

The Smallpeice Trust and InterCity Design Competition

Gerry Barnard

Advisory Teacher for Art and Design, Croydon TVEI

If our prosperity in the 21st Century depends much on the abilities of our future designers and engineers, then, contrary to much recent comment we are all in good hands.

We wish John Patten could have joined us on board an InterCity Pullman restaurant car at London's Euston Station to see two teams of young people preparing and presenting a meal to eminent judges from the food and railway industries and the British Institute of Management. Other fine examples of product design, fashion and graphics were exhibited that had deservedly won the teams a place in the finals of a national competition for young designers.

Smallpeice's Industry Education Liaison Department had set the task of re-designing a train restaurant car for use by 1st Class rail travellers, and joint sponsors InterCity provided a detailed and demanding design brief. The competition was specifically devised to run in-line with the school curriculum, and ensured that teams were required to use all elements of design and technology. Alongside the engineering design work, the entrants were asked to re-design staff uniforms, and to devise, prepare and serve a 3-course meal.

The finalists were — Coloma Convent School from Croydon, and Sponne School from Towcester, Northamptonshire. Coloma

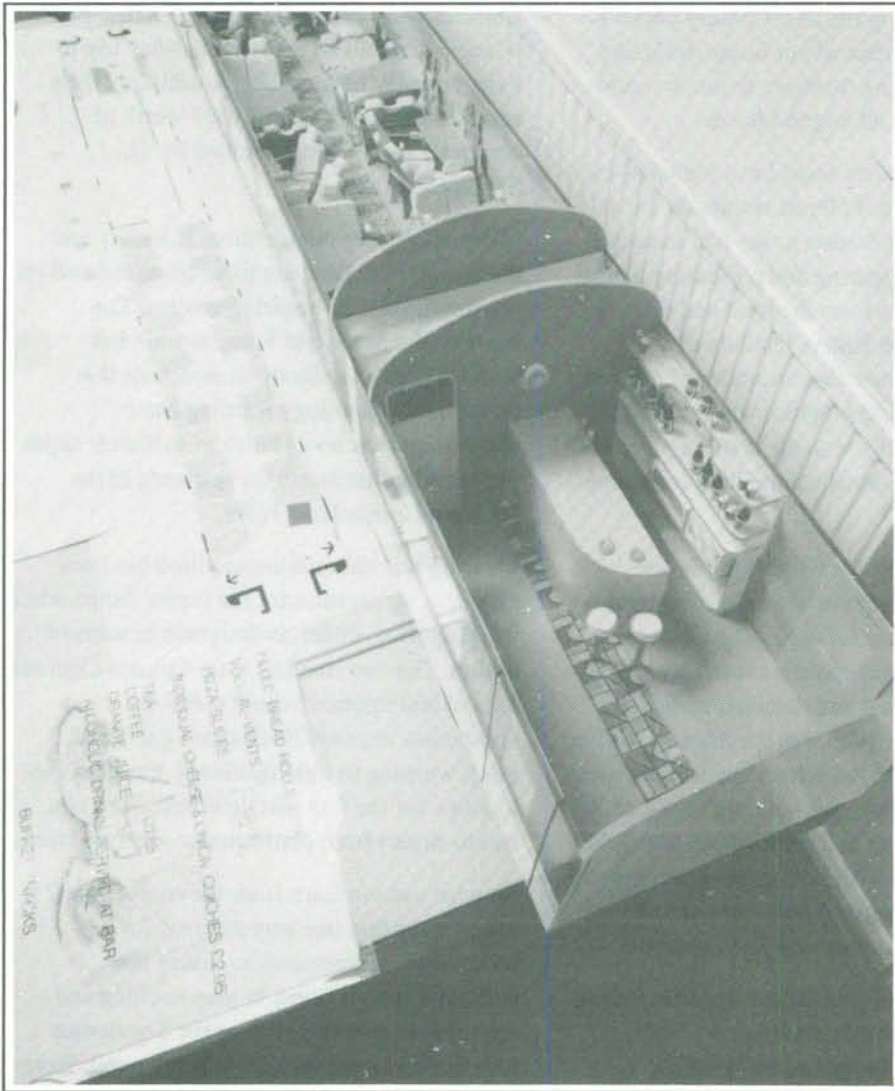
Convent were eventually named as first-prize winners and will be enjoying a 3-day trip to Paris courtesy of InterCity. In addition, their school will benefit from £1000 worth of computer equipment presented by The Smallpeice Trust.

In organising the competition, InterCity and the Smallpeice Trust are to be congratulated on providing such an inspiring subject. The context of a new-style Pullman train has enabled pupils to clearly demonstrate that design and technology learning can be undertaken in schools today to sufficient depth and breadth that meets the demands of the National Curriculum orders.

Entering this national competition has been excellent preparation for the teams' future adult working lives, either as designers or users of design. The two finalists from Coloma Convent School and Sponne School noted the constraints imposed by designing to a real brief, working to tight deadlines, even having to allow for the fact that their Pullman Train had to depart from platform one at a fixed time.

So what can we learn from the competition? It seems to us that one way forward for technology in schools is to ensure that sufficient time is given to plan exciting and appropriate contexts such as the Smallpeice Competition provided. Clearly the pupils have





been enthused by it to recognise, respond and act on different human needs to produce outstanding results.

TVEI has been delighted to provide support and advice to some of the schools entering this excellent competition. We are keen to promote the conceptual approach to designing through the technology process which integrates analysis, problem-solving and practical capability with evaluative, collaborative and communicative skills. The evidence of the success of this approach was at Euston Station for all to see in the realised ideas and professional presentation of the young people.

Everyone connected with the Smallpeice Trust 25th Anniversary Competition deserves the warmest congratulations. They must have been delighted that the result of their competition for young designers and engineers resulted in an all female team 'winning' and we were delighted that the InterCity train at platform one was not named 'Blue Peter'!

