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King Charles III
Royal Mint unveils new coin design inspired by King Charles

Animals and plants feature heavily in coinage that allows 'everyone to celebrate British nature'



The eight new designs replace the current shield. Photograph: Daniel Leal/AFP/Getty Images

Mabel Banfield-Nwachi
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A new collection of coins bearing the face of the king has been unveiled by the **Royal Mint**, breaking tradition with designs inspired by plants and animals found across the four nations.

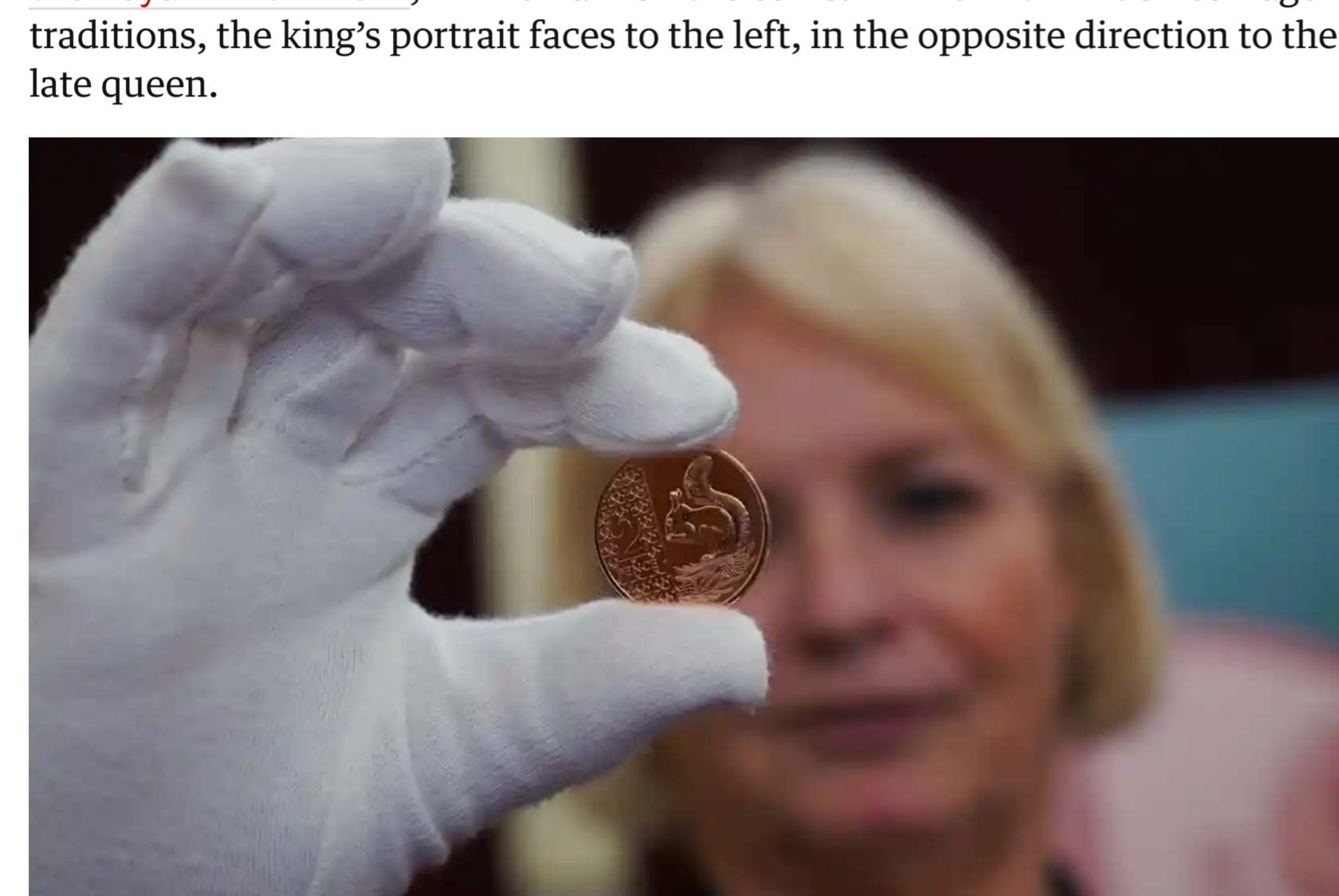
The eight designs, overseen by King Charles, depict the flora and fauna found in different parts of the UK and reflect his interest in conservation and nature.

The 1p depicts a hazel dormouse, the 2p the red squirrel, the 5p an oak tree leaf, the 10p the critically endangered woodland grouse the capercaillie, the 20p a puffin, the 50p a salmon, the £1 sees two bees and the £2 coin features a rose for England, a daffodil for Wales, a thistle for Scotland and a shamrock for Northern Ireland.

These coin designs will eventually replace the current shield, which features an emblem of the home nations: a rose, a thistle, a shamrock and a leek, and was introduced under Queen Elizabeth II in 2008.

The coins, ranging from the 1p to the £2, will be in circulation by the end of the year.

An **effigy of the king, created by sculptor Martin Jennings and presented by the Royal Mint in 2022**, will remain on the coins. In line with British coinage traditions, the king's portrait faces to the left, in the opposite direction to the late queen.



The 2p coin will be among those appearing in people's small change by the end of the year. Photograph: Yui Mok/PA

Chris Barker, information and research manager at the Royal Mint Museum, said traditionally British colony design had been dominated by heraldry.

"That's been the key theme for centuries, barring a couple of exceptions. These are a real watershed moment in the history of the British coinage because what we see is a complete gear change, to focus on flora and fauna."

He added: "These [coins] are very much of our era. They're reflecting the era of climate change, and also reflecting the monarch from which they are issued under. Charles has spent a lot of his life dedicated to nature and conservation."

A repeating pattern of three interlocking C's features on all of the coins, which takes its inspiration from history and the cypher of Charles II. The coins also feature large numbering, which is different from previous designs, and makes the coins more accessible, he said.

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Nicola Howell, chief commercial officer at the Royal Mint, said they were hoping to engage younger audiences, not only in the skill of numeracy but also the value of money "and actually being able to have these talking points about the coins.

"The big visual numbers will also help tourists who aren't as familiar with the British coinage system, and the designs allow everyone to celebrate British nature," she said. "I hope people can have conversations and [the coins] will spark an interest about conservation."

The Latin inscription surrounding the edge of the £2 coin was chosen by the king and reads *In servitio omnium*, which translates as "In the service of all". It was taken from the king's inaugural speech in September last year.

The chief Royal Mint engraver, Gordon Summers, oversaw the designs, alongside an advisory committee at the Royal Mint. The coins were created with the support of the **RHS** and the **RSPB**.

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