

change of partners before the amalgamation. Charles Francis, son of James, and John Hayes and Gerald Pomeroy, the sons of the surviving partners joined the firm.

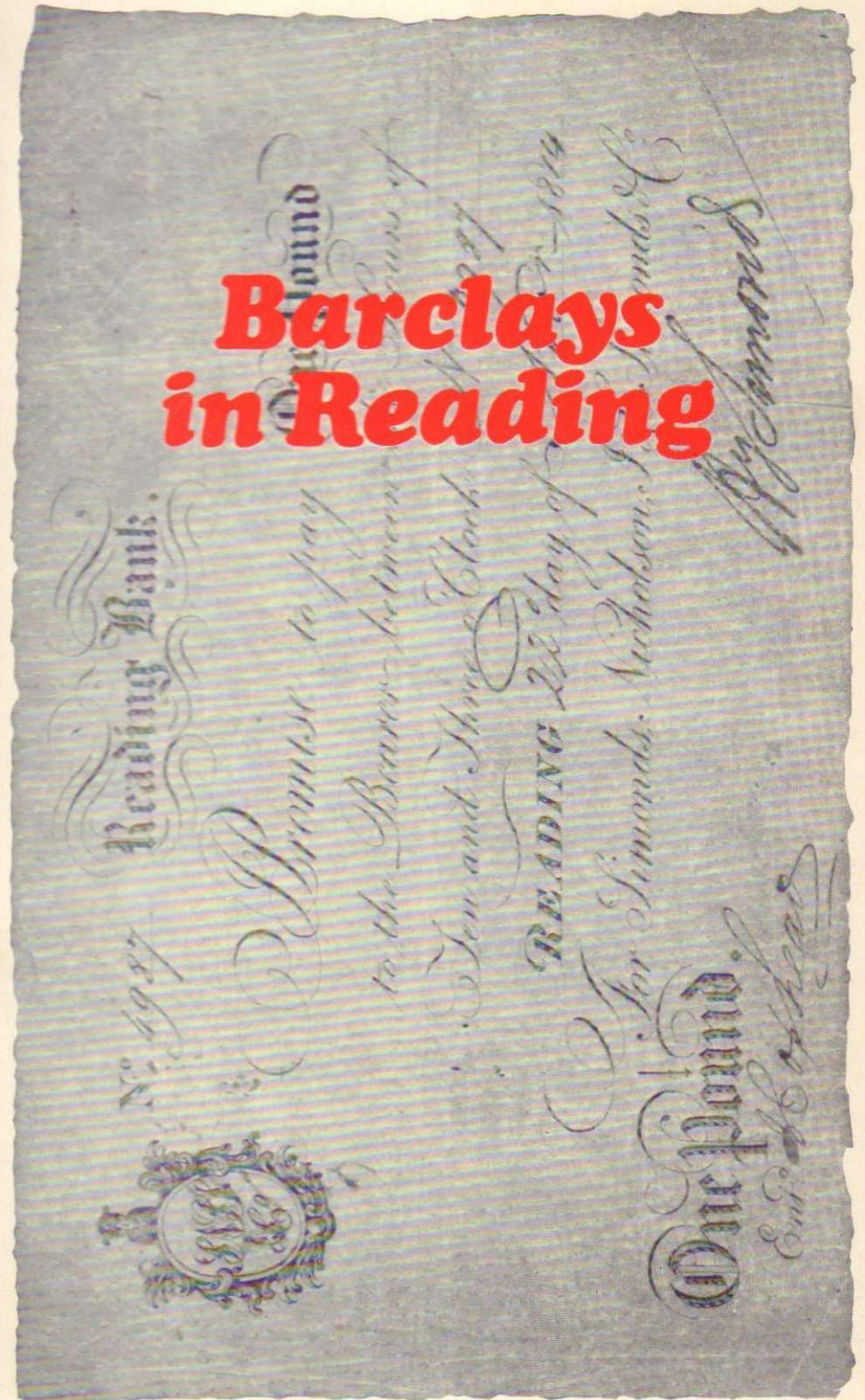
In 1892, the firm published its Balance Sheet, showing a capital of £100,000 and Deposits of £503,000, and the last Balance Sheet before the amalgamation showed deposits of £925,000 and 12 branches.

The Bank has always been very largely associated with official accounts of the Town and County, in fact members of the Simonds family have held appointments of Mayor and Treasurer for the Borough and County.

Since 1896, when Barclays became a limited company on the amalgamation of twenty private banking firms, great progress has been made and many other banks besides the Reading Bank have been absorbed; such as the United Counties Bank and the London and South Western Bank, both of which also had branches in Reading. Barclays has always followed a policy of decentralisation, setting up Local Head Offices throughout England and Wales, each administering the branches in its own area. Often the former private bankers became Local Directors, and this happened at Reading on the formation of the Local Head Office after the amalgamation in 1913. Banks normally calculate their size by reference to the amount of their deposits. According to this measurement we are now the largest Bank in the Western world outside the U.S.A., where only four banks are larger. Our principal subsidiary, Barclays Bank D.C.O. has 1,500 branches in 40 countries stretching from the West Indies, to the Mediterranean and Africa. Altogether the Barclays Group of companies has 4,240 branches in 45 countries. Our latest venture is the establishment of Barclays Bank of California which has its Head Office in San Francisco.

Bound up with our history is the sign of the Black Spread Eagle which appears outside our branches and on our cheques. It originated in the 18th Century or earlier, when the Merchants in Lombard Street, which was even then the principal financial and banking centre in London, distinguished their premises by means of various signs, some of which may have been attached to them since the days of the Italian traders from whom Lombard Street took its name. The Black Spread Eagle, which has been our sign in Lombard Street since 1727, has been charged with the Three Crowns of the former 43 Lombard Street and in this form has been officially granted by the Kings of Arms to be the arms of Barclays Bank Limited.

The Bank's Head Office at 54 Lombard Street now includes the area previously occupied by Nos. 43-58 Lombard Street, 17-22 Gracechurch Street, 1-6 George Yard, All Hallows Church, Ball Alley, the Cross Keys Inn and St. Michael's House.



A more efficient service is now offered to our customers at 3/5 King Street by the re-designing and extension of our premises, which has been achieved by acquiring the adjoining property at No. 13 High Street. The Trustee Department has been rehoused above ground floor level in the combined space of their original premises plus No. 13 High Street.

Moving the Trustee Department above ground has enabled us to bring the Machine Room down to the ground floor, so that with the exception of staff facilities on the upper floors, the Branch is now housed entirely on the ground floor.

Passenger lifts have been installed to serve the Trustee Department and the offices of the Local Head Office which occupy the first floor.

The architects, Tripe & Wakeham, have created the counter front with panels of light grey vinyl material, separated by polished aluminium channels, which are lit by fluorescent tubes concealed behind the American black walnut counter rail. The wall to the public space has been panelled to match the counter front.

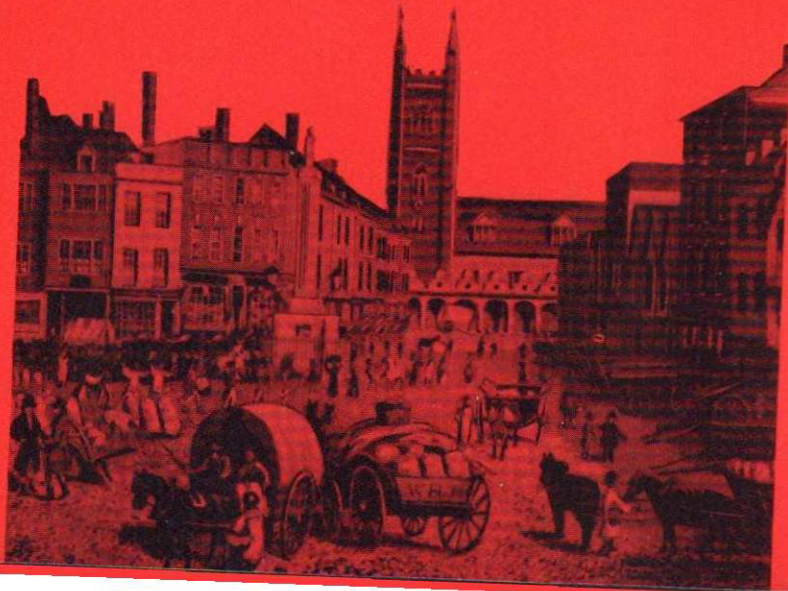
The counter screens are in four different colours in accordance with their functions, i.e., Cashiers, Foreign, Securities and Statements, and this 'colour code' is repeated in directional signs and notices relating to these various departments.

A suspended acoustic ceiling (which reduces the noise level to a minimum) has been erected over the entire Banking Hall together with new lighting which will give our staff better working conditions.

A very efficient oil-fired heating system has been installed. Although the entrance doors at King Street and Market Place

*Something old . . .*

*The Corn Market as it used to be in the 19th Century.*



have been repolished, the original brass plates remain and provide a 'potted' history of the alterations in business hours which have occurred over the years, together with the name of John Simonds, Charles Simonds and Co., as the Bank was known from 1839.

The Bank's business was established in Reading on July 31, 1814, when William Blackall Simonds established a banking house in King Street, on the site of the present office, with his son Henry, two cousins, John and Charles, and a Mr. Nicholson, as partners.

William Blackall Simonds had previously been in partnership with Robert Micklem, John Stephens and Robert Harris, who started a bank in Reading in October, 1791, under the title of "Micklem, Stephens, Simonds & Harris". This partnership was dissolved by mutual consent on July 30, 1814.

In 1816, the partnership with Mr. Nicholson was dissolved, and the business was then carried on by John, Charles and Henry Simonds. From that date onwards the partners in the Bank were all members of the Simonds family. Henry Simonds retired in 1839, and John and Charles continued under the title of "John Simonds, Charles Simonds and Co., Reading Bank", by which style the Bank was known until the amalgamation with Barclay & Company Limited in 1913. In 1859 various changes caused by death had left John Simonds (the son of the previous partner of that name) the sole partner. In 1871 he took his two sons, John (the third) and William, and his nephew, James, into partnership. After the death in 1876 of John (the second), these three controlled the business until 1905 when the death of James Simonds resulted in the final

*Something new . . .*

*Light, space and simplicity. An interior of the new extended premises at 3/5 King Street.*

