

Five groats from my account, lusty wench!

Published on **Friday 9 March 2007 09:40** in the **Lynn News**

CUSTOMERS turned out in force to see displays in Barclays Bank in Swaffham Market Place on Friday marking the 200th anniversary of banking in the town.

Staff dressed up in period costume for the occasion and a cheque for 210 from the bank was presented to Swaffham and Litcham Home Hospice Support Group co-ordinator Debbie Harfield and assistant coordinator Mr Alan Collison.

Mrs Harfield also cut a special celebration cake for early-bird customers to sample.

Barclays branch manager Mrs Jo Antliff said: "The customers' response was fantastic and they really enjoyed the theme of the day.

"We had photos and archives for people to view and it was nice to give something back to the community – giving the equivalent of 200 guineas to the local hospice group – as a way of celebrating the anniversary."

Cashier Mrs Jane Gooderson said: "It was busy all day with people looking round the displays."

The displays showed that banking began in Swaffham on February 27, 1807, when Gurney and Company of Lynn opened a branch of its bank in the town as the first move towards expanding its business.

The Gurneys were prosperous Norwich woollen merchants who had extended their business to include banking, and the Swaffham branch has occupied the same site in the Market Place since at least 1829.

In 1896, the Gurney bank was one of 20 banking firms which amalgamated to become Barclays.

At that time, the Swaffham branch manager lived in an adjoining residence and the sub-manager "above the shop", and there were stables to the rear.

Between 1966 and 1968 Swaffham branch was rebuilt to a design from Norwich architects Fielden and Mawson. Hand-made black pantiles salvaged from the old building were used on the new pitched roof and a large window placed behind the cashiers to give customers a view of the parish church beyond.

Barclays continued to expand by amalgamating with or taking over other banks, including Martins Bank in 1969 and the Woolwich Building Society in 2000.