONTINUE CONTRIBUTING THEIR MEMORIES. I WILL START THE NEXT NEWSLETTER SHORTLY AND INCLUDE MEMORABILIA WHICH HAS BEEN PROVIDED BUT NOT INCLUDED HERE.