

Mary Somerville to be the face of the new £10 note

✘ Following an unseemly confusion over some last minute voting for Thomas Telford, the Royal Bank of Scotland has announced that Mary Somerville will be the face on the new polymer £10 note.

Somerville was born in Jedburgh but studied art with Alexander Nasmyth for a time.

The week-long public vote was to choose from Mary Somerville, Thomas Telford and James Clerk Maxwell. All three historical figures have contributed to science and innovation.

Somerville was clearly in the lead all the way through the voting process until the last minute and questions have been raised over the flood of votes for Telford at the end of the process.

The notes will be produced next year.

Commenting on the announcement, Malcolm Buchanan, Chair of RBS's Scotland board, said: "I was overwhelmed by the response to this initiative – a first for the Royal Bank of Scotland – and would like to thank all those who took the time to vote. Having the opportunity to choose the face of our new £10 notes obviously meant a great deal to a great number of people.

"Any of our final nominees would have been worthy winners and we wanted to make sure that our choice properly reflected the wishes of those who took part. Mary Somerville's immense contribution to science and her determination to succeed against all the odds clearly resonate as much today as they did during her lifetime."

Mary Somerville, Scientist, Science writer and translator

(1780 – 1872)

At a time when women's participation in science was strongly discouraged, Mary Somerville was a true pioneer and was jointly nominated to be the first female member of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1835. Somerville's writing influenced James Clerk Maxwell and John Couch Adams with her discussion of a hypothetical planet perturbing Uranus leading Adams to look for and discover Neptune.