



BANK OF ENGLAND

# News release

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## **Jane Austen to feature on Bank of England banknotes**

Bank of England Governor, Mark Carney, confirmed that Jane Austen will appear on a forthcoming Bank of England banknote: the next new character following Sir Winston Churchill.

Commenting, the Governor said: "Jane Austen certainly merits a place in the select group of historical figures to appear on our banknotes. Her novels have an enduring and universal appeal and she is recognised as one of the greatest writers in English literature. As Austen joins Adam Smith, Boulton and Watt, and in future, Churchill, our notes will celebrate a diverse range of individuals who have contributed in a wide range of fields."

The Austen note will be issued as a £10 note, within a year of the Churchill £5 note, which is targeted for issue during 2016.

Features of the design on the reverse of the Jane Austen note will include:

- The quote – "I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading!" from *Pride and Prejudice* (Miss Bingley, Chapter XI).
- Portrait of Jane Austen. Commissioned by James Edward Austen Leigh (Jane Austen's nephew) in 1870, adapted from an original sketch of Jane Austen drawn by her sister, Cassandra Austen.
- An illustration of Miss Elizabeth Bennet undertaking "The examination of all the letters which Jane had written to her" – from a drawing by Isabel Bishop (1902-1988).
- The image of Godmersham Park. Godmersham was home of Edward Austen Knight, Jane Austen's brother. Jane Austen visited the house often and it is believed that it was the inspiration for a number of her novels.
- Jane Austen's writing table – the central design in the background is inspired by the 12 sided writing table, and writing quills, used by Jane Austen at Chawton Cottage.

## **Review of process for selecting characters to appear on banknotes**

The Bank regularly changes the design of its banknotes to address issues such as counterfeiting and quality. As part of its programme of issuing new banknotes, the Bank has the honour of celebrating the contribution of great Britons and has included historic figures on banknotes since 1970. There is a wealth of talented people across a range of fields and, over time with the rolling programme, we seek to commemorate some of these.

The Bank announced in April that Sir Winston Churchill would be the historical figure to appear on the next Bank of England banknote. While there was general support for Churchill's inclusion on a banknote, concerns were also raised that, if he featured on the £5 note there would, in the absence of further changes, be a lack of female representation on our banknotes. We know that the public have great pride in Bank of England banknotes and that there is much interest in the characters that are featured. We acknowledge the concerns that have been raised recently about the diversity of characters on the notes, and would like to provide reassurance that, as part of the rolling programme of note launches, it was never the Bank's intention that none of the four characters on our notes would be a woman. The Bank continues to be mindful of the need to ensure that our notes represent a diverse range of characters, both now and in the longer term.

In the light of recent concerns, and in order to ensure that our notes represent the full diversity of British people, the Bank has decided to review the approach to, and criteria for, selecting characters to appear on banknotes. The Bank's Court of Directors discussed this at its meeting on 17 July, and agreed to the Bank's plans to undertake a review. The purpose of the review, which will be overseen by Chris Salmon, the Bank's Executive Director for Banking Services and Chief Cashier, is to refine the criteria for character selection, and establish a process to ensure that potential candidates are consistently judged against those criteria. In particular we will review:

- a. The principles that guide the choice of historical characters, given the need for the choices to command respect and legitimacy.
- b. How the process for choosing characters could ensure, and be seen to ensure, the delivery of those principles.

The Bank will also review whether it can take further steps to operate within the spirit of the Public Sector Equality Duty when deciding on future characters.

Commenting on the review, the Governor said: "We believe that our notes should celebrate the full diversity of great British historical figures and their contributions in a wide range of fields. The Bank is committed to that objective, and we want people to have confidence in our commitment to diversity. That is why I am today announcing a review of the selection process for future banknote characters."

If members of the public would like to provide feedback as part of the review, they can do so via the Bank's website where an email address for comments is supplied: [banknotecharacters@bankofengland.co.uk](mailto:banknotecharacters@bankofengland.co.uk). The Bank will announce the conclusions of the review by the end of the year.

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### **Notes to Editors**

1. A brief background of Jane Austen follows at the end of this release.
2. Features of the design on the reverse of the Jane Austen note will include:
  - Portrait of Jane Austen. Commissioned by James Edward Austen Leigh (Jane Austen's nephew) in 1870. James wrote the first biography of Jane Austen, 'A Memoir', published in 1870, and the illustration was produced by James Andrews, an artist from Maidenhead, as the frontispiece. It was adapted from the original sketch of Jane Austen which was drawn by her sister, Cassandra Austen, now in the National Portrait Gallery collection (NPG 3630). Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.
  - The quote – "I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading!" from *Pride and Prejudice* (Miss Bingley, Chapter XI). The book's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary is celebrated this year.
  - An illustration of Miss Elizabeth Bennet undertaking "The examination of all the letters which Jane had written to her" – from a drawing by Isabel Bishop (1902-1988), who illustrated E. P. Dutton & Company's 1976 edition of *Pride and Prejudice*. Copyright DC Moore Gallery, New York, representing the Estate of Isabel Bishop.
  - The image of Godmersham Park. Godmersham was home of Edward Austen Knight, Jane Austen's brother. Jane Austen visited the house often and it is believed that it was the inspiration for a number of her novels. Image courtesy of Jane Austen's House Museum, Jane Austen Memorial Trust.
  - Jane Austen's writing table – the central design in the background is inspired by the 12 sided writing table, and writing quills, used by Jane Austen at Chawton Cottage. The table belongs to Jane Austen's House Museum.
3. An image of the concept design is attached to this release. By its nature, some of the precise details within the concept image might change as the design enters the proofing and production stages.
4. A short video of Chris Salmon, Chief Cashier, discussing the choice of Jane Austen will be available after 15.30 hrs (BST) here: <http://youtu.be/R11GA7CC9n8>
5. A short video of Victoria Cleland, Head of Notes Division, describing the process leading up to the launch of a new banknote is available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vv6bE-InSPQ>
6. The house at Chawton is where Jane Austen spent the last eight years of her life. Whilst living there, Austen revised *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Northanger Abbey*. She also wrote *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion* in their entirety whilst at the house. For more details: <http://www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk/about/about.htm>

7. UK legislation does not prescribe the form or design of banknotes issued by the Bank. This is a matter to be determined by the Bank. The depiction of the Sovereign on a Bank of England note was introduced in 1960, and historical figures were introduced in 1970. The first figure selected was William Shakespeare.
8. The criteria used to select both Churchill and Austen were: whether the person had made a lasting contribution which is universally recognised and has had enduring benefits; whether the person has broad name recognition; that the person should not be controversial; and that there should be good artwork upon which the Bank could base its pictorial representation.
9. At the end of May 2013, the value of £5 notes in circulation was £1,542,936,000 (which equates to over 308 million notes), and the value of £10 notes £7,507,529,000 (which equates to over 750 million).
10. More information about Bank of England banknotes can be found on the banknote pages of the Bank's website: <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/Pages/default.aspx>
11. For further enquiries, please contact the Bank's Press Office on 020 7601 4411.

### **Jane Austen (1775 – 1817): a brief background**

Jane Austen was an English novelist who, using wit and social observation, provided astute insights into 19<sup>th</sup> century life, often praising the virtues of reason and intelligence and highlighting some of the barriers that society erected against the progression of women. Many academics and the public alike consider her to be one of the greatest writers in English history. In a BBC poll in 2002, the British public voted her as one of the "100 Most Famous Britons of All Time". *Pride and Prejudice* was voted the nation's second favourite novel in the Big Read in 2004, with a total of three of her works making it into the top 40 (*Emma* and *Persuasion* are the other two). In 1875, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* lauded her as "one of the most distinguished modern British novelists".

Jane Austen was born on 16 December 1775 in Steventon, Hampshire, one of eight siblings. After a short period of formal education, she was home-schooled by her father, Reverend George Austen. During this time she developed a fascination with books.

She was close to her family, and their homes and holidays in places such as Hampshire, Kent, Bath and the West Country were influential in her novels. Her brother Edward was adopted by the Austen's cousins – the Knight's, whose estate, Godmersham Park in Kent, he later inherited. Jane often visited Godmersham and it is believed that her visits there may have inspired some of the great houses in her novels.

Jane began to write in her adolescence and often read her stories aloud to her family. It took time, however, for her novels to be accepted by a publisher and her first works were published anonymously. The first, *Sense and Sensibility*, was published in 1811, swiftly followed by *Pride and Prejudice* (originally known as *First Impressions*, which celebrates its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year), *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*. *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* (originally *Susan*) were published posthumously. While her work gave her little personal fame and only a few positive reviews in her lifetime, her novels have never since been out of print.

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Around the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Jane Austen's novels began to appear on university reading lists, and are today an integral part of English Literature courses at secondary and tertiary levels. The influential scholar, Frank Raymond ("F.R.") Leavis, referred to her as the mother of the great tradition of the English novel. Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Austen's popular appeal increased with adaptations of her novels being developed for television. Books and films which used her novels as the underlying story also began to appear, demonstrating the timeless qualities of the themes of her writing.

Jane Austen died on 18 July 1817 and is buried at Winchester Cathedral. In a private journal written in 1826, Sir Walter Scott described Austen: "That young lady had a talent for describing the involvement and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with...What a pity such a gifted creature died so early."