



1
String of good natural pearls, well-graded and graduated string between 5mm and 10mm in dia, with a report from The Precious Stone Laboratory confirming that they were rare natural pearls. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Jul 07. HP: £23,000. ABP: £27,053.*



2
Pair of diamond and pearl drop earrings, each with a pearl in a diamond-set foliate mount suspended from a line of five circular and cushion-shaped diamonds. (one pearl is a simulated replacement) *Hy. Duke & Son, Dorchester. Aug 06. HP: £22,000. ABP: £25,877.*



3
Pearl and diamond cross-over ring, c1910, with an old cut diamond weighing 2.20 carats. *Dreweatt Neate, Donnington. Jul 06. HP: £11,000. ABP: £12,938.*



4
Three row pearl bracelet set with a central diamond of approx 1.5cts, the two outer diamonds approx 0.25cts each. *Eastbourne Auction Rooms, Sussex. Jan 05. HP: £6,300. ABP: £7,410.*



5
Late Victorian brooch, diamond set scrolls & swags on knife-edge bars, cultured pearl drop below, total diamond weight approx 6.3cts. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jan 04. HP: £4,700. ABP: £5,528.*



6
Late Victorian diamond and baroque cultured pearl necklace, pear shaped centre section with diamond/pearl cluster with a pearl drop, link back chain, total diamond weight approx 6cts, matching drop earrings. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 02. HP: £3,800. ABP: £4,469.*



7
Diamond and untested pearl set hinged bangle, c1900, old cut diamonds, total weight approx 3.50ct, loop design centred by an untested pearl, approx 6.5mm dia, in white metal to carved gallery and yellow metal reverse, weight 14.5gm. *Halls Fine Art, Shrewsbury. Jun 07. HP: £3,400. ABP: £3,999.*



8
Double string of baroque natural pearls, ornate yellow & white metal serpent clasp, serpent entwined around two 9mm dia pearls, set with diamonds and rubies. 28in long. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Sep 03. HP: £2,400. ABP: £2,823.*



9
19thC Continental gold and silver diamond set brooch of foliate scroll design, central rectangular cut Colombian natural emerald and 4 pearls suspending 5 pendants, 3 terminating in pearls. *Gorringes, Lewes. Feb 01. HP: £1,900. ABP: £2,234.*



10
Peridot, diamond and seed pearl pendant necklace in a Hancock & Co. trade case. *Cheffins, Cambridge. Jun 04. HP: £1,800. ABP: £2,117.*



11
Diamond and pearl brooch, decorated ribbon ties, leaves and central drop pearl. *Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Feb 06. HP: £1,750. ABP: £2,058.*



12
Pair of diamond and pearl drop earrings in Edwardian style, Dutch rose cut diamond to hook fittings, open drop set graduated rose cut diamonds, with a pearl (untested) suspended at centre. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Sep 07. HP: £1,750. ABP: £2,058.*



13
Victorian gold, diamond, emerald and pearl set hinged bangle, quartz foil front opening to reveal a double locket compartment. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 00. HP: £1,700. ABP: £1,999.*



14
Late Victorian gold & silver openwork pendant millegrain set diamonds and a cultured pearl drop, central articulated drop supporting a cushion shaped natural red spinel, brace link chain. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 02. HP: £1,700. ABP: £1,999.*

Jewellery Series Part IV An Introduction to Pearls

By John Ainsley

I have used 92 examples from auctions sales over the last few years using our website database at www.antiques-info.co.uk. All are from sales at £500 or more hammer. There are at least a further 1,000 examples of jewellery containing pearls on our website.

Throughout history, and certainly up to the nineteenth century pearls were the dominant jewel - the Queen of Gems. A natural pearl necklace of matching spherical shapes was a treasure of astronomical value, unmatched by any other jewels. They symbolized purity, peace and beauty, but above all, wealth. Before about 1900, pearls were so rare and expensive that they were reserved exclusively for the very rich. At the height of pearl fever, the Roman historian Suetonius wrote that General Vitellius financed an entire military campaign by selling just one of his mother's pearl earrings. Today many women are able to take for granted a 16-inch strand of perhaps fifty pearls costing anywhere between about £200 and £2,000. Pearls are created by living creatures called molluscs and mainly bi-valves such as mussels or oysters. The belief that pearls result from the intrusion of a grain of sand into an oyster shell is false. In nature the catalyst is an irritant such as a wayward food particle which becomes trapped and is sensed by the animal and then coated with nacre, the same substance the animal uses to build its shell.

During the long history of pearls, the main oyster beds were in the Persian Gulf, along the coasts of India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and in the Red Sea. Chinese pearls were mainly freshwater whilst Japanese pearls were saltwater. As the Americas developed and native Americans were found to be wearing pearls, so began the exploitation of both the freshwater and saltwater pearl in the west. The USA was to become famous for its freshwater pearl industry. Inevitably the depleting of stocks could not continue and by about 1800 supplies were beginning to dry up. Pollution also took its toll as the USA industrialized. Then towards the end of the nineteenth century, a single event occurred in the isolated nation of Japan. This was to revolutionize the pearl industry in the twentieth century.

Kokichi Mikimoto, the son of a noodle maker, discovered that he could entice oysters to produce round pearls on demand. The cultured pearl had arrived. Mikimoto discovered that by inserting a nucleus of shell or metal into an oyster's body or mantle caused the tissue to form a pearl sac, which then secreted nacre to coat the nucleus, creating the pearl. By mastering the technique, Mikimoto, then hundreds of Japanese firms, made pearls available to the peoples of the world as never before. The Japanese output dominated the twentieth century market, but now, since the 1990s, the Chinese production of freshwater pearls from mussels has once more revolutionized the industry by matching the quality of Japanese akoya oyster pearls at a fraction of the price.

Freshwater pearls can be much more varied in shape and in colour than their saltwater counterparts. It has been said though that they are not as shiny and lack the lustre of saltwater pearls. I am inclined to believe this to be Japanese propaganda. Fresh or salt, quality is measured by lustre, shape, size, surface perfection and nacre thickness. Pearls scoring highly on all these factors will be of extremely high quality, rare and expensive. Today the young are wearing more colourful pearls of various shapes. The more sophisticated, mature and wealthy still



15
French diamond and pearl bracelet designed as a line of seven pearls (untested) alternating with 8 millegrain set old brilliant cut diamonds. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £1,700. ABP: £1,999.*



16
Victorian gold and silver diamond set scrolled pendant, pear shaped diamond drop and later central cultured pearl and diamond cluster. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £1,700. ABP: £1,999.*



17
Early 20thC platinum, diamond and pearl pendant of openwork foliate and ribbon design, suspending two pearl drops, fine chain, in original fitted case with brooch conversion fittment. *Bearne's, Exeter. Jun 05. HP: £1,650. ABP: £1,940.*



18
Diamond & gem set cultured pearl and matching earrings. *Ambrose, Loughton. Dec 00. HP: £1,600. ABP: £1,882.*



19
Four row pearl necklace, the gold, emerald and diamond clasp set with a rectangular cut Colombian emerald bordered by 15 rose cut diamonds, gilt tooled brown leather case stamped Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Co Ltd. (pearls untested) *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 02. HP: £1,500. ABP: £1,764.*



20
Edwardian platinum openwork floral pendant, central cultured pearl bordered by 8 diamonds and 8 pearls on outer ring between further smaller diamonds, pearl & diamond suspension loop, 1.125in dia. *Gorringes, Lewes. Sep 05. HP: £1,300. ABP: £1,529.*



21
2-row graduated cultured pearl necklace with Art Deco white gold all diamond plaque clasp of pierced geometric design. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £1,250. ABP: £1,470.*



22
Edwardian 15ct gold necklace, front with 3 split pearl and diamond set flowerhead clusters above a pearl set fringe supporting a similar detachable pendant, rope-twist back chain. (cased) *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 00. HP: £1,200. ABP: £1,411.*



23
Gold diamond set tied ribbon brooch with cultured pearl drop. *Gorringes, Lewes. Dec 00. HP: £1,200. ABP: £1,411.*



24
Edwardian openwork diamond and pearl set brooch. (one pearl and one diamond missing) *Gorringes, Lewes. Sep 02. HP: £1,200. ABP: £1,411.*



25
Pair of early 20thC Continental gold, diamond and cultured-pearl cluster earrings, central cultured pearl approx 5.6mm dia, old-cut diamond 8-stone border and cushion-shaped single stone surmount, approx 1.10cts total (2.20cts the pair), French fittings, indistinct maker's mark. (one lacking fitting) *Dreweatt Neate, Domington. Nov 04. HP: £1,200. ABP: £1,411.*



26
Floral and foliate necklace, c1900, set with split pearls and rubies, flat link chain. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Feb 07. HP: £1,200. ABP: £1,411.*



27
Pair of cultured pearl and diamond ear clips, each cultured pearl in a diamond set banded surround. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 07. HP: £1,200. ABP: £1,411.*



28
Single row necklace, uniform cultured pearls, hexagonal white gold clasp set with a rectangular-cut garnet bordered by 2 rows of grain-set diamonds. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 04. HP: £1,150. ABP: £1,352.*



29
2-row graduated cultured pearl necklace asymmetrically strung on a white gold clasp set round-cut diamonds and a pearl, 19in long. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jun 00. HP: £1,100. ABP: £1,293.*



30
Pair of gold, diamond and pearl drop earrings, designed as 'S' shaped scrolls, set 3 cultured pearls and brilliant cut diamonds. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £1,100. ABP: £1,293.*



31
French gold and silver pendant/brooch designed as a question mark and floral spray, set 2 oval sapphires, diamonds and a pearl. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 02. HP: £1,100. ABP: £1,293.*

Prices quoted are actual hammer prices (HP) and the Approximate Buyer's Price. (ABP) Includes an average premium of 15% + VAT.



32
Pair of diamond and cultured pearl earrings each with a single pearl on bow shaped support set baguette and round cut diamonds, white gold screw fittings. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £1,100. ABP: £1,293.*



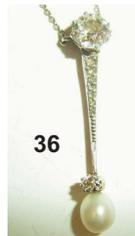
33
3-row graduated cultured baroque pearl necklace, with a Victorian gold, blue enamel diamond set oval clasp, 18in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jan 03. HP: £1,100. ABP: £1,293.*



34
Edwardian 12 row seed pearl bracelet with 2 gold and silver spacer bars set round cut diamonds, slide clasp. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £1,050. ABP: £1,235.*



35
Cultured pearl and diamond pendant necklace, 2 round pearls on suspension of 10 collet-set diamonds and a pear shaped pearl drop, fine trace link white gold chain. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £1,000. ABP: £1,176.*



36
Edwardian diamond & pearl bar drop pendant, old cut diamond approx 0.7ct, above tapering bar, set with rose cut diamonds, old cut diamond & pearl drop. (pearl untested), 3.5cm long, fine chain. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £980. ABP: £1,152.*



37
Late Victorian pearl/old cut diamond pendant, flower design, detachable brooch fitting, 2.3cm dia. *Fellows & Sons, Birmingham. Sep 03. HP: £950. ABP: £1,117.*



38
Edwardian gold and platinum quatrefoil shaped pierced work pendant with central sapphire, rose diamond set palmettes and 4 pearls, fine trace link chain. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 02. HP: £920. ABP: £1,082.*



39
Edwardian old cut diamond and pearl brooch, 5cm dia, central cluster of nine old cut diamonds, detachable brooch fitting. *Fellows & Sons, Hockley, Birmingham. May 03. HP: £900. ABP: £1,058.*

Jewellery



40
Edwardian 15ct gold, peridot and seed pearl set necklace, fine trace link back chain. *Gorringes, Lewes. Dec 03. HP: £900. ABP: £1,058.*



41
Pearl & diamond ring, cross-over design, claw-set, circular-cut diamond and a pearl flanked by two further pearls, yellow gold shank, diamond-set shoulders. *Hy. Duke & Son, Dorchester. Aug 06. HP: £900. ABP: £1,058.*



42
Diamond and pearl brooch/pendant, of heart, coronet and leaf design, 38 old-cut diamonds, approx .85cts in total, 9 pearls, set in 18ct gold and silver. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jan 05. HP: £850. ABP: £999.*



43
Pair of cultured pearl and diamond ear pendants as an encrusted flower head, pearl centre hanging from a single diamond and pearl via a diamond chain. *Andrew Hartley, Ilkley. Oct 05. HP: £850. ABP: £999.*



44
Diamond/split pearl target pendant, centre cultured pearl within a surround of diamonds and a further surround of split pearls, dia 1in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Dec 06. HP: £850. ABP: £999.*



45
18ct gold crossover diamond & pearl set ring the principal diamond approx 1 carat. *Tring Market Auctions, Herts. Apr 05. HP: £820. ABP: £964.*



46
Early 19thC 3 strand seed pearl necklace, 3 shell motifs, each with enamelled centre set with a rose cut diamond 44cm long, and a seed pearl flower brooch, 8cm long, fitted case. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £820. ABP: £964.*



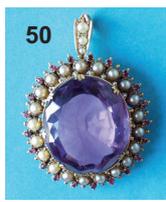
47
Continental gold diamond set pendant designed as a tied ribbon supporting a floral swag and a pearl drop, fine link chain. *Gorringes, Lewes. Dec 00. HP: £800. ABP: £941.*



48
Gold circular pendant locket, front with diamond set monogram, blue guilloche enamel ground, tracelink chain inset blue and white enamelled batons and seed pearls. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £800. ABP: £941.*



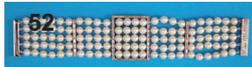
49
Triple graduated row necklace of 5.2 to 9.7mm cultured pearls to a 9ct seed pearl and paste clasp, 52cm long. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Dec 03. HP: £780. ABP: £917.*



50
Victorian gold pendant with central oval faceted amethyst in frame set split pearls and rubies. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 00. HP: £750. ABP: £882.*



51
Pair of Edwardian old cut diamond and seed pearl dropper earrings. *Fellows & Sons, Birmingham. May 03. HP: £750. ABP: £882.*



52
Five row uniform cultured pearl bracelet, buckle design front and the two spacer bars set baguette cut diamonds, 7.25in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 04. HP: £750. ABP: £882.*



53
Late Victorian gold, half-pearl and diamond heart-shaped pendant with locket-back and chain. *Dreweatt Neate, Donnington. Nov 04. HP: £750. ABP: £882.*



54
Cultured pearl necklace, two rows of uniform beads with 9ct white gold clasp set with rubies and diamonds, 20in long. *Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Nov 04. HP: £750. ABP: £882.*



55
3 row graduated cultured pearl bracelet, Edwardian old cut and rose cut diamond circular clasp. *Fellows & Sons, Birmingham. May 03. HP: £740. ABP: £870.*



56
Pair onyx/diamond earrings, black onyx kite panel within border of diamonds, cultured pearl drop, 18ct white gold, approx 0.88 cts diamond total. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 06. HP: £725. ABP: £852.*



57
Edwardian pearl & diamond target cluster ring, centred with a bouton pearl within two rose diamond borders, millegrain set in gold and platinum, unmarked and pearl untested. *Dreweatt Neate, Donnington. Nov 04. HP: £720. ABP: £846.*



58
Gold moonstone cameo brooch, carved with four classical profiles, frame set split pearls. (five deficient) *Gorringes, Lewes. Dec 02. HP: £720. ABP: £846.*

Images are in descending hammer price order. The price range is indicated at the start of each section.



59
Victorian gold framed heart shaped rock crystal pendant locket with tied ribbon surmount set split pearls, on curb link chain. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £720. ABP: £846.*



60
Late 19thC gold and silver openwork brooch of flower and scrollwork design, set sapphires, cultured pearls, rubies and emeralds. *Gorringes, Lewes. Dec 00. HP: £700. ABP: £823.*



61
Cultured pearl and diamond circular cluster ring, central pearl bordered by 8 round old brilliant cut diamonds. *Gorringes, Lewes. Dec 00. HP: £700. ABP: £823.*



62
Edwardian pearl & diamond open brooch, centred with a baroque pearl within a scroll and leaf surround, swing knife-edge swag set with old-cut and rose diamonds, pearl drop, set throughout in silver and gold. *Dreweatt Neate, Donnington. Nov 04. HP: £700. ABP: £823.*



63
Pearl and diamond brooch as a single flower with a large pearl set to the centre, rest encrusted with brilliant cuts and baguette cuts, white gold. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Jun 07. HP: £660. ABP: £776.*



64
Pair of diamond set starburst ear pendants, each hung with a grey pearl from a diamond set cap and within 18ct white gold mounts. *Rosebery's, London. Dec 04. HP: £650. ABP: £764.*



65
Edwardian openwork flower-head pendant, set rose cut diamonds and pearls, 1.75in dia. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 04. HP: £650. ABP: £764.*



66
Marquise cluster ring, set with split pearls and old cut diamonds, stamped PLAT. *Wintertons Ltd, Lichfield. Mar 03. HP: £620. ABP: £729.*



Edwardian style diamond & pearl 2 stone crossover ring with rose cut diamonds to the curling shoulders, old cut diamond estimated at 0.70ct, colour J/K, and clarity SI1, pearl 6.3mm. *Fellows & Sons, Birmingham. Oct 03. HP: £620. ABP: £729.*



Triple strand pearl necklace, with a large 9ct garnet and aquamarine clasp. *Rosebery's, London. Dec 05. HP: £620. ABP: £729.*



Early 20thC platinum faced, diamond and seed-pearl cluster ring with three seed-pearls and small circular diamonds in millegrain setting. *Bearne's, Exeter. Nov 07. HP: £620. ABP: £729.*



Double rope of cultured pearls with white metal & diamond clasp approx 1 ct, white, pink, cream, size range 14-10 metric grains, 1 rope with 62, the other 68. (lengths 20 & 21in, clasp approx 1in) *Kent Auction Galleries, Folkestone. Dec 06. HP: £610. ABP: £717.*



2-row pearl bracelet, white gold clasp set with an oval ruby bordered by small diamonds stamped Schilling. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 04. HP: £600. ABP: £705.*



Victorian parure of seed pearl jewellery: a necklace, pair of bracelets, similar brooch and pair of earrings. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £600. ABP: £705.*



Victorian gold diamond and pearl set brooch, openwork flower and leaf design set with brilliant cut diamonds and cultured pearls. *Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Oct 05. HP: £600. ABP: £705.*



Diamond and cultured pearl pendant/brooch of flower design with central cultured pearl and diamond set petals and further pearls of cultured pearls, detachable brooch fitting, unmarked yellow metal, 1.25in dia. *Gorringes, Lewes. Nov 05. HP: £600. ABP: £705.*



Edwardian peridot and seed pearl pendant, gold belcher link chain, pendant marked 15ct. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Dec 05. HP: £600. ABP: £705.*



Pair of diamond and cultured pearl earrings comprising a flowerhead diamond cluster, surmounting a line of three collet set diamonds, hanging with a pearl drop held within a lobed diamond set mount. *Andrew Hartley, Ilkley. Apr 06. HP: £600. ABP: £705.*



Pearl Arts & Crafts necklace, matching brooch, woven silver panels set with green and brown cabochon stones, pearls between, unmarked. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 07. HP: £600. ABP: £705.*



Pair of Edwardian diamond/pearl earrings, millegrain-set with an articulated line of diamonds supporting a pearl. (cased) *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 04. HP: £580. ABP: £682.*



Small gold set engraved rock crystal tied ribbon brooch, edged with rose-cut diamonds and central pink pearl. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 00. HP: £560. ABP: £658.*



Pair of pearl and diamond 9 stone daisy cluster earstuds, millegrain edging, diamond approx 1.60cts total. *Fellows & Sons, Birmingham. May 03. HP: £560. ABP: £658.*



Pair of cultured pearl and diamond earrings, large white pear drop suspended from a line of 3 graduated diamonds in 18ct white gold. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Dec 07. HP: £560. ABP: £658.*



Victorian 15ct textured gold lozenge shaped brooch/pendant, openwork design of flowerheads and leaves set sapphires, seed pearls and a diamond. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 00. HP: £550. ABP: £646.*



18thC gold ring millegrain set 3 split pearls and round cut green garnets. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 00. HP: £550. ABP: £646.*



Small Victorian flowerhead cluster brooch/pendant, set in gold and silver with a central pearl within a border of round-cut rubies and old cut diamonds. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 04. HP: £550. ABP: £646.*



Graduated cultured pearl two-string necklace, strings composed of cultured pearls ranging 3.8mm to 8.4mm dia, separated by smaller cultured pearls with an art deco diamond mounted rectangular clasp, collet and pave-set with brilliant and single-cut diamonds. *Bearne's, Exeter. Nov 07. HP: £550. ABP: £646.*



Pair of diamond and pearl dropper earrings, single 7.5mm pearl falling from a baguette and round brilliant cut diamonds. (wire fittings deficient). *Fellows & Sons, Birmingham. May 03. HP: £550. ABP: £646.*



Cultured baroque pearl two-string necklace with strings of 45 & 49 cultured baroque pearls ranging 7.9mm to 8.5mm dia with a diamond mounted rectangular clasp of pierced latticework design with brooch fittings. *Bearne's, Exeter. Jun 05. HP: £550. ABP: £646.*



Edwardian 15ct gold amethyst and seed pearl brooch, amethyst approx 11.1 x 9.3mm, some pearls deficient. *Fellows & Sons, Hockley, Birmingham. Nov 02. HP: £520. ABP: £611.*



Victorian blue enamel heart pendant brooch, central heart motif set with rose cut diamonds and seed pearls (set in silver and backed in gold) on a later chain. (original broken chain included) *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Apr 05. HP: £520. ABP: £611.*



Edwardian 15ct gold pendant/brooch of scrolled design, millegrain set with a peridot and split pearls. *Gorringes, Lewes. Feb 01. HP: £500. ABP: £588.*



Gold, diamond and pearl brooch, the central pearl (untested) and diamond oval cluster flanked by a tapered row of rose cut diamonds. (converted from a bangle) *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £500. ABP: £588.*



Victorian heart shaped pendant/brooch, centre opal in a garnet doublet surround and a further surround of natural pearls, 7/8in x 1in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 07. HP: £500. ABP: £588.*