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THE

# BRITANNIA

## EXPERT GUIDE

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COLLECTING A BRITISH CLASSIC







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Managing Consultant

# Managing Consultant Alex Hanrahan shares his guide to collecting Britannia coins

**B**ritannia – the female personification of the British Isles – has been a firm fixture on our coinage for centuries.

She was first depicted as a goddess in the first century. Today, she appears on one of the most anticipated annual coins released by The Royal Mint each year.

But with such a rich history of Britannia on coins to pick from, how do you create a collection serious collectors would be proud of?



Let's start by looking at why Britannia is such an enchanting figure for coin collectors.



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# Why Collect Britannia Coins?

Instantly recognisable, Britannia is symbolic of the British spirit, representing heritage, strength and progress.

Britannia's first appearance on an official British coin came in 1672 on a Farthing. She was then a constant on the British Halfpenny all the way to 1936 and the Penny from 1797 to 1970.

In more recent times, Britannia appeared on the UK 50p coin between 1969 and 2008.

Over the years, the image of Britannia has altered subtly, with her maritime links being emphasised by switching her spear to a trident.

But her popularity only seems to be growing, becoming more prominent in uncertain times or when national pride is booming.

That has led to some quick sell-outs of modern Britannia coins and a large number of collectors looking to build dedicated collections of coins that feature Britannia.



So, where do you start? Here are 5 ideas for Britannia collections you can build.

## Collection 1 | *The Timeless Britannia Collection*

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We've already established that Britannia has been a near-constant feature on British coins for centuries, so why not build a collection that showcases Britannia as an icon on coins?

You can own hundreds of years of history with a relatively small number of coins and modest outlay, starting with a Charles II Farthing from the 17th century, going through various reigns all the way to a limited edition Queen Elizabeth II Proof Britannia coin.

This is one of the most interesting collections you could own as you chart the history of Britannia and see how she has been interpreted on coins during different times of our history and during different reigns.



*1672 Charles II Farthing | 1797 George III 'Cartwheel' Penny | 1907 British Trade Dollar  
1987 Standing Britannia | 2017 30th Anniversary Proof Britannia*

## Collection 2 | *The Annual Issues Collection*

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The Silver 10z Britannia is released annually, giving you the chance to build a significant collection after a number of years.

You will find them in basic bullion or superior Proof standard and often in a range of weights and sizes, but for this collection I'm recommending the core coin in the range – the 10z Silver.

I would normally only focus on the more collectable Proof coins, but it is common for the mass-produced bullion coin and the limited edition Britannia to have totally different designs, so owning both is advisable for the sake of completeness.



*2017 10z Silver Bullion Britannia | 2017 10z Silver Proof Britannia*

## Collection 3 | *The Gold Britannia Collection*

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First issued in 1987, the Gold range offers collectors one of the most limited ways of owning Britannia.

That obviously comes with a price to match for the most part, but you don't actually need to break the bank. The UK's smallest coin can be found in the Britannia range as a fortieth ounce gold coin. It measures less than a centimetre in diameter and offers an affordable annual option.

The edition limits tend to come down as the size goes up though, so you may want to focus on the larger coins. I recommend the Gold sets, which have strict edition limits of just a couple of hundred each year.



*2016 1/40oz Gold Britannia | 2017 Premium 3-Coin Gold Britannia Proof Set*

## Collection 4 | The Silver 50z Collection

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One thing you can be sure of each year is that the UK's Britannia coin will be one of the best-looking issued and the Silver 50z Proof is probably the best canvas for the design.

Issued annually, the Silver 50z Proof is the connoisseur's choice – one, for the size and two, for the edition limit. It's 5 times heavier and, as a rule, 5 times scarcer than the standard 1 ounce coin, with an edition limit of 1,500 versus 7,500.

This is a relatively easy collection to build as Silver 50z Britannias have only been issued since 2013.



*2013 Britannia and the Owl | 2014 Globe Britannia | 2015 Lighthouse Britannia  
2016 Warrior Britannia | 2017 30th Anniversary Proof Britannia*



## Collection 5 | *The Britannia Firsts Collection*

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Even by focusing on just modern-day Britannias, you can build an interesting collection of very difficult-to-find coins.

The first Gold Proof Set was launched in 1987 and is one of the hardest to find UK sets. The first Proof Silver Set launched 10 years later in 1997 and then, to celebrate the 30th and 20th anniversaries in 2017, The Royal Mint released the first ever 300z Gold and 200z Silver Britannia.

Some firsts are not quite so obvious, but are still highly sought by collectors. Take the 2013 Silver 50z Britannia for example. It was the first ever Silver Proof 50z and the first Britannia issued in pure Silver.



*1987 First Gold Britannia Proof Set | 1997 First Silver Britannia Proof Set  
2017 First 300z Gold Proof Britannia | 2017 First 200z Silver Proof Britannia  
2013 First 50z Silver Proof Britannia*

## Appendix | *Recommended Britannia Collections*

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### The Timeless Britannia Collection

- The 1672-85 Charles II Farthing
- The 1797 George III “Cartwheel” Penny
- The 1895-1937 British Trade Dollar
- The 1987 Standing Britannia
- The 2017 30th Anniversary Proof Britannia

### The Silver 5oz Collection

- The 2013 Britannia and the Owl
- The 2014 Globe Britannia
- The 2015 Lighthouse Britannia
- The 2016 Warrior Britannia
- The 2017 30th Anniversary Proof Britannia

### The Annual Issues Collection

- The 10z Silver Proof Britannia
- The 10z Silver Bullion Britannia

### The Britannia Firsts Collection

- The 1987 First Gold Britannia Proof Set
- The 1997 First Silver Britannia Proof Set
- The 2017 First 300z Gold Proof Britannia
- The 2017 First 200z Silver Proof Britannia
- The 2013 First 50z Silver Proof Britannia

### The Gold Britannia Collection

- The 1/400z Gold Proof Britannia
- The Premium 3-Coin Gold Britannia Proof Proof Set

## Get in touch

Our dedicated team of consultants are on hand to help. So, if you would like us to assist you in selecting the right coins for your collection, please get in touch.



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*Alex Hanrahan  
Managing Consultant*

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