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News release

25 October 2011

Balancing Security and Aesthetics: the Evolution of Modern Banknote Design - speech by Chris Salmon

In a speech delivered to the British Numismatic Society, Chris Salmon, Executive Director for Banking Services and Chief Cashier, discusses the evolution of banknotes, and in particular recognises the contribution of Harry Eccleston, who played a key role in the development of the Bank's contemporary approach to banknote design. Mr Salmon also touches on the features of the new £50 banknote and the Bank's broader strategy towards protecting the integrity of the currency.

Chris Salmon begins his speech by setting out the history of banknote design prior to Harry Eccleston joining the Bank as a full-time banknote designer. Harry Eccleston introduced a step-change in the design of notes, which continues to underpin the Bank's approach.

Chris Salmon goes on to describe more recent developments in banknote design. In particular, the new £50 note which will deliver a significant update in security features, carrying eight features for cash users compared to the five of its predecessor. He reveals the most notable among these: a technology which is new for the Bank, called motion thread. Woven directly into the paper, the motion thread is a semi-translucent feature with five windows along its length which contain images of the £ symbol and the number 50. When a note is tilted from side to side, the images move up and down. And when a note is tilted up and down, the images move from side to side and the number 50 and £ symbol switch.

Chris Salmon finishes by remarking on three aspects of the Bank's broader strategy: ensuring genuine notes can be recognised as authentic; ensuring the quality of our banknotes; and deterring counterfeiting activity. He highlights the work the Bank has done to improve the quantity and quality of £5 notes in circulation.

Key Resources

[Balancing Security and Aesthetics: the Evolution of Modern Banknote Design – Full speech](#)