

BANKS in Birchington

In the light of our recent ram-raids on banks in Station Road, one of our members felt it seemed an appropriate time to do a mini history of all Birchington's banks!



The first bank to open in Birchington was Cobb's, which built the premises in the Square in about 1898, now occupied by Lloyd's TSB. (They had originally been housed near Brills.) When the new building was first opened, only the left half was used by Cobb's, while the right half was occupied by Brooks Tea Rooms and shop. This had moved down from "Southdown House" at the entrance to the Methodist Chapel yard. Both

the inside and outside of the building have altered over the 100+ years of its existence, but the old building is still very recognisable from this old 1908 photo.

The Westminster Bank was the next to open in 1923. It occupied premises almost opposite its present position, where "Size Does Count" now trades. The newly constructed premises over the road were opened in 1931. The bank was merged with the National Provincial Bank in the late 1950s or early 1960s, becoming the Natwest Bank we now know. It has had several upgrading of the internal premises, but the outside has remained virtually unchanged.



Barclay's Bank moved into their premises at the far end of Station Road in the middle of 1937, as they first appear in Kelly's Directory in 1938, soon after these new shops were built. They, too, have had numerous upgrading of the interior and small alterations to the outside, mainly to add the cash machine that caused so much trouble recently!

The last bank to arrive was the Midland Bank, now taken over by HSBC, which first came to Birchington in 1964, shortly after Woolworths moved in next door. Besides the change of name, their premises have seen many changes and like all the other banks, now has a "Hole-in-the-wall", which causes so much temptation nowadays. For those new to Birchington, the Co-op now occupies Woolworth's premises.



Evidence of the ram-raiders early in the morning of Saturday 14th July 2007