

Martin Brothers

The Current and Buoyant Market

by John Ainsley



Fine Martin Brothers stoneware bird jar/cover, by Robert Wallace Martin, dated 1898, standing alert, broad flat beak, casting a knowing glance, broad webbed claws, glazed in brown and green with blue plumage to wings, ebonised wood base incised Martin Bros, London & Southall, 9-1898, paper label to neck, 35cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Jun 14.* HP: £75,000. ABP: £89,895.



Large Martin Brothers stoneware bird. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Dec 04.* HP: £40,000. ABP: £47,944.



Impressive Martin Brothers stoneware bird jar and cover by Robert Wallace Martin, dated 1899, with knowing expression, broad beak and feather pate, webbed tallons, glazed green and brown with blue highlights, on ebonised wood base incised 11 1899 Martin Bros London & Southall to base and neck, small flat chip to back of head 41.5cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Jun 14.* HP: £40,000. ABP: £47,944.



Fine Martin Brothers stoneware bird jar/cover by Robert Wallace Martin, dated 1899, alert with slightly tilted head, broad beak and staring eyes, broad claws, glazed in shades of green and brown highlighted with blue, on ebonised wood base incised R W Martin & Bros, 2-1899, London & Southall, paper label to neck 35cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Jun 14.* HP: £70,000. ABP: £83,902.

The prices quoted are actual Hammer Prices (HP) followed by the Approximate Buyer's Price (ABP) which includes an average buyer's premium of 16.55% VAT.



Rare Martin Brothers stoneware grotesque spoon warmer, c1880, by Robert Wallace Martin, brown glazed and modelled with 'jug' ears, gaping smiling mouth and quiffed hair running down its spine, two front feet, incised mark 'R W Martin, London & Southall, 9.80' and impressed mark R.W.MARTIN, 5.7in high, 7in long. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jun 14.* HP: £46,000. ABP: £55,135.



Impressive Martin Brothers stoneware owl sculpture by Robert Wallace Martin, dated 1896, long-eared owl with open beak, rotund body glazed brown with opaque white highlights incised 10-1896 Martin Bros London & Southall, firing cracks, 26cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Jun 14.* HP: £30,000. ABP: £35,958.

It is only rarely that Martin Brothers stoneware appears at auction but June 2014 saw a small spate of sales with a significant number of lots appearing at *Woolley & Wallis* in Salisbury. Surveying provincial auctions only the main source of sales has always been *Woolley & Wallis*: all of their latest sales appear in this survey. You can find the first group of high priced examples between images 1 and 9. *Woolley & Wallis* have accounted for about 42% of all provincial sales over the years, with *Gorringes* in Lewes accounting for about 17%.

Canterbury Auction Galleries gets a reasonable share at about 8% and then other important auctions such as *Halls* in Shrewsbury. *Sworders* in Essex and *Hartley's* in Ilkley have seen occasional sales, but generally less than 5%. Buyers in the main are choosing the leading salerooms around the country and this is where the collector would need to look, with *Woolley & Wallis* and *Gorringes* high on their lists. However nowadays it is possible to search the auctions section of www.thesaleroom.com for up and coming sales.

Prices at the top end of the market seem only to be rising, and whilst it is more difficult to gauge the lower end of the market prices are not falling. At *Gorringes* in June a spoon warmer grotesque fetched a stunning £55,000, see 3, and at *Woolley & Wallis* in June a pair of aquatic wall chargers cleared £31,000, see 7. The first grotesque jug appears at 14 and £15,581, again at *Woolley & Wallis* in June. Grotesque jugs also appear at 16 and 19 but these prices are historical. Would they fetch as much today if they were to reappear on the market? Examples at 34 and certainly at 55 suggest not. How then do we judge the fine pair of vases decorated with grotesque fish at 15 or further single vases at 17, 18 and 20? All of these are historical results which averaged just under £6,000. Commencing at 21 there is a run of very recent sales. See 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 30, 31, 33, 36, 37 and 38. Whilst these average only £2,640 it should be noted that several of these have major damage and restoration. On undamaged vases decorated with fauna, the average at today's auction is well over £3,500 including premium. At 36 the price of £1,678 has clearly been influenced by the rim damage and restoration, and this is also the case at 37. At 30 an aquatic vase fetched £1,558 and this was undamaged. However note its small size of a mere 8cms, little more than three inches, so a lot of money for such a small item. The chess pieces at 43 and 44 are recent sales at about a £1,000 each, but I know of no other examples so must take these two as representing a market guide.

Now let us examine results under a £1,000 where clearly there will be more collectors. At 45 this is an historical result, but then at 46 and 47 we pick up again from the *Woolley & Wallis* sale in June 2014. On the face of it the flask at 46 seems the most interesting as the decoration includes incised flora and fauna. It's not small at nearly 8ins and yet at only £898 it fetched no more than a small three inch vase at 47 with an innocuous design and firing cracks to the rim. Perhaps the flattened back of the flask failed to appeal to buyers. At 49 the June sale produced £779 for a small perfume burner. At 50 a small rather innocuous jug made the same and at 55 a two-handled vase with a stylised floral incised design made a credible £659 considering it is quite small at only 5ins in height. Other historical results suggest that at the lower end of the market about £500-£600 hammer is about as low as Martin Brothers stoneware ever gets. I recently bought a fine pair of 8in baluster vases at *Canterbury Auction Galleries*, with an incised, wavy trellis pattern. Including premium these came in at just under £800 which I thought good value.

7



Pair of Martin Brothers stoneware Aquatic wall chargers by Robert Wallace Martin, dated 1887, incised/painted with grotesque fish amongst waterweed, one with lobster, other a crab, in shades of green and brown on a buff ground incised 4-1887, R W Martin & Bros, London & Southall, incised Martin Bros to front, 33cm dia. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Jun 14. HP: £26,000. ABP: £31,163.

Images are in descending hammer price order.

8



Rare Martin Brothers stoneware double bird sculpture group by Robert Wallace Martin, dated 1904, claw feet, heads with knowing stare, glazed in shades of ochre and green highlighted with blue, ebonised wood base, incised R W Martin & Bros London & Southall 9.1. 1904 to head and base rim, firing cracks to base rim and one to one neck rim, repair to one beak, 24cm high. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Jun 14. HP: £26,000. ABP: £31,163.

9



Large and impressive Martin Brothers bird, ebonised wood base, neck with brass reinforcer, incised R W Martin & Brothers, London & Southall 11 1900, 37cm high. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. May 03. HP: £25,000. ABP: £29,965.



Martinware stoneware 'New Year' bird jar/cover, incised decoration, dark green, black and brown glazes, head at a jaunty angle and winking with one eye, bold triple claw pattern feet, 11.25in high, incised mark to cover 'R.W. Martin & Bros. London & Southall', dated 1-1-85, two small minor chips to rim of base, larger flake chip approx .5in x .375in, small hairline crack running from face of chip to front for approx 1in. Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Aug 05. HP: £19,000. ABP: £22,773.



Martin Brothers stoneware model, 'Toby', dated 1894, detachable head with squint-eyes, mouth showing teeth & tongue, ruff around his neck, Toby recumbent on hind legs, glazed in brown, stoneware base glazed in black and on ebonised plinth, incised mark around neck-rim Martin Bros., London + Southall, 8 - 1894, 11.5in. Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 05. HP: £18,000. ABP: £21,574.



Martin Brothers stoneware grotesque bird jar and cover, dated 1900, standing bird with a sideways glare, picked out in cobalt, green & ochre circular base, incised 'Martin Bros. London & Southall, 1900', 23cm high. Halls Fine Art, Shrewsbury. Feb 10. HP: £15,000. ABP: £17,979.



Martin Brothers grotesque, dated 1888, creature seated on hind legs, detachable head, grinning eyes, open mouth showing white teeth, arms together at chest, incised mark to rear R W Martin, Southall, 1888, to neck rim R W Martin Bros., London + Southall, 9.75in. Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 05. HP: £13,000. ABP: £15,581.



Martin Brothers stoneware grotesque jug, dated 1891, incised with grotesque mask with smiley toothy grin, glazed in ochre/brown/green, incised 10-1891 Martin Bros London & Southall, 11.5cm high. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Jun 14. HP: £13,000. ABP: £15,581.



Pair of Martin Bros. Martinware vases, decorated with grotesque fish on a mottled blue ground, inscribed mark and dated 1909, 11.25in. Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 10. HP: £7,000. ABP: £8,390.



Martin Brothers stoneware grotesque jug, dated 1882, creature with long arms around face, eyes partially open, pointed ears, mouth open revealing hollow, shell handle, glazed in blue, deep green & brown, incised mark to rear side of grotesque MARTIN, incised beneath R W Martin, London + Southall, 10 - 82, 6in high. Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 05. HP: £3,800. ABP: £4,554.



Martin Brothers Pottery vase, reeded ovoid form, 4 squared loop handles modelled as eels, body incised with jelly fish, cream ground, 11in high. Andrew Hartley, Ilkley. Dec 05. HP: £4,800. ABP: £5,753.



Pair of Martinware stoneware square section flasks, brown glazed necks and loop handles, good incised decoration to all sides, blue/brown glaze with standing figures of grotesque birds with large bills, all beneath ferns and grass, 7.75in high, incised marks to base 'Martin Bros. London & Southall', dated 2.1896, one with tiny flake chip to base/hairline crack running around approx half of base) Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Aug 05. HP: £4,200. ABP: £5,034.



Martinware jug with double sided smiling grotesque face, date 10-1890 and marked R W Martin & Bros, London & Southall, 7in. Gorringes, Lewes. Jun 00. HP: £3,800. ABP: £4,554.



Martin Brothers vase, decorated with grotesque fish, incised marks, dated 6/1897. Hamptons, Godalming. Jul 02. HP: £3,400. ABP: £4,075.



Martin Brothers stoneware mug, Edwin & Walter Martin, dated 1898, incised with 3 anthropomorphic birds, reverse with 3 other birds, shades of blue/brown/green, buff ground incised 10-1898 Martin Bros London & Southall, paper label, sprung crack, hairline to handle, 17.5cm high. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Jun 14. HP: £3,200. ABP: £3,835.



Martin Brothers stoneware vase by Edwin & Walter Martin, dated 1894, incised with squirrels eating/hunting cobnuts, brown on buff ground, incised 1894 Martin Bros London & Southall, crack to rim, 24cm high. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Jun 14. HP: £3,000. ABP: £3,595.



Martin Brothers stoneware Aquatic vase by Edwin & Walter Martin, dated 1889, pushed-out fish with incised decoration, glazed brown & white, highlighted in blue, brown ground incised 6-1889, Martin Brothers London & Southall, glaze nick to top rim, small chip to base rim, 21.5cm high. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Jun 14. HP: £3,000. ABP: £3,595.



Martin Brothers jug, cylindrical neck, reptile handle, hand-pierced filter, incised with flowers/leaves, blue ground, incised mark Martin, London + Southall, 5.5in high. Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 05. HP: £2,900. ABP: £3,475.



25
Martin Brothers pottery vase, baluster form, all round spiny fish and other sea creatures, incised 2-1902, Martin Bros, London Southall, height 18.5cm. *George Kidner, Lymington*. May 14. HP: £2,800. ABP: £3,356.



26
Martin Brothers stoneware Aquatic vase, dated 1890, bowl with pushed out grotesque fish amidst jellyfish, eels and waterweed, in green, blue and brown, buff ground incised 3-1890 Martin Brothers London & Southall, 16cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury*. Jun 14. HP: £2,800. ABP: £3,356.



27
Martin Brothers stoneware bird jar, incised 'Martin: London & Southall', dated 1902 to base, 3.5in high. *Andrew Hartley, Ilkley*. Feb 04. HP: £2,700. ABP: £3,236.



28
Martinware double sided face jug, early 20thC, modelled to both sides with a mischievous looking character, simply moulded handle, glazed in brown tones, incised to base 'RW Martin & Bros, London Southall', 5.25in high. *Halls Fine Art, Shrewsbury*. Sep 06. HP: £2,700. ABP: £3,236.



29
Martinware stoneware vase, marked 4-1880 R.W. Martin & Bros London & Southall, 13.75in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 01*. HP: £2,500. ABP: £2,996.



30
Martin Brothers stoneware Aquatic jardiniere, dated 1890, bowl with pushed out grotesque fish amidst eels & waterweed, shades of green, brown and blue, buff ground incised 1890 Martin Brothers London & Southall, filled firing crack to base 16cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury*. Jun 14. HP: £2,300. ABP: £2,756.



33
Pair Martin Brothers stoneware vases by Robert Wallace Martin, dated 1884, angled handles, cast/incised with classical foliage, vase incised with cherub playing amongst honeysuckle stems, brown/blue & green, highlighted in white, buff ground, incised 4.12.84 RWMartin & Bros London & Southall, 24cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury*. Jun 14. HP: £1,900. ABP: £2,277.



34
Martinware double sided face jug, early 20thC, modelled to both sides with a mischievous face below moulded handle, glazed in predominantly grey tones, brown highlights, incised to base 'RW Martin & Bros London Southall', 15.5cm high. *Halls Fine Art, Shrewsbury*. Sep 07. HP: £1,800. ABP: £2,157.



37
Martin Brothers stoneware vase and cover, dated 1896, incised with dragonfly, snail & bee amongst poppy stems, brown on deep brown ground, flat cover with radiating poppy seedhead stems incised 10-1896 Martin Bros London & Southall, to base and underside of cover, factory chip and bruise to top rim, 21cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury*. Jun 14. HP: £1,300. ABP: £1,558.



41
Pair of Martin Brothers stoneware wall pockets. *Locke & England, Leamington Spa*. Nov 02. HP: £1,050. ABP: £1,258.



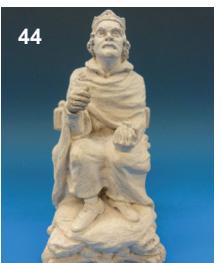
42
Martin Brothers stoneware vase, dated 1902, 8.75in, firing deficiencies. *Louis Taylor, Stoke on Trent*. Mar 06. HP: £860. ABP: £1,030.



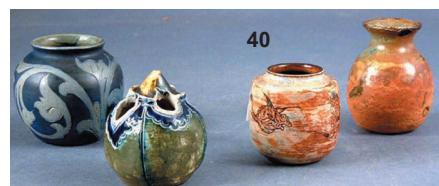
38
Martin Brothers Pottery stoneware Aquatic vase, by Edwin & Walter Martin, square section, each side incised with a fish, incised Martin Bros London 8cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury*. Jun 14. HP: £1,300. ABP: £1,558.



39
Martin Brothers stoneware vase, 1903, globular body with an elongated neck, engraved by Edwin Martin with bizarre fish under a mottled green glaze, incised name and dated 10.1903, 16cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet*. Apr 05. HP: £1,200. ABP: £1,438.



43
Martin Brothers stoneware King chess piece by Robert Wallace Martin, Southall, inscribed verso (14.5cm high) possibly Aikin Collection, Sothebys 1978. *Stroud Auctions, Stroud*. Oct 13. HP: £800. ABP: £958.



40
Four Martin Brothers stone vases, one with grotesque fish, incised mk, dated 12-1903, one with leaf scroll decoration, incised mark, dated 8-1890?, brown vase, indistinctly marked, and posy vase, indistinct incised mark. (2.25-2.75in high). *Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent*. Feb 04. HP: £1,100. ABP: £1,318.



45

Martin Brothers stoneware vase, dated 1897, incised with four dragons, on a black ground, incised Martin Bros/ London and Southall 6-1897, 24cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet*. Apr 05. HP: £750. ABP: £898.



46

Unusual Martin Brothers stoneware flask by Robert Wallace Martin, flattened back, incised panel of a hummingbird/butterfly before grasses, back with a bird perched amongst berried bough, brown and ochre, buff ground incised R W Martin & Bros London & Southall, firing hairline, 18.5cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury*. Jun 14. HP: £750. ABP: £898.



Martin Brothers stoneware miniature gourd vase by Edwin & Walter Martin, dated 1907, painted with veined design in matt grey incised 5-1907 Martin Bros London & Southall, firing cracks to top rim, 8cm. high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury*. Jun 14. HP: £750. ABP: £898.



Martin brothers stoneware twin handled vase decorated with flowers, brown ground, incised factory marks, 9.25in high. *Gardiner Houlgate, Corsham*. Apr 05. HP: £650. ABP: £779.



Unusual Martin Brothers stoneware perfume burner by Edwin & Walter Martin, dated 1893, circular tray supporting reservoir on tripod supports, incised with scrolling berried foliage in brown on deep ochre ground incised 3-1893, Martin Bros, London & Southall 12.5cm dia. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury*. Jun 14. HP: £650. ABP: £779.



Martin Bros bulbous vase, incised scroll and griffin decoration, incised R W Martin & Bros, London & Southall, dated 4.1889, 23cm. *Bristol Auction Rooms, Bristol*. Apr 02. HP: £610. ABP: £731.



Martin Bros lidded tobacco jar, incised scroll and griffin decoration, incised with a fisherman holding his catch, possibly on the Grand Union Canal, incised to the base and dated 24/3/80, 13cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet*. Feb 06. HP: £460. ABP: £551.



Martin Brothers stoneware tankard, 1880, tapering form, incised with a fisherman holding his catch, possibly on the Grand Union Canal, incised to the base and dated 24/3/80, 13cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet*. Feb 06. HP: £460. ABP: £551.

This section is only a sample from 1000s of results from recent sales. See our website for an extensive selection.



Martin Brothers stoneware jug, dated 1892, shouldered form, incised with scrolling foliage with impressed flowers, in shades of brown on a light brown ground incised 3-1892, Martin Bros London 9cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury*. Jun 14. HP: £650. ABP: £779.



Martin Brothers vesta as an ox's head, c1895, beasts head supporting a ball, cobalt glazes against brown mottled lozenge ground, incised 'Southall', vesta 16cm high, 16cm wide, mounted on an oak shield 30cm high. *Halls Fine Art, Shrewsbury*. Sep 08. HP: £550. ABP: £659.



Martin Brothers Martin ware squat earthenware vase, ribbed banded decorated in shades of brown, incised marks 5.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes*. Oct 08. HP: £550. ABP: £659.



Martinware stoneware square bulbous four handled vase, angled faces incised with finches on flowering branches in pale blue and green, pale ground, moulded angular loop handles and circular foot rim, 11in high (incised mark 'R.W. Martin & Bros., London & Southall' and dated 2-85). *Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent*. Dec 05. HP: £620. ABP: £743.



Martin Brothers stoneware twin-handled vase by Robert Wallace Martin, incised with sprays of wild flowers in blue, yellow and brown, pale brown ground incised R W Martin & Bros London & Southall, 12.5cm high. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury*. Jun 14. HP: £550. ABP: £659.



Martin Brothers salt-glazed stoneware pilgrim flask, two-handled, incised with circular panel of birds, reverse with stylised leaves, incised script signature R W Martin Bros., London and Southall, 7.25in, one handle restored. *Gorringes, Lewes*. Jun 06. HP: £500. ABP: £599.



Martin Brothers child's salt glaze mug, decorated with flowers and the name Alice, 9.5cm high, Martin Bros, London Southall, 12. 1893, and a smaller mug with the name Eva, 7.5cm, dated 8. 1897. (2) *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet*. Feb 07. HP: £480. ABP: £575.



Martinware stoneware baluster shaped vase with slightly flared rim, finely incised and decorated with thistle leaves and flowers on a navy-blue ground, 9.75in high (incised mark 'R.W. Martin & Bros., London & Southall' and dated 11-1896, with restoration to rim). *Canterbury Auction Galleries, Canterbury*. Dec 05. HP: £420. ABP: £503.



Brothers stoneware inkwells circa 1880s, of square section, sides incised and decorated with birds and fauna, incised marks and dates to both, height 6cm. *Rosebery's, London*. Mar 06. HP: £400. ABP: £479.



Pair of Martin Brothers childrens saltglaze mugs, flower/insect decoration and names Bernard and Norman, Martin Bros, London, Southall, 12. 1893, restored, 7.5cm high. (2) *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet*. Feb 07. HP: £400. ABP: £479.