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TITLE

FACTORS AFFECTING DESIGN IDEAL⁹OGY IN BRITAIN

Contents

SECTION ONE

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Introduction | 1(i) - 1(ii) |
| 2. Pugin, Cole and early Industrial designers | 2(i) - 2(vii) |
| 3. The Arts and Craft Movement | 3(i) - 3(ii) |
| 4. Dual design development | 4(i) - 4(ii) |
| 5. Conclusion | 5(i) - 5(ii) |

SECTION TWO

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 6. 1900 - 1914 | 6(i) - 6(i) |
| 7. The Design and Industries Association | 7(i) - 7(vii) |
| 8. Conclusion | 8(i) |
| 9. Chermayeff, modernism and the DIA | 9(i) - 9(iii) |
| 10. Gorrell and pre-war design ethics | 10(i) - 10(v) |
| 11. Conclusion | 11(i) - |

SECTION THREE

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 12. World War Two | 12(i) - 12(v) |
| 13. The Council of Industrial Design | 13(i) - 13(vii) |
| 14. The South Bank Exhibition of 1951 | 14(i) - 14(ii) |
| 15. Raymond Loewy and the Festival of Britain | 15(i) - 15(v) |
| 16. The Cold 1951 to 1960 | 16(i) - 16(v) |

SECTION FOUR

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| 17. The Challenge of Pop | 17(i) - 17(iv) |
| 18. Conclusion | 18(i) - 18(iv) |

SECTION 1

1. Introduction

1(i) In life there are two types of comment.

a) Retrospective comment: This type of comment is made after an incidence has occurred and its consequences partially or fully lived out.

b) Ground comment: This type of comment is made about an incidence at the time it is happening.

Both types of comment are flawed. Both are biased in some way. Ground comment is biased because a commentator will only tell his version of what happened. No "version" can be entirely honest. Retrospective comment is biased because it neglects some incidences while giving greater importance to others. It chooses its own history; how else could a history be made fit into a book? If the truth is sought, neither type of comment can be fully relied upon; therefore the truth is forever elusive, being lost the moment it becomes past. To delve into history is to delve into a number of untruths joined chronologically pretending to be fact. For this reason historical reports should be annotated as hypothesis, or qualified "but was it". To understand a historical report enough to theorise and question its preceding incidents must be studied. In relation to industrial design this burden is somewhat eased by the virtue of its nature. Industrial design is a subject of the machine age. Gordon Russell almost by way of an apology explains the essential newness of industrial design;

"We are apt to forget how profoundly production by machine has affected the designing of goods and how relatively little experience we have of it as yet. After all, mankind has had many thousands of years to experiment in making things by hand and less than two hundred years to solve the vastly more complex problems of machine production."¹

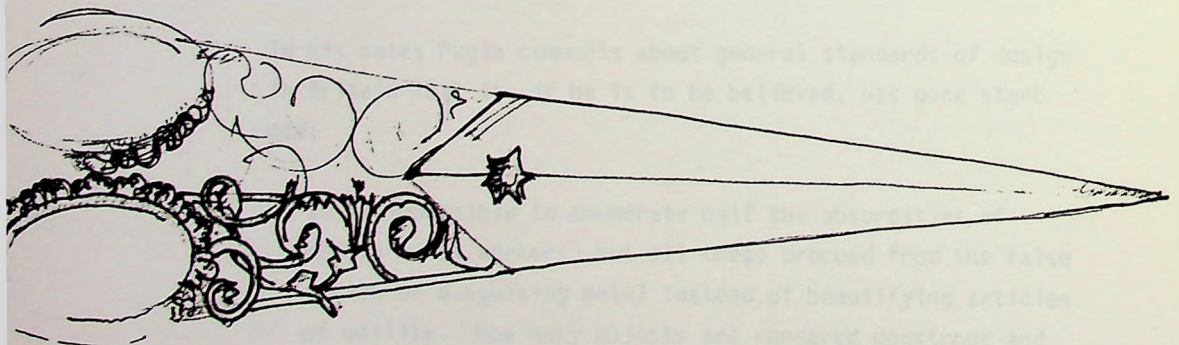
1. Russel Gordon: Design in the festival. (1(i))

- 1(ii) The "vastly more complex problems" were explored among others by A.W.N Pugin, who incidentally died mad at the young age of forty.

Pugin, Cole and early industrial designers

- 2(i) At the age of seventeen William Morris was reportedly shocked at the vivid commercialism of the Great Exhibition of 1851.² "Ten out of ten", to William; the exhibition was to be the greatest trade show of all times. Perhaps because of the "hype" the show received manufacturers made special products to exhibit their skills in manufacturing technique. Products in the show were consequently over decorated. Decoration of products, however, was in 1851 a relative norm. The exhibition of that year exhibited some of the most overworked examples. Many manufacturers applied ornament without proper regard of taste or function. Styles were borrowed from Rome and Greece and from ancient times. The gothic style was particularly popular. Pugin alone amongst gothic revivalists could give vitality to the opulent decoration of a style long dead.³ Artistic ornateness and

Illustration one. Scissors: London 1851



2. Watkinson Kay; William Morris as a designer (2(i))
3. Gloag John; Victorian taste (2(i))

the styles of the past were proclaimed suitable for the aristocracy and ruling classes. Why this expensive frame of mind existed is knowledge lost in time. Pugin (who was exceptional) had a perverse set of religious values that led him to believe in the Gothic style. Pugin claimed that he was an interpreter of the medieval style not a copyist. He notes of his contemporaries' work;

"All the ordinary articles of furniture which require to be simple and convenient are made not only very expensive, but very ordinary. We find diminutive flying buttresses about an armchair; everything is crocketed with angular projections, innumerable mitres, sharp ornaments and turretted extremities. A man who remains any length of time in a modern Gothic room and escapes without being wounded by some of its minutiae may consider himself fortunate".⁴

In 1846 Pugin designed the throne in the House of Lords in a style he would call 'Christian Art'. The throne seems to be typical of gothic revivalist style. Pugin, apparently contradicts himself frequently. On one hand he is the master gothic revivalist on the other he advocates functionalism. In his book 'The principles of pointed or Christian architecture' he maintains that 'all beautiful forms in architecture are based on soundest principles of utility'

In his notes Pugin comments about general standards of design in Britain that it, if he is to be believed, has gone stark mad;

It is impossible to enumerate half the absurdities of modern metal workers; but all these proceed from the false notion of disguising metal instead of beautifying articles of utility. How many objects are rendered monstrous and ridiculous simply because the artist, instead of seeking the most convenient form and decorating it, has embodied some extravagance to conceal the real purpose

4. Pugin A.W.N. Recalled by John Gloag in Victorian Taste 2(i)

for which the article has been made! If a clock is required it is not unusual to cast a Roman Warrior in a flying chariot round one of the wheels of which, on close inspection, the hours may be described; or the whole front of a cathedral church reduced to a few inches in height, with the clock face occupying the position of a magnificent rose window. But this is nothing compared to what we see continually produced from those inexhaustible mines of bad taste, Birmingham and Sheffield; staircase turrets for inkstands, monumental crosses for light shades, gable ends hung on handles for door porters, and four doorways and a cluster of pillars to support a French lamp; while a pair of pinnacles supporting an arch is called a Gothic pattern-scraper, and a wiry compound of quatrefoils and fan tracery an abbey garden seat"⁵

The 'sequel to such falsifications' of form and function was the 'Venus of Milo reproduced in miniature in bronze or plaster with a clock inserted in her stomach. It did not stop there, Londoners must have become bored with mere representation of flowers and animals and plants so, in a logical but not tasteful progression real animals and plants were used for decoration. Although Pugin worked at remedying the situation it seems that nothing could be done to avert the flimsy whims of popular taste.

- 2(iii) The so called naturalist school of ornament is evident from about 1840. Women adopted the fashion of wearing whole prowse or pheasants as hats. Bird hats were so popular at one stage that more birds were killed for hats than for food. Suppliers could hardly meet demand. In furniture birds became lamps. Two humming birds are positioned between pyrex plates and framework for a fire screen. Liqueur stands are made from elephant feet,⁶ chairs are fashioned with rhino legs. A wall clock is made grasped in jaws of a tiger. More than any other animal, monkeys were the most popular. Ship loads arrived at London docks. Monkey lights were made, one paw

5. Pugin A.W.N. Recalled by John Gloag 'Victorian Comfort' 2(ii)

6. Gloag John Victorian Comfort 2(ii),2(iii)

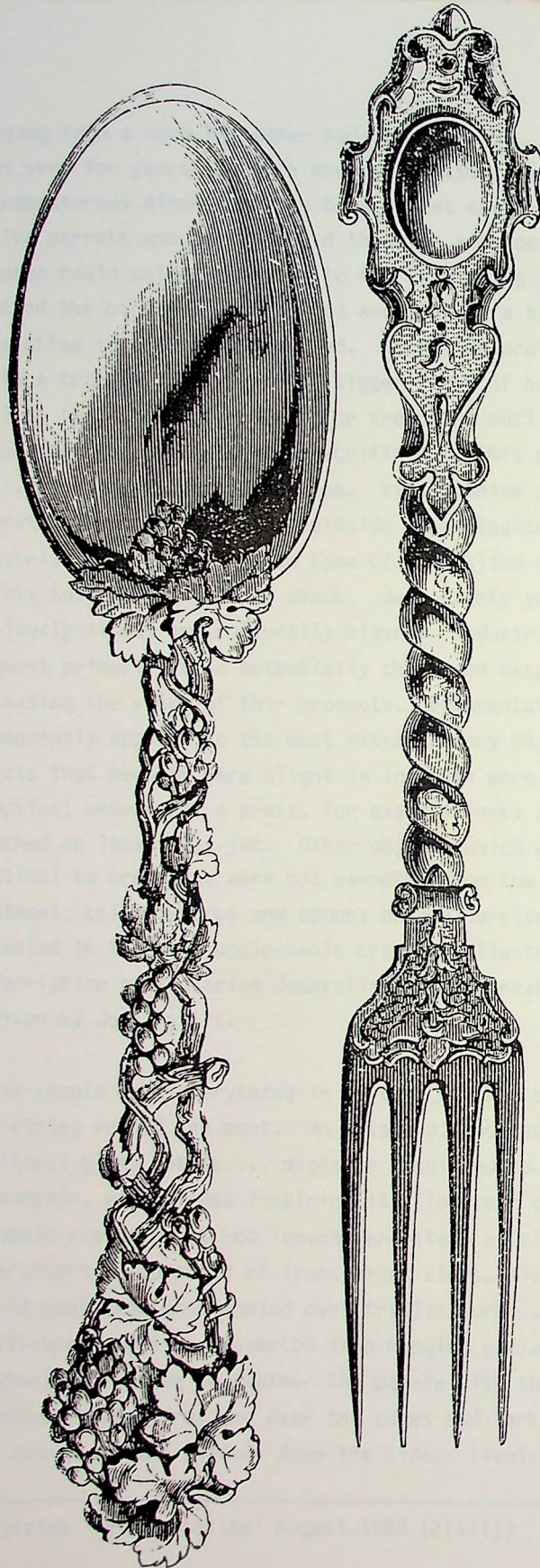


Illustration two; Spoon and Fork; London 1851

swinging from a hoop the other holding the bulb. Billard rooms were for years lit with monkey lights. The craze grew to preposterous dimensions. A Bond Street shop kept a stock of live parrots and cockatoos so that the aristocratic customer could select a favourite for a swinging lamp. Once selected the bird would be killed and sent to a taxidermist and stuffed in the shape required. Animal decoration was merely a trickle in a very much bigger river of bad taste. 'Health' (as Pugin pointed out for the trend outlived him)' comfort and leisure are being sacrificed to this monstrous idol'. The idol being decoration. Victorianism and the decoration that goes with it coincide chronologically with the Industrial Revolution. A new type of capitalism sprung up and society suffered a bit of a shock. Just eighty years previously it was agriculturally biased! Industrialists saw ornament primarily as a potentially cheap and easy way of increasing the value of their products. Ornamentation was subsequently applied to the most extraordinary objects. Objects that perhaps were slight in location were no exception; underneath a press, for example lurks a fully branched and leaved gas jet. Other objects which were not practical to ornament, were not exempted from the fullest treatment; knives, forks and spoons became carriers of germs concealed in the most uncleanable crevice (illustration two). A description of Victorian decoration at the great exhibition is given by John Tallis.

'We should have everything in a house touched by the divining rod of the poet. An inkstand, instead of being a literal glass bottle.... might be fashioned to represent a fountain, with a muse inspiring its flow; our goblets might bubble over amongst hop leaves, and stems of blossoms; our decanters be composed of transparent vines, clustering in wild confusion or drooping over trellis work...;our bellropes might be converted into hanging garlands; our waterjugs be made to feather the palate with their look of coolness, snow creaming over the edges and larks drinking at brooks in the shadows down the sides; lively colours

teatefully toned and harmonized might be scattered over our rooms under a thousand pretences of necessity',⁸

Victorian ornament frequently did nothing for aesthetics and often impeded function. The decoration phase continued until at least 1910 but after 1851 it had become tedious, endlessly repetitious and lacking variation. Unsuitability for use and unsuitability for production were the most common ailments of Victorian products.

2(iv) As early as 1836 a committee had been set up to discover "the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and principles of design among the people (especially the manufacturing population)."⁹ This was called the Ewart Committee. The committee discussed the inferiority of the English product compared with foreign competitors. In the House of Commons the Ewart committee's opinions were given full support by Sir Robert Peel. In 1832 he had made calls for funds to set up an exhibition place for exemplary products. A sort of Design Council. Sir Henry Cole was instrumental in doing just that.

2(v) Cole was responsible for setting up the Great Exhibition of 1851. The exhibition however was not his only great work. He also introduced the penny postage, reformed patent laws, unified railway gauges, and designed potteries. Cole is however, more important as a social reformer and propagandist of good design than a 'designer'. His potteries were very much in the idiom of the Victorian age. Cole's first object was to establish a practical alliance between artists and manufacturers. He more or less announced the existence of Industrial Design in Britain. It was Cole's innovation to these ends that led him to set up the exhibition. It would educate the masses. He also set up various schools to train artists and designers. In criticism of Cole he once overestimated the need for wallpaper designers by four thousand. According to many he was a most intolerable character. His work in the area of social reform however, puts pay to any petty criticism.

8. Tallis John, 'History and Description of Crystal Palace 1851' 2(iii)

9. MacCarthy Fiona 'All things small and beautiful' (2(iv))

2(vi) Factory conditions in 1851 frequently were deplorable. In the nineteenth century brand of labour intensive capitalism, little social space was left for expression of any feeling other than exhaustion. For most men and women the aesthetic dimension of work was squatly suppressed. In the factory, work was simply paid employment unaccompanied by any expression of significant values or expectation of pleasure. In complete contrast to the opulence and decadence of aristocratic Victorian dandyism. Motivated partially by this contrast cole pressed for laws ensuring good working conditions, and fair pay; he expressed the views for those whom brute reality and economic necessity impinged to deeply.¹⁰

2(vi) After the 1851 Exhibition Cole had a large following of young designers. John Bell, Matthew Digby, Richard Redgrave, and Owen Jones among them. These designers joined cole on his crusade for the promotion of Art in Industry. A.W.N. Pugin sat with Cole and some of his followers to choose exhibits of particular note-worthiness from the Great Exhibition to make up a permanent museum of ornamental



10. Schaefer Herwin; Roots of Modern design. (2(v))

Illustration three; Working conditions frequently were deplorable

art. This museum was later to become the famous Victoria and Albert in Kensington. It is interesting that in 1971 the director of the V + A said that the Design Centre would do what the V + A had failed to do. Namely exhibit to the public good examples of Industrial Design. It is of further interest to speculate that the V + A Boilerhouse project is a sort of counterattack, covering an exhibition gap that the Design Centre did not successfully fill.¹¹

- 2(vi) Although neither man achieved any particularly good samples of design both Pugin and Cole are important because they were instrumental in trying to make the nation aware of the problems of industrial design. They did not so offer solutions to design problems but rather just brought attention to the fact that problems existed. They criticized attempts that had been made at beautifying products underneath a thick skin of decoration. Cole and Pugin tried to educate the general public into an understanding of 'good design' via exhibitions, books and pamphlets. The public however largely ignored their foresight distracted by a platform of other influences not least the Arts and Crafts movement.

3. The Arts and Crafts Movement

- 3(i) Working at approximately the same time as Cole were John Ruskin and William Morris. Their goals regarding social reform roughly were the same as Cole, but their design ideals differed greatly. Ruskin, impatient with Coles' design insensitivity criticised him; "Try to manufacture a Raphael then let Raphael direct your manufacturers". Cole, according to Ruskin was an incapable designer, Many designers were attracted to the 'homely' policies of Ruskin and Morris. Societies promoting arts and crafts ethics subsequently formed all over the country. Ernest Toller in his 1921 play, "The Machine Wreckers" recalls a picture, albeit an exaggerated one, of the workers' narrow and savage attitude towards machinery in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Arts and Crafts movement was a reaction against the Industrial

11. Times; June 22, 1977

Revolution. They saw themselves as saving the world by averting mankind's enslavement to the machine. It is a feeling that can be entirely sympathized with when consideration, regarding the poor standard of product produced by machines of that age, is made. Quality was becoming so poor that the Arts and Crafts products of 'medieval craftsmanship' were cherished. Many designers became emotionally involved with the revival; they often believed and with passionate sincerity that, good design could only be restored by



Illustration four; Saville Chair Arts and Crafts 1890

restoring the Arts and Crafts guilds. The scale of the swing towards the movement was very considerable. It was seen as an alternative to a world devastated by the Machine. Its success as a movement seriously delayed the identification of industrial design as an activity in its own right. To the credit of the movement is the social reform work of Ruskin and Morris. Their ideals have a modern interpretation in the Factories Act of Environment and Conditions.

- 3(ii) The Arts and Crafts societies began to fade out when its members began to realise that instead of promoting good design, they were further alienating it from the general public. No-one but the very rich could afford to buy works of the movements activists. Ambrose Heal bought the movement to a swift end when he published a catalogue of his mass-manufactured pseudo arts and crafts furniture. It was cheap and readily available while still being in the 'homely' style. The new town homes of Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City were largely furnished from his catalogues. The demise of the Arts and Crafts societies was a beginning of a new era. Herbert Read in his book 'Art and Industry' explains the dilemma of the Arts and Crafts;

'We cannot oppose the machine. we must let it rip, and with confidence.' 'The cause of Morris and Ruskin may have been a good cause, but it should never the less be abandoned because it is now a lost cause.' 'The machine has rejected ornament; and the machine has, everywhere established itself. We are irrevocably committed to a machine age.'¹²

4. Dual Design Development

- 4(i) All the time that the Arts and Crafts societies occupied so many designers, industrial production was rolling on unguided to produce the shoddy wares of Victorianism. Some historians notably Fiona MacCarthy holds the development of design in Britain to be the responsibility of a few outstanding pioneers; Cole, Pugin, Ruskin and Morris etc. Other

historians play down the importance of these few and raise the status of 'follow your nose' development. Walter Dexel¹³, in 1939 referred to a dual design track, one the highly ornate and decorated pieces for the aristocracy as seen at the Great Exhibition, the other vernacular for the ordinary man. In 1964 Herbert Lindinger referred to the key role of the technical advances on route to design reform. Lindinger noted the want of frankness in most articles. Exceptions were articles of engineering such as boats, trains and stream tractors all of which, he claimed, were examples of design honesty. As with the look of technology today; it takes time for that technological style to be found in household products, and even more time for it to percolate into other products like cars or trains. The NASA look of white and grey is now common in refrigerators and sewing machines. It could also be postulated that the functionalism of early engineering achievements percolated its way into products of the early twentieth century. It is curious that Victorian customers would accept functionalism on certain products yet they would be against it when applied to domestic products. The American section of the 1851 Great Exhibition illustrated functionalism in almost all the exhibits (illustration five). The famous McCormick Harvester won particular acclaim. American functionalism is described by Horatio Greenough in his 1852 book, 'The travels observations and experiments of a Yankee Stonecutter'

'The redundant must be pared down the superfluous dropped, the necessary itself reduced to its simplest expression, and then we shall find, whatever the organisation may be, that beauty was waiting for use.'¹⁴

- 4(ii) At the Vernacular level the design of age old everyday useful objects was unaffected by the fad for decoration. A village carpenter still made a chair the simple traditional chair his father made if he were so commissioned. The forms of these everyday objects were the result of centuries of adaptation to

13. Schaefer Herwin; roots of Modern design (4(ii))

14. Greenough Horatio; 'The travels observations and experiments of a Yankee Stonecutter' (4(ii))

function and utility. Even when influences from vernacular design wafted its way into industry a strong sense of tradition was maintained. A Sheffield cutler exhibited in the Great Exhibition a number of mens shavers; illustrated in the catalogue were grossly overdecorated versions of their products sold presumably to the rich; the same company also manufactured simple shavers from a vernacular design. The simple shavers were deemed too uninteresting and utilitarian to merit illustration even though they were far superior in design. (illustration six). The notion of a dual design track as per Dexel is particularly believable when, say Memphis furniture is compared with what is available in todays' furniture shops for Joe Soap.

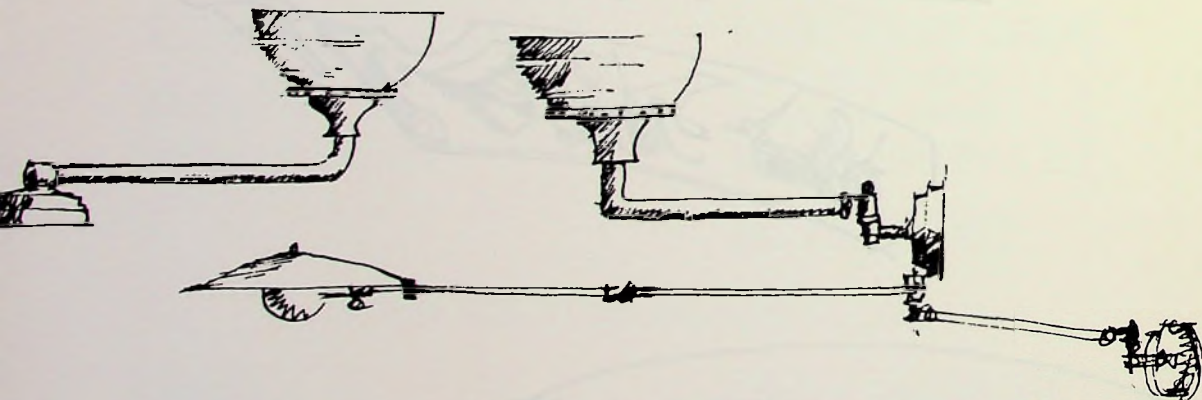


Illustration five; adjustable lamps; Chicago 1894; American functionalism.

5. Conclusion

- 5(i) Production of products at the beginning of the machine age was frequently flawed by bad design. This was due to the essential newness of designing for mass production. As time went by and people became richer a certain pretentious element came into society. This was Victorianism which has come to be regarded as a period of vigorous decadence. Victorian society was not mature enough in its taste for good design to be appreciated. Industry consequently had no particular direction and resorted, for its aesthetic needs, to appalling decoration derived from styles of the past. As a reaction to the shoddy produced by such an industry the Arts and Crafts movement evolved. More realistically dealing with the situation were design reformers such as Pugin and Cole. Industry itself was improving as influences from the 'technical' and the 'vernacular' trickled their way into production. Improvement, blind to the various leaders and pointer incidences was painfully slow to come about.

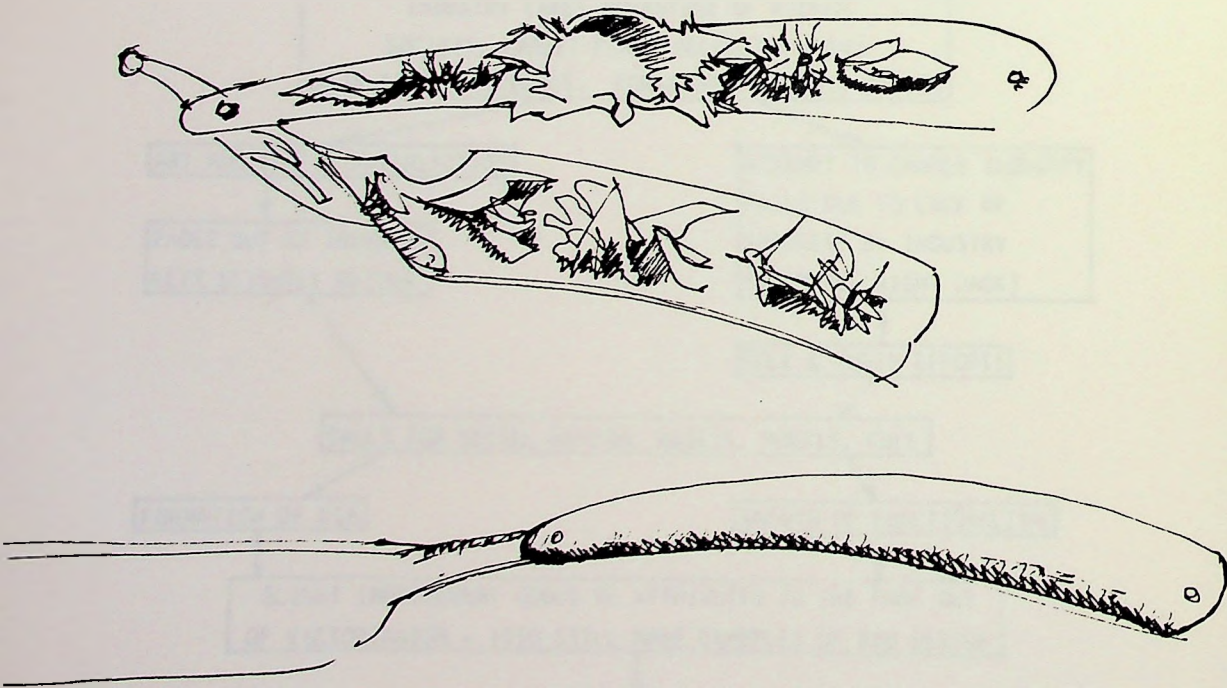
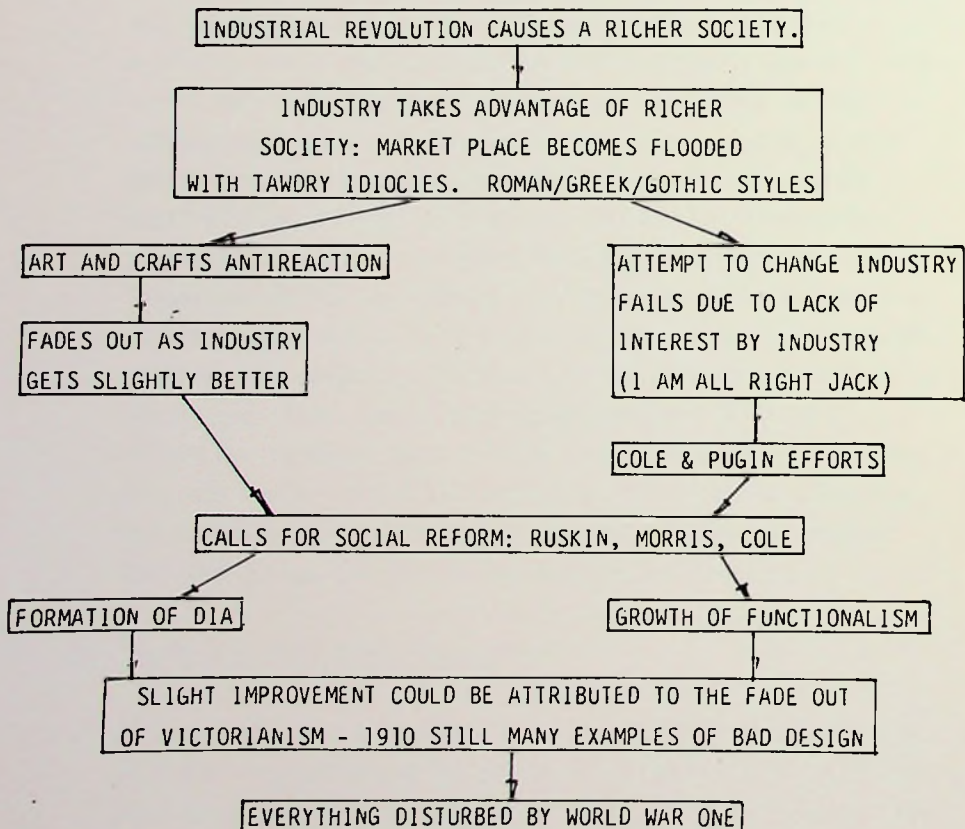


Illustration six; Sheffielded Shavers. 1851.

Deals in design were frequently flawed. Designers had not yet found the true identity of that peculiar pantagonian penguin; 'taste'. In the search for taste, idealistic designers were overly purist, each having a very particular viewpoint, each disregarding overall effect.

- 5(ii) None of the so called pioneer of design actually pioneered very much. This is shown by the number of different progressions featured in Chapters one to four. They each contributed to a progression that most likely would have happened even if they never existed. Their individual importances have been overestimated in many written versions of design history. If say, that a particular designer managed to wangle his or her way into the pages of a history book then at least half the credit should be allotted to fate. The work of Pugin and Cole is frequently cited. But they are picked



SECTION 2

6. 1900 to 1914

- 6(i) The 'Paris Exposition' of 1900 inspired very few. Products exhibited were grossly overdecorated and frequently poorly made. The Paris Exposition showed little improvement in product quality or design standards over the 1851 Great Exhibition. The opulence of Victoriana was lasting far longer than it ever should have. It certainly outlived the Queen. The precise manners, formal clothes, expensive comfort and its copious vulgarities were present in Britain well up until 1914. The shock and terror of four years war finally brought an end to the period. Once the war was over the prewar style seemed extraordinarily dated. Victorianism was dead. On a broad front and in all the arts 'the inherited values and ideals of narrative representation, artificiality and sentimentality were increasingly challenged by the new realities and a desire on the part of artists to express truth and honesty'.¹⁵ The last years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth saw enormous technical advances. Functionalism was being developed into a style inspired from a formal analysis of so many new discoveries. In Britain there was a concern regarding the prolific pace of technology in the new century. Life was changing so fast that it became impossible for a single person to remain abreast of technological advance. Unlike the rest of Europe particularly Germany, Britain made no particular advances in terms of design during these years. Britain was retarded by lingering Arts and Crafts ethics and further still by caution, reserve and indeed slight snobbery. It was out of this environment that the Design and Industries Association emerged.

7. The Design and Industries Association

- 7(i) In 1914 the Board of Trade officially recognised the existence of industrial design as an entity in its own right. Just one year later the DIA was formed. Ironically it was members from

15. Gloag John; Industrial Art Explained (6(i))

the Arts and Crafts societies who were the founding associates, Harold Stabler among them; Fiona MacCarthy calls his departure from the Arts and Crafts a breakaway.

- 7(ii) Stabler, Ambrose Heal and Harry Peach and some others went to Cologne where in 1914 the Deutscher Werkbund had an exhibition. The Werkbund had been active for about seven years. Industrial design had officially been recognised by the German government and financially backed by the same number of years. The British group returned impressed by the exhibition and optimistic for the future of design in Britain. The DIA was subsequently set up, using the Werkbund as a model. The first members were ex-members from the Arts and Crafts societies, much of the early DIA thinking therefore, reflects the ideals of an almost ancestral Arts and Crafts. Harold Stabler, for instance was a countrified fellow; 'outgoing and gregarious' and 'and arid politician'¹⁶. Other main members would have been, Peach, Heal, Frank Pick and Gordon Russell; all rather rusticated, country, jolly good types. Their activities in the years between the wars were to be the great campaigning years for art in industry. Their activities firmly established the moralist factor in British design; a factor in smaller quantities that today still exists. The 'early moralist' factor emphasised the quasi-countryfied standards of honesty, homeliness, decency and cheerfulness. The flavour of the moralist factor can be tasted in the 1922 DIA yearbook where the DIA claimed itself to be

'made up from practical enthusiasts to combat the practical influences in British design and industry.'¹⁷

The DIA maintained that British products, furniture, textiles, pottery and printing, were often poor because they were not designed and constructed principally to do their job with maximum efficiency. Hence arose the chief article of their creed, a phrase borrowed from A.W.N. Pugin; 'Fitness for purpose', they added to Pugin's phrase 'the courage to restate that as many times as necessary'. The creed went on the state

16. MacCarthy Fiona; All thing small and beautiful

17. DIA yearbook 1922 (7(ii))

'If a thing were unaffectedly made to fulfil its purpose thoroughly, then it would be good art.¹⁸

It was in 1922 that this comment was made. The superstition that real art depended on elaboration and disguise of multiplied ornament was finally challenged. 'Finally' is right. It took the formation of the D1A, and all their combined insight to come around to a point of view shown at the American stand at the Great Exhibition of 1851, described so clearly in spirit by Horatio Greenough (note 12).

7(iii) Arthur Clotton-Brook a D1A member further expands on the D1A creed in this peice written in 1916

'The industrial producer of shoddy may grow rich, but he is killing for prosterity the goose which has laid the golden eggs for him, he is in fact a public enemy; a traitor to his own trade; and if his own trade cannot deal with him as it would have done in the middle ages, it can at least organise itself against him; it can teach the public to shun him by example as well as by precept. It is the aim of the D1A to produce such an organisation.¹⁹

Industry did not suddenly jump up and start designing in spite of such a strongly worded threat, infact poor Arthur was probably unnoticed by the vast majority. The D1A was a very small organization (292 members in 1916) with very little money. This however did not curtail their enthusiaism or exuberance, and by 1920 their activities included, magazine writing, (the magazine had various titles but never had a run longer than two issues in succession) the production of a year book, exhibitions, lists of sensible presents for Christmas; the latter being typical of D1A jolly good conviviality. D1A criticism concentrated on two themes. The first the lamentable standard of public taste, the second its condemnation of the lethargy of industry in respect to design. Their approval was wholesome and to a certain extent predictable, and its disapproval, hard set (read conservative). Wholesome criticism such as the condemnation

18. D1A yearbook 1922 (7(ii))

19. Arthur Clotton-Brook 1916 Recalled by Stephen Bayley 'In good shape

of machine production made to look like craft work. The year book of 1923 was concerned to make that criticism clear. The nature of this criticism is more than a little reminiscent of Arts and Crafts ideology.

'Handiwork has its own qualities and excellences,..... and machine work may also be regarded as having its own particular qualities and excellences though these can never reach their fullest development while the aim of those responsible is to make machine made things in close imitation of hand made things'.²⁰

Industry took very little notice of the DfA. As late as 1935 the DfA still found it necessary to mention that

'A good many of the troubles today come about because designers have not yet grasped the idea that in machine production it is the machine which must be considered. For example, one sees tiles made by a machine with a purposely irregular surface; thousands are made all alike, with little bumps in the same places. The products of the machine age should be absolutely mechanical, and their shapes must be governed by the process of production; any applied art is sickening'.²¹

The DfA criticism fell on deaf ears? They did not voice the criticism loud enough? They were unable to voice the criticism due to financial problems. Whatever, today pressed copper coal buckets are manufactured with real forge hammer marks. Speculation could be made that DfA and CofD good design propaganda has not been heard or else it has been heard it has been ignored. Bad taste is still rampant today.

- 7(iv) As part of an attempt to raise design standards the DfA used the yearbook to illustrate their approval on any particular design, an activity that long predicted the CofD Design Awards scheme. Amongst the DfA reclaimed products were the Rolls Royce motor cars, the Bristol plane and the London Underground which they saw as an example of 'fitness for purpose'. On a massive scale little criticism can be leveled at the DfA for acclaiming such excellent products; their disapproval however

20. DfA Yearbook 1923 7(iii)

21. Design in Industry. DfA magazine 1935 7(iii)

was in retrospect very concessive. They disapproved of artnouveau styling, exoticism and strangeness. Developments in Germany with the foundation of Das Bauhaus in 1919 aroused scant interest. Events in Scandinavia with Alvar Aalto and in Copenhagen with Kaare Klint were noticed but not assimilated. The relative lack of excitement over Scandinavia design was to prove an embarrassment for the DIA when, a few years later, Scandinavia import shops were vogue in London. The Paris exhibition in 1925, with all its jazziness and flash cubism left the DIA quite unimpressed²². The subsequent isolation the DIA chose to live in, retarded the development of modernism in Britain. It was popular demand rather than the design institutions that eventually brought modernism to Britain.

7(v) Whatever about the DIA and Britain getting along without influence from the rest of the world, the rest of the world regarding design was certainly getting along without Britain. Compared with other countries Britain seriously lagged in terms of design ethics and organisations. In Europe, Germany was the leading design country. Many regard Germany as the true birthplace of modern industrial design. The Werkbund and Das Bauhaus were major influences on the development of world design. In America by 1920 industrial design had still not been officially recognised but yet occupied a position of importance it had in no other country. The World Columbian Exhibition of 1893 in Chicago had products which were more design advanced than many produced in Britain in 1920. America of course in the thirties, saw the growth of the biggest Industrial Design consultancies in the world.

7(vi) In 1927 the DIA assembled a 'country craft display' for a trade and industry exhibition at Leipzig²³. The other exhibits were in the modern idiom, making the British exhibit rather out of context. This exhibition highlighted the discrepancy in design standards between Britain and the rest of the world. To add to the DIA's problems came criticism from

22. MacCarthy Fiona 'Pushing the tank uphill' (RSA) 7(iv)

23. MacCarthy Fiona; All Thing Bright and Beautiful.

within the British design world claiming the DIA to be more of a Londoners social club than a national organization. Some designers saw its activities as merely an extension of the Arts and Crafts societies. DIA vigorously rejected this claim. Although much of the British design world agreed with the DIA policy, they were at the time ignorant of the associations existence. Membership by 1928 was only 602. John Gloag was dragged into a meeting in 1924 by Alfred Read, Gloag was to become one of the DIA main propagandists.

- 7(vii) John Gloags influential book 'Industrial Art Explained' was published in 1934 and dedicated to Frank Pick. The opinions expressed in the book echoed DIA ideology. the introduction is titled 'The case for an academy of design' Gloag calls for the establishment of a government sponsored academy which would be responsible for introducing suitable designers to suitable industry as well as education of new designers. He argues that the establishment would of such an institution would have far more effect upon standards of taste in England and would do far more to elevate artistic appreciation, than the artificial respiration of Grand Opera. The book predicts streamlining and comments in respect to modern design;

'Our contemporary obsession with functionalism is at least healthier than the obsession with ornament and with antique styles which complicated every attempt to improve design in the nineteenth century.²⁴

He makes a short attack on the arts and crafts societies;

'From its inception, the movement for the revival of handicrafts was influenced by romantic antiquarianism. William Morris, the most energetic leader of the movement, was a medievalist, a reactionary like Ruskin, and quite unaware of the promise that lurked beneath the smoke cloud of the factories, of the beauty that machine craft might bring to the world under proper direction'

Gloag argued that 'Industrial art' would adopt a distinctive character of its own, providing, that the ladies and gentlemen of late Victorian outlook allow their taste the privilege of

24. Gloag John; Industrial Art Explained 1934 (7(vii))

further education. He then details typical characteristics of various businessmen; the retail buyer, old style; the manufacturer, new style; the retail buyer, new style; and the manufacturer, old style. Each one is given a page long description of their typical activities and attitudes. This section of his book reveals that many industrialists were unaware that there was a 'modern movement' in design. To these manufacturers modern meant 'jazz' or 'futuristic'. They believed that people would settle back to normal ways and want again the 'stuff' dated pre-war with some skill and ornament about it. Manufacturers rejected the 'fitness for purpose' ethic in fear of people rejecting functionalism; described as "modern, made in Germany, looking stuff". Indeed the manufacturers were proven right at least to a certain extent. People were never quite won over to functionalism. Gloag argued however that the slogan 'fitness for purpose' would only restrict those designers of 'limited fertility'. Referring to the yearbooks, further insight to the policies of John Gloag and the DIA can be gleaned. Gordon Russell had a policy of 'small advancement then consolidate'. Gloag writes of the DIA masterplan which reflects Russells very British reserve and good sense;

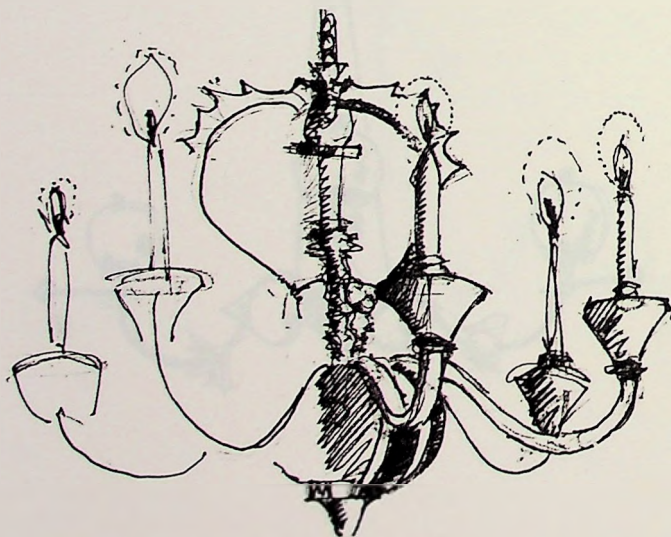


Illustration eight; Chandelier

'It is a great temptation to dream of imposing plans that will recast the world and destroy all the foolish legacies or bad custom from past generations, the cramping traditions and other obstacles that stand in the way of an orderly and beautiful civilization; but the improvement of even one section of industry is much more serviceable contribution to general betterment than a thousand Utopias - on paper',²⁵

Gloag used an example of the development of the chandelier to electrolier to illustrate the Victorian carry through effect of British design thinking (illustrations eight, nine, ten)

8. Conclusion

- 8(i) The DIA was a very worthy institution. Its existence proves that there was at least active interest in design. Unfortunately the associations had few members and little money. Their ideals and logic were sometimes little more than an extension of the Arts and Crafts movement. Because of their size they had very little effect on British industry.

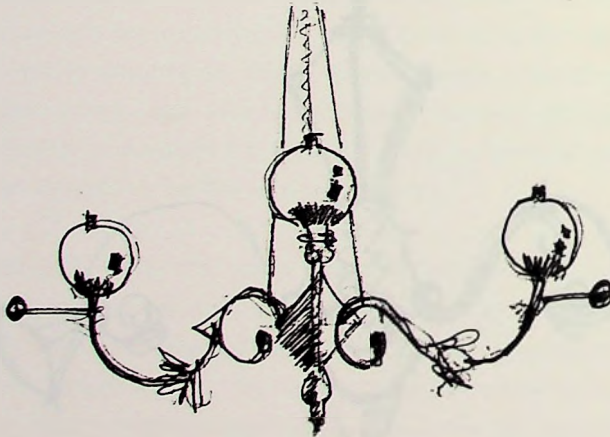


Illustration nine; Gasolier.

25. Gloag John; Industrial Art Explained 1934. (7(vii))

In most industry, attitudes pertaining to design either did not exist or else tended toward Arts and Crafts ethics. The DfA because, of its bias towards the Arts and Crafts was trailing in terms of design ethics rather than leading. Had the DfA been more revolutionary in its ways perhaps more people would have taken notice. The DfA could have brought modernism to Britain but their lack of pace prevented them from doing anything out of the ordinary. Modernist style in design was subsequently delayed in its arrival to Britain.

9. Chermayeff, modernism and the DfA

- 9(i) Before World War One industrial design was becoming recognised in a muddled sort of way. Even in 1900 a few enlightened people realised that such a discipline existed. In 1914 it had achieved recognition. The Board of Trade and the Board of Education jointly sponsored a scheme to launch the British Institute of Industrial Art.²⁶ The DfA were active from

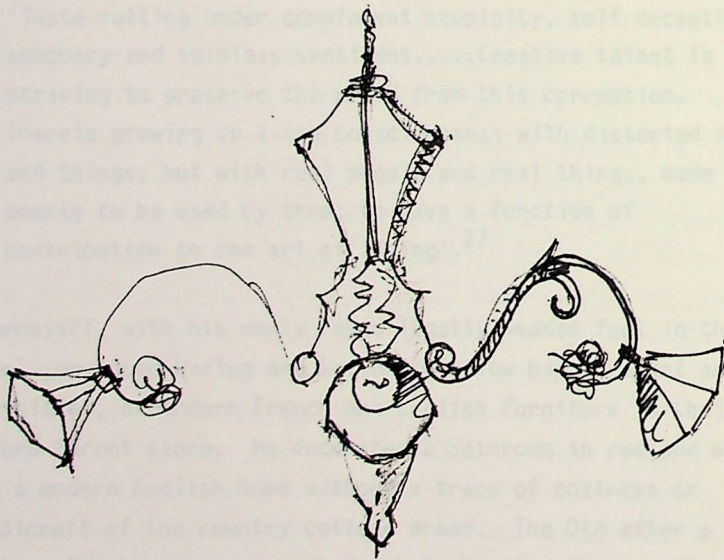


Illustration ten; Electrolier

26. Glog John. 'Contribution of the Royal Society to Industrial Design' RSA (9(i))

1916 though it is difficult to measure their relative success. The war stopped most design activities for four years. As with most wars, after it had ended there was a rise of functionalist style. Precision engineering as a relatively new phenomenon complemented the rise of this functionalist style. In Europe the new style was quickly adopted. The French railway for example adopted the word 'Exactitude' to advertise their new rolling stock. In Britain the growth of functionalism was considerably behind Europe. Britain never reached the purity of functionalism seen in Germany. In fact it might never have gone through a functionalist phase had it not been for a Russian emigrant Sergius Chermayeff.

- 9(ii) Chermayeff had studied art in Paris, and he arrived in England in the early twenties. He married a daughter of the owner family of Waring and Gallow. Waring and Gallow was a 'posh' furnishing store based in London. It had previously been associated with furnishing of historical styles. Chermayeff however criticised the values of the past; his rhetoric is sometimes as flowery as the styles he disliked:

'Taste rotting under complacent stupidity, self deceptive snobbery and spinless sentiment.....Creative talent is striving to preserve the world from this corruption. There is growing up a new consciousness with distorted ideas and things, but with real people and real things, made by people to be used by them; to have a function of contribution to the art of living'.²⁷

- 9(ii) Chermayeff, with his newly found legally wedded foot in the door, convinced Waring and Gallow to allow him to mount an exhibition, of modern French and English furniture in their Oxford Street store. He decorated a bathroom in red and black and a modern English home without a trace of cosiness or handicraft of the country cottage dream. The DfA after a period of reluctance commented, that; Sergius Chermayeff's interpretation of up to date furniture, differed very greatly

27. Chermayeff Sergius; recalled by Johnatan M Woodham;
The Industrial Designer and the Public. (9(ii))

from the attitudes and methods of those whose creed was the teaching of Gimson and Barnsley. In the DIA journal John C Rogers was obviously highly moved by the new furniture. In some ways what he writes could be interpreted as the ultimate rejection of arts and crafts philosophies.

'It only needs an effort on our part to lay aside insular prejudices, to admit that perhaps, after all our progress is not what we imagined, and we shall acknowledge that here in Oxford Street, is by far the best thing yet done in this country to re-establish the domestic crafts and to fire the English designers with a new enthusiasm. In many ways, the right note is struck and given the support it justly deserves, popular interest will increase and in a few years good modern design will sweep the country'.²⁸

Rogers comment was a little optimistic; good design did not sweep the country. His comment, however, does reflect a new concept in design amongst the countries design idealists. Chermayeff had landed himself in the London limelight, thanks to his new family connections. Good one Sergius! He continued his career by co-ordinating the 1928 Wembley Empire Exhibition. Under his direction appeared a suite by the French designer Paul Follet and Danhams McLaren's 'Mans Bathroom'. The exhibits perhaps were a little expensive and over the top but, they illustrated admirably the up and coming new styles. One critic said about the exhibition;

'bound to produce a considerable amount of criticism among English designers. To those who still follow the forms and details of historic styles, it must impress with at least one fact, viz, that Queen Anne positively is dead, and so is Chippendale, and Sheraton. It may bring the realisation that they themselves have become back numbers'.²⁹

The DIA after several years of condemnation regarding the continental styling whims 'eventually praised Chermayeffs clear outlook unencumbered by the ideas and traditions that no longer have any meaning for those who wish to live an honest

28. Rogers John C; recalled by Fiona MacCarthy; All things bright and beautiful (9(iii))

29. Recalled by Johnathan M Woodham. The Industrial Designer and the public (9(iii))

twentieth century existence.' The DfA regardless of praise for Chermayeff did not take any direction or influence from the exhibits and carried on doing what they were doing with impunity, promoting what they saw as sensible and superbly British.

10. Gorrell and pre-war design ethics

- 10(i) In the summer of 1931 the infamous 'Gorrell committee' first met. It was apparent that the DfA had provoked at least some government interest. It was the brief of the Gorrell committee to examine 'the state of production of everyday objects and desirability of holding exhibitions as a means of introducing the public, as potential purchasers, to an appreciation of the principles of good design'. The committee stated that

'It is time that an institute of modern industrial art was brought into being, if not by the action of government then by that of some generous and patriotic benefactor. The necessity is obvious and in some way or another it should now be met.³⁰

The 'generous and patriotic benefactor' never turned up with the cash, and it was not until 1944 that the government finally got properly around to setting up such an institution. The Gorrell committee made comments about many elements of the state design in Britain. It delivered this kick in the teeth to the DfA committee, commenting on the slogan 'fitness for purpose';

'Though such a theory would at least spare us from the horrors of futile decoration, it would none the less prevent any real development of artistic design. It is true that the best designers often take the functional purpose of an object as a point of departure, but the aesthetic satisfaction given beautiful decoration is quite distinct from pleasure of recognizing functional adaptation.'

- 10(ii) In 1934, as a result of the Gorrell committee, the Pick council was formed. This council was government supported

30. Gorrell committee.

but, not nearly by enough. It was very short of both money and staff. The council was to promote 'Art in Industry'. Its first comments were very sober 'A long time will be required to complete the task which the council has set itself'.³¹ Attitudes towards Industrial Design were still quite homespun. Frank Pick, the chairman, said that national design should be;

'modest not too grandiose in scale.... not too logical in form.... a reasonable compromise between beauty and utility neither overstressing till it degenerates into ornament, nor overstressing utility until it becomes bare and hard'.³²

There was expressed in his views a slight change from the 'fitness for purpose' ethic, perhaps rooted from a fear of becoming too much like Das Bauhaus.

10(iii) The arts and crafts values were brought out for yet another airing in the following year in an exhibition called; British Art in Industry. It was strongly criticized in that 'it did not give sufficient prominence to the products of mass-manufacture which would make good design available to ordinary people'.³³ It seems ironic that Frank Pick should be worried about subtle variations in the balance between utility and decoration when his comrades at the DfA were still designing for craft production. Ground comments levelled at the exhibition were disapproving. John Mortimer of the New Statesman, said that the exhibition was worse than none at all. Nicholas Pevsner, one of the influx of immigrants from Germany said, the exhibition was an embarrassment to anyone who had visitors in London'.

10(iv) During the thirties London had become an important focus for the modern movement, many internationally acclaimed avant garde artists, writers and designers arrived from the

31. MacCarthy Fiona. All things bright and beautiful (10(ii))

32. Pick Frank; Recalled by Fiona MacCarthy; All things bright and beautiful. 10(ii)

33. Bourke Brian. Past Present and Future. RSA (10(iii))

continent as the European political climate worsened. It is an indication of the stubbornness of British designers that even when new ideas land on the doorstep the pace of progress remains the same. Among the new arrivals were Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Naim Gabo, Erich Mendelsohn, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Piet Mondrian and Le Corbusier. British artists co-operated with the continental influx to produce 'Circle' a survey of international constructivist art; it seemed that modernism had arrived in Britain; but that was in art, in design it just didn't happen. It must have been like flogging a dead horse. Gropius was soon labelled 'Grop Pious'. His ideas for the British were simply too uncompromising. Gropius found himself in a slower entirely alien design environment. The DfA as ever, polite, organised a farewell dinner for him when he was forced to leave the country due to lack of work.

Nothing had changed. The design world in Britain kept its slow pace regardless of the foreign influences. Typically at the Royal Society of Arts, Sir Henry MacMahon in 1937 announced that the Society would be allowed appoint 'Royal', 'Designers for Industry'³⁴. This was to be hailed as progress! Also at the society Professor Russell gave a speech moaning and preaching about the good fight that designers must put up to 'retain in a cut price world the quality of craftsmanship' Russell restated the importance of craft based ideology when dealing with the problems of machine production and industrial design. Alfred Read spoke for the retention of integrity and modesty in design in the face of the 'clamouring of a blatant world to advertisement and vulgar expression'.³⁵ From these 'goody goody' speeches it can be assumed that the moral base of the Arts and Crafts societies was still strongly present in British Design. When modernism was tried out all sorts of problems were experienced. Brian O'Rourke described the problems he encountered when he was commissioned with Colin Anderson to modernise the ship interiors for the 'Orient Line';

34. Gloag John; Contribution of the society to Industrial Design RSA (10(iv))

35. Bourke Brian, Past Present and Future RSA (10(iv))

'It would be hard to exaggerate the difficulties we met in persuading proud and successful industries that not a single object in their active output was acceptable for a modern ship interior. We found ourselves having to discover designers capable of producing new designs for a wide range of products from carpets to cutlery, the makers of which had no staff designers who could understand what we were after;³⁶

Britain chose to ignore the influences from the continent. P Morton Shand, a leading critic, said, when reviewing the Stockholm exhibition,

Sweden has every chance of being able to do what Britain might perhaps have done had not the good seed sown by William Morris been choked by the tares of a spurious simple life rusticity and trodden under the besotted feet of Chipping Camden folk dancers.³⁷

- 10(v) America, unhindered by such troubles as the Chipping Camden folk dancers, had by the thirties the stunning Industrial Design success stories of Herbert Hoover and Henry Ford both working large factories on principles of mass production and standardisation of parts. Raymond Loewy had worked for Edmund Gestetner, The Pennsylvania Railroad, Virginia Ferry Corporation and the Sears refrigerator company. His designs for the Coldspot refrigerator were to revolutionize industrial design worldwide. The Loewy 1932 Hupmobile far advanced any car designs in Britain.³⁸ A country still stifled in a peculiar way by a set of over moral arts and crafts ethics.

11. Conclusion

- 11(i) The work of the design pioneers, between the wars established firmly, design ethics with a moral, do-goody bias. This bias can be traced back to "Arts and Crafts design ethics. Working at the same time, but almost against the DfA was the sizeable growth of modernism. Sergius Chermayeff most visibly heralded

36. Bourke Brian, Past Present and Future RSA (10(iv))

37. Shand Morton P; Recalled by Johnathan M Woodhann. The industrial Designers and the public (10(iv))

the arrival of modernism in Britain. DIA reaction to his work was at first critical and gradually became hesitant approval. Chermayeff's work was given extra weight by the arrival of modernists from Europe taking refuge from Hitler. There would have been a tremendous forum for experimentation and discussion had the DIA been more co-operative. The DIA designers admired the continental designs but did not allow

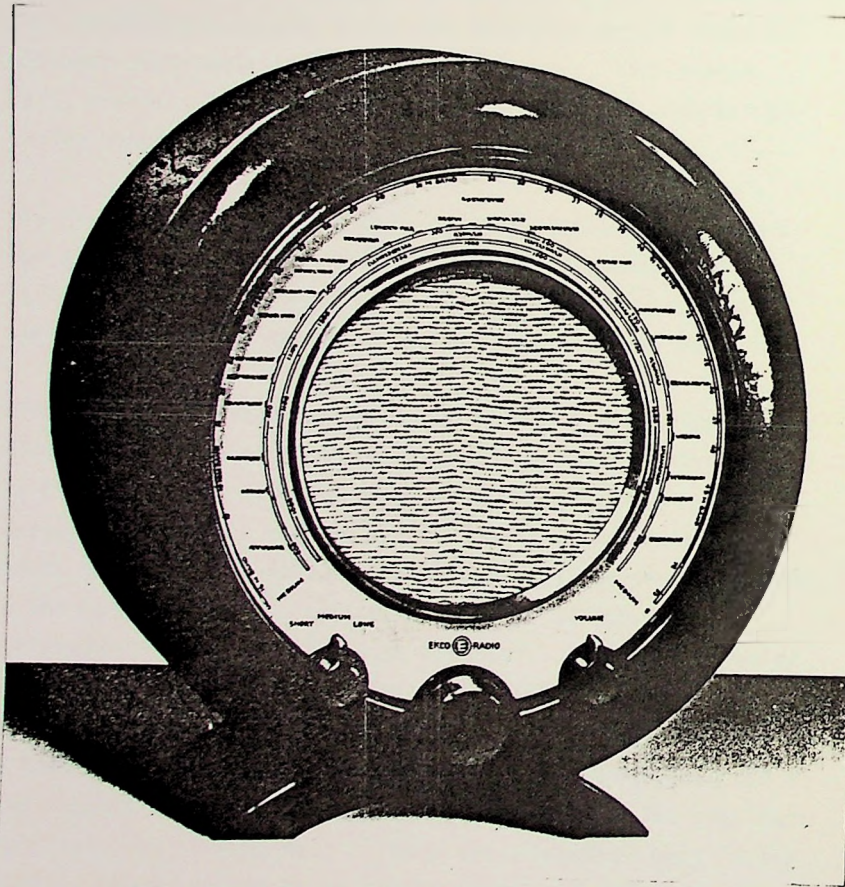


Illustration eleven; Radio cabinet by Sergius Chermayeff 1933

themselves to be influenced. The result was that design ideals, remained Arts and Crafts based even though there was ample opportunity to constructively break the mould; such was the narrow vision of the so called 'design visionaries'.³⁹

In the first of September 1918 the Ministry of Supply restricted use of timber as part of the rationing scheme resultant from the outbreak of World War. It was, that British timberland will always be blessed by war. But as a logical consequence to design thinking is rationing a war broke out and the whole development is partly suspended for four years. In 1918 followed the outbreak of war against a class development towards modernism, and just Gordon Russell elevates timberland as designer and designer. That single fact, evidently delayed thinking in the furniture industry for twenty years.

12(i) The restricted supply of timber and the rationing of what the all furniture makers needed at enormous shortage of furniture for British and English homes. Utility was to be here and functional to meet with devastation from 'Gerry'.

12(ii) Firstly the 'utility' had to be designed. The huge battle was given the job of organising the work. He called Gordon Russell to work as the 'utility furniture committee'.⁴⁰ Gordon Russell wrote about the request "I felt that to raise the whole standard of furniture for the mass of the people was not a war service job....war-time conditions had given us a unique opportunity of making an advance". It should be noted that Gordon Russell had a definite and not necessarily subjective view of what he calls 'advance'. Russell rounded up a committee of various old designers such as John Worthington and the rational form modernists, including Lloyd. The resultant form was not strong, easy to make and altogether very 'jolly good'. It was in 1918 taken a good example of 'fitness for purpose'. It functioned well as wartime furniture. From 1918 until the end of rationing it was the only furniture being manufactured in Britain. Inevitably, just utility a

39. MacCarthy Fiona. All Things Bright and Beautiful (11(i))

SECTION THREE

12. World War Two

- 12(i) On the fifth of September 1939 the ministry of supply restricted use of timber as part of the rationing schemes resultant from the outbreak of World War. It seems that design historians will always be plagued by wars. Just as a logical progression in design thinking is maturing a war breaks out and the whole development is rudely interrupted for four years. In this instance the outbreak of war smashed a slow development towards modernism, and gave Gordon Russell elevated importance as designer and thinker. That single fact, probably delayed thinking in the furniture industry by twenty years.
- 12(ii) The restricted supply of timber and the reallocation of work for all furniture makers caused an enormous shortage of furniture for bombed out English homes. Utility was to be bare and functional to deal with devastation from 'Jerry'.
- 12(iii) Firstly the 'utility' had to be designed. Sir Hugh Dalton was given the job of overseeing the work. He asked Gordon Russell to sit on the 'Utility furniture committee'⁴⁰. Gordon Russell wrote about the request 'I feel that to raise the whole standard of furniture for the mass of the people was not a bad wartime job'....'wartime conditions had given us a unique opportunity of making an advance'. It should be noted that Gordon Russell had a patriotic and not necessarily objective view of what he calls 'advance'. Russell rounded up a committee of various DIA stalwarts such as John Gloag and a new recruit from Czechoslovakia, Jacques Groag. The resultant furniture was strong, easy to make and altogether very 'jolly good'. It was in DIA terms a good example of 'fitness for purpose'. It functioned well as wartime furniture. From 1942 until the end of rationing it was the only furniture being manufactured in Britain. This understandably, gave Utility a

40. Ha Ha ! Joke

position of great influence. Utility however was not nationally acclaimed, there were a few problems. Most people liked it, but as John Gloag revealed at a question and answer session (some years later) at the Royal Society of Arts, its functionalism was for some a littler hard to take;

'A lot of people felt, quite rightly, that the simple looking rationed furniture would help educate people in the charm of simplicity, they forgot that ancient human need which should not be denied. I remember one occasion when somebody on that committee protested that some buyers of utility furniture were also buying bits of composition ornament and nailing it on'⁴¹

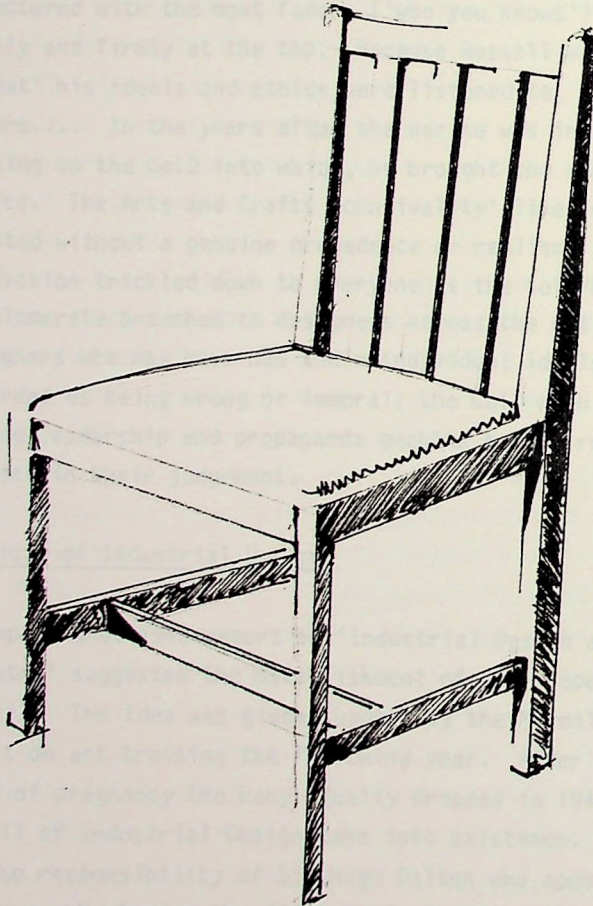


Illustration twelve; Utility furniture 1939 - 1945

41. Gloag John; Royal Society of Arts Journal January 1962.

12(iv) Many historians give Utility a position of major importance in the development of Industrial Design in Britain. But how honestly can they compare the importance of such a scheme with other wartime design developments? Could utility be more important than say Spitfire or Wellington or the tanks and boats and submarines? The design of domestic telephones, radios and every piece of equipment closely related was speeded up by the urgency in technology and design in the war.

12(v) Russell was hailed as a great designer for achieving a synthesis of a handful of designers to produce a range of simple furniture. This was undoubtedly a competent, methodical piece of work but, hardly great! British design became structured with the most famous ('who you know') being placed safely and firmly at the top. Because Russell was hailed as 'great' his ideals and ethics were listened to, more than ever before.... In the years after the war he was involved in setting up the COLD into which, he brought the same ideals and ethics. The Arts and Crafts 'conviviality' lived on; it existed without a genuine precedence or realism. Its motivation trickled down to everyone as the COLD/Russell conglomerate preached to designers across the nation. Designers who may have had their individual ideals were regarded as being wrong or immoral; the COLD with its very strong leadership and propaganda machine being irrevocably correct in their judgement.

13. The Council of Industrial Design

13(i) An unpublished 1943 report on 'Industrial Design and Art in Industry' suggested the establishment of an independent design council. The idea was given support by the Meynell-Hoskins report on art training the following year. After one hundred years of pregnancy the baby finally dropped in 1944 and The Council of Industrial Design came into existence. Delivery was the responsibility of Sir Hugh Dalton who appointed Sir Thomas Barlow as the first Chairman, and, S. C. Leslie as the first director. With its birth no immediate change in the state of design was noted. The situation must have been similar to the anticlimax felt by revellers on the first of

January every year. The early ColD faced objections from those purists who maintained, that art and industry should be treated as separately as possible; art being a thing of beauty. Concern for prosperity overruled their idealised objections with a counter argument, that British goods must compete in terms of artistic input in what would become (after the mess was cleared up) a European market. Some others considered it a waste of public funds. Engineers objected, arguing that 'beauty is mathematical'... 'like the R100 airship and the Wellington Bomber'.⁴²

- 13(ii) The ColD saw one of its main tasks to be a major demonstration of Britain's post-war design and manufacturing capabilities. 'After all we won the war'.⁴³ Plans for the 'demonstration' were accelerated in 1945 when Sir Hugh was replaced at the Board of Trade by Sir Stafford Cripps. Cripps was very enthusiastic about the 'demonstration' and so plans for the 'Britain can make it' exhibition were hatched. However, the ColD and Cripps soon encountered problems finding suitable exhibits, and for a while it was questioned if there were sufficient quality goods to mount such an exhibition. ColD policies came under fire with arguments such as; was the council jeopardising exports by criticising products of perhaps dubious quality that were bringing money into Britain? Other problems during the organisation of the exhibition were that the Chairman Sir Thomas Barlow wrote of resigning because he complained of overwork. In the selection of the exhibits the ColD ran into further trouble. Designers were unhappy because they thought selection standards were too low. Industry was also unhappy; it claimed standards were too high. The ColD selection committee eventually chose 5259 exhibits from a total of 15,836 put forward. The divided the 5259 into three categories; one, available; two, soon available (before January 1947); three, later available (after January 1947).⁴⁴ This labeling led to the popular dubbing

42. Wallis Barnes N; Artist or Engineer RSA 13(i)

43. Bloag Joseph; Daily Express 1945 13(ii)

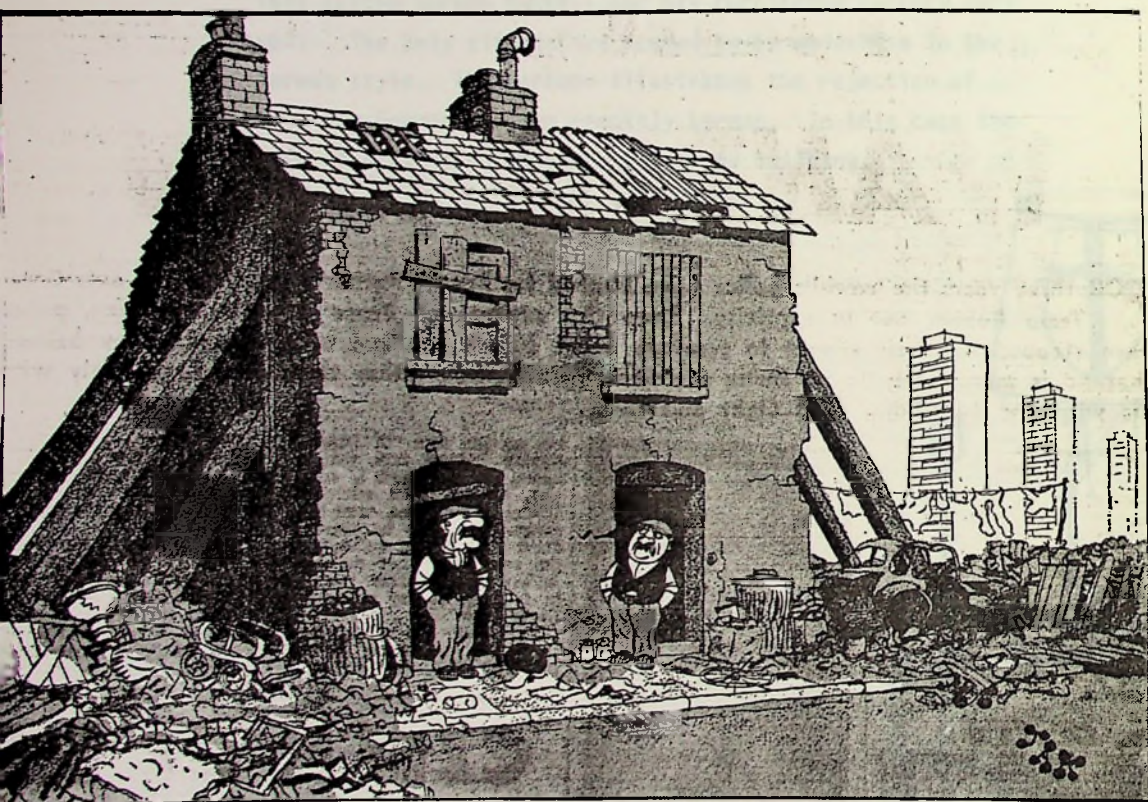
44. Woodham Johnathan M 'The industrial designer and the public' 13(ii)

of the exhibition 'Britain can't have it'. The exhibition was designed by James Gardner and Basil Spence, it occupied 90,000 square feet at the Victoria and Albert museum. The stunning success of the exhibition could partially be attributed to a national feeling of patriotism and attempts by the nation to return to peacetime normality. Design awareness increased during this period as Britain pulled together to try and get industry back on its feet. Misha Black designed a most successful exhibit spelling out 'What Industrial Design means'.

13(iii) With the success of the 'Britain can make it' exhibition as a proverbial 'feather in the cap' the COLD moved on, and in 1947 took a stand at the Board of Trade exhibition; the British Industries fair. Although the design propaganda the council wished to disseminate was very worthy, the exhibit was somewhat difficult to interpret. The display consisted of an imaginary design centre constructed from scaffolding and inhabited by surrealist-inspired figures which held either T-squares or cogwheels. (intended to symbolise designers and industry). Whatever about the actual design of the exhibition it illustrates that real money was now being devoted to design by the government. Again the overriding motivation and ideal behind design, was war recovery.

13(iv) The next COLD activity was a combined exhibition with the Royal Society of Arts called 'Design at Work'. The council wished to expand on the 'Britain can make it/Misha Black' theme of 'What Industrial Design means'. The exhibition was modest in scale and featured not just finished designs but also the design methodology behind them. It was criticized, because of its emphasis on exhibition design rather than the all intended industrial design. It also revealed (by omission) the shortcomings in design and production, a problem glossed over at 'Britain can make it'. Design standards in industry were very mediocre. Industry it seemed had ignored the council's propaganda and was producing the same shoddy wares Pugin complained about in 1840. The council decided to try to remedy the situation by appealing to the young. Design week was duly launched. This was a series of lectures, exhibitions, pamphleteering and poster making carried out

nationally. Much of the effort was directed at schools. The 'good design' message was being pumped at Britain from all angles with little result. In 1947 Dr Ralph Edgars took over as Chairman and Gordon Russel took over as Director. With the new arrangement the COLD increased in its capacity of educators. Attention was drawn to the need for new designers. The Royal College of Art was placed under the leadership of Robin Darwin who set about training designers for industry.



"You wouldn't catch me living in one of them jerry-built skyscrapers."

13(v) In 1949 the council became involved with the Daily Mail exhibition 'Ideal Home'. The Council's contribution was that it commissioned five designers to furnish and equip five similar Ministry of Health houses. Russell wrote some of the first Council books 'How to Furnish your home, and 'How to buy Furniture'. These books were wholesome and recommended only practicality - there was little discussion of fashion. This was a period of reconstruction. People wanted British goods and British lifestyle. In the field of furnishing there was little else that was British but Arts and Crafts spin-offs; consequently the very British cottage style became popular. This suited Gordon Russell and his furnishing factory very well. The only alternative seemed to be modernism in the German style. The cartoon illustrates the rejection of anything German or even remotely German. In this case the high rise flats so many councils were building.

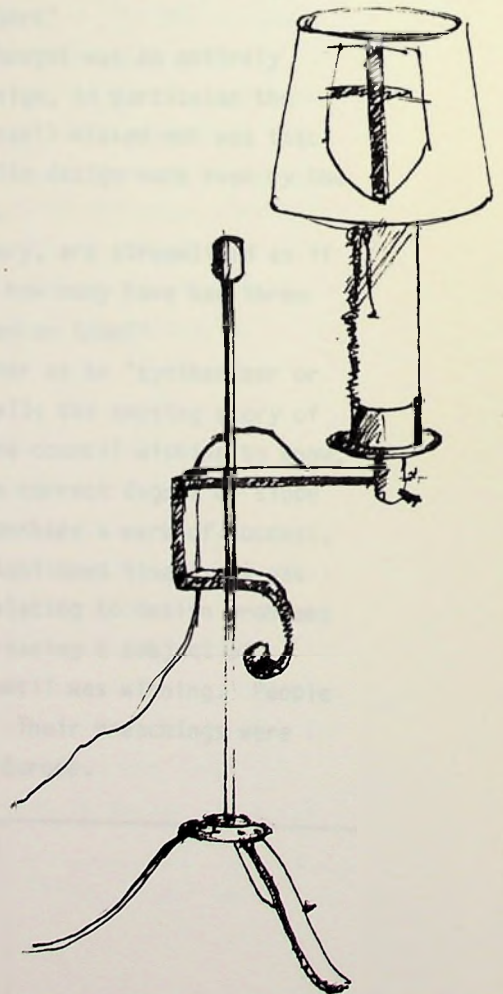


Illustration fourteen; 'Good design is not'

13(vi) The first issue of design magazine appeared in January 1949 declaring that;

'this journal begins publication with one purpose and one purpose only; to help industry in its task of raising standards of design. We believe that the task is urgent' Undoubtedly design standards were poor but, the little alternative was offered by the council. Their version of good design was flawed with a rather homespun idea of what industrial design actually was. Gordon Russel wrote his famous article 'What is Good Design' in the first issue of 'Design'. He writes emphatically, addressing the nation.

'Good design always takes into account the technique of production, the material used, and the purpose for which the object is wanted'...'You have all seen clocks with the hour and minute hands so similar that it is not easy to tell the time, teapots that do not pour well, kettles which burn your hands, handles which pinch your fingers'

He goes on to take a swipe at what he thought was an entirely incorrect method of design; American design, in particular the styling work of Raymond Loewy. What Russell missed out was that underneath the styling was some worthwhile design work even by the measure of over moral British standards,

Refrigerators, which remain stationary, are streamlined as if they were aeroplanes or ships. And how many have had three zigs up and three zigs down plastered on them?'

He gives an idea of an industrial designer as an 'synthesizer or co-ordinator'.⁴⁵ The first issue also tells the amusing story of the confused typographer who wrote to the council wishing to know; 'Has the council given any ruling on the correct degree of slope for an italic letter?' The inquiry is perhaps a mark of success, showing clearly that the council had established itself; it was constantly referred to in discussions relating to design problems of every nature. Design had become increasing a subject of discussion. To a certain extent the council was winning. People were taking notice of their preachings. Their preachings were however, out of date when compared with Europe.

45. Russell Gordon; Design Magazine Issue 1

13(vii) To compensate for lack of designers the council started a scheme for the retraining of staff designers. It was through these schemes and other COLD activities that the Russellist creed was preached to the populus. 'Design makes a thing easy to make, easy to use, and, easy to look at'. By 1950 Design magazine was claiming victory.

'Note the increasing frequency of constructive references to design in the home, see how the womens pages examine the design of household goods'⁴⁶

Fiona MacCarthy claims in her version of design history that 'One way and another by roughly 1950, partly through the Councils efforts, partly independently, design in British industry was visibly improving'. She is hardly wrong but, she has carefully qualified her statement with a series of 'partly's' and 'one ways and anothers'. It is difficult to gauge how much of the new discussion could be attributed to the Councils efforts. Most likely it was largely due to a general recovery in the economy. Design magazine as with most literature on the subject, disproportionately favours the propagandists of good design. Many writers fail to acknowledge the importance of attitudes, aspirations, ideals and purchasing patterns of the mass consumer. In this case the mass consumer had very different ideas about 'good design' than did the good people in the COLD. This element of design idealism was to be the largest problem Sir Paul Reilly had during his stint as the director of the COLD during the sixties.

13(viii) The late forties and early fifties were dominated by war time recovery thinking. Patriotism was at a high point. Russell perhaps caught up in the euphoria of patriotism overlooked how far Britain lagged behind the rest of the world in terms of Industrial Design. He valued Britishness highly. Perhaps it was his avowed patriotism that led him to overlook the real motivation of industry. Russell must have reasoned that industry existed simply to serve consumer needs. He miscalculated the real motivation for industry; that of profit. He was too 'nice' for the 'post recovery' world, this functionalist approach to design was based

46. Design Magazine by Fiona MacCarthy. All Things Bright and Beautiful' (13(vii))

on acceptance of the DIA slogan 'fitness for purpose'.
Even by 1949 Russell was losing grip with the real design
world that was commercial. (Illustration fifteen)

14. The South Bank exhibition of 1951

- 14(i) From 1949 onwards the COLD was involved in organising the bigger and better type exhibitions for the 'Festival of Britain'. The notion of such an exhibition was first considered at the Royal Society of Arts decades earlier. It would be a centenary celebration of improvement and development since the Great Exhibition of 1851. There was considerable lobbying carried out to encourage the government to allocate funds. At first the exhibition was to be a 'first rate international exhibition'⁴⁷. The government however would not impart the funds and thus the exhibition was eventually wittled down to a mere national exhibition. The COLD was to organise and select and generally be responsible for the exhibition. They were to take care that the exhibition would act as a springboard for your designers. On that point it was completely successful, so much so as to create a 'jobs for the boys' situation. When the exhibition opened in 1951 at the previously devastated South Bank in London it caught public imagination and approval and was to become an overwhelming success. Eight and a half million people visited the South Bank with countless more attending other festival sites at Lansburn and Battersea in London; the exhibition of Industry Power at Glasgow, the Ulster Farm and Factory exhibition at Belfast; a travelling exhibition around the Midlands and a sea travelling exhibition visiting ports around the country. Gordon Russell wrote in the front page of the festival catalogue;

'An avowed aim of the festival of Great Britain is to show a high standard of industrial design'....'Design you will see' (on viewing the exhibition) 'is recognised as an integral part of quality, which can no longer be thought of as good workmanship and good material only'⁴⁸

47. Ramsden Committee (14(i))

48. Russell Gordon, Festival catalogue 1951 (14(i))

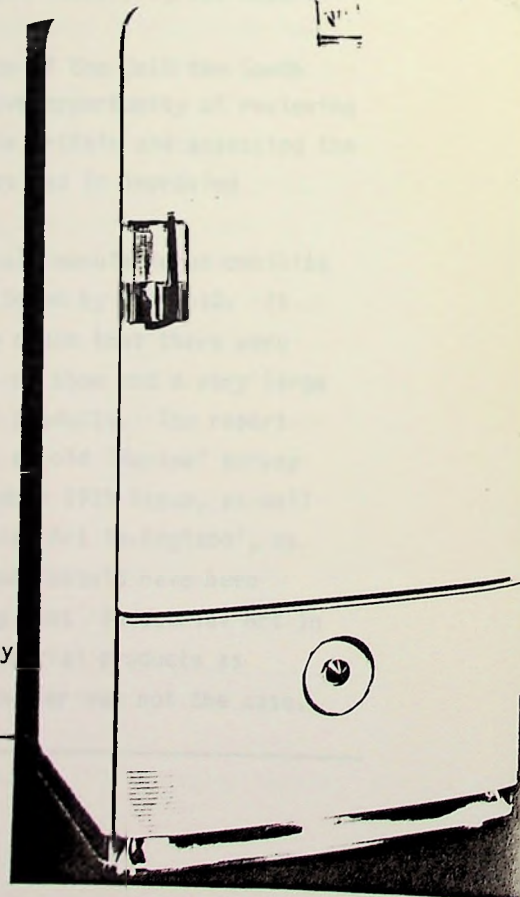
14(ii) When the DIA, the early Cold and Gordon Russell figure in design history books the tone tends to be patronising⁴⁹. Although their methodology and particular brand of functionalism offered many design solutions, their work now looks naive when compared with design work of the same time in America. It is difficult to believe that Raymond Loewy and Gordon Russell were born within one year of each other.⁵⁰

15. Raymond Loewy and the Festival of Britain

15(i) The comparison between Loewy and Russell, each representing a national design ethic was to be the subject of much comment pertaining to the festival. Russell made frequent rhetorical swipes aimed at the Loewy stance. Loewy made comparatively few comments about what he considered a 'very conservative' British design scene. The two men and the two systems were entirely opposed. Russell was restricted by the responsibility of being a civil servant. Loewy was a free man

Illustration fifteen;

Coldrator refrigerator, Designed by R Loewy



Design magazine. August 1983 (14(ii))

Loewy Raymond; Industrial Design 1973 14(ii)

who was almost expected to be flamboyant. Russell found it necessary in his public job to comment morally, for example in respect to the design freedom of post war manufacturers. He said, that they 'indulged in an orgy of bad taste frequently accompanied, as bad taste so often is, by shoddy workmanship. Loewy was not compelled to be so upright and moral; while Russell was plodding around with his pamphlets on 'How to Furnish your Home'; Loewy was streamlining refrigerators and cookers for a booming industry and a 'lap it up dog' public. Young designers were becoming increasingly irritated with the almost calvinistic Russelism being preached by the Cold.⁵¹ They were looking to America for new ideas and a different idealism. Loewy from the distant shores of America by the late forties was having more of an effect on British design than the 'Good God Gordon' Russell at home base.

- 15(ii) Perhaps the most vigorous attack of the Cold and of Gordon Russell came from the Architectural Review of December 1951. The issue carried an article entitled 'Cold progress Report'. The report claimed that;

'Seven years after the foundation of the Cold the South Bank provided a most comprehensive opportunity of reviewing the state of Industrial design in Britain and assessing the amount of success the Council has had in improving standards.

The report reminds the reader that all manufactured exhibits were, if not chosen, at least sanctioned by the Cold. It emphasised this fact and goes on to claim that there were quite a number of 'real atrocities' on show and a very large number of aesthetically indifferent products. The report substantiates its comments by using an old 'Review' survey made by R. Dudley Ryder in the December 1935 issue, as well as, Nicholas Pevsners book 'Industrial Art in England', as fodder for comparison. The comparison should have been positive toward the Cold considering that 'Industrial Art in England' labeled 90% of British industrial products as artistically objectionable. This however was not the case.

At its mildest the report reasons that in no case has the standard gone down. It comments that Murphy's radio cabinets of 1935-37 had not been improved on by other designs. It further noted that many firms who in 1935-37 had cabinet work below contempt; 'now have diluted versions of what Murphy's had before the war'. It criticised the festival souvenir kiosks with their cliched powder compacts with circular enamelled fronts adorned with roses. The report could not have realised the fight Gordon Russell had to pursue, to keep the souvenir shops free from 'effigies of the Royal family in edible fat' and Winston Churchill swiss-rolls.⁵²

15(iii) The point the report⁵³ was most critical about was the influx of American styling.

'there was, alas, a number of modern pieces of the American type with bogus streamlining, known over there as Borax....for instance some of the water heaters and one high price gas stove'

Raymond Loewy the arch fiend had even managed to get one of his cooker designs a position of prominent display. On the condemnation of Borax the Architectural Review seemed to unite with Russell. Why then was so much Borax allowed display space? Russell explains in the next months exciting issue⁵⁴ that there was little choice. He explained that it was the prerogative of the selection committee, to find 'something worth showing from as many firms as possible. It is apparent that both Architectural Review and Gordon Russell still held strongly to 'fitness for purpose' ethics. The festival however marked an end to depression. The following years were to be boom time. The Review and the Council were advocating functionalism when the rest of the world wanted celebration and decoration. What was wrong with applied decoration anyway? Why was Borax deemed so particularly wrong? Surely the old D1A slogan did not really hold any weight? The Architectural Review deals with these questions

52. MacCarthy Fiona. All things bright and beautiful (15(ii))

53. Architectural Review Cold progress report Dec 1951 (15(iii))

54. Architectural Review Cold progress report' 'The Director Replies
- Jan 52 (15(iii))

with the following statement which, virtually states that there are limits and Borax was their limit.

'Fantasy contradicts Industrial Design. Yet, fantasy is as vital as order. The recognition of this need began amongst the most progressive architects and designers just before the war. Until then, its outlet had been jazz in design and decoration; that is lively modernity without creative effort and thought. Jazz has gone out of fashion now, but borax has taken its place...This form of styling usually resolves itself into a repetitive cliché of the chromium strip tacked onto a smooth exterior...it satisfies some of the smarter American stylist, but it does not satisfy the serious modern designer in England, nor one hoped the Cold' It did not satisfy the Cold which is unfortunate, because it satisfied many British designers and much of British industry. The presence of Borax at the South Bank should have been a pointer to the Cold to change their tune. No institution promoted the growth of Borax. It grew because of sales increases. People liked Borax. Russell underestimated the power that 'sales' has on styling, still believing that industry would serve the consumer in a responsibly way.

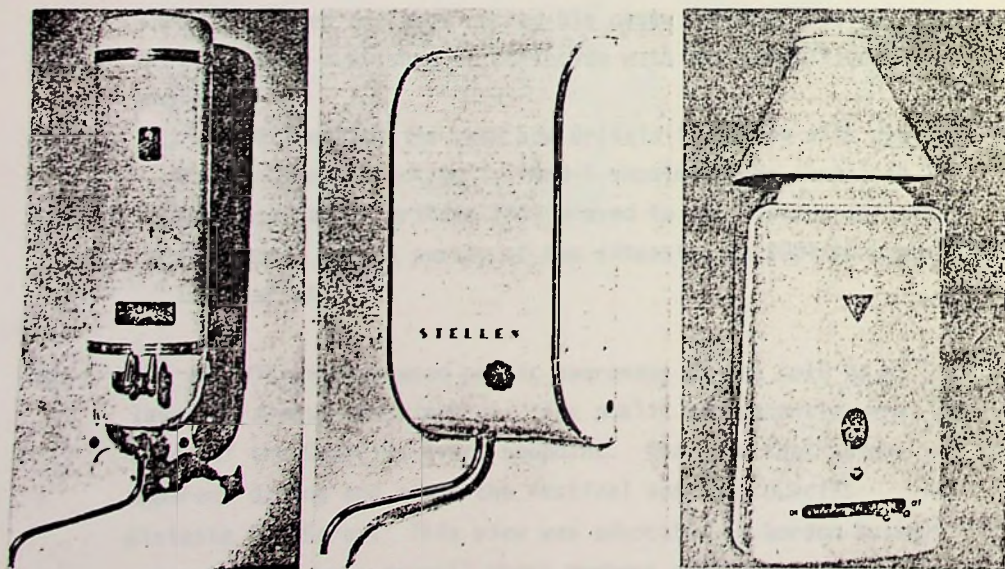


Illustration sixteen. Water boilers at the festival.

15(iv) The report rattles on eventually admitting that the Councils selection of kitchen equipment showed that the companies concerned were 'very much more alive to good design than they were, say, fifteen years ago,' regardless of the 'disease' borax. The report picked up on a number of sideboards found in the Homes and Gardens building. One of the sideboards was according to the report, 'prententious in its struggle to achieve originality'. The report asks why such an ugly exhibit was admitted. Gordon Russell answered in the director replies article; his reply reflects lingering Arts and Crafts philosophies.

'Because I felt it was a sincere attempt to find a way of using carving again' (after the war)'which I happen to think important. I defended it strongly when there was considerable pressure to withdraw it'

Russell, with the exception of the nasty glimpse of that old movement creed stated above, defends the CoLD policies from other Review criticisms quite adequately. He fends off the report as ivory-towerish. He balances the Review criticism with criticism received from industry and trade complaining of over exacting selection procedures. From the combination of the two criticisms Russell reasoned that the festival was correctly aimed and thus rested his case. In the 'Design in Britain' book published to co-incide with the exhibition he wrote;

'The 1951 exhibition show how Britain is coping with design for machine production'...'And I should not be surprised if the festival of Britain 1951 proved to have been a decisive influence, when a survey of the situation in 2051/AD comes to be written'⁵⁵.

15(v) The exhibition increased public awareness of the CoLD to a level of almost acclamation. The public subsequently were aware of the Councils every newpoint. One view that became apparent during and after the festival was the councils distaste for Borax. This view was advocated by Gordon Russell and supported by a council whose members still possessed

ideals belonging to the bygone days of the Arts and Crafts societies. As borax increased in popularity the Council increased its campaign against it. This campaign amongst other over moral CoID policies alienated the Council from young designers and the general public. It became apparent that Gordon Russell definition of 'what is good design' would not hold for all time, good design being a transient thing.

16. The CoID 1951 to 1960

16(i) The CoID never reached the high goals it had originally; aimed at, for, it did nonetheless make certain inroads into many design problems. Fame came to the CoID directly as a result of the Festival and as design consciousness multiplied. Many women's magazines and woman's pages in newspapers adopted 'design' articles. Design was on the move; it was not however controlled by the CoID but, rather, it was a popular type of design. More than at any time previously people had money to spend. There was a substantial growth in the purchases of consumer goods helped greatly along by the introduction of hire purchase. As people became richer they became more aware of design. They would choose a product of higher quality feeling little constraint due to price. The change in the economy elevated British design appreciation in the general public from a status of apathy to active interest.

16(ii) In June 1952 the Government sponsored an Anglo-American council to investigate American design and productivity. They reported back with astonishment that a totally alien design ethic had grown in America.

'Practice in the aesthetics of design varies widely from one firm to another, but all regarded it as a serious element in their design policy'...'In one branch - the automobile industry, we found that initiative in the introduction of each years model is taken by the styling department, with design engineers and production engineers called into consultation.'⁵⁶

56. Anglo American report on productivity 1952 (16(ii))

More than ever before the difference in attitudes between British and American designers was apparent. The Cold still strongly disapproved of Borax or any other form of 'American' design. John Blake (editor of Design Magazine 1986) was most vocal on this point. He was totally opposed to the ideals of American consumerism and the associated concept of 'built in obsolescence'. Milner Gray, in an article called, 'Retrospect to Prospect' blamed the slowing down of British progress in design on the same concept. He wrote;

Yet in radio and television sets it is doubtful whether we have improved upon or indeed equalled the earlier models by, for instance Murphy or K. Cole; such is the penalty for harnessing the goddess fashion to a street car named 'design for obsolescence'.⁵⁷

16(iii) The council was fighting a losing battle. The weight in terms of influence of American styling won the day and Chromium was expensively and expansively tacked onto everything. The white products were the first to show the signs, next the cars sprouted chromium tailwings and Flash Gordon styling.

(Illustration eighteen) Blake strongly disapproved;

'Films, plays, stories and broadcasts are devoted to the exploits of space men, so that almost without realising it we are witnesses to the growth of new mythology comparable to that of ancient Greece...The dashboards of many new, particularly American cars look and are obviously intended to look, as they would control nothing less than a space ship...the more dials and controls we possess, the more apparently we can identify ourselves with our space heroes, the more we can bring this romantic world of science into our homes'⁵⁸

'Sci-fi' became accepted and there was nothing that John Blake or the Cold could do. John Blake summed up by saying;

The danger, is that more than ever before, appearance is becoming a substitute for substance, the look more important than the purpose, the image a cloak for reality'

57. Gray Milner, Retrospect to Prospect; RSA journal

58. Blake John recalled by Paul Reilly in 'Design in Britain' (16(ii))

It is ironic that the Cold saw this revival of decoration and falshboynance as a danger. The same revival caused so much economic boom and prosperity.

16(iv) The D1A sprung back into action in 1953 after taking a back seat for a number of years. They mounted an exhibition called 'Register your Choice'. The exhibition consisted of two rooms one contemporary (modern) and the other commercial (what was selling). Most visitors preferred the contemporary room, which at least suggests that people were fed up with the cottage style. People were a little confused as to whay style the Cold were promoting, if any. All that was clear, was that Borax was condemned. This was to be the beginning of public confusion as the council changed its ideal definitions of good design several times. The exhibition is significant becausee it shows that a majority of people were making a conscious swing toward one style or another, they were not apathetic. The growth of Borax proves that 'Swing' was not particularly affected by the preachings of the Cold.

16(v) On the twenty sixth of April 1956 the Design Centre was opened at Haymarket. The new chairman, Sir Walter Worboys assured the public that the Design Centre's function was 'unashamedly commerical'. The Cold would operate the Centre via a selection committee. Manufacturers would enter products to the committee which, would in turn assess the design merits of the product according to the old D1A morals, 'performance (fitness for purpose), construction, ergonomics, safety, appearance and cost.'⁵⁹. If the committee approved then the product could be exhibited (on payment of a fee) at the centre. If more money was handed over special 'Design Centre Approved' badges could be affixed to each product. The standing of the Cold at that stage in time should not be underestimated. Many companies thought so highly of the awards thay used them exclusively in their advertising. Even though the Cold was rapidly losing grip with the world of

59. Johnston Dan 'The Design Council' (Museums Journal) (16(v))

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Illustration eighteen A, Ford Motor Cars 1952

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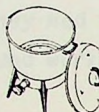
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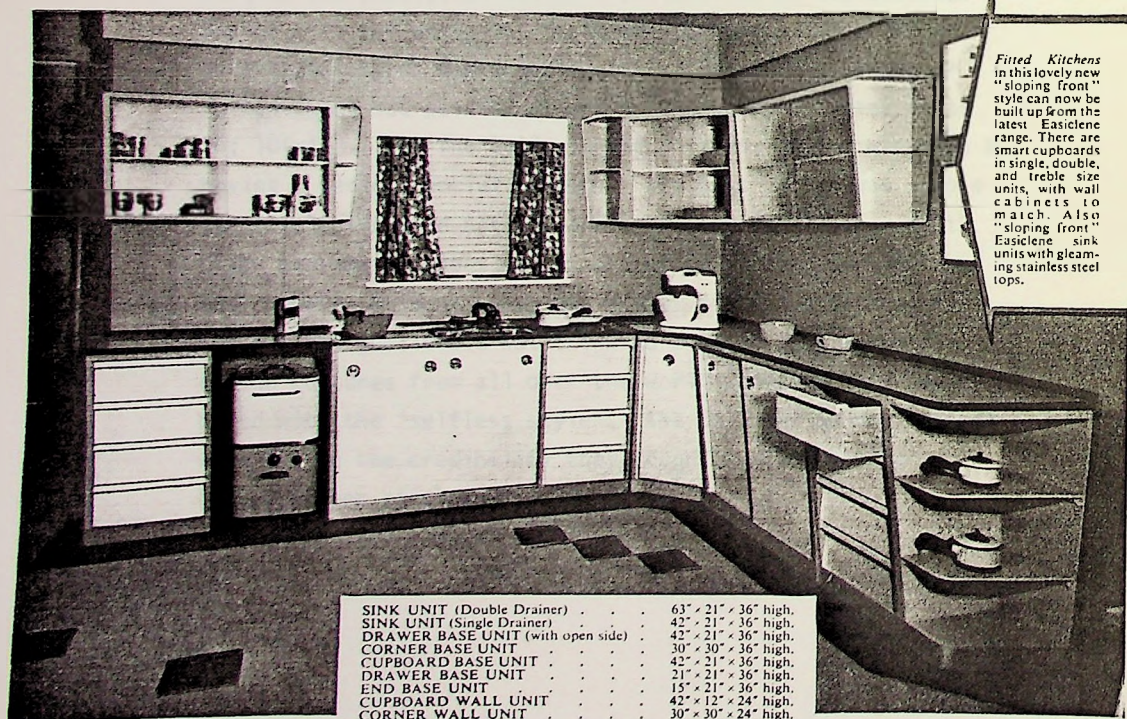


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DRAWER BASE UNIT	21" x 21" x 36" high.
END BASE UNIT	15" x 21" x 36" high.
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Illustration eighteen B, Borax? Kitchen Design. Ideal home magazine

fashion based industrial design, it still was riding high on the success story of the Festival. Criticism started to mount against the Council when it was noticed that the approved products tended to look the same. The council was accused of 'style hunting'. The council claimed that if the chosen products looked the same it was because they had the same features of quality, clean appearance, sound workmanship and suitability for purpose.

- 16(vi) Over the years the Council had proven itself to be competent to stage exhibitions small and large and to carry on effective propaganda, but, it did not take care to analyse the importance of popular taste. An example of these oversights can be found in the council treatment of Scandinavian culture. The Council should have made early note of the Scandinavian design activities and encouraged industry to do likewise, instead they ignored the situation. By the late fifties the population was more switched on to Scandinavian Design than the design of their own country. The predictability of the Scandinavian situation was clear. P. Morton-Shand had pointed it out in the early thirties (Note 36; 10(vi)). For the Cold, in the fifties, design was seen as having a serious social purpose. The best design was simple and straightforward not wayward or eccentric.⁶⁰ The right style was the selfless style, accesible to everyone; but was it? Neither Raymond Loewy nor any of his clients thought so. The British public did not think so either, they adopted design cultures from all over the world whenever they became bored with the 'selfless style'. The Cold and Gordon Russell were losing the credibility they fought so hard to win (Illustration nineteen)

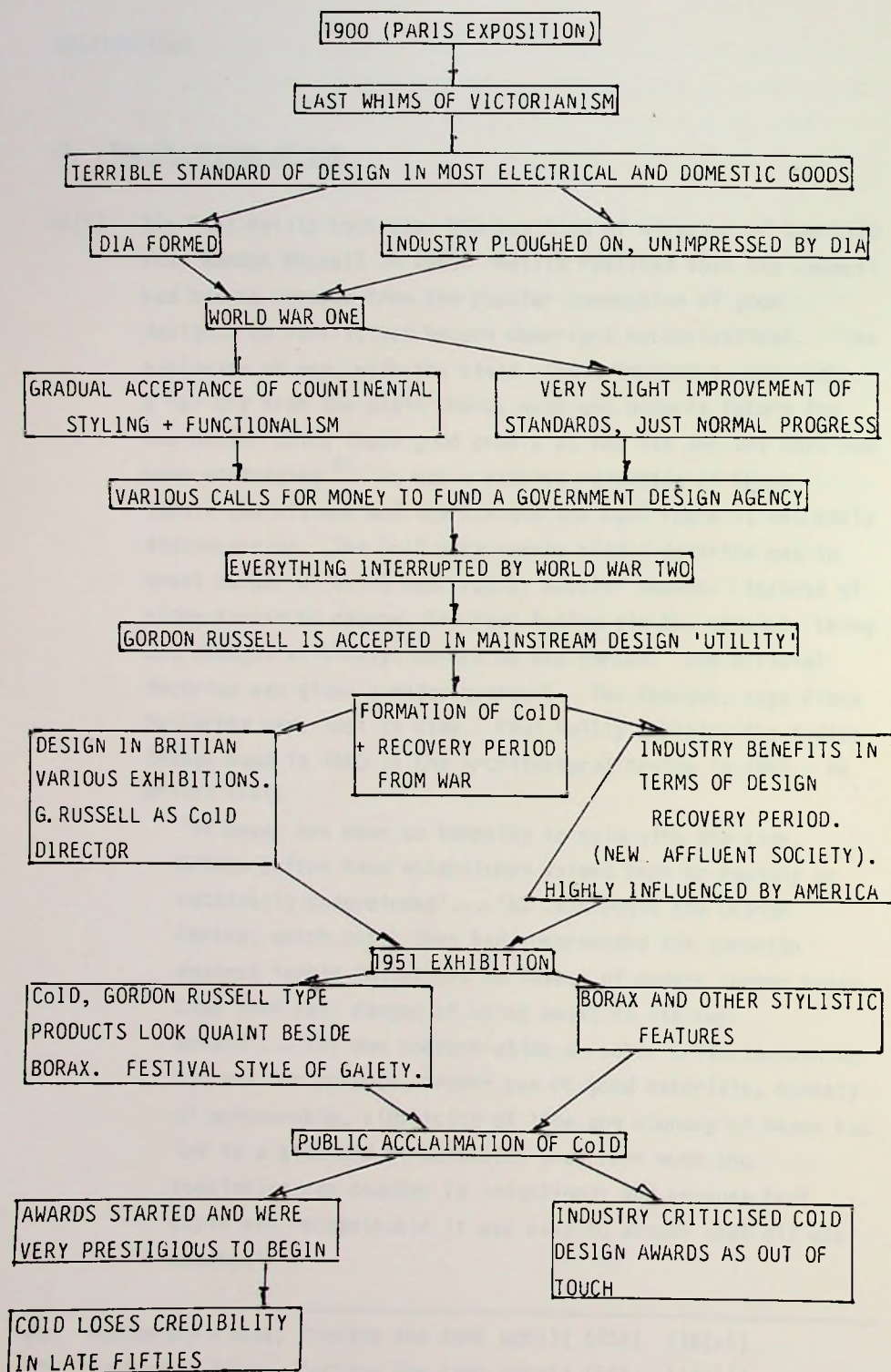


Illustration nineteen Graph

SECTION FOUR

17. The Challenge of pop

17(i) Sir Paul Reilly took over the position of director of the Cold from Gordon Russell in 1960. Reilly realised that the Council had become removed from the popular conception of good design. In fact it had become downright ecclesiastical. 'The explosion of pop, with its vivid visual imageries, was rather a far cry from the plain charm, neat and orderly future for the nation which those good people at the DIA and the Cold had been envisaging.⁶¹ It was a massive rejection of those ideals and visions and the DIA and the Cold found it extremely disconcerting. The Cold very narrow minded doctrine was in great danger of being over run by popular demand. Instead of being forced to change, Sir Paul Reilly did the sensible thing and changed willingly, before he was forced. The official doctrine was given a major overhaul. The changes, says Fiona MacCarthy were just in time. Paul Reilly explains the sudden change made in 1960 in the Architectural Review in 1967. He writes that;

'it never has been so tempting to swim with the tide. Seldom before have established values been so rapidly or ruthlessly undermined'....'At this point the Design Centre, which until then had spearheaded the campaign against feeble imitations in favour of modern common sense came into real danger of being hoist to its own petard'...'Its own concentration on sober criteria such as fitness for purpose, proper use of good materials, honesty of workmanship, simplicity of line and economy of means had led to a standard of selection (how ever much the conclusion ran counter to intention); and because that style was recognisable it was easy to assume that all was counted'⁶²

60. MacCarthy Fiona, Pushing the tank uphill (RSA) (16(vi))

61. MacCarthy Fiona, Pushing the tank uphill (RSA) (17(i))

62. Reilly Paul. The Challenge of Pop. Architectural Review (17(i))

17(ii) Reilly highlighted the need for change. The conflict between the fast changing Kaleidoscope of young fashionable ideas and the old principles of the DIA and early COLD was a battle Reilly could not hope to win. His only option was to lose gracefully. He knew that 'Englishness' conviviality and cups of tea, were no longer acceptable at the Haymarket. The old ways were criticised by Fiona MacCarthy;

'There was a certain sense of being alone against a world of suspect values, passing fashions, a self righteous sort of attitude which partially explains, it seems to me the lack of stylishness in so much of British Design this century'.....⁶³

Marshall McLuhan observed about design in the sixties that 'to ignore the ephemeral per say is to ignore a fact of life'. This was to become the idiom of design for the sixties and seventies. The council quickly shed its old morals and in 1967 Reilly claimed that the Design Centre was 'unashamedly adventurous and obviously much influenced by, if not itself the initiator, of current trends'. He completely rejects the old notions of form follows function' and 'fitness for purpose' thus disowning the old principles of Gordon Russell, and calling them 'old fashioned';

'In engineering industries other more functional considerations will continue to apply, but for consumer goods, though form may have followed function in the good old days, in this electric age they are neck and neck'⁶⁴

17(iii) With the established measures of good design not just moderated as before but vanquished, new measures needed to be introduced. The new measure of good design was to be conviction. Every product should show conviction in its design. Product identity was specified by the COLD as a way in which 'conviction' could be shown. Product identity explains product function through associational values or form;

'What we should expect to experience from a product is an idea of its role or purpose relative to the roles and purposes of everything else which we have experienced.

63. MacCarthy Fiona Pushing the Tank Uphill RSA (17(ii)

64. Reilly Paul. The Challenge of Pop. Architectural Review (17(ii)

What happens inside the product is irrelevant. Form in such a fast technological age cannot follow function.⁶⁵

It is hardly surprising the COLD found it hard to indoctrinate the notion of good design into the brains of the populus, when the Council itself made such complete changes in their own opinion of what good design is. Misha Black in the Times in 1976 reveals what surely is the mark of ultimate failure for the COLD;

'The task of the ergonomist is now I hope well understood by industry, but the role of the industrial designer remains unclear despite thirty years of propaganda by the design council.'⁶⁶

In July 1983, The Times in an article referring to the Council explains that three arguments are current;

1. What do we mean by good design
2. Should we as a nation and the Design Council in particular identify industrial design separately from consumer appeal?
3. Is British design in consumer fields good or bad?

These are the same arguments that were being discussed in 1944. Has any progress been made?⁶⁷

17(iv) Sir Paul Reilly retrospectively commented on his stint at the Haymarket in Stephen Bayley's book 'In Good Shape'

'Towards the end of my period at the Haymarket I began to find myself out of touch and indeed out of sympathy with some of the more popular and to me more frivolous manifestations of modern design.'⁶⁸

It could be possible that it is over taxing to ask of any institution to lead and maintain the lead, in terms of ideology in something as fast changing as industrial design.

65. Britton Mark Design Magazine 1976

66. Times June 1965 (17(iii))

67. Times July 1983 (17(iii))

68. Reilly Recalled by Stephen Bayley ; 'In good shape' (17(iv))

18. Conclusion

- 18(i) The record of history causes several problems. The further back into history, the more difficult it becomes to understand these problems in design history the main problem is assessing a "general state of design" when history records the work of only a few leading designers. This generally gives an over optimistic view of design standards.
- 18(ii) In the nineteenth century there was A.W.N. Pugin and Henry Cole. Neither of these men are very important because of their design achievements but, both are important because of their useful and highly perceptive 'ground comment'. According to their views industry was in a dreadful state of design ignorance. This was the opulent era called Victorianism and it was to produce many absolute travisties in terms of design. Industry took little notice of the advice and criticism levelled by Pugin or Cole and rattled on until World War 1 producing the tawdry idiocies of Victorianism. As an antireaction to the poor design awareness of industry several protest groups were formed. One such group was the Arts and Crafts movement. The movement called for the maintainance of craft skills and workmanship. It rejected the goods of machine production. Arts and Crafts ideology attracted many competent designers. The shift in attention away from machine production to craft production by designers delayed development in the area of industrial design. The effect of the Arts and Crafts did not stop when the movement the movement fizzled out in 1914. The ideology of the movement was to become a trade mark of British Design well until 1960. From the Arts and Crafts grew the DIA who were to represent design ideals for many years. The main element of DIA creed was 'fitness for purpose'. 'Fitness for purpose' ideology certainly gaurded against the travisties of Victorian days. As time went by however, it began to show its limits in terms of application. It produced a naive sense of design very similar to the Arts and Crafts in style. This naivity was based on the DIA cottage industry conception of Industrial design.

18(iii) Progress in design ideals had been severely hampered by the two wars. The DfA had not provoked industry into rapid design improvement. Design standards in industry had improved only slightly since 1900. The CofD was formed just after World War 2 and set about educating industry and the public that industrial design existed. They organised exhibitions and conferences as means of education. Misha Black's famous exhibit 'What is an Industrial designer' demonstrates how chronic public ignorance was of the subject. In 1947 Gordon Russell took over as CofD director. Russell maintained the old DfA standard of 'fitness for purpose'. Instead of advocating experiment in new design Russell and the CofD promoted the old over purist DfA ideals. This suited for the years directly after the war but, as wartime recovery became more apparent the policy became removed from public desire and industrial reality. The situation was highlighted in the 1951 Festival of Britain. Young British Designers if not already advocates of American styling rapidly lost their bashfulness. The honest and homely design work so typically British simply looked quaint. Design ideology was rapidly changing and the CofD was equally rapidly losing touch. This phenomenon was called the 'Challenge of Pop' by Sir Paul Reilly. Reilly took over as director of the CofD in 1960. His new policies rejected the 'fitness for purpose' ethic and somewhat closed the gap between, CofD official 'good design' and the popular conception of good design.

18(iv) The final conclusion must be that ideals are not fixed. Design ideology as with design itself, must change with environment and time.

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