



BANK OF ENGLAND

News release

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Virtual tour of the Bank

The Bank of England today launches its first App, featuring a virtual tour of its famous Threadneedle Street building.

The Bank of England throws open its doors to the world today, with the launch of a Virtual Tour app that gives users a fascinating insight into the institution that shapes the UK's economic and financial landscape.

Available to download free of charge via the Apple Store and Google Play marketplace, the App takes visitors on a virtual tour of the central bank's historic building, with 360° panoramic views and featuring key points of interest.

A highlight of the Virtual Tour is a rare view of the Bank's gold vaults – one of the largest in the world – that houses over 400,000 bars of the precious metal. The tour also visits the Cash Vault where the Bank holds a portion of its vast stock of banknotes, and users can learn about the security features on each of the Bank's notes via the 'Know Your Banknotes' feature.

App users can also explore the Garden Court – an oasis at the heart of the building – which is planted with mulberry trees, the material that was used to make the first paper money issued in 10th century China; and can learn the gruesome tale of the "Bank Giant" – a 2-metre tall former clerk whose body was buried in the garden in 1798 to protect it from grave-snatchers.

The Bank of England's monetary policy and financial stability roles are also illustrated in the tour, with a visit to the room where the Monetary Policy Committee meets to set interest rates every month. There is also a view of the Dealing Room, where the Bank interacts with the financial markets to implement monetary policy.

Most of the Threadneedle Street building is, of course, a working space devoted to monetary and financial stability. But it is a recognisable landmark to many people, and the App provides a unique glimpse of some of the Bank's more significant locations behind its familiar facade.

Note to Editors

The Bank of England was founded in 1694 and has occupied a building in Threadneedle Street since 1734. In 1788, Sir John Soane was appointed as 'Architect and Surveyor' to the Bank. Soane extended the Bank's original building until 1828, when it finally covered the whole 3.5 acres of the present site and was enclosed with the windowless wall that still stands today. The Bank was Soane's main pre-occupation for 45 years until his retirement in 1833, when he described it as '...a situation which has long been the pride and boast of my life'. Soane's structure remained more or less untouched until it was demolished, and a new building, rising seven storeys above ground and three below ground, erected between 1925 and 1939 by the architect Sir Herbert Baker.