

Victorian pair took a passage from India

A Victorian sapphire, diamond and pearl brooch-pendant was one of two pieces with Indian roots offered for sale at **Duke's (25% buyer's premium)** in Dorchester on June 16.

Fashioned with a central Sri Lankan stone weighing approximately 17.41ct encircled by surrounds of diamonds and pearls, the piece is set with a gold mount inscribed on the reverse *The gift of David Wilson to his daughter Mary, on the occasion of her marriage December 27th 1865*. Wilson was a hotelier and businessman who was the founder of the Auckland Hotel in Calcutta. It came by descent.

Accompanied by a report from The Gem & Pearl Laboratory stating the sapphire to be untreated, it had a guide of £10,000-20,000 but sold at £33,000.

A Victorian diamond bird brooch set with cushion and old-cut diamonds suspending a single pear-cut ruby from its beak came in a fitted box for Barton Son & Co, Bangalore.

The firm (which continues today) was established in 1861 by London-born Thomas Barton (1834-1920). He was married in Bangalore the following year to Grace Caroline Bartels Edwards (1842-1922) by whom he had several children, including Alfred Percy Barton (1868-1958) who succeeded to the business.

The motif of a dove is often associated with the Holy Spirit but also was a symbol of faith and fidelity. Here the ruby eyes symbolise passion while the 'heart' the dove holds in its beak symbolises love. It sold at £9500, well above the guide of £1000-2000.

The Victorian 'language of love' appears regularly in jewellery of the period.

When Prince Albert proposed to Queen Victoria, he gave her a ring shaped like a serpent, the head set with small rubies, diamonds, and an emerald, her birthstone. In mythology, the snake is an emblem of goodness, wisdom and love and the serpent swallowing its tail the sign of eternal love. Soon, serpent jewellery was all the rage.

Recalling this fashion, a 19th century gold and turquoise articulated necklace designed as a snake devouring a heart set with a small keepsake window sold for £2600 against an estimate of £500-700 at **Canterbury Auction Galleries (22.5% buyer's premium)** on June 11-12.



Above: two views of a Victorian sapphire and diamond pendant – **£33,000** at Duke's.



Below: Victorian diamond bird and heart brooch – **£9500** at Duke's.



Left: Victorian gold and turquoise serpent and heart necklace – **£2600** at Canterbury Auction Galleries.

Cartier's mystery solved

On June 23 Bonhams Hong Kong sold a version of Cartier's first-ever mystery clock: the Model A.

The first of these were available in 1912 when even Cartier's own sales team were in the dark as to how they worked. John Pierpont Morgan, Queen Mary and Joseph Stalin all clamoured to own one.

In fact, they operate in much the same way as the clocks created by the 19th century French illusionist Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin.

Although the dial appears to float in a clear rock crystal case without mechanical parts, the movement is secreted in the base and the hands secured to revolving glass discs. However, in Cartier's hands the form became synonymous with the Art Deco movement and became a staple of the brand over the decades.

This fine example, complete with original leather carrying case, was offered by the Mulloon Institute, a non-profit organisation in Australia working to combat the impact of climate change on agriculture.

After more than 50 competitive bids, it soared four times above its estimate to realise a premium-inclusive **HK\$6.87m (£687,000)**.



Bearing the Boivin mark

This Art Deco turquoise, rock crystal and black enamelled silver necklace, sold by **Fellows (25/15% buyer's premium)** in Birmingham on May 26, carries the maker's mark of the celebrated French atelier René Boivin.

Boivin (1864-1917) himself died in the Great War years but the studio he founded with his wife Jeanne (1871-1959) created some of Paris' most celebrated and influential jewellery for more than eight decades. She became renowned for championing female designers including her daughter Germaine Boivin, 'little Suzanne' Belperron (who worked at Boivin from 1921-32), and Juliette Moutard (from 1931-54).

Unstable economics in the period of the 1930s-40s encouraged creativity and innovation in the use of semi-precious stones.

This particular design – very much in the manner of Belperron – is known in a number of different materials. A similar necklace with a gold half loop sold for \$50,000 at Sotheby's New York in April 2014; another brought €17,000 at Christie's Paris in 2010. Both were dated to c.1950.

Fellows' necklace, guided at £2000-3000, raced away to **£32,000**.



Winterton expands team

The jewellery team at Richard Winterton Auctioneers has expanded.

Gemmologists and jewellery specialists Georgina Southam and Emma Testill (pictured here second right and right) join Lisa Spence, Natalie Brandon (left) and Louise Ludlam-Snook as valuers.

The team will be based across its two venues – The Lichfield Auction Centre and Tamworth Auction Rooms – and will continue to work with independent jewellery valuer Heather Callaway. Callaway has recently been appointed chairman of The National Association of Jewellers (of which Richard Winterton Auctioneers is an associate member).

The team also works with watch specialist Ben Winterton.

Regular 'pop-up' jewellery events are planned in conjunction with the firm's weekly in-house valuations.



Laura Chesters