

# All Things Auctioneering

With Cato Crane Valuers & Auctioneers and John Crane Fine Art



The Cato Crane Heswall office is open every Friday for pre-sale valuations and all manner of objects are brought in for appraisal as to their suitability for auction. People often drop off boxes full of items cleared from the houses of their relatives to our City of Liverpool auction rooms for us to sort through for auction. One item was well 'sorted' last month when two keen bidders pushed the price of a broken Chinese vase up to £31,000, which pleased the vendor to no small extent. It was not the £1,000,000 Chinese vase we know is somewhere in Wirral, but nevertheless a very good result and a happy vendor!



How much would you pay for a broken vase?



Another successful Saturday morning was held at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Heswall when people were invited to bring in items for auction to assist with funding for the proposed new church in Telegraph Road. There is still great interest at home and abroad in collecting Beatles memorabilia and high prices are achieved as we have a good mailing list (both post and email). Bamston Women's Institute is famous for having the Beatles play there in 1962. The small advertising posters and handbills for that event are becoming scarce now and I think the one illustrated here, which was

brought into the event for me to see, should bring £2,000 to £2,500. If you have a stack still sitting in a cupboard, just don't throw them out! If you still have any Beatles stuff still in drawers now is the time to sell. Even NEMS paper record bags are making over £100 each now. I think collectors only want the best so 'the best' still command high prices, but for how long we can't forecast.

What do you think? Is it or isn't it? A serious question with major challenges and legal implications for the unwary valuers and collectors. Laurence Stephen Lowry, 1887–1976, spent much of his time painting scenes from everyday life in Salford and around Pendlebury, where he lived. His style of painting is like a well-known salty beef-flavoured sandwich spread – you either love it or hate it! Several times each year I have 'Lowry' drawings brought in to me for appraisal at our Liverpool auction rooms and our Heswall valuation office. This process of authentication is a minefield full of danger for inexperienced valuers. Good artists can copy almost anything and recently a collection of Lowry drawings were brought in for valuation to me. The owner wanted a letter of authentication. The top experts in the country often can't agree. The Lowry Centre doesn't provide the verification service nowadays either. So why can't, or won't they do it?

Valuers, even the London specialists, are liable to sometimes 'get it wrong' with Lowry works of art as some copies are amazingly convincing. When mistakes in attribution occur, litigation takes place and very expensive court cases ensue, so these



'Lowry' sketch