

Here at the Bank of England, it's 's a historic day.

The first time in a generation where they've issued banknotes with a new monarch on them.

There were around four and a half billion banknotes in circulation, equating to £80 billion.

And her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth the second has appeared on all Bank of England notes since 1960.

Now, that's all changing.

Let's go and find out more.

As of today, the Bank of England will be issuing these banknotes with the portrait of King Charles the third.

However, all notes in circulation won't change immediately.

Banknotes that feature the portrait of Queen Elizabeth the second will remain legal tender, which means you can still buy things with them.

But how did banknotes come to be used in the first place?

I met with the curator of the Bank of England Museum to find out more.

People would have deposited coins at the Bank of England and they would have received something like this.

Now, that was a banknote from 1697.

Now, that became something that people would have exchange to get other things.

And that's how the very earliest banknotes began.

So this is almost like the very, very start of it all.

The very beginning. Amazing.

So from this banknotes, we go to this one, which is worth a little bit more.

Take a look at the number.

£1,000,000.

£1,000,000.

So technically, I've got £1,000,000 in my hand right now.

So this is only used inside the bank? Yes.

What are you going to do with the million pound note?

Who can accept it? Who can give you change for £1,000,000?

Not many people.

Much too big to be useful.

This is made in 1960 and it was one of the First Bank of England notes that has the Queen's face on it.

You can see there are quite complex designs

and that helps to make the paper really difficult to copy.

Fascinating stuff.

But we don't use notes and coins anywhere near as much as we used to.

Instead, we pay with things like our bank card or even on our phones.

So will the museum soon be the only place to see cash?

And to help answer that.

Who better than the Bank of England's chief cashier, Sarah John?

What does your job actually mean?

So I'm responsible for overseeing the design of the banknotes, the production of the banknotes.

If you look at any of these new banknotes, you will actually see my signature on them.

Sarah John, up there. In this corner here.

What about the future of cash? And the future of notes. What's that looking like?

I actually think that cash is going to be around for quite a long time to come.

And we know that around 2 million people still rely on cash for their everyday spending.

The note swap from paper to plastic. Why was that?

So this is a material that's called polymer and it's cleaner, safer

and stronger than paper notes. So these polymer notes are all recycled when they come back to us at the end of life and they end up looking a little bit like this.

They then get melted down and then they get recycled into other products like plant pots.

Well, so is it sustainable?

It is, absolutely.

It seems that there's still a demand for cash. So there's no doubt that we'll be seeing these banknotes out and about. But I don't think I'll be leaving the house without a bank card.