

Reviews

Design Assignments for GCSE and Standard Grade

Jeff Nicholls
Hutchinson £19.95

This is an interesting publication consisting of sixty design problems printed in black and white on single sides of A4 card and presented as pupil worksheets. A concise set of teachers' notes and useful related information statements for each assignment are included in a wallet.

The 'sleeve notes' state that this collection covers all aspects of Craft, Design and Technology and the assignments intended for pupils entered for GCSE Design and Realisation, Design and Communication and Technology. These claims are not unsubstantiated but, of course, it would be unwise to assume the offering to be a complete scheme of work for the three subject areas. Although the context in which each assignment is set is explicit it remains the obligation of the teacher to ensure structure and progression in pupil activity and the provision of an attractively resourced environment which can initially motivate and foster productive thinking and doing.

Each worksheet provides a situation, brief and basic principles involved in a sympathetic way and is complemented by two simple assessment grids for teachers to objectively record a response to pupil performance. The sixty design problems, based on the kind of situations young people can associate with are grouped under four sections: 1. Household, 2. Work in the Workshop, 3. Car and Bicycle and 4. Leisure. Cartoon, perspective and orthographic drawings help to visually set the scene and enhance easy to read printed information. Typical titles are: 1. Removing a broken lightbulb, 2. An alert to telephone ringing, 3. Storing a bicycle and 4. Camera setting recorder. It is not difficult to imagine many of the suggested projects being used with individuals and groups; problems will occur, as they always have done, in appropriately resourcing pupils of differing ability, therefore whilst this pack can enhance thorough teacher planning it cannot replace inadequate performance.

Some of the assignments can be completed in a typical lesson and others

may take a considerable time depending on the constraints set by the teacher. It is important to grasp the opportunity this pack offers to vary the approach to solving problems as well as the point at which assignments are concluded, be it at drawing, modelling or realisation stages.

The quality of the content and its presentation will stimulate imagination and research by both teachers and pupils. The teachers' handbook points out that the information given is by no means exhaustive but provides a useful starting point for discussion. Details of where to go for further information are not included here but credence is given to the values of co-operation in researching and planning within the school. There is recognition that a substantial amount of professional designing involves teams of designers working on modifications rather than inventions.

Spasmodic attempts have previously been made to produce teacher/pupil friendly material in this form, this is the most successful so far; it will make an attractive addition to a Design and Technology department resource library and a starting point for teachers wishing to build a design situation repertoire.

Bob Booth

Design and Communication for Foundation Courses

Peter Gowers
Blackie £5.25. (Also a Teachers' Guide £3.75)

This clear and authoritative book joins a growing number covering Design and Communication in CDT and Art and Design. The author's objective in writing the book was 'to help pupils in lower secondary schools develop the ability to visualise and communicate their thoughts and ideas graphically in response to problem solving situations'.

The reader is carefully introduced to the rationale behind design and communication in a section which considers various modes of communication, relates them to designing procedures, and attempts to build confidence. The next section describes basic graphical techniques, and offers practical advice to pupils; it

Publisher's Announcement

We apologise to the many readers who have waited for many months to receive copies of the 20th Anniversary volume *The Best of Craft Design and Technology* and also of John Penfold's *CDT Past Present and Future*.

There have been major difficulties in producing both volumes. As events unfolded during the past year there was a constant need to up-date *CDT Past Present and Future* in order to ensure that it took account of the rapidly changing events.

The Best of CDT suffered from a different problem. It proved exceptionally difficult to track down some of the authors of the earlier contributions to *Studies in Design Education Craft & Technology* which we particularly wished to include. Furthermore the ensuing volume became something approaching twice the size of the one originally envisaged. Eventually the difficulties were overcome, but in order to make the production financially viable we had no choice but to increase the price from the £9.95 originally stated to £14.95.

All readers who have ordered copies of the *The Best of Craft Design & Technology* and *CDT Past Present and Future* will now have received their copies and we have honoured all pre-paid orders for *The Best of Craft Design & Technology* at the original price. Readers who have not yet ordered copies of these outstanding books will find full details on the inner back cover where we also announce publication of another important new volume — Peter Toft's *Making Change in the CDT Department*.

We hope that readers will understand and join with us in support of these new initiatives in publishing books that are of immediate professional value to CDT specialists.

Barbara Wiggins

also stays within realistic cost limits, commendable in such a potentially expensive activity. Perspective drawing, and the uses of shading are covered comprehensively. Various effects of colour are examined, to be followed by a review of the media which can be used to achieve them. Most media described are affordable in the context of lower secondary CDT, although certain spraying techniques may not be, and the use of spirit based markers is questionable on health grounds. The section on building models, mock-ups and prototypes is thorough, followed by a brief consideration of the presentation of work. The book ends with a useful index.

As an example of the genre, I found the book very good indeed. It is lucidly written, vividly illustrated and well structured. There is a sound interplay between the text and illustrations, and a profusion of interesting assignments. It will not only serve as an effective text for pupils, but as a source of procedures and ideas for their teachers. Some will no doubt be surprised at the apparently high level at which the book is pitched, but I believe the level is right given that we should be continually seeking to raise standards of achievement in CDT, a subject which is arguably still only in embryo form. My main reservation is not specific to this book, but to a number of such books recently produced also: there is a danger in developing graphical techniques of this level of sophistication (albeit an appropriate level) that learning them reduces the pupils' focus on generating ideas which must surely be paramount. This, however, is something which sensitive teaching can easily overcome.

Overall it is a first rate book, excellently supplemented by the related teachers guide.

Peter Toft

The Celtic Art Source Book
Courtney Davis
Blandford Press £14.95

If ever there was a book where you could tell that the author enjoyed himself this was it.

Mr Courtney Davis has romped through Celtic manuscripts, stone

carving and jewellery redrawing their intricate patterns to appear in profusion throughout this book.

Alternating with the drawings are the author's adaptations of the Celtic ornaments, vividly coloured and intertwined with one author as introductions to, and pages in, the sections on the different types of ornament, zoomorphic ornaments, knot work patterns, key patterns.

Despite the good quality paper, beautiful printing and binding and rich appearance, for which Messrs Butler and Tanner are to be congratulated this is a book which can't make up its mind. The title declares it to be 'The Celtic Art Source Book', the fly leaf states that the book has been produced so that professional or amateur alike can use or adapt the designs for their own purpose, but a very few pages into the book we are forbidden to reproduce or transmit any part of it in any form! And that's not the only place where confusion reigns; the book is divided into sections some, as I said, by ornamental type with a historical one on 'The Early Celts' and a literary/mystical one on 'Celtic Myths and Legends' and a section on 'Initials'. Within each section is a mixture of redrawings of genuine Celtic art and adaptations by the Author and it's not always easy to sort out which is which. Referring to the sources of the illustrations, given at the back of the book, is little help. Here a bald statement that designs have been copied from the Books of Durrow, Kells, Lindisfarne and St Chad is small help as we are not told which designs are from which and it doesn't tell the full story either — I believe I recognise designs from the Tara brooch, I've drawn that one myself, and there may be others, I remain open-minded. What we need is an accurate page of references so we know what came from where — how can a teacher answer a child's questions, or indeed their own questions, on the information given here?

Look in the index you say and here you come utterly unstuck; the index is there all right but somebody's head is surely rolling by now for forgetting to number the pages!

To sum up: the drawings are clear, the colouring is good, its the sort of book one might use as a source for embroidering designs on a dress for

Irish dancing but it's not a serious source book for anyone who wants to know more about Celtic Art — they should do what Mr Davis did and go and do their own drawings from photographs, reproductions and the real thing.

Rosemary Booth

The World of Plastics
British Plastics Federation £3

The British Plastics Federation, in co-operation with the Plastics Industry of the UK, produced 'The World of Plastics' in support of Industry Year in 1986, and as an aid to the study of Polymers for GCSE pupils. The book was originally sent to all secondary schools. This inexpensive, attractively produced work, in full colour, is a welcome addition to the wealth of curriculum material made available to schools and colleges by a wide section of industry.

The volume has three main parts. Section A, Plastics in the Environment, introduces the reader to the importance of the materials to society and follows the introduction of plastics over a century ago to today's growth of the industry worldwide. Technical terms are clearly introduced and explained and the section includes a few identification tests, some of which are suitable for much younger children.

Section B, From Raw Material to Plastic, explains how the fractional distillation of crude oil provides some of the building blocks of polymer production and how specific properties can be introduced for specific needs, relating, in a readable way, the structure and properties of a variety of materials.

Section C, From Plastics to the Finished Article, develops the industrial and commercial production techniques and clearly shows the reader the various processes used to produce the finished articles. The environmental problems of finite resources, disposal of waste and recycling are also tackled.

Throughout the book photographs, diagrams and statistics support the text, and classroom approaches via individual or group work, class discussion or follow up referencing enable the reader to build up a

comprehensive picture of a major section of industry and its place in society.

The book is available from the British Plastics Foundation, 5 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PH

George Raper

Illumination: A Source Book for Modern Calligraphers

Christopher Jarman
Dryad Press £14.95

The title of this book seems to me to be somewhat contradictory. Indeed, I fail to appreciate the book as a source of ideas for present-day calligraphers and illuminators — who are searching for new and inspired visual imagery in their work — for it tends to be aimed at the copyist who will always take the easy and more plagerist manner of working. Nineteenth century researchers, artists and writers such as, amongst others, Shaw and Jones, were well-intentioned in producing 'Ornamental Grammar Copy-books' (in an age of copy-books and rote learning) and the many pseudo illuminated books and certificates churned out by Victorian illuminators bear witness to this.

Medieval scribes and manuscript artists, on the other hand, were the true *inventors*. They were the real innovators who produced outstanding works of art. Theirs was the creative genius, with their inspiration springing from religious fervour and artistic skill of the highest order. Anything that attempts to copy this can only be second rate.

This book has been very well researched. It is excellently presented and puts medieval visual ornamentation and book illumination 'on a plate', so to speak, for less creative amateurs to purloin. In this sense, it irritates me for I like to consider that lateral thinking, experimentation and creative originality as far more important.

Let me say that this is a most 'eyeable' publication. It is well set out and its visual material is a pleasure to look at even though some of the colour registers are a little indistinct. And if it inspires some people to push their ideas further then I welcome it quite sincerely as a useful addition to any reference section.

The author has tried quite successfully to get his information into an understandable and readable form. His sections on materials and methodologies are comprehensively dealt with in a workmanlike manner that will be useful to many.

John Lancaster

Craft, Design and Technology. Materials: Investigation and Choice. A database for pupil use.

David Barles, Simon Powell, Sheila Nelmes and Adrienne Jones
Thames Education £19.55

The instruction booklet correctly points out that there is not enough time to teach pupils all they need to know about materials before they have to make decisions on which to use. In this respect a database on materials has very obvious applications in schools.

The database can be used by individual children or small groups, probably in any secondary age group. It is fairly easy to get into and use, though a simple reminder card to put by the machine would have been a useful addition to the pack. Such a card, reminding the user of key commands, could easily be made up by teachers so enabling impatient children to get quickly at the information without reading the 14 page booklet!

After a few minutes experimentation the user can see the pattern of the database emerging clearly, however at this stage the limitations of the package become obvious. The first drawback is the rather limited amount of information held on disc in terms of details on each material listed. In some cases information is limited to very obvious statements such as being informed on looking up safety information, that wood is potentially flammable. Whilst it may be adequate for foundation level work one might expect more depth for subsequent project work with older children.

A second limitation is the very crude graphics possible with this system. Icons are used to help children spot properties, however they are so basic that they often confuse and distract.

On the more positive side the database allows printouts of information which

children can include in folders as evidence of research. We also find a fairly wide range of materials, far beyond the 'traditional' workshop trio of metal, wood and plastics. This is an important factor in encouraging a broad ranging attitude to materials in design. The range of properties covered for each material is good, though as indicated above sometimes the information contained on the disc within each 'property' is thin. Teachers can enter data in terms of local suppliers and materials costs, a useful facility. The usual search commands in a database (simple and complex) are available and are fairly easily used by children.

In conclusion we have a resource that has applications in schools, but do not expect too much from it. It is, nevertheless, a valuable learning tool in terms of children handling databases, encouraging familiarity, confidence and understanding. Within the limitations of the particular hardware it is designed for it is a useful resource, but it's main use is in demonstrating the potential power of more sophisticated equipment which is coming into schools.

David Barlex

Design in Context

Penny Sparke
Quarto £16.95

Design in Context bears a certain visual similarity to Penny Sparke's other 1987 offering in which she joined forces with Ms's Hodges, Stone and Dent Coad. This is not a criticism, only an observation — the style of presentation would seem to be 'fashionable'. As an offering dealing with design history I find this book to be potentially more useful to both the serious student and the enthusiastic amateur.

A positive attempt has been made, as the title states, to put artefacts into context from a social, commercial and technological standpoint, beginning in 1750. This mammoth task has to some extent been complicated by the multitude of examples which have been selected and presented as visual resource material, and, the lengthy period considered in the publication. Consequently only a comparatively brief indication of the influence of

design on the world has been possible within each of the three eras considered. Nevertheless a lively and honest combination of text and illustrations presents the interested party with a pleasurable introduction into the importance of designing and its role from the Industrial Revolution to the 1980's.

In Part 1 Ms Sparke suggests that during the period 1750 to 1914 'foundations were laid on which modern industrial design was subsequently built' and proceeds to take the reader through these years, sampling salient points and introducing notable contributions to the designed world. From the cast iron-work of Coalbrookdale, via Chippendale, Wedgewood, Boulton and Singer, the philosophies of industrialism and its influences upon people are discussed, laying a sound foundation for the period leading up to the Second World War (Part 2).

This second era, 1915 to 1939, begins by drawing upon the avant-garde approaches to design which were evident immediately after the First World War (1918); Russian, Dutch, French and German examples being cited. Then, moving through the major technological influences responsible for change in the design and manufacture of consumer products at this time, the design ideologies emanating from the Bauhaus, Cubism, Modernism and Constructivism, amongst others, are covered. Part 2 ends with a somewhat confusing look into style in the 1930s, quite reflective of the neurotic days when the world of industry and commerce tried to justify itself after a period of world depression. All in all the encouragingly unbiased appraisal of taste, tastelessness and the market-place combined with a sample explanation of the rapid, and often mis-directed, introduction of new methods and materials to the designed world is successful. A nostalgic experience for those of us who have memories of living with the resultant products even if, in some instances, these memories conjure up nothing more than designerly embarrassment.

The third and concluding section, 1940 to 1985, understandably addresses itself to the re-establishment of designer/industry roles for peace-time needs. It acknowledges the impressive

technological advances made due to war-time pressures and recognises the influences such progress has upon industrial designers. Concentrating principally upon developments in the western hemisphere, changes in taste and fashion as well as commercial, political, architectural and product influences are looked into, culminating in comment on *Post-Modernism* — 'a term for all those "messy" design manifestations which resist categorisation'. This period bears a remarkable resemblance to the 1930s if Ms Sparke's comments on depression and design are to be taken seriously. Is she indicating the need for another major upheaval or can we look forward to change of a more considered and constructive nature?

From a study/education position a more extensive bibliography with, perhaps, reference to further specific 'in-depth' material, would have enhanced the book as a design resource. Nevertheless, a relaxing read which encourages further enquiry whilst stimulating debate and discussion — it will help those interested to form a personal viewpoint without impressing a particular opinion. The visual impact and its related text will prove to be of interest in the design-related field throughout the full spectrum of secondary education, whereas the broader socio-economic and moral implications tackled will attract the more advanced student and the potential designer. Without a doubt 'a thinking person's publication and as such a useful addition to the design library of any educational establishment, not to mention the collection of those interested for purely leisure/pleasure.

John H. Carswell

Designwise 2
N. McLean
Jonquil £12.95

Designwise 2 is the second of the new Designwise series, the first having been reviewed in an earlier edition of *SIDECT*. *Designwise 2* is copyright, but teachers may use it as a photocopy when those copies are used within the school that purchased the original. It offers 25

briefs in a range of CDT areas. There are also some limited teachers notes to support each brief.

Designwise 2 is aimed at the foundation years and certainly offers the hard pressed teacher a useful range of topic areas that could be interpreted by the teacher with a variety of age ranges. In this respect it will be much appreciated.

Generally, as in the first *Designwise* the sheets are well illustrated in a manner which generates interest. In some drawings there are half developed ideas which could give lower ability children a start but which may blinker some children. Clearly, whilst these briefs are useful the teacher needs to be fully in control and cannot afford to issue them without comment.

Again, like the first edition the wire binding will mean a visually ragged left edge to each handout which runs contrary to the high standards we should present to children, however the rest of each brief is of a good, clear standard which photocopies well.

The language used is reasonable for the age range concerned, though perhaps there is a little too much of it! Nevertheless it is broken down into short paragraphs for easy digestion.

In conclusion, a useful addition to the hard pressed teachers armoury, used sensitively it will pay for itself quickly in terms of time saved in preparation of handouts.

H.G. Denton

Airbrushing the Human Form
Andy Charlesworth
Studio Vista £14.95

The airbrushed drawing can be a most powerful and convincing image. Graphic designers have long realised its potential and it is an indication of this potential that much airbrush work passes for photographic in the dizzy array of advertising images that surround us.

Andy Charlesworth's new book 'Airbrushing the Human Form' lets the reader into the process by which many convincing pictures are produced. Unlike other books on this technique, Charlesworth concentrates on one subject for the airbrush, namely the

human form, and he covers a variety of styles and topics from glamour to futuristic. The book is copiously illustrated throughout, examining the rendering of various anatomical features separately. A gallery section at the back extends the function of this book from a manual of technique to a showcase of professional work.

While the focus of the book clearly lies in the communication of the process of airbrushing — preparing the masks, applying the media etc., there is an attempt to establish the designer's dependency on the quality of the initial drawing. Although a whole chapter is allocated to drawing it can only briefly touch upon the process and it relies for the most part on tips and tricks such as copying from projected images or photographs. 'Airbrushing the Human Form' will appeal to those artists, designers and students who have already achieved a high degree of competence in drawing the human form. Those without such skill who are looking for a

guide to quick and convincing airbrush technique for drawing figures will struggle with the subtleties of the process.

S.W. Garner

Douglas Scott
Jonathan Glancey
Design Council £8.95

Douglas Scott, designer of the double-decker 'London' bus, the Routemaster, is the subject of the latest title in the Modern European Designers series published by the Design Council. The book is an appraisal of one of Britain's first professional industrial designers, and charts Scott's career from his initial training in silversmithing, through his work with Raymond Loewy who was to influence his stylistic development and, later, that of his own design practice, and his considerable contributions to furthering industrial design education

in Britain, especially at the Central School of Art, and more recently, in Mexico.

Scott's approach to industrial design has always been a practical one. His conviction that usefulness, durability and ease of maintenance are as important as style has resulted in products that have remained credible and durable for many years; the Routemaster is still in service almost thirty years after its introduction; the Roma washbasin for Ideal-Standard, in countless homes in Europe, is regarded as a design classic (it features in the Museum of Modern Art in New York); and many other, everyday Scott designs remain in popular use. The book contains detailed examples of key designs which demonstrate Scott's concern with bringing practical styling to a wide range of products, including a GPO clock and pay-phone, Prestige kitchen equipment, and TV camera equipment for Marconi.

K.J. McAuley

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