

# Banknotes return home after 'coup'



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**Extremely rare Hemel Hempstead banknotes were snapped up by a history group after its members learned they were going under the hammer – thanks to the Gazette.**

Last month we reported that the notes were to be sold at Spink's London auction house.

A committee member of The Friends of Dacorum Museum alerted Dacorum Heritage Trust vice-chairman Peter Clayton, who sprang into action.

The trust snapped up nine of the 13 notes at a [cost](#) of £3,620.80 and the group is now seeking sponsors and donations to help foot the bill.

Historian Michael Stanyon said: “They represent an important phase in the development of the town nearly 200 years ago. This really is a coup for the Dacorum Heritage Trust.”

Between 1809 and 1856 the Hemel Hempsted Bank – the correct spelling of the time – had several owners.

Three of the notes bought are for the Grover and Pollard bank and date from 1812 to 1839.

Harry Grover came to the town in 1792 to set up a law practice that was so successful that he founded a bank in 1809.

He lived at the Bury, now the register office, and owned a 16-acre estate that included much of Gadebridge Park.

At that time banknotes were only printed on one side and were invalid until signed on the face by one of the partners.

The bank survived the crash of 1825 while many others went under. After Grover’s death new partners were found and five of the notes acquired by the trust were issued under their names – William Smith and Edmund Fearnley Whittingstall of Langleybury House. These notes date from 1839 to 1856.

The bank ceased [trading](#) in 1856 after being hit by a particularly bad robbery when a 17-year-old clerk stole about £1,300 – a huge sum in those days.