



**DOERR DALLAS
VALUATIONS**



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THIS WEEK'S JEWELLERY PICK

This week I saw a lovely collection of antique jewels, dating from the mid-19th century. Mid-19th century felt 'relatively' close until I realised it was getting closer to being 200 years old rather than 100... If you're like me, the 80s was still only 20 years ago! Enough revelation on how old I am and back to this beautiful collection.

The one piece which caught my eye was an onyx mourning brooch dated 1854.



Mourning brooch, 1854

The oval onyx plaque, measuring 4cm x 4.5cm, has an overlaid border of acanthus leaf gold detail, the central glazed compartment with a lock of hair within a surround of 31 seed pearls, in closed-back setting. The reverse was engraved with 'In Memory of Henry Thomas, Sept 14th 1854, Oct 54 years & 11 Months'.

Though its value might be relatively low, around £500 for Insurance purposes and £200 for open market value, one can immediately sense the priceless sentimental value this piece had.

When Prince Albert died on 14th December 1861 of typhoid fever, Queen Victoria entered a state of mourning and wore black for the remainder of her life.



Queen Victoria

It was then that onyx became fashionable. The court was quick to follow the new strict "dress code". With wars and epidemics, death was everywhere. The demand for hair for mourning jewellery was such that it is said an extra 50 tonnes of human hair a year was imported to England to meet the demand.

Though a very personal jewel, the demand for mourning jewellery is constant. The below items, comprising of two mid-19th century gold and enamel mourning brooches and an 1830s gold locket, sold at Bonhams for £1,000 (including premium).



Bonhams Mourning jewellery

Mourning jewels are both sad and a beautiful statement of the love someone has for a departed. Whether antique or new, it is a celebration of the life that once was.

Stay tuned for next week's jewellery pick...

Call us today to enquire about an appointment on **01883 722736**, email **enquiries@doerrvaluations.co.uk** or visit our website **www.doerrvaluations.co.uk**