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Our main offices and two auction rooms are located in Stanhope Street, opposite the Liverpool Marina. There is free on-road parking. Visits to clients in Wirral, Chester and North Wales are made every week. Evening and weekend visits to clients homes can be made by prior arrangement.

To book your appointments simply telephone **John Crane** personally on either **0151 709 5559** or mobile **07836 209995**

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fine oak Liberty-designed cupboard with an inset copper panel. While it may not appear to be an overly exciting piece of furniture, it will still make over £2,000 at auction. That will be a successful outcome for the vendor who had asked me to visit to appraise a table worth less than £50...!



Detail of Liberty copper inset door panel

'There is no sense of community any more' was a comment I overheard this year at my Liverpool Institute old boys' annual reunion dinner in March. Do you agree? I don't agree with that comment at all. On most nights the Cato Crane Antiques Community on Twitter and social media communicates ideas and our enthusiasm for discovering those long-lost objects that enhance our lives by being either beautiful, useful or entertaining. We don't physically meet up in groups and some of us have never met in person, but we all know each other and our knowledge and lives are enhanced by the internet.

Frank Hornby of Liverpool, who is probably best known for his Meccano Construction Sets and Hornby Double 'O' model railway sets, created many 'community groups', giving pleasure to countless thousands of fans.

The Hornby factory in Binns Road in Liverpool developed an affordable range of model speedboats in the early 1930s. All these pressed tin-plate boats, which eventually had ten sizes with many variants and colours, had beautiful lines with well-designed, strong packaging for storage.

To promote his new product, Hornby encouraged the formation of clubs where enthusiasts would meet to race their boats competitively on lakes in municipal parks. Club members would wear lapel badges costing six old pence! As a child I remember being taken to boating lakes on Sunday afternoons – a popular weekly community event in those days. Naturally these events encouraged



sales of Hornby's products, but the 'by-product' was friendship and a sense of belonging to a 'community'.

It is quite surprising how many of these Hornby pre-war model boats still exist, and they are still popular with collectors. I discovered two just last week, still in their original boxes and still with original keys for the clockwork powered 'engines'.

Everyone wants to know the monetary value of items, and the boat illustrated will have an auction guide price of £150 to £250, which should be easily achieved when the internet collecting community hears about it! Hornby speedboat production ceased at the outbreak of WWII in 1939.

Finally – our Heswall Valuation Office at 48 The Mount is continuing to be a meeting place for collectors and vendors of fine objects and pictures and is open on Fridays. Please do come to see me, but telephone for an appointment first on 0151 342 2321 or Chester 01244 680055.



Hornby Speed Boat