

The Brannam Market

By John Ainsley



1
C.H. Brannam pottery 'comical cat' modelled seated with curled tail and quizzical expression and inset glass eyes decorated with applied chocolate, rust and green slips on a mustard ground, 34cm high, incised C.H. Brannam, Barum, 1911. Bearne's, Exeter. Jun 05. HP: £650. ABP: £764.



4
Brannam pottery jug of squat form with angular strap handle, sgraffito decorated in cream over chocolate slips with three oval panels of songbirds between encircling bands and stylised foliage, 15cm high, incised CH Brannam, Barum Ware, N Devon, 1882 with monogram for James Dewdney.

Bearne's, Exeter. Jun 05. HP: £360. ABP: £423.



5
Early 20thC John Dewdney, Brannam pottery vase, body decorated with sgraffito Arts & Crafts inspired floral motifs, bears incised signature and dated 1905, 17in high. Amersham Auction Rooms, Bucks. Nov 01. HP: £290. ABP: £341.



2
A C. H. Brannam terracotta stick stand. Ambrose, Loughton. Sep 99. HP: £500. ABP: £588.



6
Seven various C. H. Brannam jugs. Gorrings, Bexhill. Oct 05. HP: £260. ABP: £305.



3
Fine Brannam Barum Litchdon pottery vase, dated 1909, 35cm. Hamptons, Godalming. Nov 99. HP: £380. ABP: £446.



7
C. H. Brannam owl jug and a C. H. Brannam Baron fish vase. Gorrings, Bexhill. Oct 05. HP: £260. ABP: £305.

Although the famous name Charles Hubert Brannam is usually associated with this Barnstaple, North Devon output, the venture was actually begun by his father, Thomas Brannam as early as 1847, producing utility wares, floor tiles and sewage pipes. Charles, his son began working for his father at the age of twelve and by 1879, now twenty four, began designing art pottery. Over the next decade the Company developed this new line, which by the twentieth century was being marketed as Royal Barum Ware, Barum being the Roman name for the town of Barnstaple. This was a remarkable commercial success and patrons were to include some of the crowned heads of Europe including Queen Victoria. Success was to continue into the twentieth century but following C H Brannams death in 1937 at the age of seventy nine the factory reverted to once more producing only simple domestic pottery.

Barum Ware is frequently decorated with incised sgraffito designs using dark blues and greens against a background of red clay. Noted artists were James Dewdney and William Baron. Barum Ware is usually marked which adds greatly to its collectibility and nor is it unusual to also find a date and the initials of the artist. The incised mark is C H Brannam Barum from 1879 in script, often with a date and the artist's initials added. The mark may also be impressed between 1879 and 1913 after which Ltd may be added. Castle Ware and Royal Barum Ware are twentieth century trade names. There is a book in print, Art Potters of Barnstaple, by Audrey Edgeler, which can be obtained for about £30-£40 and there are also further references in other works.

The Brannam market at auction would seem to peak at about £1,100 including premium and, as in all areas of collecting it is only the lower end of the market that ever suffers in a recession, whereas the better pieces continue to hold their own. The most that I have seen paid is £950 hammer for a 13 inch plaque, painted in relief with an anthropomorphic squirrel and rabbit confronting each other whilst playing cards. Humour is never far away with Brannam figures and this theme flowered in England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This example was incised C H Brannam 1899 K W Rd 44561. Assuming the first number to be a date I could not understand why an 1886 registered number appears so late, unless of course the design was much older or the number is an internal design reference. One of the top lots sold in 2008 was a pair of twin handled, art nouveau, flared cylinder vases, dated TL 1904 and this also had the number Rd 44561. These vases were worth every penny of their £740 hammer for their intricately designed stylised flower motifs and scrolling lizard handles. Intrigued I researched further and found another vase, which sold for £550, also with the same number so I will have to pass this over to Brannam experts for an explanation. One of the more desirable pieces I have seen was a green and blue centre-piece in the form of a grotesque, bird like vessel, supported on paw feet and ten inches in length, this incised C H Brannam Barum 1901 RP. Despite restoration to the head this realised £650 hammer. Here at 1 is an example from our own database, a 'comical cat', decorated in chocolate, rust and green slips, with glass eyes. Dated 1911 this fetched £764 including premium at Bearne's in Exeter. And taking this output right up to date a further early twentieth century cat, but a different model in blue and green glazes, sporting an enormous comical bow around its neck, surprised the auction rooms recently at Canterbury where the buyer had to fork out the best part of £600.

Continuing on the animal theme, I am not to keen on the buyer spending over £300 for seven Brannam lots at 6 but the two vases at 7 are a better bet. The Brannam grebe jug at 8 is another good recent buy at about £250 in 2008 and I suggest readers compare the two fish spout jugs at 9 and 16 to gauge the popularity and familiarise with the prices. These date from 1898 and 1894 respectively and have completely different handles. I should also like to draw attention to chambersticks and there are three examples at 10, 11 and 15. Note that Brannam figures are modestly quite valuable compared to the average pots. The griffin at 10, and dating to 1912 has yet again the Rd 44561. Unfortunately this is not a good image and therefore difficult to check the quality of the modelling. At 11 on the other hand, the pair of six inch chambersticks were a seriously good buy in 2003 and if resold today I am sure that you could add at least another £100 or more. On the theme of models there are further examples at 12 and 18, the first being a humorous pair of winking cats, and although not shown the lot contains a vase with a stylised band of cats as decoration. The planter at 18 is bigger than you might think at first notice, being nearly thirteen inches in length and an extremely decorative object. I am not certain it is a boat despite the waves, and it could rather be a sled. I would urge collectors yet again to try to resist the multiple lots or those shown at the lower end of the market, particularly when there is damage. I know it is tempting to keep building a collection but it is far, far better to own a small selection of better pieces, which will prove a better investment in the end.



8
Brannam pottery Grebe jug, decorated in shades of green and blue and dated 1909, 7.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 08. HP: £220. ABP: £258.*



9
C.H. Brannam, Barum jug, with fish-spout, the globular body moulded, painted and incised with a fish and vegetation, dated 1898, 6in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*

Prices quoted are actual hammer prices (HP) and the Approximate Buyer's Price. (ABP) Includes an average premium of 15% + VAT.



10
C.H.Brannam novelty chamberstick, modelled as a griffin holding a flowerhead with a mottled blue green ground, dated 1912, Rd 44561, 7in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 05. HP: £170. ABP: £199.*



11
Pair of C H Brannam chambersticks, modelled as griffins, signed to bases and dated 1897, 6in high. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Jun 03. HP: £160. ABP: £188.*



12
Pair of Brannam pottery cats, c1900, green glazed, seated with one glass eye open, chip to an ear, & a pottery glazed vase with a stylised band of seated cats, 24cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Apr 05. HP: £140. ABP: £164.*



13
Pair of Baron Brannam vases, another Baron vase and a Brannam vase. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Oct 05. HP: £130. ABP: £152.*



14
Pair of C.H. Brannam beakers by William Baron, dated 1888, decorated with birds amongst foliage and flowers. (some def) *Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Jan 07. HP: £130. ABP: £152.*



15
Brannam pottery candle holder as a dragon with it's wings back, painted in green, yellow, brown & blue glazes, incised mark and dated 1896, 10.5cm high. *Rosebery's, London. Jul 07. HP: £110. ABP: £129.*



16
C. H. Brannam fish jug, fish head spout, fish tail handle, sides incised with two scaly fish amongst weed, in blue, yellow and brown enamels, incised on the base 'C. H. Brannam, Barum 1894', 18cm high. *Hampton & Littlewood, Exeter. Jul 04. HP: £105. ABP: £123.*



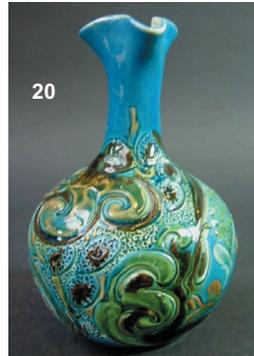
17
Seven items of Brannam pottery and another Devon ware item for the Coronation of 1902. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Oct 05. HP: £100. ABP: £117.*



18
C H Brannam pottery boat shaped planter, 1901, signed and dated, chips, 32cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Feb 06. HP: £80. ABP: £94.*



19
C H Brannam, Barum art pottery water jug, dated 1881 and decorated with a central bird design amidst foliate bands and panels, (handle a.f) 10in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 03. HP: £70. ABP: £82.*



20
C H Brannam pottery vase, c1900, bulbous form with pinched rim, blue ground with stylized foliage design, 15cm high, impressed factory and date to underside. *Rosebery's, London. Mar 05. HP: £55. ABP: £64.*



21
Matched pair of Brannam Royal Barum ware vases, inverted baluster form, with deep yellow slip glazes, one with impressed marks, 9in high. *Golding Young & Co, Grantham. Feb 06. HP: £45. ABP: £52.*



22
Brannam for Liberty green glaze jug, circular tapering form with an everted rim, neck with three applied twist handles, impressed C H BRANNAM BARUM. N. DEVON MADE FOR LIBERTY CO, 14in high. *Golding Young & Co, Grantham. Feb 06. HP: £42. ABP: £49.*



23
C H Brannam of Barnstaple green-glazed pottery lemonade set and various ramekins and dishes. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Oct 05. HP: £40. ABP: £47.*



24
Brannam terracotta ink well, compressed circular form, incised 'Don't forget to write', and flowers against a cream ground, signed Brannam Barum 1908, 3in dia. *Golding Young & Co, Grantham. Feb 06. HP: £40. ABP: £47.*



25
Brannam terracotta beaker, conical form, painted and incised with fish & seaweed, and verse 'From rocks and sands barren lands, Good fortune set me free, And from great guns and women's tongues, Good lord deliver me', incised signature and dated 1916, 4in high. (minor rim chips) *Golding Young & Co, Grantham. Feb 06. HP: £28. ABP: £32.*



26
Brannam Terracotta small jug, baluster form, scroll moulded handle, incised and painted with foliage and with a verse 'In Barnstaple was made this cup, fill it with milk and drink it up', against a green and cream ground, incised Brannam Basum, 3in high, rim chip. *Golding Young & Co, Grantham. Feb 06. HP: £22. ABP: £25.*



27
C.H. Brannam Barum tapering vase of bird and flower pattern, (chipped) 13cm. *Boldon Auction Galleries, Tyne & Wear. Sep 04. HP: £20. ABP: £23.*



28
W L Baron Pottery jug, dark brown ground incised and painted with stylized flowers, 3in high, Baron pink ground egg cup and a Brannam Pottery small pot with incised/painted decoration. (small chip) (3). *Golding Young & Co, Grantham. Feb 06. HP: £12. ABP: £14.*