

Crafts and Craftsmen

Christopher Chappell

London: Edward Arnold. 78p

There are twenty crafts covered in this 46-page booklet in the series 'Topics in Medieval History'. Some relate to the simple necessities of existence, food, shelter and clothes; others to aspects of highly organised community life, trade, religion and warfare. The pattern of presentation is uniform, namely a double page of pictures, diagrams and text on each craft together with suggested follow-up activities for children.

At a glance the format suggests the primary school age-group. In fact, the range and accuracy of information make it suitable for use with middle school and even secondary school pupils up to C.S.E. level. Reproductions of contemporary pictures give the flavour of the period. In particular, the diagrams and line drawings are refreshingly clear. They reveal exactly how, for example, the water wheel or the loom worked or how a cruck house was constructed. There are striking modern comparisons and references to the derivation of terms like 'starboard' and 'spinster'. Overall the impression is of strenuous physical effort, of the sheer amount of manpower required in the pre-industrial age.

Inaccuracies are relatively rare, but some children will have visited Lullingstone and will be able to challenge the statement that "silkworms cannot live as far North as England". Teachers will have no difficulty in sifting the suggestions for children's work. Some of the model making would seem to be of doubtful value. On the other hand, there are stimulating questions which compel children to throw the shuttle backwards and forwards across the web of time. Given the opportunity, the best form of follow-up would be to see examples of early technology either by means of field work or by a visit to one of the splendid folk museums.

Overall the booklet is highly professional. It is scholarly and attractive in presentation and can be recommended as excellent value for money to teachers of history or regional studies. It is a pity that the publishers give no information of other titles in the series.

Marjorie Cruickshank

Learning and Teaching through Art and Crafts

Alan Cotton and Frank Haddon

London: Batsford Books. £1.90

The scope of this small book is very wide, yet the authors have succeeded in producing a stimulating, readable and helpful book. They manage, skilfully, to steer a course between prescriptive tips and abstract philosophy, due largely, I suspect, to their genuine interest in the development of children and their understanding of the significant part which a sensitive Art teacher can play in this.

The aim of the book is stated as

"We are attempting to provide a rationale for Art teaching and to offer principles upon which a teacher can design an appropriate programme of activities".

Arising from this aim, the small vignettes which lead us into the substance of the book could be misleading and ambiguous, perhaps appearing too easy or dismissive in their statements. But the real dilemma of teaching Art is soon declared.

". . . teaching can become purposeful, directional and sequential without the loss of spontaneity and responsiveness".

Is it assumed that the teacher is the only one who can have such feelings about any creative work that a child does? Or can the work of a child over a span of time, exhibit more relevant to him because the motivation is from a more personal and imaginative source?

The authors not only recognise and discuss this dilemma but go a long way in suggesting how its solution should be approached, for as they say,

"... visual Arts and other Art forms, offer a very special opportunity to assert our individuality".

The paragraph on "Freedom" gives a clearer idea of the way they see the difficult balance, of which the teacher has to be aware, if the experience of the children is to be neither purposeless nor over directed.

All this promotes thought about the way in which anyone should approach the using of ideas and information in the book, and this should be applauded. In no sense does this opening section put one off, but rather tunes one in to read and digest the interesting and helpful ideas proposed in the main body of the book. This includes sections on Drawing and Painting, Photography, Colour, Collage, Print making and Three Dimensional materials, including Construction and Modelling.

These chapters are set out with an introduction to the material, its range and qualities, possibilities and difficulties, and there is comment on the value to a child of working with these materials.

For example, in discussing Constructional materials,

"The nature of formal materials (normally squared up as blocks or planks of strips of metal) offers opportunities for children to explore functional rather than image-making problems".

Such comments are complemented by suggestions as to how the teacher might help the child. The balance seems to me to be good, as the answer to how the teacher operates cannot be simply an instructional or technical one in the context in which the authors describe it.

The chapter on Backward Children gives another insight into the sympathetic yet purposeful approach the authors hope to promote through their book. Altogether this

is helpfully and thoughtfully written, with some excellent photographs of children handling materials of all kinds.

I would recommend this book as worthwhile reading for students and teachers, and indeed anyone else who is really interested and cares about the creative experience of children and tries to find the best way to help them.

Keith Gentle

The New Handicraft/Processes and Projects

Lester and Kathleen Griswold

New York: Van Nostrand

This book (of over 460 pages with 430 figures and photographs) which has just become available for review in the U.K. is the 1972 reprint of the 10th (1969) edition of a work which first appeared in 1925. The bibliography has references going back no later than 1967. It is a work meriting an unusual classification. Some books are 'for instructors only' and others are the equivalent of 'pupil texts', but this book is one that should not fall into the hands of instructors. There is no harm in a young craftsman taking it off the reference shelves to find out the proportions of a cutting tool he may wish to make, but a student teacher allowed to come into contact with it may be corrupted by this work which is flawed by too much information on surface decoration in outdated styles, by too strong an emphasis on 'decoration' as a word which is regarded as being almost synonymous with 'design'. Whilst the dust is far from settled on the controversy as to what 'design' is, one feels that this work savours too much of the handicraft ethos of which the British equivalent would be the making of a gramophone record rack by fretwork.

But first let us deal with the good points: topics forming the substantial chapters include basketry; bookbinding;

ceramics; decoration of fabrics, paper and wood; lapidary; 'leather craftwork'; plaiting; plastics (yes!); weaving and woodwork. Photographs and drawings on how a tool is to be held and the relation of the 'business end' with the material are very clear. The section on chip-carving (pp. 412-413) is a good example of this.

If one views the book as a work that is looked up for a topic one is not an expert in then, again, there are some good points. The seventeen drawings on carding wool on pp. 370-372 are really helpful and practical and far more helpful than even the fine photographs in Allen Fannin's excellent *Hand-spinning* (1970). On the use of the spindle the diagrams are useful but a 'self teacher' might not learn from them how to hitch the yarn on the notch at the top of the spindle. But Dryad Leaflet 83, *Spinning Wool*, does explain this with a simple diagram. Damnably, one needs all three publications if one is a beginner.

A good idea is a set of instructions on how to convert nails into tools for stamping leather. This is probably better for turning us into craftsmen than teaching us the use of a bow or pump drill as was used by Red Indians — with a sophisticated steel chuck at the base end.

So apart from such gibberingly irritating misinformation as 'The craft of book-binding began about three centuries ago, during the period of the Guilds in England', or such naiveness as 'Arrowheads today are part of the sport of archery. Occasionally a sportsman hunter emulates the Indian in his big game search', we have a reference work which will be pirated by instructors for its many useful step-by-step illustrations on techniques. This can be seen on pp. 71-72 where the principles of positive and negative pieces in casting moulds for casting with clay slip are clearly shown.

Francis Celoria

Design Projects in Technical Drawing: A Course for Examination Candidates

B.G. Cuthbert and M.R. Pattenden

London: Macmillan. 80p

This book is intended for use in the final two years of a course in Technical Drawing. It can be used for the non-examination groups or as a C.S.E. Mode Three examination course. It takes a new and refreshing look at Technical Drawing which has tended, despite its clear links with other subjects, to be taught in isolation.

The work is presented in a series of thirty worthwhile projects which have a strong practical bias, and an integrated approach involving wood, metal, art, crafts, mathematics and science. Each project has been well thought out requiring the application of the basic geometrical and engineering drawing techniques for their solution, but also have a strong design bias encouraging the need to look at a design problem, experiment, develop ideas and to prove. The projects include: the construction of a model windmill in card, involving the development of geometrical solids; a study of the bicycle; and a look at the construction of an electric motor and steam engine suitable for making in the school workshop.

The book also contains, for reference, a number of geometrical constructions which can be used to solve the practical problems involved in the projects.

With the present design approach to the teaching of Technical Subjects this book will prove to be a valuable resource and reference to the teacher.

G. Roberts

G.A. Hicks, G.M. Heddle and P.A. Bridge.

London: Pergamon, £1.90

Most books which deal with technology and metal are of a technical nature and can generally be identified with some aspect of engineering or metalwork in a fairly rigid sense: only too often they are presented in a dull manner and are uninspiring so far as schools are concerned.

Design and Technology — Metal reaches far beyond this and in its general presentation and quality gives teachers an insight into the broader parameters of metal, its nature and application to design factions.

The combined efforts and contributions of the three authors has payed off. An excellent coverage is given to the subject in simple but effective language, illustrations are of a clear quality and relevant to the text.

The book clearly capitalizes on the vast area of experience of the authors and because of this there is a good balance between the elements that compose the title.

Such a book is extremely welcome from the standpoint of both experienced and newcomers to the profession, and as part of a series of three books, the other two dealing with Wood and Plastics, a very useful source of information is now available.

The general content of the book deals with the outcrop of both technological and practical problems which the metalworker often faces, but some of these problems are treated as valid elements of teaching opportunity instead of techniques which have to be taught. Most of the content is put into the context of a related design situation. An appendix of no less than 83 design problems should leave the reader in no doubt at all of the opportunities available to the imaginative teacher.

This book and its companion volume cannot fail to inspire all but the very least sensitive reader.

F.O. Zanker

Woodwork

J. Maynard and D. Jones

London: Hulton £1.75

This is a useful book that describes, with the aid of clear line drawings, all the wood constructions likely to be encountered in school workshops. When dealing with more advanced work proved methods of tackling jobs are described. These are most valuable when even many teachers have insufficient opportunity to acquire all the traditional expertise of the cabinet maker.

The authors very rightly point out that with pupils undertaking a greater variety of work they need to be more self reliant. This book enables them to look up methods which used to be demonstrated by the teacher, often to the whole class, when only one pupil needed the information. Individual help will still be required but certainly reference to the book will help understanding.

I, personally, would not subscribe to the idea that all work should consist of 'problems' that can be 'solved'. This seems to suggest too simple a view of designing which more often has to suggest some reasonable way of coping with a situation which can only be modified. But this book goes a very long way beyond the acquisition of skills in order to produce an article predetermined by authority.

It is a pity the section on sculpture was included as this is quite the least satisfactory part of the book and not in the same class as the constructional work in which the authors clearly are masters.

B.J. Aylward

Design Concept Series

Gerald F. Brammer

London: Ward Lock Ltd. £3.75

The Design Concept Series attempts to present a wide range of visual material as a source of reference for art and design studies. The books are generously illustrated with photographs taken from the environment — both natural and man-made. However, a more extensive use of colour would no doubt have added greater visual impact and made the illustrations considerably more effective. At the same time it is disappointing that the authors have neglected the use of microscopy as a vital source of visual stimuli.

On the whole the texts are brief and to the point and related directly to the adjacent photographs. At times, however, the commentary becomes exclusively subjective when a good deal more could have been said to explain why things are as they are. The series aims throughout at revealing the aesthetics of visual phenomena but barely touches on the relationship between form and function and for this reason the books may be of more interest to art teachers than to teachers of applied art, design, or craft.

It is difficult to determine precisely what role this series intends to fulfil. Although these books could possibly provide a useful addition to the shelves of a school or art department's library, it is doubtful how they might be used effectively within the class situation, since such visual material as this is certainly more convenient in the form of slides or filmstrips.

Ian Toon

Introducing Finger Painting

Guy Scott

London: Batsford. £1.75

This lively and informative little book is concerned with matters which go far beyond the scope of its modest title.

It deals with Pre-School, Primary and

Secondary aspects of the technique and goes on to its use as a mature creative medium. There is also a fascinating introduction which sets finger-painting within its historical and fine art context.

The book is full of "ideas" for creative work with children of all ages and the abundant illustrations are without exception excellent. The photographs of children engaged with the technique are a pleasure in themselves, independent of their illustrative value.

The use of finger paint as part of a print-process is of particular and novel interest and the examples shown should stimulate rewarding exploration.

This is not another piece of "book-making". It does seem to have at its source a real excitement and a real sense of discovery and these qualities come off the page at the reader.

Mr. Scott is to be congratulated on a valuable addition to the "Art" bookshelf.

Edward Phelps

Craft Education: Woodwork Design

T. Pettit

London: Edward Arnold £2.50

The ideas expressed in the preface are sound and the author must be an able and inspiring teacher. It is disappointing, therefore, that the book does not, completely, support his ideas and quality.

This is partly because of the layout which is hardly systematic: it jumps from wood as a material to power tools; to an exposition with examples of working out A.E.B. design questions; before starting on suggestions for early work.

It is worth being patient enough to delve into the book because it does contain matter helpful to the teacher wishing to develop design methods. The series of ques-

tion sheets, to be used at the beginning of a course, represent an attempt to 'put the child in a learning situation'. This is a phrase that is much abused by teachers who expect all children to be naturally 'creative' if simply left to struggle on their own. This is just not so but how to structure a situation that encourages children to develop their own potential is not so easy.

If Mr. Pettit's suggestions are not entirely acceptable to a purist at least he has had the courage to put his ideas on paper and so invite criticism. It is to be hoped that other progressive teachers will do the same so that ideas can be exchanged and refined. Only in this way will the difficulty of putting sound ideas on design education into successful practice be overcome.

B.J. Aylward

Lettering

John Cataldo

New York: Davis Publications Inc, London: Ward Lock Ltd. £4.25

We live in a world of symbols ranging from a kind of visual shorthand with road signs which help to keep us alive to a most sophisticated and complex collection of shapes which when put together allow us to communicate at many levels. John Cataldo has been able to break away from the pure function of the letter form and show us how it can, in its own right, be considered as a basic symbol to be used as a foundation for design. He takes forms with which we are all familiar and shows how they can be used creatively, almost in a 'picture-making' way.

He reminds us throughout the book that the letter forms we accept do have some degree of formality and historic development but then proceeds to show us how they can be used in a contemporary and much more informal way. He certainly does not labour the points of history or technique

of producing the form but explains how the media we use alters the character of the letter. He persuades the student to find his own way whilst remembering his starting off point.

Each suggested exercise combines historical background technique using the appropriate drawing or painting instruments and finally a creative application. It is this last step which lifts Mr. Cataldo's book out of the usual lettering 'how to do it' category.

The book combines admirably the balance needed between the functions of letters as a form of communication and letters as units for design. Very well illustrated throughout. Perhaps a small criticism being that some of the pages tend to be too full, but that in itself is a welcome change from the usual uninspired visual 'padding' we have grown used to seeing in books on the creative arts and crafts.

Generally a book well worth looking at which could well inspire much creative work.

Keith Riseam

The Complete Book of Woodwork

Charles Hayward

London: Evans Brothers Ltd. £3.95

One's impression on first handling the book, which is Mr. Hayward's new edition and includes both metric and imperial measurements, is that he has achieved the impossible by being able to produce a 'complete' book of woodwork in 188 pages. What he has attempted to do and very successfully, is to provide the beginner or the 'do it yourself' enthusiast with the knowledge and technique that might be required for producing a reasonable job of work. With this in mind, no doubt, he has limited his information to basics only, which, to many an enthusiast who 'wants to get on with the job' will be welcomed. Throughout the book his draw-

ings and photographs are clear and informative and he deals with many aspects of woodworking that confront the home woodworker of today.

He begins by suggesting a 'Fundamental Kit of Tools' which should be of great use to the beginner as should reference to some of the more sophisticated tools for special purposes.

This is ably supported by a chapter on *How To Maintain And Use Tools* with a number of clear descriptions on tips for the beginner such as using a bradawl in the kerf to prevent the wood binding on the saw. This practical approach to problems is distinctive of the book as a whole and there are many woodworking hints that the reader should find useful.

The chapter on *Light Machines For Woodwork* should be particularly enlightening to the home enthusiast who has this type of machinery but lacks that bit of professional knowledge to make the most of his machine.

Other chapters all have the same efficient, practical explanations and advice and deal with many aspects such as sliding doors, veneering, carving, etc.

Timber and materials is dealt with in three pages which hardly does justice to the subject and the author suggests that the best plan would be to consult a text book or timber merchant which makes one wonder why he attempted to write on such a vast topic at all. He also refers to laminboard and battenboard which, to the present day enthusiast, is rather irrelevant because supplies are difficult to obtain. He also refers to chipboard on which he rightly recommends lipping on all edges; however he omits to mention that it may be poor material for holding screws — and this may be of more importance to the modern woodworker.

The author's chapter on *Wood Finishing* is, again, a masterful example of giving information in a concise manner. The 'Furniture Finishes' again describes briefly the

advantages and disadvantages of certain finishes but for example, omits the use of cellulose sanding sealer, and the advantages and disadvantages of using a polyurethane varnish, which are probably convenient and popular finishes available to home woodworkers.

I do wonder about the necessity for the inclusion of some of the articles under the heading of *Design*. Some of the suggested designs will clearly open up debate on aesthetics. One also wonders about the justification for the inclusion of a 'Commodious Sideboard' in a book which is basically for beginners.

On the whole I would recommend this book for any home woodworking enthusiast, for in it he should find much information that might help him solve woodworking problems. He should find it very useful as a reference book and, indeed, he should be delighted to receive a copy as a birthday present; perhaps from a wife who is herself delighted at her husband's new found capabilities.

I.D. Jones

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with a major restoration only every 80 — 100 years.

Bibliography: Hopkins & Rimboult (*The Organ, its History and Construction*), first published in 1855) is still the best account of English organ design at its peak; a reprint is now available of the third (and best) edition of 1877. A modern text based on Hopkins & Rimboult is: W.L. Sumner — *The Organ* — Fourth edition, 1973, published by Macdonald. Other good technical books are: Norman — *The Organ Today* — Barrie & Rockliff, 1966, and (more advanced) P.G. Andersen — *Organ Building and Design* — George Allen & Unwin, 1966. The *Trade Journal* is *Musical Opinion*, published monthly.