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Diana SCARISBRICK

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Diana SCARISBRICK : Ancestral jewels before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ancestral jewels:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful BookBy LisaMarieA friend loaned my her copy and I had to get my own. A must for any jewelry and or history fan. Lots of substance to this book.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Tiara pronBy B. WeavesThis is an older book, from 1990, so most of the photos are in black and white. However, since most of the photos are old, they were in black and white anyway. There are some jewels and some paintings shown in color photos, too. It's nice that I haven't seen these jewels reproduced anywhere else (except for a few in Royal Jewels, this book's sequel).It's nice that the backs of some pieces are shown, which are as lovely as the fronts and sometimes include inscriptions. There are paintings and photos of people wearing the jewels. The text and the jewels are on the same page or close to it.There's also a "Where are they now?" chapter, which is interesting, but again, only covers up to the 1980's.I found this book to be much superior to its sequel, "Royal Jewels."Since this book is out of print, I bought a used library copy through "available from these sellers" link.19 of 19 people found the following review helpful. A sumptuous look at Britain's noble past via jewelsBy Catherine S. VodreyDiana Scarisbrick's "Ancestral Jewels: Treasures of Britain's Aristocracy" is a superb overview of the jewels and jewelry which helped to set the British nobility apart--for better or for worse. Scarisbrick doesn't limit herself to the typical earrings, necklaces, tiaras, and so on--there are bejeweled ceremonial swords, stomachers, chatelaines, cups and boxes, and more.One of Scarisbrick's real accomplishments is to juxtapose photographs of jewelry alone with a

photograph of the jewelry being worn in an oil portrait, or showing a piece being worn first as a head ornament and then later as a necklace (a common practice with tiaras, which could often be broken down into smaller parts and used as earrings, brooches, and so on). The jewels are fantastic, as is the photography. Although I would have preferred that more of the photographs were in color, that's a small quibble when even the black-and-white pictures are so crisp and filled with telling detail. Beyond this, Scarisbrick is to be commended for providing a concise, accurate, and broad overview of British jewelry history. The book is eminently readable, and the pictures are fascinating. One of the most fascinating parts of the book is the appendix, tellingly entitled "Where Are They Now? Dispersal, Transformation, and Theft." Here Scarisbrick delves into the sometimes shady, sometimes ignoble histories and reputations of dozens of gem-encrusted objects. She quotes here from Anthony Trollope's peerless novel "The Eustace Diamonds" when she writes: ". . . family treasures were preserved 'not so much for the protection of property but for the more picturesque idea of maintaining chivalric associations. Heirlooms have become so, not that future owners of them may be assured of so much wealth whatever the value of the things so settled may be--but that the son or grandson may enjoy the satisfaction of saying my father or grandfather or ancestor sat in that chair or looked as he now looks in that picture or was graced by wearing on his breast that very ornament which you see lying beneath the glass.'" Scarisbrick understands, as did Trollope, how the aristocracy works and how it clings to the thought of itself as being somehow better than the rest of the world. Scarisbrick's accomplishment here is to show us a history of a rarefied group of people through the splendid adornments chosen by its very privileged members.

The survival of these jewels is a tribute to the successive generations who have preserved these links of their history.

From Publishers Weekly With her recognition of ancestral jewels as "emblems of family pride, visible links in the chain of history . . . encompassing the heights of human artistry and the breadth of human feeling," freelance writer Scarisbrick embarks on a survey of the gems of England from the Tudors to the Edwardians, with detours into the history of certain individual pieces. These are jewels with pedigrees--and through them, aspects of their eras come to life. Via words and illustrations of queens and other nobility bedecked in their prized possessions, the elegant baubles and bangles are recreated in glossy splendor: the workmanship of Renaissance goldsmiths and less flashy Stuart ornaments; the diadems, tiaras and diamond dog collars of more modern days; "love rings" with French inscriptions and memorial rings containing locks of hair; parures of dazzling opulence. Retained whenever possible by their original owners, these glittering fragments of the past have survived time, taxes and the Blitz. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.