

RICHARD LEIGH

Richard Leigh was born in 1839, first son of Ralph Leigh, Attorney at Law, living and practising in Standishgate.

Around 1866, Richard and Thomas Ratcliffe Ellis, formed a Solicitors practice, Leigh & Ellis based at 26 King St.

In 1868 an agreement was reached with Manchester & County Bank, formed in 1862, to share the King Street premises and the bank opened for business on 9th March 1868.

Both businesses flourished and discussions and negotiations took place to build The Arcade on adjacent land in King Street.

The bank opened for business in the Arcade building on 1st March 1872

Richard made, 26 King Street, available to the organising committee responsible for the forthcoming opening of the Wigan Infirmary and subsequently the visit of the Prince of Wales.

In the Spring of 1874, Richard married Frances Annie Hardinge a resident of St. Leonards, Hastings and shortly after the marriage Richard moved to Hastings.

By 1875, the partnership between Leigh & Ellis had been dissolved and Ratcliffe Ellis went into partnership with Edward Scott and formed Scott and Ellis located again at the Arcade Buildings.

Unfortunately, Richard's new life in Hastings was short lived as he died in March 1879, aged 40 years.

His funeral at St. Leonards, was attended by Thomas Ratcliffe Ellis and Leigh Clare.

MANCHESTER & COUNTY BANK

From its humble beginnings at 26 King Street, the bank continued to grow thanks to the branch manager, Irishman, Wright Gee.

Wright would spend more than 40 years with the Bank and 36 years at the Wigan branch.

The Gee family settled in at a house in 147, Wigan Lane close to the Plantation Gates. However, tragedy struck when his wife, Elizabeth Geete died in 1871, at the age of 35, at the residence of her parents in Finchley New Road, London. Her father John Gadsby was the author of "Wanderings in the East"

He would marry on two more occasions and also moved out of the grimy atmosphere of Wigan in the late 1870's moving to Ormskirk and then to Southport where he died in December, 1912.

Wright Gee would oversee the branch's 3 moves,

1868 - 26, King St,

1872 - Arcade building

1890 - Market Place.

It is not known when the bank opened for business in Market Place, However Pevsner states..... *thence back to Market Place, on the N corner the Manchester & County Bank, now a pub with 1990's ground elevations, but pretty, original Loire style uppers by Mills & Murgtroyd of 1890 to the Market Place and 1895 to Library Street. Each with frilly gables, the older with an off-set oriel.*

The Manchester & County Bank merged with the District Bank in 1935.