

# THE GRASSHOPPER PENSIONERS' CLUB



## MARTINS BANK

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

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**CHAIRMAN:** Bernard Lovewell

**TREASURER:** Alan Thomond

**WELFARE OFFICER:** Susan Sutcliffe

**Database Manager:** David Baxter

**Function Organiser:** Ken Quirk

**EVEN AFTER 53 YEARS  
THERE ARE**



**IN THIS EDITION**

**ISN'T IT AMAZING WHAT IS OUT  
THERE IN THE ETHER?**

**Special memories and photographs, following the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of our Head Office building on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1932.**

**First**, from the [\(7\) Merseyside In Focus | Facebook](#) page, there are several photographs of our Head Office building under construction. The first (right) being of the marble columns being turned in a



Liverpool stone yard, followed by two images of them after installation (left and



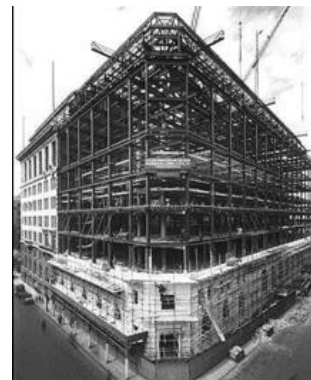
right) and the obligatory 'Group Photograph' (top of second column), which appears to have been taken in the same position as the above photograph and long-



(right) taken from India Buildings and copied from an enhanced video of Liverpool in the 1930s which can be viewed by clicking on the following link:

[Old Liverpool - 1930's footage \(colour and sound enhanced\) - YouTube.](#)

Almost there, from the 'In My Liverpool Home' website and immediately following

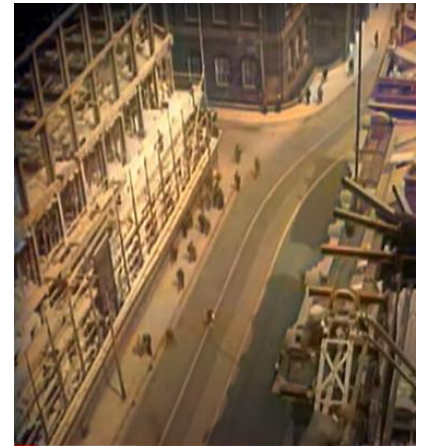


construction in 1932.

At the top of Page 2, and already sandbagged against bombing raids, with our Head Office building in the background, this photograph of Liverpool Town Hall was taken on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1939, just 17 days after the outbreak of the Second World War and can be viewed at [@hiddenliverpool](#) where a visiting member commented:

**Christmas 2022** before the 'hard hats', 'high-viz' vests and 'steel toe-capped boots' era.

A rare view of our Head Office building under construction (below



*My grandad worked in the boiler room and was a Fire Warden during the Second World War'*



Isn't it amazing that, when we tend to forget non-clerical staff, our major office buildings could not have functioned without them and the larger the building, the more-essential 'non-clerical' staff became.

**As the Second World War progressed, how fortunate were we on the night of 12<sup>th</sup> May 1941?**

We can now see just how lucky we actually were: From the following photograph, which comes from the website of the **Liverpool Echo**, after the 'direct hit' on the original 'Atlantic House' building with our Head Office building



*'Businessmen from bombed-out offices gather in the street to transact business on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1941.'*

clearly visible in the background. However, our



208 Kensington High Street branch wasn't as fortunate during an air raid in August 1944.

If you haven't already signed-up to the regular updates from Kinrise, then the following link will give you an idea of just how inclusive our

former Head Office building will be when the renovation has been completed:

[Martins Bank Building \(@martinsbankbuilding\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

## SECURITIES COURSE, FEBRUARY 1969

Led by Ian Kerr (right), the course was held in the small room at the top of the spiral staircase in the eaves of Castle Street branch. As I was the only attendee from Yorkshire, little time was spent on taking a charge over land in Yorkshire, apart from the comment that I had to *remember to search the West Riding Deeds Registry in Wakefield and pay the appropriate Stamp Duty*. This is where I first met Barrie Brookes, amongst others, but who were they? I remember Carrol Clark from Wrexham (Wrecsam) being on one course, but was it this? That apart, on a Wednesday afternoon, mid-course, the Liverpool branch of the Institute of Bankers had arranged a special treat for those of us who were interested in attending. For those of you who were not



present, it was a trip down a working coal mine in St. Helens where we descended 1750 feet down the main shaft before walking along the

roadways to the cutting face and crawling along



the three-foot high seam, where cutting was fortunately stopped whilst we successfully navigated its length, before returning along the exhaust roadway. A true experience, never to be forgotten nor repeated by anyone in future!

**Were you on this Securities Course?** If you

were, or knew anyone who was, will you please make contact with me?

### COMPUTERISATION

Did any of our Liverpool-based members ever work in our Computer Centre and even if you didn't, can you identify any of these former



colleagues? If you can, **will you please let me know?**

### MORE DONATIONS

Following the death of her husband and our colleague, **John Peters**, his widow, **Susanne**,



didn't want John's prized possession, the Martins Bank Clock from our London Office, **68 Lombard Street\***, to be lost for ever and has donated it to our Club for us to ensure that we can find an organisation where it will be valued. With this prerequisite in mind, and our ever-growing

relationship with **Kinrise**, the company in the process of renovating our Head Office building, what better Company and in what better location could it be housed? Yet, the clock wasn't the only piece of Martins' memorabilia that Susanne discovered:



Not quite as large as the clock, to say the least, but something to treasure from the days when we had to fill inkwells and replace the nibs of the pens on our counters and at tables in the banking hall. But did we need to go to such



lengths as needing to have our name stamped on each nib?

**\*You will, no doubt, remember John's article about his clock in a previous edition of our Newsletter.**

### SOME PHOTOGRAPHS FROM PETER THOROGOOD'S COLLECTION

Following Peter's recent death, Susan Moxon, Peter's daughter, discovered some of Peter's memorabilia which included the following photographs.

Peter joined Martins in 1952 at **Westminster** branch before transferring to **District Office Relief** in 1953 for two years then a transfer to **Hanover Square** branch. 1964 saw Peter being transferred to **Richmond** branch before being appointed 'Pro Manager' at **Wigmore Street** in 1968.

Peter and his brother Jack, followed in their father's (Reginald Thorogood) footsteps with Reginald joining **Cock's Biddulph** in London in 1919 before retiring as manager of **Chislehurst** branch, after 15 years, in 1967. This photograph (left) was taken outside Chislehurst branch. (Left to Right) Peter Thorogood, Gladys Thorogood, Jack Thorogood, Reginald Thorogood (manager). **We now need your help**



again. Although Susan can obviously identify her father (Peter Thorogood 1st left front row) and uncle (Jack Thorogood 5th left back row) in the photograph on Page 3, but who are our other former colleagues and in which location and on what occasion was it taken? It could have possibly been in a District Office, but who knows? **If you can identify anyone, the location and occasion in Peter's photograph on Page 3, then please contact me before time runs out.**

### MORE OF OUR MOBILE BRANCHES



Does anyone recognise the locations and messenger/driver?

## OBITUARY

### CHRISTOPHER JEFFERSON BARKER

1938 – 2022

Chris left Calday Grange Grammar School on the Wirral in 1954 and joined Martins



Bank at West Kirby (below), aged 16. He said of the branch *"there can have been no better place to start work thanks to manager Eric Wylie"*. After a couple of



years, he went on District Relief and travelled widely across the Wirral working first at New Brighton followed by



Ellesmere Port, Toxteth in Liverpool, Little Sutton, Upton and Birkenhead

Borough Road where one of his jobs on a Saturday

afternoon was to collect the takings from Tranmere Rovers when they had a home game and put it in the night safe.

After three years on Relief and hungry for foreign travel he saw an advert for Barclays DCO and decided to apply. He was successful and joined Barclays DCO in Liverpool in 1958. Chris spent four years with DCO including time in Nigeria. On home leave in April 1961 he married Audrey and they returned to Nigeria together.

Wishing to return home, now with wife Audrey and baby daughter Caroline, he wrote to **John Pickering, Staff Manager at Head Office** asking to return, having been told he would not be able to when he left. By then Martins was expanding so on return he was offered a job in



**Leicester, Hotel Street** (left)

starting in 1963. Chris had to stay in lodgings for a year before he was allowed to buy a house! In April 1964 he completed his

Institute exams becoming an AIB. During his time in Leicester a second daughter Sarah was born.

After a period in Midland District Office working with **Warwick Isle** on the advances section Chris was appointed Pro Manager at



**Head Street, Colchester.** It was during this time that the merger of Martins and Barclays was announced. Chris wondered if he was unusual

having been employed by Martins twice and Barclays twice. Later, Chris became Assistant District Manager in Ipswich LHO.

Chris's last appointment was as Manager at Woodbridge in 1979 until his retirement in 1989. On retirement Chris remained in Suffolk enjoying an active retirement close to family.

**Norman Eccles**

*(Ed, If you want to read more of Chris Barker's life in banking then you can follow it by clicking on the following link: [www.martinsbank.co.uk/Shotguns Whiskey and Bats.htm](http://www.martinsbank.co.uk/Shotguns Whiskey and Bats.htm))*

**I OFFER MY MOST SINCERE APOLOGIES**

to **Ruth Tanner** (nee **Gilmer**), who rang me after speaking with **Pam Thorogood** (nee **Homersham**). Another of our database problems. So, we must wish Ruth a warm welcome and return as a member. Starting her career at **Chislehurst**, Ruth was transferred to Ludgate Circus, followed by **Sidcup, Bexleyheath** and finally **Mottingham**, where the above photograph was taken of Ruth as a cashier.



**COMPUTERISATION - THE TEAM**

**More thanks**, this time to Merryl Nicholls, who



(Left to right) Meryl Nicholls (née Jones), Neil Matthews, Viv Smith (née Heighway), Jackie Gascoigne (née Betts, possibly), Pete Snowball, Barrie Owen, Margaret Alderson (née Driver) is featured in the above photograph.

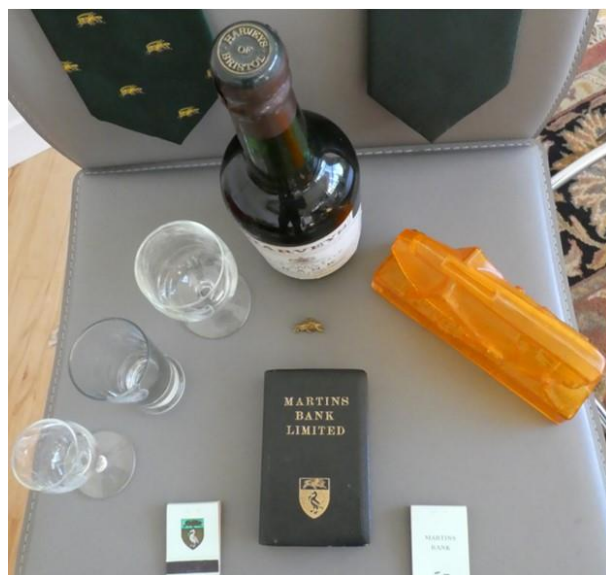


Joan Manners, Norman Taylor, Tony Kimber, Pauline Snowball (in glasses), Sheila Dingwall, Mike Wilkinson, John Gascoigne, Mike Fazackerley, Pat Henderson (née Currah), Chris Hayne and Phil Dowthwaite, Margaret Alderson (née Driver), Alan Alderson, Norman Taylor, Jackie Gascoigne (née Betts) and standing behind me is Dave Straughan.



I only hope that I have correctly identified everyone from information provided by some of those in the photographs and apologise in advance for any errors, which can and will be corrected in future issues.

**MORE (literally) FROM OUR MOBILE BRANCHES (and Merryl Nicholls)**



If you ever attended a 'Show' visited by one of our caravans, sorry, 'Mobile Branches' you might have been offered a drink in one of these glasses and/or a 'Harvey's Bristol Cream' sherry from a 'BANK' similar bottle. Now this bottle must be truly **UNIQUE!** You might also have noticed the different books of matches. Were these solely for our Mobile Branches?

**Merryl** has also donated some of **Graham's** 35mm slides, which he took whilst working at various shows around the country and will be converted to images by Jonathan Snowden in the near future.

### OUR FORMER BRANCHES THEN and NOW

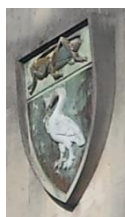
During a recent visit to our son, who lives 10 miles from Plymouth, I couldn't resist the short train ride into Plymouth to check on the state of one of our major southern branches. Pictured below in its early days, with a pristine Coat of



Arms looking down on Armada Way in the Cornwall Street area of the city. Last month,



the branch was still there, the saplings have grown into mature trees and our once-proud grasshopper and liver bird, like the branch, closed and on the market, is looking neglected but at least it is still there, just like us. We can only hope that



some time in the future it will be restored to its former glory.

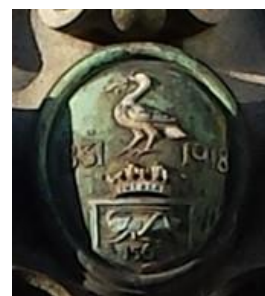
A similar situation exists in Huddersfield,



which I visited whilst waiting for my car to have a software update. In the 1960s we used to have 'mechanics', now we have 'technicians'. That said, and despite only 31 of our branches still remaining open, our name has not changed on the high streets of many towns and cities throughout

the country, just as it does in **Huddersfield**, at our former **Westgate** branch here its major relationship was **Standard Fireworks**.

Although slightly different in its appearance during its Martins days, and now a part of a Yorkshire Indian restaurant chain, little has changed. However, in a slightly different design, our Coat of Arms is still clearly evident above the entrance, and possibly unique, displaying the liver bird and dates '1831 and 1918' on either side of it, with Gresham's grasshopper and '1563' beneath. Which begs the question, (jokingly) popular in politics today;



*'Did Martins have a North/South Divide?' To which, the simple answer must be; 'YES'!*

**'MARTIN'S BANK'**, as we all know, with its apostrophe was a 'Southern' bank with mainly 'Southern' staff which, following its merger with **The Bank of Liverpool**, northern-based staff started to be transferred south. Some of our southern members might remember **Peter Hole**, (left), who joined Martins in 1959, at



**South Audley Street** branch, but, by 1966, who was Pro Manager at the branch between 1966 and '68. Our northern members will also remember **Bernard Whiteley**, (right), who succeeded Peter, as Pro Manager at **Westgate**, in 1968 after joining Martins at our **Silver Street, Halifax** branch in 1952. But, once merged, our merged bank forgot both the divide and the apostrophe.

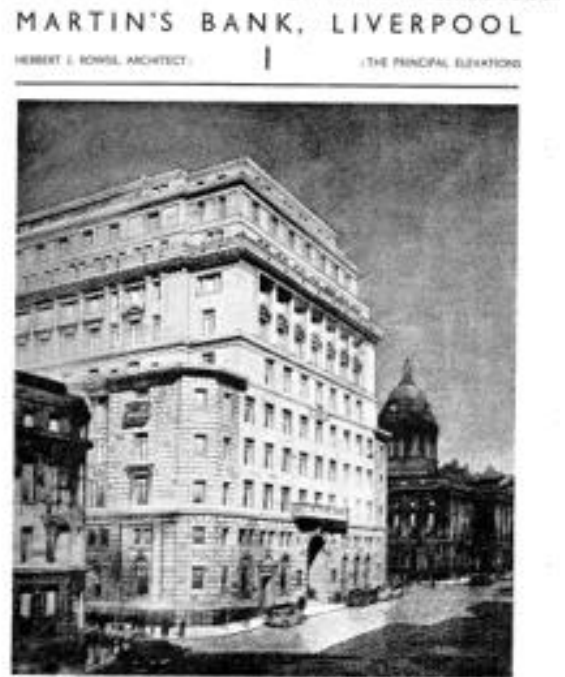


Although some of our former branches continue to display our name in various forms, in others it is, sadly, lost for ever. However, thanks to the ethical approach adopted by the new owners of our former Head office building, Kinrise, we can look forward in eager anticipation of enjoying our beautiful building being restored to its former glory once again. With this in mind, once completed, I would encourage our southern-based members to attend whatever functions we are permitted to arrange in Water Street.



## A 90th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

As we all worked for Martins it is obvious that we are, dare I say, 'old' rather than 'young' and many of our members are over 90 years of age; and now, our former Head Office building has joined these ranks as another nonagenarian. To celebrate its opening on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1932, *'The Architects' Journal'* published as supplement in celebration of the completion of the building, from which I will publish extracts in future Newsletters. In the meantime, here is the first page. *Forgive the rogue apostrophe!*



The photograph of 4, Water Street, also include the corner of 'Atlantic House', destroyed and mentioned earlier in this Newsletter. The rebuilt 'Atlantic House' can be seen later in this Newsletter and in aerial photographs taken by **Kinrise** and featured in their latest update and drone-filmed video, click on this link:

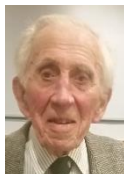
[\(49\) Post | LinkedIn](#)

Photographs of our December Lunches will be published in the next edition of our Newsletter.

### 2022 NOVEMBER LONDON LUNCH



Marilyn Lovewell, Neil Matthews, Bernard Lovewell, Michael Wilkinson, Michael Widdup, Brian Hubble, Robert Bunn, Gordon Rhodes, Dan Butler, Ken Quirk, Pat Styant, John Charlton, Pam Charlton, Brian Barnes, Robin Lucas, Pat Wilson, Barry Turnwell, Bill Webb, David Baldwin, Mike Woolnough, Nick Kingan.



We must not forget Arthur Rowe (inset) who, by virtue of his membership of The Union Jack Club, enable our Club to gain a substantial discount on our room hire fee at the Club.

In the following photographs, our magnificent building dwarfs **Liverpool Town Hall** (below)



and an unusual view of the 'Light Well' © Kinrise 2022



Cut along the line and fold to make your Grasshopper Christmas card



**WE WISH EVERY  
MEMBER A  
HAPPY CHRISTMAS  
AND  
NEW YEAR  
AND HOPE  
TO SEE YOU  
AT OUR 2023 LUNCHES.  
PLEASE REMIND YOUR  
FORMER COLLEAGUES, WHO  
ARE YET TO JOIN, THAT  
MARTINS CONTINUES TO  
EXIST**