

How much is the 1965 Winston Churchill Coin worth?

The Winston Churchill coin was a crown minted in 1965 to commemorate the life of Sir Winston Churchill following his death.

Sir Winston Churchill was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom between 1940 and 1945 during World War Two, and later between 1951 and 1955. Known for leading Britain to victory during World War Two, Churchill led a decorated career serving as a Member of Parliament for 64 years and in the army as an officer.

The coin sells for an average of £1.16 on eBay without packaging, according to the most recent values in 2021.

What is a Crown?

The British crown is a coin that was minted between 1707 and 1965 with a value of 25 pence today or five shillings/one-quarter of a pound during its circulation. The British Crown replaced the English Crown which was first introduced in 1526 under the monetary reform of 1526 under King Henry VIII.

It was a silver coin weighing around one ounce containing 92.5% silver from 1816 to 1919 and 50% silver from 1920 to 1946.

Following this, it was minted from cupronickel, an alloy of copper-containing nickel. The decline in silver content was directly related to the impact of World War One and World War Two, whereby the economic impact of the war meant that it was not feasible to continue using a high silver content.

During the 18th century, the Crown was a regularly used form of currency, it was not until the 19th and 20th centuries that it became more of a commemorative coin.

As such, there are many Crowns from this era that are sought after by coin collectors. These include coins such as the 1887 Victoria Silver Crown and the world-renowned 1847 Queen Victoria Gothic Crown which had a mintage of just 8,000 and sells for around £5000.

The value of a Crown depends on when it was minted, as this directly impacts not only the silver content of the coin which will inherently increase its value; but also, the historical importance of the coin. Other factors include the mintage figure as this tells us how rare the coin is and the condition of the coin itself.

Is It Rare?



Reverse Design of the 1965 Winston Churchill Crown



Obverse Design of the 1965 Winston Churchill Crown

The Winston Churchill Crown is the first ever UK coin to depict a figure other than someone in the Royal Family. This makes it the first of its kind and adds to its value.

Despite being collectable, the mintage of the coin is very large. With 19.6 million of the coins produced it is clear to see why the selling value on eBay is only £1.16

What Is The Winston Churchill Coin Made Of?

Due to being minted after 1946, the Winston Churchill Crown is composed of cupronickel. This means that the coin is not as valuable as Crowns minted before 1946 which were produced in silver.

Despite this, many coin collectors are willing to spend above face value for the coin – mainly due to the historical significance behind it.

Other Coins Featuring Churchill

The 1965 coin is, unsurprisingly, not the only one to feature Churchill. Let's take a look at other coins that have featured him.

Collectable Winston Churchill Crown sets

There are a few sets available for purchase created in 1965 that feature the Winston Churchill Crown. Sets like these are commonplace for the Royal Mint to make to give coin collectors the chance to own something a bit different and perhaps more collectable than the coin itself.

Examples of these include the Sir Winston Churchill Coin and Stamp gift set featuring the Crown alongside 2 postage stamps or the Commemorative Great Britain Coin Set from 1965 which features the Crown alongside a Halfpenny, Shilling, Threepence, Penny, Half crown, and the new 10p coin.

Should you choose to buy this coin, eBay would be one of the first places to look. Be wary of scammers trying to list the coin for ridiculous prices.

There are many fine examples available to buy on eBay, we just advise taking your time when browsing to make sure you purchase the right example.

Those who are extra cautious and able to afford to pay above market price can browse specialist coin dealerships that can guarantee the quality – making the buying process less stressful.

The History of the 1965 Winston Churchill Commemorative Crown

By Fred Glueckstein

Sir Winston Churchill, the distinguished British statesman, army officer, orator and Nobel Prize winner, was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945, when he led Britain to victory in the Second World War. From 1951 to 1955, Churchill would again serve as Prime Minister. After an extraordinary life, Churchill passed away in London on Jan. 24, 1965 at the age of 90.

On March 16, 1965, only seven weeks following his death, Parliament voted and approved the Churchill Crown. In September, the Royal Mint released a limited issue Churchill circulating commemorative crown honoring and memorializing his life. The Crown was legal tender valued at 5 Shillings/25 Pence in the Pre-decimal coinage era.

The Churchill Crown featured the Laureate bust of the first “young head” of Queen Elizabeth II not the “older head” adopted that year by Canada, Australia and others. The Queen’s portrait on the Churchill Crown is facing right on the obverse. The inscription around the Queen’s stunning portrait reads: ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA F.D. Translation: “Elizabeth the Second by the Grace of God Queen Defender of the Faith.” Below the Queen’s portrait is the year of the Crown’s issuance, 1965.



Shown is the 1965 Churchill commemorative crown featuring Queen Elizabeth II on the obverse and Winston Churchill on the reverse. (Image courtesy of PCGS)

The reverse of the coin depicts a somber looking portrait of Sir Winston Churchill facing right. He is wearing a siren suit, a one-piece garment that is associated with the Second World War. The legend on the right of the portrait reads CHURCHILL in block letters. The coin’s edge is reeded. It was also the first crown since 1902 which did not bear a denomination.

The 1965 Churchill Crown was the first coin issued in the United Kingdom to bear the portrait of a commoner on the same coin as a Monarch since Oliver Cromwell in 1658. The Queen had to give her express approval for this currency innovation. The Churchill Crown was made of cupro-nickel alloy, as no silver had been used in any British general circulation coin since 1946.

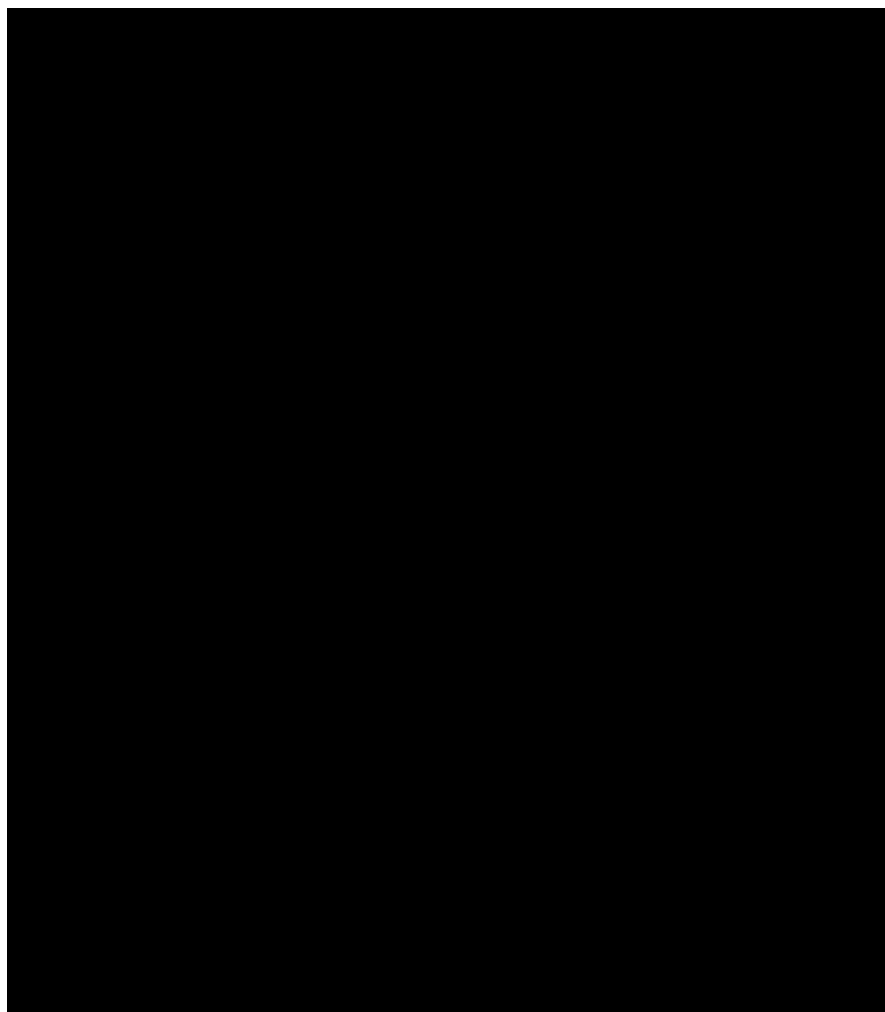
To meet public demand, The Washington Post’s London Correspondent, W. Dennis Way, reported on Oct. 17, 1965 that British banks ordered \$19.5 million worth of the Churchill Commemorative Crowns, and the United States ordered another \$14 million worth. The orders indicated an issue by the Royal Mint of at least 50 million Crowns.

Oscar Nemon

The Churchill portrait on the commemorative crown was created by the British statesman’s favorite sculptor Oscar Nemon (1906–1985), a prolific sculptor born from a Jewish family in Osijek, Croatia who came to Britain in 1938 to escape the Nazis. In January 1951, a friendship between Nemon and the Churchills arose when they met at the luxury La Mamounia Hotel in Marrakesh.

In the years that followed, Nemon sculpted Churchill numerous times in England, such as in 1954 when he was commissioned to create a statue of Churchill for the Guildhall, London. The statue was unveiled by Churchill on June 21, 1955. In his speech at the Guildhall, London, Churchill praised the sculptor with sincere admiration and humor.

“I greatly admire the art of Mr. Oscar Nemon whose prowess in the ancient realm of sculpture has won such remarkable modern appreciation. I also admire this particular example, which you, my Lord Mayor, have just unveiled, because it seems to be such a very good likeness,” said Churchill.



Oscar Nemon’s daughter, Aurelia Young, has graciously provided this photo of Nemon’s profile of Churchill in relief, which she believes her father may have used for the crown.

In view of Churchill's admiration of Nemon, the sculptor was the principal choice by the Royal Mint to create the statesman's portrait for the 1965 commemorative crown. Nemon had never sculpted a coin before. The portrait he used was derived from a bust commissioned from him by Queen Elizabeth. The original is at Windsor Castle.

The Royal Mint described the Churchill Crown as "one of the most difficult ever produced." Each cupro-nickel crown had to be struck by two extremely heavy presses, one of 250 tons and the other 360 tons. The Royal Mint had to remove some details such as Nemon's small initials to the left of the head. The relief was flatter than the sculptor had intended and Nemon was not at all happy with the result. As will be seen, however, the Churchill Crown was a big success with the public.

Mary Gillick

The effigy of Queen Elizabeth II on the obverse of the Churchill Crown was made by the sculptor Mary Gaskell Gillick OBE (1881–1965). Gillick was born in Nottingham and attended the Nottingham School of Art and at the Royal College of Art from 1902 to 1904. After making her first exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1911, Gillick designed several medals to be used as awards and several other larger relief sculptures in stone and bronze.

In 1952, Gillick's effigy design of Queen Elizabeth II was selected from a field of 17 to be used on general-circulation coinage. When her design was selected, Gillick was 71 years old, recently bereaved and in poor health. Gillick's design was notable for portraying the Queen uncrowned and was the last to be used on the pre-decimal coinage. Her image of the Queen was used on coinage in the United Kingdom and elsewhere from 1953 to 1970.

Prior to the Queen's effigy portrait, Gillick focused on metallic work and portraiture. She created many commemorative medals including for the Royal Society, Institute of Physics and Royal Academy Schools. A year after creating the effigy portrait of Elizabeth II, Gillick made a joint portrait of the Queen with the Duke of Edinburgh which was also widely used on commemorative medals. Mary Gaskell's effigy of Elizabeth II can be appreciated on the 1965 Churchill Crown.

Popularity of the Churchill Crown

In September 1965, Lady Churchill visited the Royal Mint and struck the very first Churchill Commemorative Crown. The Churchill Crown was to become a huge success with the public. After just two months, about three million crowns were circulating worldwide. By March 1966 more than three times the number of any previous Crown issue had been struck.

Upon release by the Royal Mint, the Churchill Crown was distributed through British banks. This occurred as the Royal Mint preferred not to deal directly with collectors or dealers. American collectors had to obtain the Churchill Crown from British or American dealers or certain authorized banks. The Churchill Crown had a nominal value of 70 U.S. cents.

The size and heavy weight (38.61 mm. and 28.2800 g.) of the Churchill Crown, however, ultimately negated its intended use as a circulating coin. Despite the undesirable result, Aurelia Young, the daughter of Oscar Nemon, wrote of the positive inspiration of the Churchill Crown in the biography of her father, *Finding Nemon: The Extraordinary Life of the Outsider Who Sculpted the Famous*.

Young wrote: "Nemon's Churchill Crown, despite its heavy weight, was damaging pockets all over the country (even if some taxi drivers were hesitant to accept it as real money). A writer in the Daily Telegraph said that 'the massive jingle of a couple of these coins in my pocket has a far more heartening effect than any tatty old ten-bob note . . . is it not a better memorial to Churchill to have his coin readily moving throughout the honest business of a free kingdom?'"

Today, the Churchill Crown is a desired collectible and should be considered in a numismatic collection. The regular 1965 copper-nickel Churchill Crown in fully uncirculated condition retails for about \$5.00. A rare almost identical "Satin Finish" VIP Specimen coin was also struck. Although the exact mintage is not known, it is valued at \$1,400.00.

The eye-catching Churchill Commemorative Crown is an enduring tribute to the life and accomplishments of the great English statesman. From an artistic perspective, the Churchill Crown also displays the superb talents of Mary Gaskell Gillick and Oscar Nemon, two eminent sculptors of the 20th century.

From a numismatic perspective, over the years, the 1965 Churchill Crown has become one of the most well known British coins of the last century.

Fred Glueckstein is a regular contributor to The Churchill Project, Hillsdale College and The International Churchill Society.

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