

Review Section

People and Furniture, Molly Harrison

London: Ernest Benn, £1.95

As a former curator of the Geffrye Museum, Molly Harrison kindled in many generations of London schoolchildren an affection for the homes of the past. In her present book she shares her expertise with a wider public and by word and picture relates the evolution of domestic furniture to the modes and manners of the people who use it.

Her treatment is chronological. In an early chapter she traces the development of basic articles: of the chair from the box, the bed from the bench, the table from the board and the chest of drawers from the simple coffer. With the passage of the years craftsmen were able to design for grace and comfort and many innovations were a response to new fashions in clothing (the comfortable chair, for example, appeared only when menfolk ceased to wear padded breeches). It is particularly the interpretation of changing styles and the illumination of family life from a great range of contemporary sources which gives the book a special flavour. Yet this is no starry-eyed view and from the voices of the past we can almost *feel* the chill of the rooms and *smell* the dirt and the vermin.

Through the centuries craftsmen responded to the mood of their times. In the twentieth century hand-made furniture was for the few, and harsh judgement is passed on the seamy world of commerce which gave the public 'what it liked', reproductions as tasteless as they were shoddy. Wartime utility furniture with its simplicity of style is seen as heralding a new era.

The authoress wears her learning lightly. She has written a book which is as entertaining as it is informative and which could well serve at the school level as a reference work on materials, processes, designs and uses. There is the occasional historical error. It was not Lady Asquith (p.129) who was the Prime Minister's daughter, and in her swift introduction (p.6), as Mrs. Harrison leaps from the coaching age to the age of automobiles, she omits to acknowledge the effect on changing fashions of that "great connector", the railway.

Minor flaws apart, she has given us a lively and polished work which will expand the horizons of both historians and craft specialists. Implicitly she raises a major problem which must concern all educators, the cultivation of public taste.

Majorie Cruickshank

Technical and Vocational Education: Six Area Studies: D. Porter

Strasbourg: Council of Europe, £1.00

This is a welcome publication making available comparative information in the field of curriculum, syllabus and teaching method for pupils aged 15 to 19. For the comparative educationist it is a model in the collection, analysis and presentation of data from a range of sources.

Britain's likely entry to the European Economic Community means the possibility of greater movement of educators throughout European countries; this publication offers a useful introduction to terminology and procedures to be found in Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, and the clear and well categorised information helps to suggest the possible effects of one system upon another as the countries of Europe draw closer together.

The author deals with each country in the same systematic way. Of interest to teachers of workshop based subjects is the 'standardised' diagrammatic breakdown of the emphases each country places on general and technical elements of the curriculum. A specific region of each country is outlined in detail and is followed by a series of case studies of particular schools; all this services to illustrate the working and implications of different courses. A further section skillfully isolates features of international interest.

Whilst each country receives individual treatment the book concludes with a section utilising information drawn from the previous sections. This is a significant part of the book since it identifies factors bearing on educational change. Amongst these are topics such as 'links with industry', 'specialisation', 'methods of instruction' and 'teachers'.

Overall it becomes clear that in the United Kingdom, pupils engaged upon design subjects have a far wider range of experiences than their counterparts in European countries, where activities are usually related to vocational crafts. In times when interdisciplinary approaches are being fostered it is gratifying, if somewhat difficult to appreciate, to learn that in England the task of crossing subject boundaries may be simpler than elsewhere!

A. R. Pemberton

The Technique of Kinetic Art, John Tovey

London: Batsford and Van Nostrand, £3.50

This is certainly a comprehensive book on the subject as developed so far, and a valuable one for the serious student of kinetic art.

The author has had experience in the field of Experimental Design in an art college and his book provides a sensible balance between the creative and scientific sides of this kind of work.

Starting with vision and perception, illusion and illusory movement, Mr. Tovey deals with the now familiar effects of moiré patterns and the use of this principle in the work of Agam, Bridget Riley and others.

Chapters follow on light and simple optics, the nature of colour and the projection of light through lenses and prisms, thence to simple mechanical systems for introducing and controlling movement in light and colour and finally the more complex field of electronics.

The last five chapters bristle with technical diagrams. Although Mr. Tovey is admirably lucid with his explanations, without some basic knowledge of both electrical practice and the graphic symbols which go with it students, particularly those who want to work on their own, may well be daunted by the effort needed to become at home in this field.

Inevitably the main source of movement and light effects in kinetic art will be through electricity. Handling high voltage equipment is dangerous and the question of safety is not touched upon. Amateurs and students working on their own would be well advised to seek expert advice and help in setting up and using electrical apparatus. One is bound to ask who, in art colleges and schools, will be responsible for training and safety in this area.

The recent move on the part of the Minister for Education and Science inviting Polytechnics to consider promoting their own version of Dip. A.D. may well encourage the inclusion of mathematics and electronics among the optional studies in such courses for the nature of the Polytechnics is to be interdisciplinary. One could then assume that proper training in this field would be given to art students.

This is a well produced book. The illustrations are informative and stimulating; there is a good bibliography, useful appendices, with suppliers of components in both this country and the U.S.A. listed.

A. W. Keefe

The Classical Guitar — design and construction, Donald McLeod and Robert Wetford

Leicester: Dryad, £2.50

The basis of all music is sound and the modern trend in schools — particularly the primary sector — to encourage pupils to create and harness sounds purposefully is fast gaining popularity as a valid aspect of their general education.

In 1965 Dryad published Ronald Roberts' book, "Musical Instruments made to be played". Clearly this book has proven itself to be an extremely valuable aid in encouraging pupils of all ages to make simple instruments and also to play them.

It is now appropriate that Dryad should publish this outstanding book — "The Classical Guitar". Guitars of many breeds are being made in schools in ever increasing numbers but there has been a definite need for an authoritative book offering guidance to the gifted pupil or evening class student.

Donald McLeod developed his interests in making and playing guitars a number of years ago and in collaboration with Robert Wetford has established a series of highly successful classes in guitar making at Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology. McLeod, who is an architect, has demonstrated his skill in communicating his ideas clearly through an outstandingly well presented series of illustrations; some aspects of the text, however, may be over descriptive for the skilled woodworker. Valuable attention has been given to describing the choice of material and also the importance of the necessary jigs and devices associated with the professionalism in instrument making.

The book is beautifully presented in its layout and should quickly establish itself as an important standard reference work in the field of guitar making — an occupation that is increasing in popularity as a leisure time pursuit.

F. Zanker

Introduction to the Visual Arts: Volume 2, Association of Secondary School Art Teachers, France.

London: Harrap, £2.50

At first glance the book appears to have quality, for the most part the illustrations are excellent and the pages are well presented. The colour photographs of natural objects and museum studies are particularly impressive. When, on closer scrutiny, the pages begin to reveal a catalogue like quality of diverse items with only minimum information. In fact one is dazzled with bits and pieces – techniques, history, materials and how-to-do-it. It is a book which is far too embracing to be of use to the professional art teacher though it may well be useful to the non specialist teacher who is stuck for an idea, or wants basic information on a technique.

Certain parts are hard to accept, particularly sections on how to draw. Objective drawing is a personal response to looking, so how can mechanical ways of drawing figures or animals solve anything? What happens if next time one wants to draw an object it has moved from the position shown in the book? Is one condemned to drawing a three quarter view of a stuffed wild boar for the rest of one's life?

J. P. Jenvey

Glass, Resin and Metal Construction, Peter Tysoe

London: Mills & Boon, £4.50

The technique of Wood Engraving, John O'Connor

London: Batsford, £2.50

Tysoe has produced a valuable book opening up a field of sculpture in glass and resin that is still relatively unexplored in schools and colleges. The recent development of new industrial resins has not only greatly extended the range of possible activity in this field but also has brought new opportunities for work of this nature to schools with even limited facilities. The author, an established and well known artist explores the field fully and is particularly helpful in his detailed account of technique, and the availability and use of equipment and materials. The particular hazards of work with glass and resin are made clear and appropriate and convincing safety procedures are outlined.

Perhaps the greatest feature of the book is the outstanding quality of the work illustrated, much of it inspirational in nature. In turn this quality is reinforced by the excellence of the production. This is not altogether surprising as it originates in W. S. Cowell's renowned printing works.

O'Connor's book achieves a similar excellence in almost a reverse way. Here the author is helping to initiate a renaissance of an earlier art form – print making by wood engraving. Again the writer's text is as clear and incisive as his illustrations and his account of basic procedures, materials and processes is impressive in its economy of style. The illustrations are again outstanding and the particularly neat way in which traditional and modern engravings are juxtaposed enhances the reader's appreciation of both old and new manifestations of this fascinating art form.

S. J. Eggleston

A Designer's Approach to Woodwork, D. W. Eglestaff

Oxford: Pergamon, £1.50

The strength of the book lies in the insistence with which the author reiterates the analytical aspects of design. In a series of 'design programmes' related to wooden artifacts, he forces the reader to consider the *purpose* of a bread board, chair, storage unit or similar functional item of furniture. There are some 500 'what, why and how?' questions of construction, shape and size as they relate to the purpose of the object.

One range of questions is well within the capacity of a pupil to answer from his everyday experience; 'Is there room enough for a finger grip?', 'Do you think an opening in the tray would be useful?', 'Will you be lying on the sledge or sitting on it?'. A second range of questions can be identified as requiring some background of technical knowledge on the part of the pupil; 'What length of dovetail will hold the end?', 'With these glued butt joints, will it be necessary to use pressure?', 'What advantage is there in having a shoulder?'. This reference to assumed knowledge of constructional woodworking techniques suggests that the title of the book should be reversed.

In a book which deals principally with considerations of utility and with questions of construction to achieve this end, it is a pity that the author has included two inadequate pages on the difficult topic of expressive woodworking, and later a brief to 'Design a piece of sculpture entitled 'Knowledge and Truth' for this alcove'. There is a difference between examining the visual and tactile qualities of wood in relation to a partially functional design problem and an essentially expressive problem.

There is a useful section of the book which poses a series of 'Problems in design'. The reader is given a brief to design a bookcase, lamp or stool for a given situation. Whilst there are excellent cross references back to the earlier planning section it is at this point in the book that one begins to feel that the reality of the classroom is receding. There is a need for some *solutions* to be shown to the problems posed. A few typical schoolchild solutions would do much to give the book a less academic tone.

The feeling that one is getting away from the classroom increases as one turns to the final section which consists of photographic examples of room settings. The author is making the important point that design of artifacts should include consideration of setting, but the examples shown are too sophisticated, too complex, and couched in a vocabulary which is hardly directed at the child. This is a big jump from the strength of the book; consideration of function, and construction in relation to function.

But the fact that the author has overreached himself in an attempt to convey the complexity of the design process does not mean that it should not find a place on the school craft room bookshelf. Every writer on design has this problem of compromise between telling the whole story and the selection of one point to stress. The insistence upon bombarding the reader with questions, both verbal and visual, cannot be quarrelled with, either by designer or teacher. For this reason alone, the book merits serious consideration as an aid to the serious teacher of design.

A. R. Marshall

Painting in Manua, Padua, Siena and Urbino, F. Williams

Oxford: Pergamon, £1.50 (cloth), £0.90 (paper)

This is a slim volume of 60 pages, which includes 23 illustrations in black and white — two of which use red and blue lines for structural analysis — and in addition, there are five colour plates. It is the first volume of a new series which will later deal with more familiar schools.

One way to assess this work would be to make two comparisons. On grounds of subject matter, the obvious comparison would be Berenson's classic, *"The Italian Painters of the Renaissance"*, now nearly 70 years old. It shares a difficulty that was inherent in this famous work, namely the division into regional groups. Such classification always have untidy edges. Donatello, for instance, discussed here under Padua will presumably re-appear under Florence, and the Bellini family, two of whose members also come under Padua, will doubtless be finally united in Venice. It is important to stress, however, that this book is not just potted Berenson. Mr. Williams would not claim to be undertaking a critical appreciation of that kind. Instead, he gives essential background information about the regions themselves, offers concise details on the lives of individual artists, and comparative analysis of certain pictures.

On grounds of price, another comparison comes to mind. Having doubts about getting one's money's worth, one wonders whether a student might not do better to buy the *Penguin Dictionary of Art & Artists* by Peter and Linda Murray — a current bargain at 30p — and then add to it an expanding collection of clippings and museum postcards. Such a suggestion gains edge when one finds that 20 of the 28 illustrations relate to pictures from the National Gallery, and only 5 are not viewable in England. Against this, however, are at least three considerations. If you check item for item, you find that some of Williams' accounts are fuller. (See the account of Beccafumi, for instance, under Padua). Also, they are spiced with more illuminating information. (See his quick comments — to cite an example at random — on Alvise Vivarini's break away from the Polyptych form). One of his best studies — that on Alberti, with 3 illustrations — was not covered by the Murrays at all. Secondly, there is a decided gain in convenience in having information on these men together in one place, and the oblong format makes for easy handling. Thirdly, there is the additional gain, referred to above, not only of the geographic and historical background material, but also of his comparative studies. These include a general comparison between Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini, as well as more detailed comparisons between Duccio's *The Virgin & Child with Saints* and Bellini's *The Madonna of the Meadow*; Pisanello's *St. George* and Crivelli's *St. Michael*; Piero Della Francesca's *The Baptism* and Guilio Romano's *"The Infancy of Jupiter"*. These are usefully illustrated, include analytical drawings, and give a genuine insight into artists at work.

On balance, this offers a crisp and sensible introduction of real use to a student of the history of art, even if of more limited value to the general reader.

D. W. Bolam

The History and Philosophy of Art Education, Stuart Macdonald

London: University of London Press, £4.20

This book, in the words immortalised by Dickie Murdoch “fills a long felt want” Or, to be more precise, attempts to fill it. There is a very surprising paucity of books dealing with the history of Art Education and this is confirmed by the bibliographies which accompany Macdonald’s chapters.

For those of us involved in Art Education this book opens up many subjects and ideas that are tempting to explore. But Macdonald has set himself an impossible task; finding himself treading virgin (or technically virgin) territory, he has “floated like a butterfly” but not “stung like a bee”.

His subject is vast, it could have been titled “The History and Philosophy of Art Education in the World since mediaeval times”. Consequently as I read through, no sooner did a place or period involve me than I was moved on. The result is essentially scrappy and unsatisfying. Conclusions have been drawn which are to put it mildly, dubious. Nevertheless I hope Macdonald and others will research thoroughly the many fascinating points raised by this introduction.

R. Plummer

Puppet Circus, P. Fraser

London: Batsford, £1.50

This is another beautifully presented book from Batsford’s and shows, yet again, how they have established their reputation for publications in the field of Art and the Crafts.

Starting with simple toys which are easily made and manipulated, Mr. Fraser leads us through to appreciating and understanding the more complex construction of many-stringed marionettes. There are also useful notes on different types of stages.

Anyone who has handled the simplest puppet, with only a few moving parts, will have experienced the fascination and pleasure this can give. The book does not pretend to engage the reader in the art of story telling, nor the skills and mysteries of expressing ideas and themes, but is a straight-forward exposition of the many different ways in which moving joints can be made and figures and animals strung.

Mr. Fraser’s drawings are easy to read and clearly show how a complicated movement can be engineered, and where the strings should be attached.

The manipulation of marionettes is an act which requires patient practice and the drawings can only give us clues as to how this is done. However, with the information we are given about how to do it, we should be inspired to have a go and find out, in a three-dimensional way, the acrobatic feats our own puppets can perform.

A useful addition would have been photographs of puppets made by children, showing the variety and interest that can be found in less professionally finished pieces and a puppet ‘at work’. Also, some information about storing puppets would have been useful.

Altogether this is an informative and well put together book, which would make a very good addition to school, art, craft and handicraft areas, colleges of education, and would not be amiss in many homes during long school holidays.

K. J. A. Gentle

Plywood, Rolf Hartung

London: Batsford, £1.50

It is only in comparatively recent years that plywood has been recognised as a structural and decorative material in a full sense rather than as an adjunct to more traditional materials. This short but imaginative book indicates a range of design and constructive activity undertaken almost solely in plywood that is likely to extend the ideas and capture the imagination of teachers. There are examples of free sawing, mobiles, kinetic models that include an exciting range of project possibilities. In a final section the technique of layered work using plywood sheets and veneers is illustrated. Though in some ways the book is a series of examples of finished work it manages in its limited size to go much beyond this in stimulating a wide range of further ideas.

S. J. Eggleston

'Secondary Certificate Questions' series

Metric Woodwork Design, A. W. Lewis

Metric Technical Drawing Without Instruments, A. W. Lewis

Metric Technical Drawing, A. W. Lewis

Metric Engineering Drawing, A. W. Lewis

Metric Assembly Drawing, A. W. Lewis

Woodwork Craft Knowledge — Metric Edition, A. W. Lewis and S. H. Lewis

London: Methuen, £0.35, £0.28, £0.44, £0.44, £0.44, £0.30, respectively.

Despite some apparent slackening in the official move towards metrication, the operation continues apace in the field of education. These books are a part of the cascade now descending upon the schools, much of which is of indifferent quality and of doubtful educational value.

For the crammers and those who prefer to occupy rather than educate their pupils, here is a veritable treasure chest of printed resources.

In our industrial society, technical drawing is a vital supplement to verbal communication, and every citizen, needs some degree of familiarity with its conventions. It is disturbing to find therefore a series of books such as this perpetuating a completely unnecessary and anachronistic dual system which is peculiar to the U.K.

Adequate mastery of the techniques of graphic projection is beyond the capacity of many, if not most, adolescents. Is it not incredible then that we should attempt to further confuse them by using two systems serving identical purposes, one of which moreover, is totally illogical? Those unfamiliar with first angle (or any system of) projection would scarcely expect to find the top view of an object at the bottom of the drawing, or the left

hand view on the right hand side. The elaborate apparatus often used to explain this paradox to children has to be seen to be believed.

Perhaps the greatest absurdity however is that the rest of the world is content to confine itself to a single logical system. The universal third angle projection is, of course, one component of our dual system, but with characteristic British masochism we include the illogical first angle as well. Tradition apart, the reason for this inclusion is difficult to discern unless it is to provide for the mental gymnastics so beloved by examiners.

To the committed, the conscientious, or the enthusiastic teacher, the subject of many of the drawing questions might be almost an embarrassment. Less imaginative or less inspiring objects would be difficult to find, for they make no attempt to harness the wide-spread interest among adolescent boys in automotive, aeronautic, electronic and space technology. It is bad enough that so much drafting activity in schools is the mere derivation of one drawing from another, as if three-dimensional objects existed only in the mind's eye, but to base such worthless activity upon the apparent discoveries of the industrial archaeologist is inexcusable and indefensible.

Perhaps the most regrettable aspect of this is that these books inevitably reflect contemporary thinking and practice in the subject. If this is in fact so, it would appear that this area of the curriculum is in as great a need of change as any other. We should perhaps be grateful that design education at least sets out to achieve in a meaningful way the instrumental objectives of the graphic language.

In this respect, *Metric Woodwork Design* may have some merit, although the design questions seem singularly adult-oriented, and scarcely calculated to motivate the adolescent boy. *Metric Technical Drawing Without Instruments* may appeal to him as being less exacting than mechanical drawing, but again inspiration is sorely lacking.

The contents of *Metric Technical Drawing* and *Metric Engineering Drawing* are likely to give practice for the most searching examination syllabus, and the pupil who has the endurance to work through them will surely be able to perform any graphical trick demanded of him.

Metric Assembly Drawing offers splendid opportunities for mentally assembling such fascinating artefacts as a three piece wooden bracket or a five piece sliding bevel. The sixteen-year-old who spends his spare time stripping and rebuilding an ancient Lambretta with the aid of a dog-eared and oily workshop manual will doubtless be thrilled at the prospect.

The metric edition of *Woodwork Craft Knowledge* seems to record every question an examiner might ask in the sphere of school woodwork. What possible value there can be in knowing the size and shape of coping saw teeth (p. 43) escapes me, since they are commercially determined, incredibly cheap to replace and almost impossible to reshape or sharpen. The two-page bibliography at the end of this little volume contains all the familiar titles but unfortunately omits the all-important publication dates. One cannot however deny its comprehensiveness for it even includes the title of the book in which it is published.

Thus whilst the unseen examination paper may remain one of the more depressing aspects of pupil evaluation, the constraints imposed upon its techniques are scarcely such

as to commend themselves as a method of education. Working through old examination papers however has been a common practice in many school drawing offices and workshops. One can only hope this is now giving way to worthier educational activity calculated to serve our adolescents in this century and the next. If not, the commercial success of this revamped series is assured.

L. T. Deem

Bobbin Lace Making, Doreen Wright

London: G. Bell, £2.40

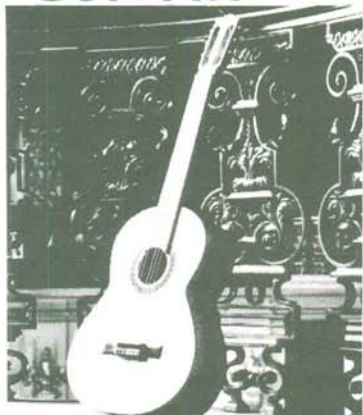
The revival of interest in lace-making in recent years has revealed the need for a practical modern book on the subject. Mrs. Wright is one of the few teachers of this old craft in Britain and is fully qualified by long experience to write on this subject.

Every effort has been made to ensure that this book is a self-teaching aid and adequate for anyone working alone, and the author has been most successful in achieving this. It begins with the basic elements and goes on to give instructions in making a wide range of laces. It is very fully illustrated with diagrams (including prickings) and some excellent photographs. The book contains a brief history of lace, instructions for many different patterns including Torchon, Maltese, Honiton and Brussels. There are also general notes on use, mounting, etc. Appendices include making pillows and on pricking as well as lists of books and suppliers.

This book would be valuable for any adult who wishes to teach themselves lace-making.

Violet M. Endacott

THE CLASSICAL GUITAR



DONALD McLEOD, MA, ARIBA
and ROBERT WELFORD

Donald McLeod, an architect with an enthusiasm for making and playing guitars, and Robert Welford, a craftsman, prove an ideal combination in writing this beautifully produced new book on the design and construction of a classical guitar. The methods carefully described are refined to produce instruments of outstanding quality. Here is a book which should be a worthwhile addition to any craft library.

112 pages, Case-bound, Superbly illustrated, **Net £2.50**
Postage 14p

JUST PUBLISHED

DESIGN AND CRAFT IN EDUCATION

FRANCIS O. ZANKER, NDD DLC

96 pages, Case-bound, Well illustrated, **Net £2.50**

Comprehensive craft booklist available.

DRYAD • Northgates • Leicester