

AN ITEM OF INTEREST FROM THE HERITAGE CENTRE

Contents inherited from NatWest Bank found whilst refurbishing the Bank and turning it into a Heritage Centre

This month there are 3 OBJECTS we have that were already in the Bank when it was bought, 2 were hidden away in the Cellar (which was not shown on the drawings we inherited) and was only found when the floor covering was replaced. The 3rd Object was found in a box of rubbish, and only found when the box tipped over. I had caused the



box to tip and what I saw made my Heart race, as I'm sure it would if it were you.

Forty-five used £20 pound notes in a bundle with a Bank tape around it. I thought Xmas had come round a second time in 2019, until having shown my find to co-workers in another room, we had a closer look.

The notes seemed perfect and very real, but the centre part of the notes had been cut away in order to inlay a Tracking Device and we think a coloured smoke or dust producer for locating the cash and giving the thief a different skin colour.

This item has been 'sandwiched' between clear Polycarbonate sheets and displayed securely in a display of Banking Items in the Centre.

The Cellar mentioned above had been sealed off many years ago, it was only noticed when the flooring material was lifted and a woodblock floor was exposed. Where the stairs to the Cellar had been, was now found to be Joist and Floor boarded. In this area was a square of approx 2ft x 2ft easily seen as a square saw cut access trap.

Once we managed to open the trap, two of us Volunteers, the shortest ones which is handy sometimes, armed with Torches shot down into the Cellar like Ferrets. I think we thought the notes had been found above ground, perhaps the Gold was underground, but alas not so.





However, what we did find was 2 rooms, one was completely shelved out floor to ceiling, the shelves were wide enough and spaced for housing Box Files. After all this part of the Building was from the 1920's, and no fancy Computers then so all accounts were done either in longhand or Typewriter and filed away. The other room was a boiler-room, the boiler had been removed probably in the early 1980's when an extra floor was built on the Bank. The boiler had been a Coke burning type, but in the 1980's Gas was the means of Heating and for Hot water.

Also within the Cellar amongst general rubbish we found an unusual 'Bank Interest' Display board, unusual in the fact that at the time this was

last used, the bank paid high interest if you saved with them, unlike today, and the figures were all in 'Fractions' so before Decimalisation which was February 14th 1971.

Another item we found was, again unusual, a Trolley used to transport cash from A to B. It was very well made and included horizontal wheels on each corner, these were there to prevent the trolley gouging a wall if it got too close, instead the unit would roll along the wall.

Remember, these items are from pre decimalisation, when coins were heavier than now, for instance £5 worth of old pennies would weigh approximately 2.5 kilos.

The Trolley itself weighs about 1 Cwt.

All these items will be on show in the Heritage Centre for our visitors to view when we reopen this coming weekend.



Written up by Tony Armstrong, Heritage Volunteer.