

COLLECTABLES

Few collecting subjects are as confusing as coins. I often receive letters from readers asking me the value of old coins they have, and it is never easy to give an accurate answer, for so many factors come into play.

For instance, most of the coins people write to me about are from the Victorian period around 100

At an international coin auction not long ago a bronze coin dating from around 337AD and therefore almost 2,000 years old and in quite good condition, was sold for ... well how much would you think?

Perhaps £4,000? What about just £400? Well, the answer was actually just £40!

near as much as gold, but the vast majority of coins tend to be bronze or alloy and despite great age are worth virtually nothing.

The reason is that coins were minted in very substantial numbers, so examples are not as rare as you may think.

Some coins were issued in what are called 'low mint' years when a relatively small amount were produced, and some were produced for a relatively short space of time. But the vast majority of coins were produced in tens of thousands, and that is why coin collecting is such a specialist business.

It is possible for a coin made perhaps just 50 years ago to be much more valuable due to its comparative rarity, than one made even 500 years ago.

If you do have any old coins tucked away, it is worth seeking



Roman coins – not always valuable!

Coins market defies logic Old age won't always dictate value

to 150 years ago, and while some of the coins are something simple such as an 1896 penny, or one of the old silver three-penny pieces, others can date back further.

In almost all instances, I have to inform the owners that the coins are worth little or nothing, for in coin collecting terms, a coin that's even 200 years old can still be considered relatively recent!

The reason was that, believe it or not, that particular coin is considered quite common in collecting circles and it points at the fact that age is not such a significant factor.

Generally, gold coins will always have a premium value because of the precious metal content. Silver can also have a significant value, though nowhere

specialist advice. Coin experts are listed in *Yellow Pages*, and are often seen exhibiting at collectors' fairs.

There are also a number of excellent price guide books on the market that you can consult.



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