THE UNACCEPTABLE FACE OF THE IPRODE

Sir — I wish to add my comments to those expressed by many others regarding the new look Production Engineer, and to what must by now be a massive pile of ignored letters.

In the April issue of Production Engineer Professor Hundy fairly well summed up what seems to be a general feeling regarding the revised design of this journal. However, your reply to his letter cursorily dismissed his remarks. It is unfortunate that, despite the ‘great debate’ which surrounds the new look, all those submitting constructive comments simply find themselves coming up against an editorial brick wall.

However, the change in title to ‘Manufacturing Engineer’ is good news and a step in the right direction, but this change should not be made alone. A title change creates a good opportunity to alter the journal design and layout and themselves coming up against an editorial brick wall.

The journal is the major link between the Institution and its members, and if this link breaks down when members do not read it, the Institution will soon fall apart. The journal is also what the ‘outside world’ see, and it is an appalling advertisement for the IProdE. How many young engineers will be inclined to join an Institution which they see to be represented by this journal? I am leaving it.

Sir

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N. I. R. 2.

THE LEADER (March)

Sir — I am very disappointed with the Leader article in the March issue of Production Engineer which states that Europeans will be buying British light bulbs, and in Britain people will be buying Continental light bulbs “because of standardisation will not be radically different anyway”.

The barriers to free trade may come down in 1992, but for Britain life will not be as simple as was made out because to sell light bulbs on mainland Europe they will have to correspond to the local voltage pressure, and are usually held in place by the Edison screw method not the British style of bayonet fitting. I suspect this sort of difference local variation is still going to be with us in 2092.

Bob Cooper
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LETS THERE BE LIGHT

Sir — I read with interest (Letters February 1989) the problems Senior Editor Sam Tulip had with members referring to the Institution of Production Engineers as “The Institute.”

Maybe this is not surprising when some members of staff think they work for the Institute.

In the same issue of Production Engineer, under classified, BREL have an advertisement for a production engineer who is a member of “The Institute of Production Engineers” (sic). I will say no more!

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FALLING UNDER THE SPELL

Sir — I read with interest the final paragraph of the Leader article in the March issue of Production Engineer which states that Europeans will be buying British light bulbs, and in Britain people will be buying Continental light bulbs “because of standardisation will not be radically different anyway”.

The barriers to free trade may come down in 1992, but for Britain life will not be as simple as was made out because to sell light bulbs on mainland Europe they will have to correspond to the local voltage pressure, and are usually held in place by the Edison Screw method not the British style of bayonet fitting. I suspect this sort of difference local variation is still going to be with us in 2092.

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This was precisely the point that the Leader, and the article ‘Standard Questions’, were trying to raise in the same issue. If these products cannot be used in different European countries because of fundamental differences in technological standards, how can we achieve this ‘Single Market’? And even if we could, will it really be of benefit to the citizens of Europe, and the manufacturers who serve their needs?

Simon Clarke.

BETTER VALUE BY FAR

Sir — Clive Bone’s letter in the March issue of Production Engineer enquires about the availability of films on Value Analysis and information on the demise of Value Engineering in the UK.

The old films on Value Engineering are available from the Central film library. Up-to-date material is available through the Society of American Value Engineers. The neglect of VA is confined to the UK and is in proportion to the decline of the UK manufacturing industry, now down to 15% of GNP.

When Japan’s phenomenal growth rate, eg 8-10% pa, was threatened by oil price increases in the early 70s they switched from quality improvement to elimination of waste. This took many forms, eg energy saving, application of industrial engineering and value engineering. The design benefits, features and price of any Japanese product is testimony to the application of Value Engineering technique by Japanese designers. The just-in-time technique now reaching the UK twenty years after being introduced into the Japanese Toyota company is Value (added) analysis of a repetitive manufacturing process, demonstrating how Japanese production engineers have applied Value Analysis to the manufacturing process.

It all started with Lawrence Miles in the USA, and with the American Department of Defense insisting that defense contractors apply cost saving Value analysis as a condition of contract. The United States DOD has recently renewed its demand for the application of Value Analysis by contractors in an attempt to further reduce defense spending.

A House of Commons committee recently reported massive overspend on UK defence contracts, eg £100 million overspend in three years.

UK industry is currently quite rightly concentrating on improving the quality image of British goods and services. When that job is done there is still the question of value for money and at that moment enlightened manufacturers will apply Value engineering. Of course the name will be changed and it will be heralded as yet another wonder cure from the East.

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