

24 June 2019

HSBC UK PRESTON BRANCH CELEBRATES 175TH ANNIVERSARY

Fascinating history of 175 year old branch revealed

HSBC UK's branch in Preston, one of the oldest branches in the bank's network, is celebrating its 175th anniversary since the bank first opened its doors for business, servicing the boom in the cotton trade in the city.

The branch, which originally opened at 40 Fishergate as the Preston Banking Company, formally opened its doors on 24 June 1844, with a small team led by branch manager Henry Graves, who was described as "an Irish gentleman of portly and commanding address", with an annual salary of £500.

A cashier named John Gilot was recruited, earning £225 per annum. He later became branch manager upon the death of Henry Graves. Gilot and Graves were joined by an accountant, Mr Brunskill, with an annual salary of £75, as well as a clerk, a watchman and a charlady. By 1866 the branch employed 22 people due to the high level of demand for its services.

Plans to grow the Preston Banking Company were restricted by its Royal Charter, which stated branches could not be opened further than 40 miles from head office (Preston Fishergate). As a result, a decision was made to amalgamate its 29 branches with Midland Bank (now HSBC UK), thus joining an ambitious institution that would become the largest bank in the world by the 1920s.

Due to the success of the branch in the early years, the building, which doubled as the residence of the branch manager, was extended and was the home to the bank for over 160 years. In 2008, the bank relocated a few doors down to 49a Fishergate.

The branch has a fascinating history that includes employees playing a full part in both World Wars, with 41 members of staff joining the war effort, including 17 men in the first World War. The majority of them returned home, including Reginald George Pullen, who rose from the rank of Cadet to Sergeant and was awarded the Military Cross after being wounded in the head at the Battle of the Somme.

Sadly, two men did not survive the conflict. Humphrey Marsden and John Noblet were killed in action on 26 October 1917 and 11 October 1918 respectively. The young men had both signed up locally to serve with the fourth Battalion of the Loyal North Lancaster Regiment – formerly known as The Preston Rifles – in 1916. Their Battalion served in some of the most pivotal battles of the war, including the Somme and Passchendaele.

Twenty-four members of staff enlisted during the second World War. Fortunately, all 23 safely returned, including one female member of staff, Ms V. Yates who joined up to serve in October 1943.

Ryan Longhorn, manager at the HSBC UK Preston Fishergate branch said: “I am proud to be leading the branch team at such a momentous time. Celebrating 175 years in this fantastic city has given us the opportunity to appreciate how our branch has adapted to rapidly changing consumer habits and technology over the years.”

Preston Fishergate branch timeline:

- **1844** – In April the Preston Banking Company was founded by local merchants and industrialists who decided the city needed a joint stock bank to service the needs of a booming cotton industry.
- **1844** – On 24 June the Preston Banking company opens its first branch at 40 Fishergate.
- **1894** – In June an agreement was signed by the Preston Banking Company to amalgamate with Midland Bank (now HSBC UK).
- **1914-1918** – Seventeen men from the branch joined the Armed Forces and served their country in the First World War. Sadly, Humphrey Marsden and John Noblet were killed in action in France. A copy of the War Card of Reginald Mullen, who survived the war can be seen below.
- **1939-1945** – The branch faced the strain of the Second World War with twenty-four members of staff leaving the branch to contribute to the war effort, including, unusually, a female member of staff Ms V. Yates. Fortunately all returned safely.
- **2008** – On 2 May the branch moved to new premises at 49a Fishergate, Preston.
- **2019** – HSBC UK celebrates its 175th anniversary at the Preston Fishergate branch.

Ryan Longhorn continued: “During the early 1890’s in-branch services and the customer experience would have been significantly different to what it is like today. Opening hours coincided with local market days and the services available would be limited to business advice and small loans, receiving deposits, withdrawals authorisations and cashing cheques in, with all records paper-based and recorded in large ledgers.

“While today, the majority of our banking is done with a click of a button, where customers can keep a very close eye on their finances wherever they are in the world, they are still able to discuss our mortgage and savings options here in the branch. We are very proud to be part of a branch which has been at the centre of change in banking in the 21st century, but even more proud to continue to be providing a first class service for those in Preston who use the branch.”

Media enquiries to:

Steve Gracey, HSBC UK Press Office: 07920 413401 / steve.gracey@hsbc.com

For the latest news and updates, visit the HSBC UK newsroom:
<https://www.about.hsbc.co.uk/news-and-media>

Notes to Editors

The original branch was located at 40 Fishergate for over 160 years. Photo from c.1960.



The War Card of Reginald Pullen, branch staff member who was awarded the Military Cross after being wounded at the Battle of the Somme in the First World War.

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| SURNAME | <i>Pullen</i> | | |
| CHRISTIAN NAMES... | <i>Reginald George</i> | | |
| NUMBER AND RATING OR RANK | <i>Cadet</i> | | |
| DECORATIONS ... | <i>Military Cross</i> | | |
| REGIMENT OR OTHER UNIT ... | <i>D Coy & Officer Cadet Batt Trinity College Cambridge</i> | | |
| BRANCH. | DATE OF BIRTH. | DATE OF ENTERING BANK'S SERVICE. | DATE OF JOINING H.M. FORCES. |
| <i>PRESTON</i> | <i>Sept 1893</i> | <i>Nov 1911</i> | <i>Nov 1914</i> [P.T.O.] |

HSBC UK:

HSBC UK serves around 14.5 million customers across the UK, supported by 32,000 colleagues. HSBC UK offers a complete range of retail banking and wealth management to personal and private banking customers, as well as commercial banking for small to medium businesses and large corporates.

HSBC Holdings plc:

HSBC Holdings plc, the parent company of HSBC, is headquartered in London. HSBC serves customers worldwide from offices in 66 countries and territories in our geographical regions: Europe, Asia, North America, Latin America, and Middle East

and North Africa. With assets of \$2,659bn at 31 March 2019, HSBC is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations.

ends/all