

Auctioneers urge you to look in your attic



A treasure trove of at least £50 million worth of unwanted jewellery is gathering dust in Britain's homes and attics, according to new research.

Figures from **Bonhams** suggest millions of pounds worth of earrings, necklaces, bracelets and other expensive pieces are simply forgotten, stashed on top of wardrobes or in bedside drawers, as a result of changing tastes.

The leading international auction house is inviting people to bring their unwanted jewellery in for a free valuation as part of its nationwide Jewellery in June campaign – and has highlighted details of its most incredible 'finds'.

Bonhams used the data from the past five years of June sales to create a jewellery hot-spot map, showing some of its most lucrative sales as a result of the campaign. While some jewellery is deliberately squirreled away for a rainy day, many more items are simply lost and forgotten among general household clutter, or are passed down through the generations without their true value being realised, rarely worn and left to gather dust.

With prices rising, and increasing numbers of investors turning away from stocks and shares to more tangible commodities such as diamonds, gem stones and historically significant pieces, the figures suggest people should pay more heed to the value of their family jewellery.



Last year's sales included a new world record price for a blue diamond 'Trombino ring', which sold for £6.2million at Bonhams in London.

Jean Ghika, head of jewellery in the UK and Europe at Bonhams, said: "We estimate that there is at least £50 million worth of unwanted jewellery that owners have forgotten or never worn just waiting for a new home. We're urging everyone to have a look in their drawers and jewellery boxes, dusting off any items they haven't worn for several years or may have been bequeathed and not know much about.

Ghika added: "It's incredibly exciting not knowing what pieces will be brought in. Over the years we've had some astonishing finds, often brought to us in carrier bags or wrapped in tea towels!

"Many clients tell us they had simply forgotten about a piece of jewellery that might have been handed down to them when an elderly relative passed away. A lot of them have no idea just how valuable these pieces could be."

Traditional Scottish jewellery, as popularised by Queen Victoria, were among pieces unearthed and auctioned for an amazing £454,000 in total by Bonhams following the Jewellery in June campaign last year.

- A diamond single-stone ring weighing 6.27 carats sold for £27,500.

- A 3.15 carats diamond single-stone ring, c1930s, sold for £15,600.

- **Bonhams estimate £5m worth of unwanted jewellery gathering dust in this area.**