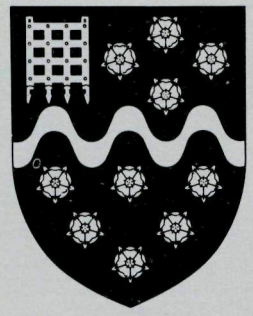
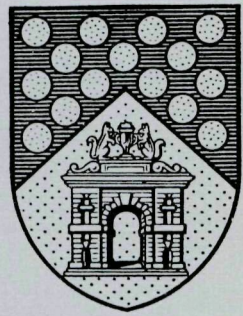
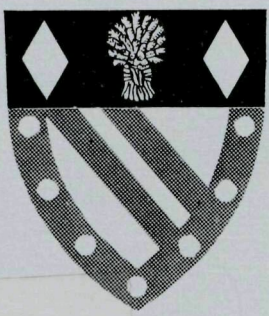


BUSINESS ARCHIVES PROJECT

Three Banks in Bristol



The National Westminster Bank
in Corn Street 1750-1980



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Three Banks in Bristol

The National Westminster Bank in Corn Street 1750-1980

At the birth of the National Westminster Bank on 1st January 1970 all three of its constituent banks — District, National Provincial and Westminster — were represented in the centre of Bristol. The roots of the newly fashioned bank ran deep into the city's past. The National Provincial had grown in Bristol from five banks founded in the eighteenth century and the Westminster from two established in the first decade of the nineteenth.

The Old Bank

Pride of place goes to the Old Bank, the first full banking partnership to be established in Bristol. The partners — Onesiphorus Tyndall, Isaac Elton, Harford Lloyd, William Miller, Thomas Knox and Matthew Hale — opened the 'Bristol Bank' in Broad Street on 1st August 1750 in the reign of George II. Once other banks opened in the city it became known as The Old Bank.

Eventually the Old Bank's office had to be demolished for the construction of John Street at its junction with Broad Street and the bank moved in 1777 to the former Royal Insurance site in Corn Street; although at that time Leonard Lane marked the end of Corn Street and the bank's address was Clare Street. In 1794 the bank moved up Corn Street to begin its long occupancy of the present building at number 35.

Charles Cave, to whose 'History of Banking in Bristol' we are much indebted, records that in 1816 two clerks employed in the Old Bank were taken into partnership — an example of industrial democracy within a year of the Battle of Waterloo.

In 1826 the Old Bank merged with **Ames Cave and Co** which had been opened as 'The New Bank' in 1786 by Messrs Ames, Cave, Harford, Daubeny and Bright. The offices of this bank were at what is now 32 Corn Street and on the amalgamation the business was transferred to the Old Bank's office across the road.

Meanwhile, in 1752 two years after the founding of the Old Bank, another partnership — Messrs Goldney, Smith, Miller, Champion, Reed and Vaughan had opened a banking business, eventually known as **Miles' Bank**, on the south side of Corn Street. The partner John Vaughan contributed the private banking business of his father, John Vaughan, goldsmith, of the Old Dutch House, often described as the father of Bristol banking.

In 1820 Miles' Bank merged with the **Harford Bank** which had been started by Messrs Bright, Deane, Ames, Whitehead, Harford and Munckley in 1769 in Small Street, probably on the site now occupied by the Post Office.

In 1799 the Harford Bank had also moved to the south side of Corn Street and these premises were retained in 1820 as the office of the merged business styled **Miles, Harford and Co**.

In 1877 Miles Harford and Co themselves merged with the Old Bank, taking their business across to 35 Corn Street. There were now nine partners — Messrs William Miles, Cave, Baillie, Edwards, John Miles, Harford, William Henry Miles, Bright and Robert Miles — and the Old Bank was alternatively known as **Miles, Cave, Baillie and Co**.

New Year's day 1891 marked the end of the Old Bank's long history as a purely Bristolian institution. A fourfold amalgamation had been agreed with Messrs Prescott, Cave, Buxton, Loder and Co of Threadneedle Street, Messrs Dimsdale, Fowler, Barnard and Dimsdales of Cornhill, and Messrs Tugwell, Brymer, Clutterbuck and Co, The Old Bank, Bath. The new business became a limited company under the title of **Prescott, Dimsdale, Cave, Tugwell and Co** with its Head Office at 50 Cornhill. In 1903 it became Prescotts Bank and in the same year merged with the **Union of London and Smiths Bank** whose origins on the Smith side went back to Thomas Smith's Nottingham Bank of 1658.

Thus The Old Bank now found itself part of a national branch banking network. In 1908 the 35 Corn Street premises were, temporarily as it turned out, abandoned by an exchange with the Liverpool London and Globe Insurance Company for the building opposite at number 36 — designed by W B Gingell the Bristol Architect. This was aptly described at the time by the 'Western Daily Press' as being in a thoroughfare abounding in architectural triumphs 'and these premises are amongst the most picturesque, with a number of imposing pillars and an abundance of carving.'

National Provincial Bank

In 1918 the Union of London and Smiths Bank amalgamated with the National Provincial Bank of England but the National Provincial had already been in Bristol for over eighty years when The Old Bank joined it through this merger.

In 1794 the **Bristol City Bank**, consisting of five partners — Messrs Ireland, Protheroe, Bengough, Haythorne and Wright — opened in Exchange Buildings, All Saints Passage. 1826 saw the firm move to 46 High Street but in 1834 the business was taken over by the **Northern and Central Bank of England**. After two years the directors of the Bank announced that as the Bristol branch was inconveniently distant from their Manchester Head Office they had 'withdrawn in favour of the National Provincial Bank of England and that the business will in future be conducted by that establishment'.

So the National Provincial Bank of England came to Bristol only two years after the opening of its first banking branch at Gloucester in 1834. It had set up an administrative headquarters in London on its establishment in 1833 but did not open a banking office there until 1866. The National Provincial Bank of England was the fruit of a long and vigorous campaign by Thomas Joplin, a Newcastle timber merchant, who had seen an appalling series of English banking failures in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. Joplin's National Provincial was the first bank established on the strong base of joint stock ownership and a fully national branch network.

The establishment of the National Provincial Bank of England was followed in 1834 by the London and Westminster Bank leading the way in London and a

new era in banking had begun. In 1837 Victoria came to the throne and this period was particularly eventful for Bristol itself. In 1831 the city had suffered its worst riots, 1834 marked the final end of the slave trade in Britain's colonies and in that year too was published the prospectus of the Great Western Railway. This shows the Bristol bankers as Miles' Bank, the Old Bank and Stuckey and Co — all three to be one day part of the National Westminster. In 1838 Brunel's trans-Atlantic paddle steamer 'Great Western' was launched and a year later he laid down the 'Great Britain', the first iron-hulled and propeller driven ship to operate across the Atlantic, which has now returned home to the dock in the Floating Harbour where it was originally built. No doubt in 1840 the Bristol bankers took advantage of the introduction of the penny post and then of the G W R rail link with London, completed in 1841.

In 1863 the National Provincial branch moved to a building in Italian style built at 31 Corn Street also by W B Gingell. Growth of business resulted in rebuilding in the late 1920s incorporating number 33 as well as 31 behind the classical front we see today. The magnificent dome and coloured plaster ceiling remained from Gingell's original building.

During the Second World War it was decided to unify the two branches of 31 and 36 Corn Street but in 1953 they were reorganised as separate branches again.

Westminster Bank

While the Westminster Bank could not claim quite so old a link with Bristol as the National Provincial, its presence in the city came through the Stuckey family; one of the most famous names in West Country banking. During the time that Stuckey's were issuing their own notes these were widely preferred locally to those of the Bank of England.

Stuckey's Bank, as so often happened in the early days of banking, evolved almost imperceptibly from a general merchanting business: that of Samuel Stuckey of Langport. His bank there is dated from 1772 and Langport remained its Head Office throughout the 137 years independent life of the bank.

1806 saw the opening of the Bristol Office at 50 Broad Quay. It was called the **Bristol and Somersetshire Bank**, the partners being Messrs George and Vincent Stuckey, Lean, Hart and Maningford. Twenty years later Stuckey's consolidated their business in Langport, Bridgwater and Bristol in **Stuckey and Co** and at the same time absorbed Bristol's **Castle Bank** which had been opened by Messrs Ricketts, Thorne, George, Wait, Dymock and Courtney in 1810. Their office was John Vaughan's Old Dutch House on the corner of High Street and Wine Street, regrettably destroyed in 1940 in one of the heavy air raids on Bristol, but since redeveloped as part of the site for the Bristol Branch of the Bank of England.

We have seen how the Bristol banks were steadily drawn to Corn Street and

Stuckey's moved closer by leaving Broad Quay for the Castle Bank's Office in the Old Dutch House.

The final move to Corn Street took place in the 1850s when Stuckey's purchased the City Auction Mart on the St Nicholas Street corner which had been the site occupied by Ames Cave and Co nearly thirty years before. Their new premises, designed by R S Pope, were opened in 1854. It was a practice of Stuckey's to appoint joint managers to the Bristol Office and from 1858 to 1861 one of these was Walter Bagehot, the economist and writer.

Stuckey's Bank, by then a limited Company, merged in 1909 with **Parr's Bank**. Parr's Bank was incorporated in Warrington in 1865 but its forerunner Parr Lyon and Co went back to 1782. By 1909 Parr's Head Office had moved to Bartholomew Lane in London and, like the Old Bank six years before, Stuckey's now became part of a widely based national bank.

During 1918 Parr's merged with the London County and Westminster Bank who, through the London and Westminster Bank, could claim the distinction of establishing the first joint stock bank in London with the opening in 1834 of its City office on part of the site on which the Head Office of National Westminster in Lothbury now stands. The role of James Gilbart, the bank's first General Manager, in overcoming the hostility of the Bank of England and other city interests in the successful establishment of the London and Westminster Bank, may be compared in significance with that of Joplin in the National Provincial. The long new title of **London County Westminster and Parr's Bank** was shortened in 1923 to Westminster Bank.

District Bank

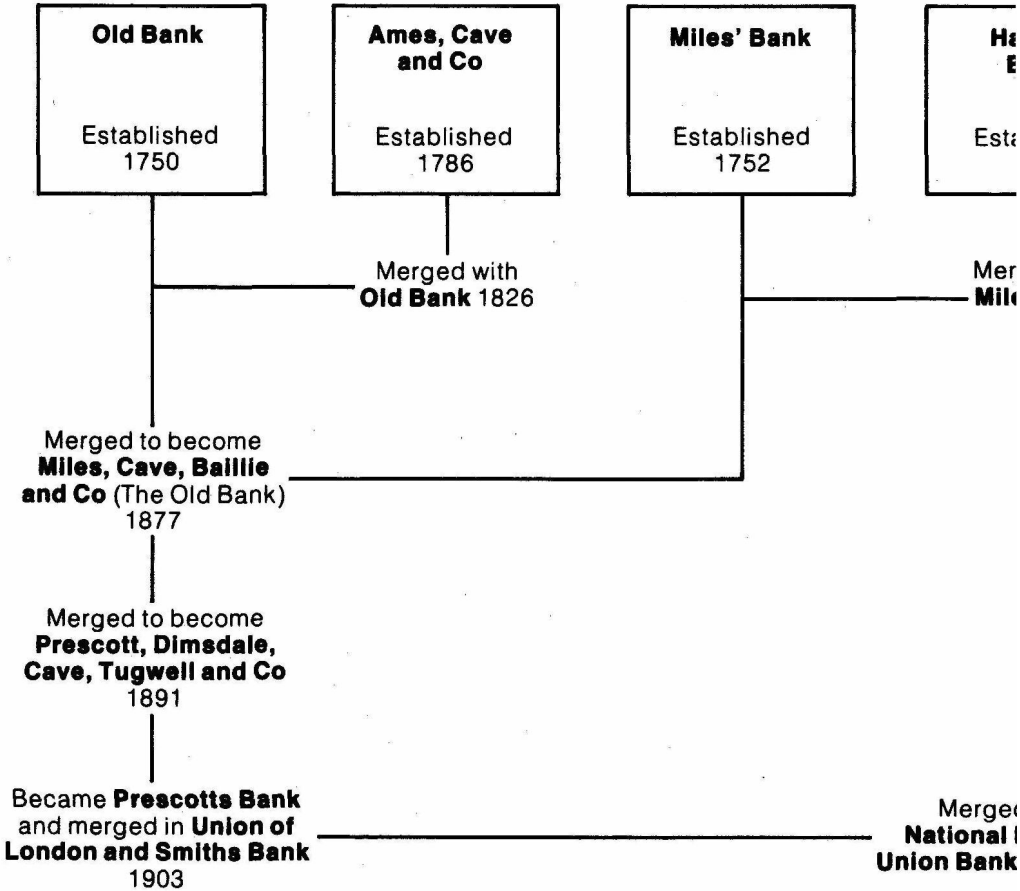
The **Manchester and Liverpool District Banking Company**, as it was called until shortened to District Bank in 1924, was founded in 1829 before the National Provincial and the London and Westminster. Although a London Office was opened in 1885 the bank mainly confined its activities to the northern half of the country until the 1930's when expansion in the south began. The District came to Bristol in 1939 when the branch at 28 Clare Street was opened.

Although the share capital of the District Bank was acquired by the National Provincial in 1962 it continued to operate as a separate bank until the National Westminster merger.

National Westminster

The merger of 1970 found both National Provincial and Westminster Banks strongly represented in Bristol with some 30 branches and sub branches each in the city and its environs. In Corn Street were the three large offices with the District Bank nearby at the top of Clare Street.

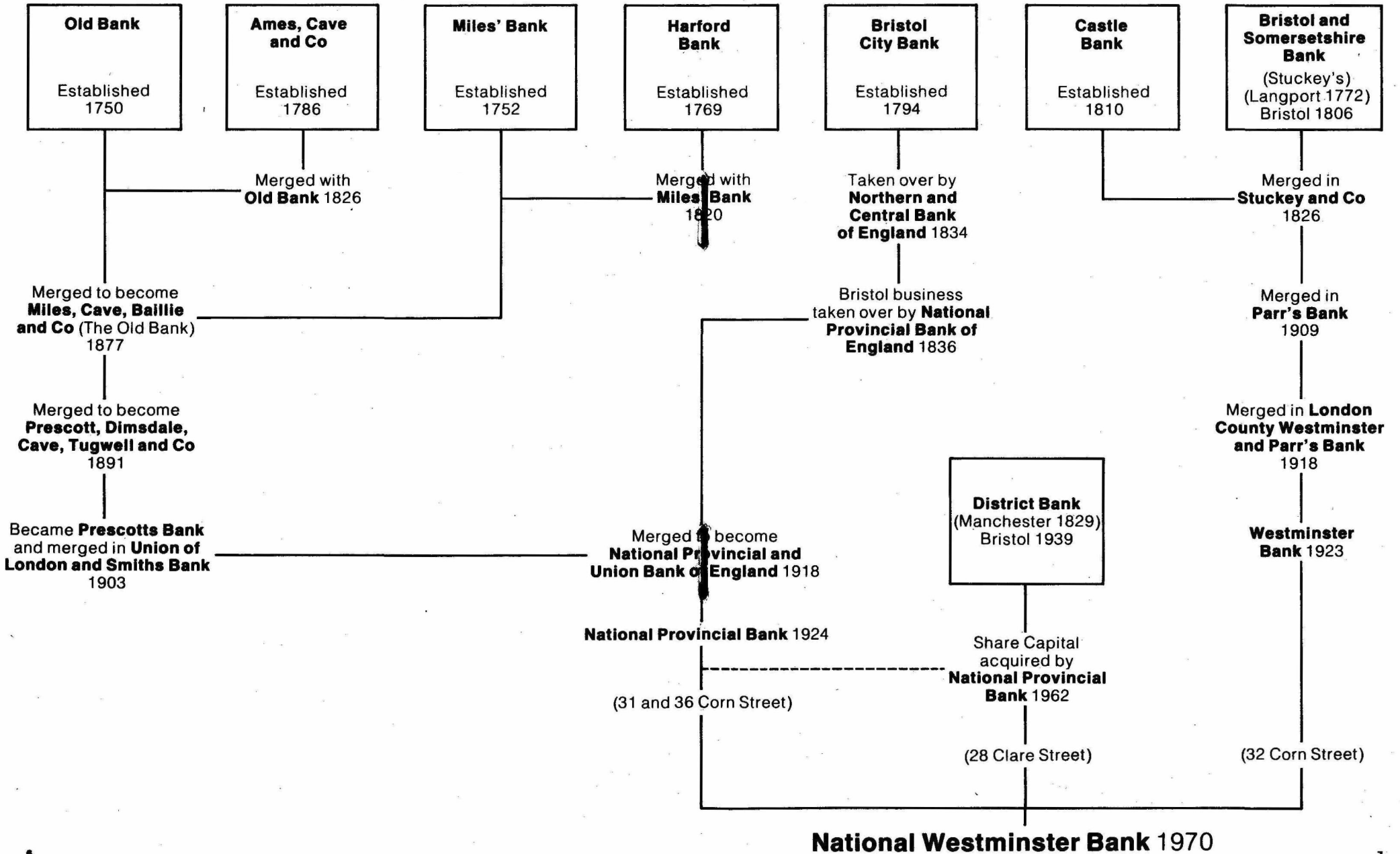
Genealogical Tree — Nation



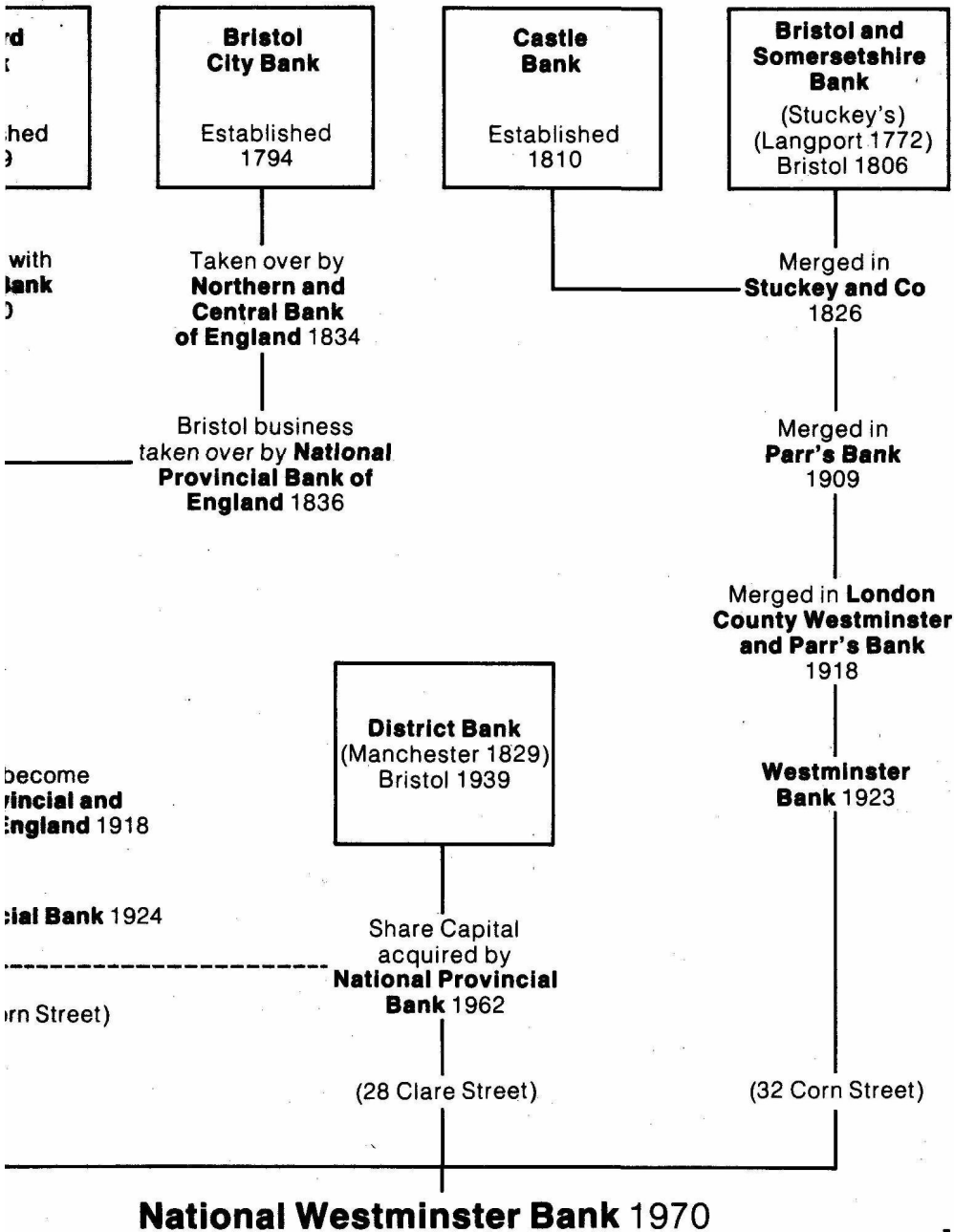
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Genealogical Tree — National Westminster Bank in Bristol



Westminster Bank in Bristol



In 1971 the Clare Street branch was closed, the business being taken into 36 Corn Street and in 1977 the combined business was amalgamated with that of number 31.

In recent years the attraction of Bristol as a place in which to work and live has been widely recognised and the National Westminster Bank has made the city the home of its Insurance Services, Registrars Department, a sizeable part of its International business, the Chief Office of the Trustee and Income Tax Department, and the Head Office for its South West Regional Board and management.

This year we see the final unification of the Corn Street business on the south side of the street at numbers 32,34 and 36, while Coutts, another member of the National Westminster Group, is now in its fourth year in Bristol at number 38.

The visitor to Corn Street must be struck by the sharp contrast in styles of the exterior of the new Bristol City Office — the Victorian flamboyance of the facade of number 36 against the quiet solidity of the 32 and 34 Corn Street building. The two 'Old Bank' oval stone tablets brought from the earlier building across the road can be seen on the face of number 36 and stepping inside we are surprised by a completely modern, yet intimate, banking hall. A feature of this is a carving in marble of the granting in the 16th century by Queen Elizabeth I of the right to 'the loyal wives of Bristol' to lay out washing to dry on the slopes of Brandon Hill.

Again there is contrast as one enters the other half of the office where the securities and management sections are at work beneath the splendid barrel-vaulted roof of Stuckey's old banking hall, remodelled by Parr's in 1914, with the archway to the street embellished by seven shields adopted by Parr's Bank. Clockwise from the St George's Cross of the City of London are the Arms of Sir Claude Scott, Stuckey's Bank, and the City of Liverpool, the Vine house sign from 77 Lombard Street in London, and the Arms of the City of Manchester. Superimposed in the centre are those of the Borough of Warrington. The two Stuckey family lions appeared on the notes and cheques issued by Stuckey's Bank and the remaining six shields were displayed on Parr's cheques.

The highly successful blending of all these different architectural styles in the new office surely characterises the fusing of the traditions and skills of the three banks whose history in Bristol we have briefly traced. The National Westminster Bank in Corn Street looks forward to the next 230 years of service to the people of Bristol.





Managers of 36 Corn Street (Old Bank) Branch

(former National Provincial Bank)

1875	H F Price	1960	H Shaw
1902	E Moxley	1961	J E Holifield
1910	H Elgey	1964	V B Clark
1922	C H French	1968	A R Boulton
1927	R Waller	1969	E S Hughes
1941-53	Temporarily merged with 31 Corn Street Branch	1971	B E F Whitehead
		1974	M J Tamlyn
1953	A R S Whiley	1977	Closed by merger with 31 Corn Street Branch
1957	C W M Young		



Managers of 31 Corn Street

(former National Provincial Bank)

1836	George Wright (formerly partner in Bristol City Bank)	1950	H C Pearson
		1952	E A R King
1837	Henry Eades Stephens	1960	C W M Young
1860	Robert Fergusson	1961	H Shaw
1870	A C Smith	1967	J H Waite
1892	B J Haines	1968	G A Young
1903	A C Rogers	1971	J A Duffield
1919	R G Hervey	1974	T R Webley
1928	H L Smith	1980	Businesses of 31 and 32 Corn Street Branches merged in Bristol City Office at 32-36 Corn Street.
1933	T F Stone		
1938	F G Jennison		
1941-53	Temporarily absorbed business of Old Bank Branch		



Managing Partners and Managers of 32 Corn Street Branch

(former Westminster Bank)

At 50 Broad Quay:		1868	W G Coles
1806	James Lean		J C Chetwood Aiken
	John Maningford	1869	W G Coles
1825	John Maningford		J C Chetwood Aiken
		1886	Alfred Deedes
			Alfred Deedes
At High Street/Wine Street:			J C Chetwood Aiken
1826	John Maningford	1888	Alfred Deedes
1841	John Maningford		J C Chetwood Aiken
	Charles Paul		H C Batten
1845	John Maningford	1895	J C Chetwood Aiken
	Charles Paul		H C Batten
	P F Aiken	1899	H C Batten
1850	John Maningford		E C Nicholetts
	Charles Paul	1918	E C Nicholetts
	P F Aiken	1927	R S Cozens
	W G Coles	1928	J G Jarvis
		1949	H Brook
		1958	G G N Candy
At 32 Corn Street:		1961	E J Downie
1854	Charles Paul	1964	S G Hooper
	P F Aiken	1965	H G Jannaway
	W G Coles	1971	R J Fellows
1857	P F Aiken	1975	J A R Green
	W G Coles		
1858	P F Aiken	1980	Business merged with that of 31 Corn Street in Bristol City Office at 32-36 Corn Street
	W G Coles		
	Walter Bagehot		
1861	P F Aiken	1980	T R Webley
	W G Coles		



Managers of 28 Clare Street

(former District Bank)

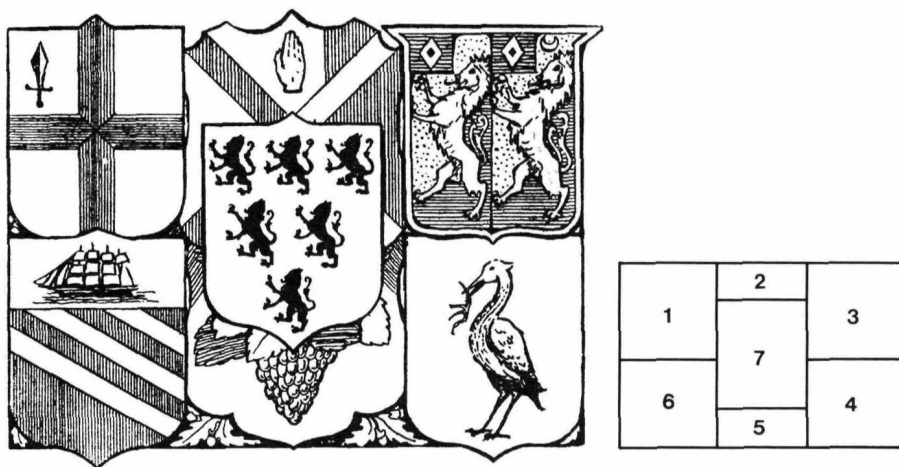
1939	W H Hodson	1971	Closed by merger with
1946	F W Bate		36 Corn Street (Old Bank)
1963	J Wilkinson		Branch

The Brandon Hill Carving In Marble

The 15 feet by 13 feet marble wall decorated with carving in the new banking hall was commissioned from Walter Ritchie, the British sculptor who is a leading exponent of Intaglio. This technique of carving the design into the face of the stone makes possible the very fine detail of the scene so elegantly depicted. The white colour is produced naturally by the chisels crushing the brown-veined Napoleon marble.

Tradition has it that when Queen Elizabeth I rode down Corn Street in August 1574, she was in an ill humour because her fine ruffs had suffered on the journey over the bad roads. The Mayor gave the ruffs to the loyal wives of Bristol who laundered them with such skill that they were returned to the Queen next day in an immaculate condition.

Her Majesty was delighted and asked what favour she could bestow. They replied that it was their custom to wash their linen in the pure water of Jacob's Well and hang it to dry on the south slope of Brandon Hill, but of late Her Majesty's Ranger had encouraged his dogs to pull down their washing. The Queen graciously decreed that the wives of Bristol should henceforth enjoy the right to hang out their washing on Brandon Hill without hindrance and the right exists to this day.



Armorial Details of the Parr's Bank Shields

1 Arms of the City of London — Argent, a cross gules, in the first quarter, a sword in pale, point upwards of the last.

2 Arms of Sir Claude Scott, Bart — Per pale indented argent and sable a saltire counter-changed (the hand is a sign of a baronet). The banking firm of Sir Samuel Scott Bart and Co which merged with Parr's Banking Co and the Alliance Bank Ltd in 1894, was originally Sir Claude Scott, Bart, Williams and Company of Cavendish Square, London.

3 Arms of the Stuckey Family of Langport — Per bend sinister crenellée or and azure a lion rampant ermine on a canton of the second a mascle of the first. These Arms are shown twice on the shield side by side — 'impaled'. This is probably due to the fact that the original partners were brothers or because a later partner, Vincent Stuckey, married his first cousin.

4 Arms of the City of Liverpool — Argent, a cormorant, in the beak a branch of sea-weed called laver, all proper.

5 Sign of the Vine — The bunch of grapes sign originally hung outside 77 Lombard Street which was occupied by Fuller, Banbury, Nix and Co, private bankers, absorbed by Parr's Banking Co Ltd in 1891. This merger gave Parr's their first London Office and a seat in the Clearing House.

6 Arms of the City of Manchester — Gules, three bendlets enhanced or, a chief argent, thereon on waves of the sea a ship under sail proper.

7 Arms of the Borough of Warrington — Ermine, six lioncels rampant, three two and one gules.

