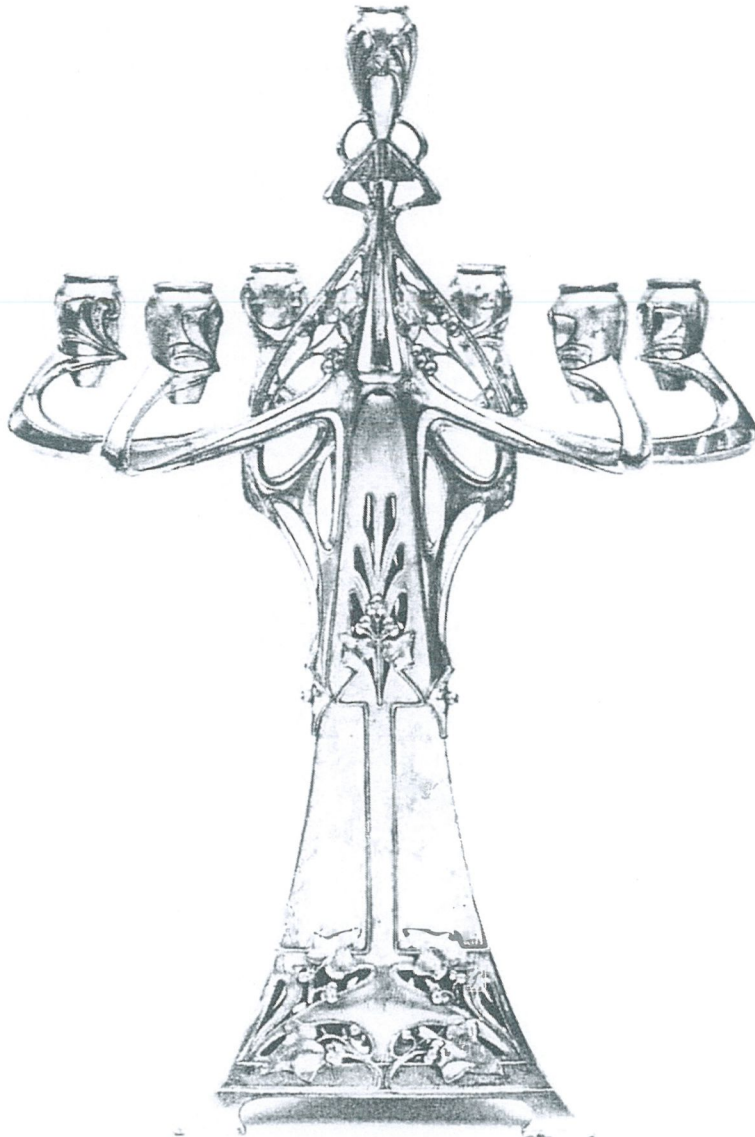




A. 74-77

# TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY EUROPEAN PEWTER

*The popularity of the Art Nouveau style helped revive interest in this malleable material first in France and Germany and then in Britain. Eric Knowles explains*



The rise in popularity of the Art Nouveau style at the end of the last century, and its application and consequent effect upon industrial design, helped to revive a British pewter industry which had seen little innovation for a century or more.

A notable exception was, perhaps, the growing use of Britannia metal, closely resembling pewter in form, but differing in constitution, being an alloy of tin and antimony as opposed to tin, lead and copper, which form the constituents of pewter. Britannia metal enjoyed several advantages over pewter, primarily as a result of being stronger and lighter in weight. It also proved a satisfactory medium for electroplating.

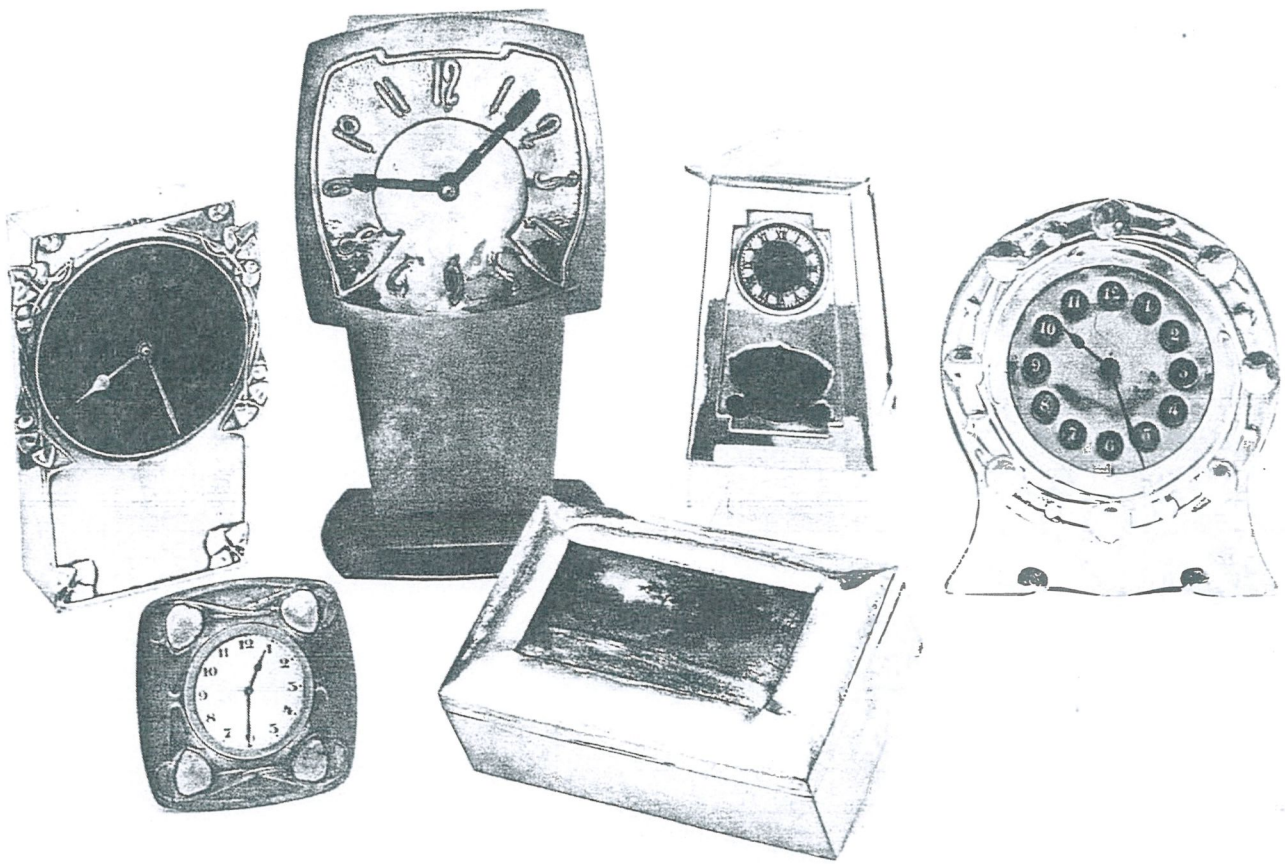
For the greater part of the 19th century pewter production was chiefly concerned with the manufacture of tavern and domestic wares, such as cooking moulds and tobacco containers.

The introduction of inexpensive moulded glassware from the glasshouses of the north east added to pewter's decline, as glass sold well with the added advantage of being more hygienic.

A halt in the decline came about at the turn of the century, at a time when the Art Nouveau style had already begun to peak on the Continent. The French, and in particular the Germans, had been quick to recognise the potential of pewter, resulting from its malleability, resemblance to silver when polished and relatively low production costs. The German industry had remained active for the larger part of the century, producing pewter mounts and covers for traditional beer steins of both stoneware and glass.

The 1890s witnessed the emergence of 'Art Pewter' in many manufacturers' catalogues. J. P. Kayser and Son of Krefeld were no exception, and proved the most active advocates of the new organic style. Their early productions trod the safe path of compromise, by simply embellishing traditional shapes with organic ornament, before the

*Left*  
One of a large pair of W.M.F. table candelabra. This particular example retains much of the original silver electroplating. H 62 cm (29 in)  
GALLERY 25  
Price £2000 (c US \$3100)



introduction of more avant-garde organic shapes with integral ornament.

In Britain this pewter could be purchased through such retail outlets as Arthur Lazenby Liberty's shop in London's fashionable Regent Street. Not only did Liberty retail the 'Kayserzinn' products of J. P. Kayser and Son, but other German pewterwares manufactured by Orivit, Osiris and Hueck are known to have featured on the shelves of Liberty's showrooms. These sold well to a clientele who saw that these products had been well received by Liberty's and subsequently carried the seal of approval from a company recognised, even at international level, as a guiding light and arbiter of current taste and fashion.

The pewter body favoured by most German makers resembled Britannia metal closely in appearance. Indeed, those wares produced at Geislingen near Stuttgart by the Württembergische Metallwarenfabrik, who are probably better recognised by their trade

name initials of W.M.F., were usually retailed in an electroplated finish, and consequently probably offered more competition to the British silver plate industry than the pewter trade.

Encouraged by the response to Continental art pewter, Liberty decided to launch his own range of pewter in conjunction and partnership with W. H. Haseler and Sons of Birmingham. Registered in 1900 as 'Tudric Pewter', the catalogue of objects produced was inspired by similar themes found on 'Cymric Silver' examples. 'Cymric Silver' had been introduced a year earlier by Liberty, and had shown itself to be a fresh and distinctive style of silverware. The silver range was naturally expensive and this limited the market somewhat, and with this in mind Liberty's sought to retail similar objects in pewter, at a price more easily affordable by a larger clientele.

Liberty commissioned a number of top contemporary designers to furnish

*Above*

Left to right: Mantel clock with enamelled circular dial and shaped surround designed by Archibald Knox. Stamped marks, made by Liberty and Co (0609 Rd No 468016). H 20.5 cm (8 in). DAN KLEIN £450 (c US \$697); Desk clock with easel support and representative of the lower price range. Stamped marks, made by Liberty & Co (0482). H 10 cm (3½ in). DAN KLEIN £120 (c US \$186); Mantel clock with copper dial demonstrates Knox's use of Celtic forms. Stamped marks Tudric (0253). H 30 cm (11½ in). DAN KLEIN £950 (c US \$1472); Rectangular casket with hinged cover with inset enamel plaque decorated by Charles Fleetwood Varley with a moonlit riverscape. This example can be paralleled with the metalwork produced by Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft. In direct contrast to the hand-made objects produced at the Guild, Liberty's use of mass production techniques to simulate hand crafted effects, produced the most profitable formula. EDITIONS GRAPHIQUE £300 (c US \$465); Mantel clock of architectural shape with Art Nouveau influenced enamelwork represents a compromise between a traditional form and avant-garde decoration. Stamped marks Tudric (0629). H 18 cm (7 in). DAN KLEIN £380 (c US \$589); Mantel clock of balloon shape with enamelled chapter ring. Stamped marks Tudric (0366) Made in England. H 20.5 cm (8 in) DAN KLEIN. £460 (c US \$713)

*Right*

Orivit pewter mounted clear glass claret jug and a single glass. The former exemplifies well the sinuous shapes adopted by both German and French designers of the period. Stamped marks 'ORIVIT 2192'. H 22.5 cm (8½ in)

DAN KLEIN

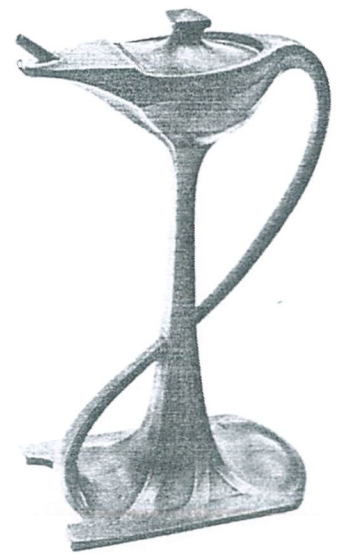
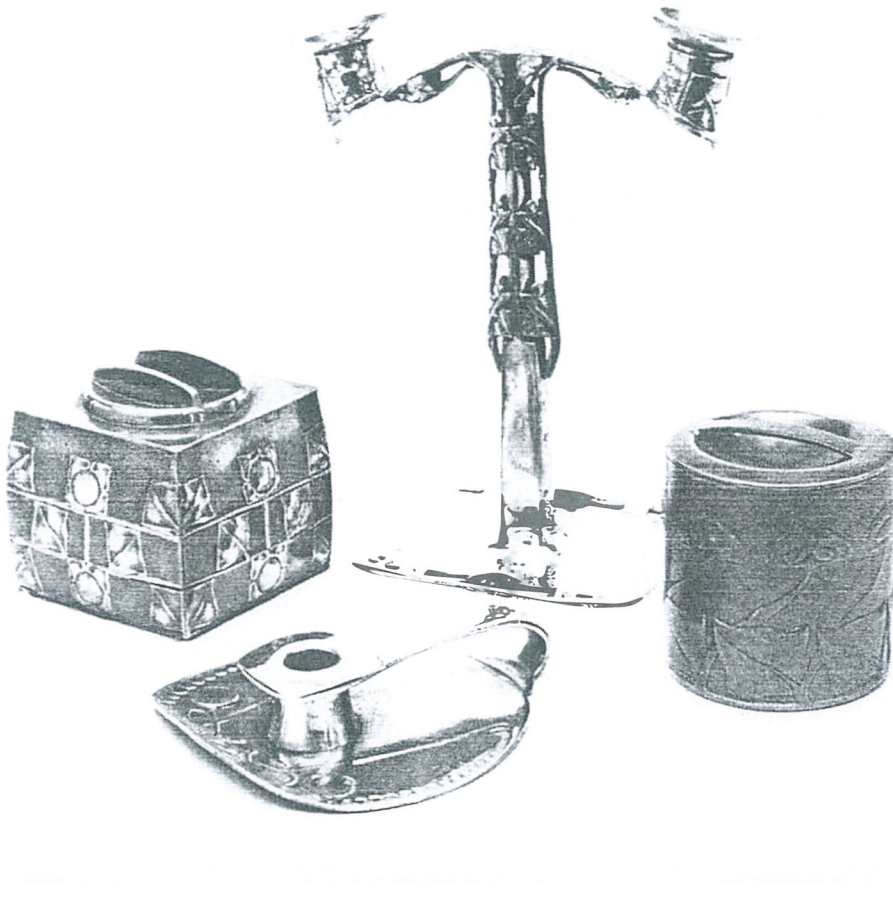
Price £60 (c US \$93)

*Below*

W.M.F. oil lamp, illustrating well the achievement of functional form. H 22 cm (8½ in)

BONHAMS

Sold for £40 (c US \$62)



*Above*

Selection of various items from Liberty's Tudric range of pewterware, their design attributed to Archibald Knox. From left to right: square box with swollen sides and circular screw twist cover, H 11.5 cm (4½ in) £250 (c US \$387). Chamberstick, stamped mark English Pewter '0523'. Made in England, H 18 cm (7 in) £160 (c US \$248). Twin branch candlestick, stamped mark 'Tudric 0530, Rd 459548', H 27 cm (10½ in), value £450 (c US \$697). A cylindrical box and cover, H 11 cm (4 in) £250 (c US \$387). Twin branch candlestick, EDITIONS GRAPHIQUE, the remainder DAN KLEIN

*Right*

Stamped marks on cylindrical box and cover illustrated above.



*Right*

Stamped marks on square section box and cover illustrated above.



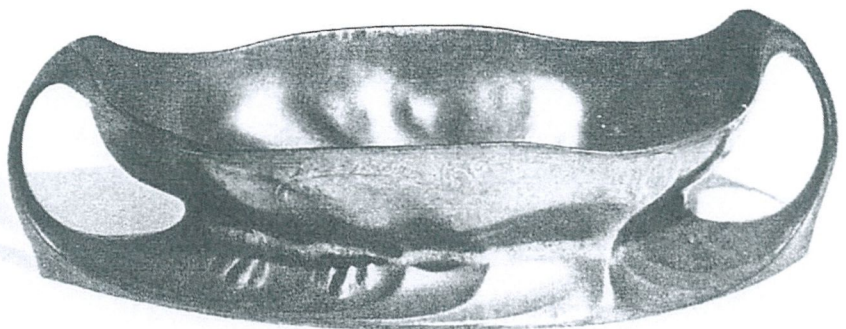
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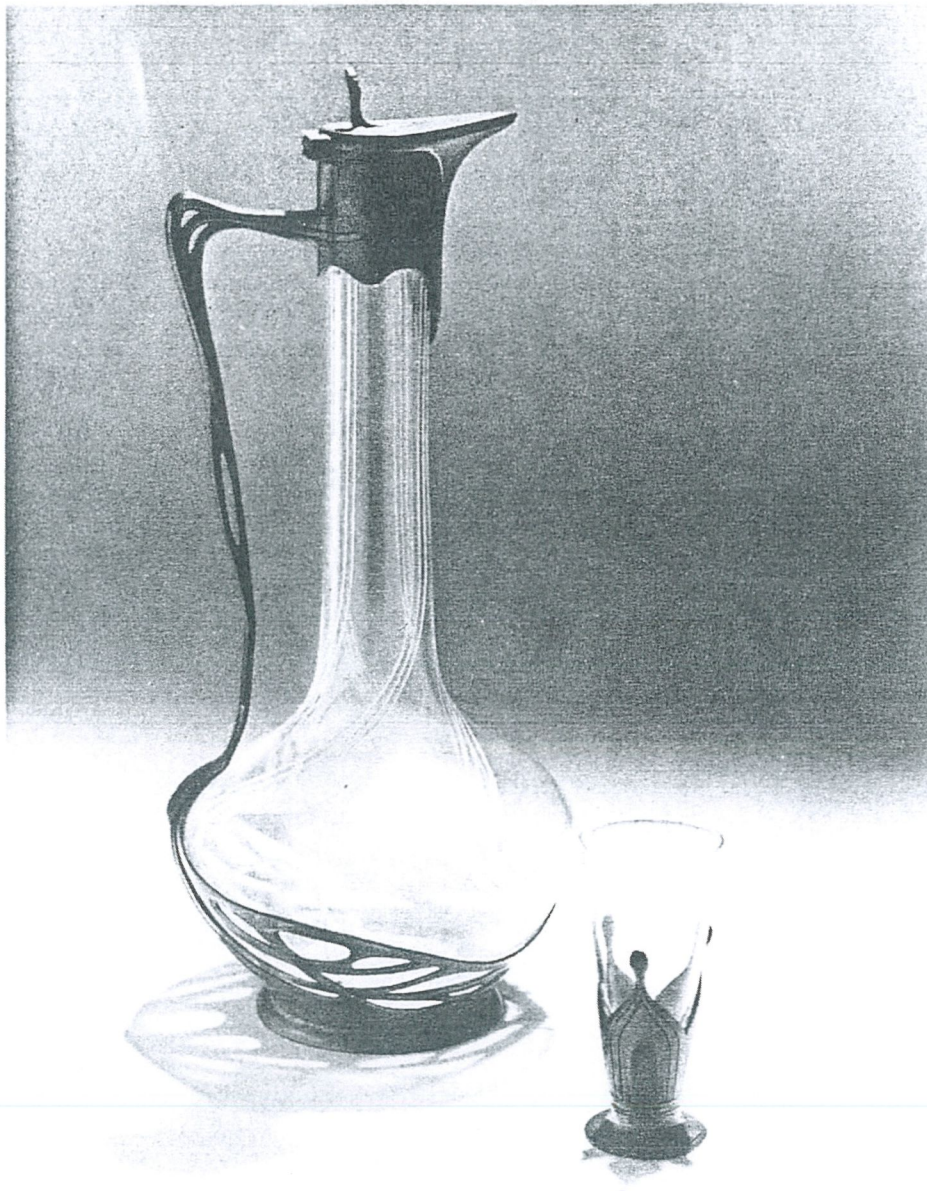
Relief cast mark on underside of the bowl above, the '4461' refers to shape number.



*Above*

Kaysierzinn two-handled ovular bowl of organic style, the decoration forming an integral part of the entire form. This particular example is probably by the designer Hugo Leven. W 33.5 cm (13 in) DAN KLEIN Price £120 (c US \$186)





the catalogue with exciting and individual shapes, at the same time insisting that all objects were stamped with the Liberty and Tudric trademarks and nothing more, great efforts being made to maintain the anonymity of the designer responsible.

Although such names as Rex Silver and Oliver Baker have been linked to Tudric designs, one designer is now acknowledged above most others as being responsible for some of the most exciting and highly individual designs produced by Liberty; his name was Archibald Knox. Knox, a Manxman, trained initially as an art teacher before becoming involved with the firm of M. H. Baillie Scott, the architect and designer, whose offices were in Douglas. It was probably as a result of Knox's connection with the company, the details of which are presently uncertain, that he first came into contact

with Liberty. The designs submitted by him show clearly a distinctive and highly individual fusion of Celtic themes and Art Nouveau form, whilst at the same time incorporating a fitness for purpose. Some designs involved the option of ceramic and enamel inset decoration, the former usually from Howson-Taylor's Ruskin pottery at Smethwick near Birmingham, the latter of a landscape or seascape by Charles Fleetwood Varley.

The popularity of the ware waned with the decline of the Art Nouveau style, indeed many Tudric vases ended up in the melting pot of the First World War's munitions effort. Those wares produced after the war years proved to be unimaginative and heavy in form, their decoration often limited to a simulated hammered surface.

In direct contrast to Art Nouveau, the Art Deco style was constantly looking

to the future for inspiration. Its gradual emergence during the 1920s as the dominant art style virtually ignored pewter as a utility medium both here and on the Continent. By then, far more importance was attached to such modern materials as aluminium, chromium plated and tubular steel and perspex.

### Prices

The price one might be expected to pay largely depends on whether the object can be attributed to a particular designer, and then will reflect on how highly that designer is regarded by collectors or dealers. National bias can often be another contributory factor. For example, items designed by Archibald Knox tend to be more saleable in this country, appealing to collectors whose tastes are firmly embedded in objects of Liberty style.

Liberty's personal attitude to the curvilinear extravagances of Continental Art Nouveau design was made clear in an address he gave on 17 May 1904 to the Society of Arts and headed 'Pewter and the Revival of its Use', in which he described it as 'the fantastic motif which it pleases our Continental friends to worship as l'art nouveau.'

Condition as always plays an important part. Repaired items, usually lead soldered, are to be avoided unless the repair is not visible and consequently does not blemish the appearance. Even so, a repaired item should carry a lower price tag.

### Where to Buy

BONHAMS (auctioneers), Montpellier Galleries, Montpellier Street, London SW 7 (01-584 9161)  
 CHRISTIE'S (auctioneers), 8 King Street, St. James's, London SW 1 (01-839 9060)  
 CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON (auctioneers), 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW 7 (01-581 2231)  
 EDITIONS GRAPHIQUES LTD, 3 Clifford Street, London W 1 (01-7343 944)  
 GALLERY 25, 4 Halkin Arcade, Motcomb Street, London SW 1 (01-235 5178)  
 HASLEM & WHITEWAY LTD, 105 Kensington Church Street, London W 8 (01-229 1145)  
 JOHN JESSE & IRINA LASKI, 160 Kensington Church Street, London W 8 (01-229 0312)  
 DAN KLEIN LTD, 11 Halkin Arcade, Motcomb Street, London SW 1 (01-245 9868)  
 LIBERTY & CO LTD, Antique Department, Regent Street, London W 1 (01-734 1234)  
 PHILLIPS (auctioneers), Blenstock House, 7 Blenheim Street, London W 1 (01-629 6602)  
 URSULA, Stand P 16, Antiquarius, 135 King's Road, London SW 3 (01-352 2203)