

# All Things Auctioneering

With Cato Crane Valuers & Auctioneers and John Crane Fine Art

How did you spend Easter and Good Friday? On the Thursday before Easter we were on a very tight schedule with a house clearance and to make sure we were finished on time, I donned overalls and worked as a 'removal gent' with my removal team.

We kept to our schedule for our clients and the house sale was completed on time. Everyone was pleased, but the result of the unaccustomed physical exertion of lifting heavy furniture was that I became violently ill which triggered pneumonia the next day. Arrowe Park Hospital Walk-in Service was extremely efficient with little waiting time, and I am fortunately, now, 'on the mend'. (This has happened before and I never learn that the human body has its limitations!)



Checking the inaccessible on removal day

It must be said that furniture removals are always best left to the professionals; they know how to lift heavy furniture without hurting themselves. So, do arrange your removals with either ourselves or one of the local removal firms we are happy to recommend; don't try to save money and attempt it yourself... a week in bed may well be the result!

On a happier note, what gift do you give to someone who has everything? Well, you're all TV antique experts by now... so what will it be? Unusual items are highly prized by collectors, even though they may sometimes not

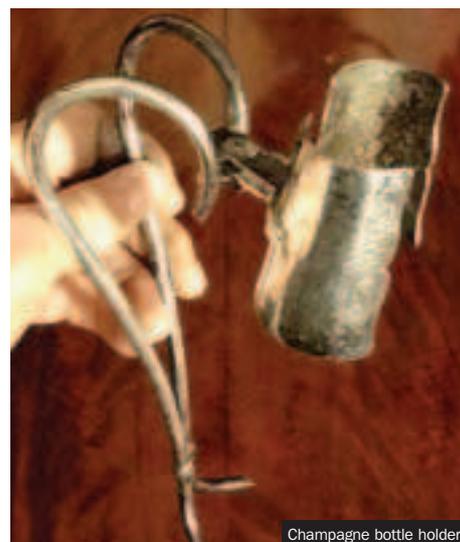
be of enormous financial worth. Some amateur collectors simply try to impress their friends with their knowledge... pure one-upmanship (yes, these people do still exist!).

Jonathan Wilson Hukin and John Thomas Heath, established the manufacturing silversmiths and electroplaters firm of Hukin & Heath in 1855. They registered their first hallmark at the Birmingham Assay Office in 1879, followed by their first London mark later that same year. Hukin retired in 1881, but his partner John Heath continued the business with a third party, John Middleton. The firm is probably best known for its association with the hugely influential designer Christopher Dresser, and produced his designs between 1879 and the turn of the 20th century. Hukin & Heath stocked Oriental-inspired objects plated in gold and silver, and also supplied fashionable pottery mounted with fine metal ornamentation produced by firms such as Doulton Lambeth.

Dresser's angular, geometric designs were considered too modern for their time, but are now very popular with collectors; a Dresser-designed and Hukin & Heath manufactured piece from this period is highly sought after and would now bring a good price at auction. The firm also produced a range of limited-edition novelty items, which now find a ready market. Hukin & Heath products should remain very collectable in the future, and also appeal to collectors interested in the industrial manufacturing processes of the late 19th century.

Items with a practical modern use, such as letter racks and cruet sets, are of particular interest, as are all wine-related items. The piece illustrated has the very small stamp 'H & H', followed by an impressed figure of an eagle. Impressed marks are easy to miss if a piece is tarnished and if you do not take an eye glass on your hunting trips.

This particular piece is a champagne bottle holder and is fairly rare – hinged to clasp the neck of the bottle firmly,



Champagne bottle holder

I suppose it does stop your fingers getting cold! And it's worth? From a specialist dealer £300.00, but a lot more than that if you feel the need to impress your dinner guests around the table! Hukin & Heath ceased manufacturing in 1953.

People always seem to be intrigued by what we do and the often asked question by visitors to our Auction Rooms is 'where does it all come from'? Well, the simple answer to that is 'houses'.

Every day my schedule sees me visiting properties in the local region to appraise items for auction. Although some visits are not fruitful for us or the potential vendors, they are often very worthwhile. One recent visit produced a



Oak Liberty Cupboard