

INDUSTRY: CONSTRUCTION
ACTIVITY: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
ORGANISATION: CITB: CONSTRUCTION
INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARD

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - BARBARA HASTIE

I left school at the age of 16 not knowing what direction I wanted to go. My father, who was in the trades, suggested I enrol at the local Borders College on a full-time course studying Painting & Decorating (P&D). Until that point no one had ever suggested that a girl could do a trade craft for a living, it was only seen as something for the boys!

That was the beginning of my journey through a wide varied career revolving around the Construction Industry.



Construction lecturing staff came to the aid of Local Nursery, Knowpark in Selkirk looking for assistance in helping to cover the topic of 'Jackie of all Trades'.



Although it was hard at first on my first day at college as the only female in the class, I managed to gain an apprenticeship with a local company and became a fully qualified Painter & Decorator working alongside my fellow tradesmen. Being the only girl never bothered me as it just made me more determined to prove them wrong in that a female can do the same job as a man if not better! I took part in lots of local and national P&D competitions, showcasing my skills and as I travelled a lot, I found that there were more and more females learning the trade.

I then went on to start my own successful P&D company and worked hard being self-employed, picking up lots of work just because people liked the idea of a female decorator. An opportunity arose at the local college where I trained at and they were looking for a lecturer in the P&D Department. I applied and successfully got the role and became the first female construction lecturer in Scotland. I taught there for over 15 years and ran the department. I taught all different levels from nursery right through to advanced craft level, from students aged 4 – 54. I gained further qualifications and a teaching degree of which I never imagined I could do. I even got my story told in a book!

I went on to work with SQA and an External Verifier, and I was the first female craft External Verifier for SQA. I helped create the qualification that they still use today as well as visit other Scottish colleges to ensure standards were being met for the P&D awards.

In a way I have now come full circle. I now work for CITB as an Apprenticeships Officer, helping, encouraging, and supporting apprentices in their trades, just as CITB did for me when I first started my apprenticeship. I love my job and would encourage any girls out there to consider construction as a worthwhile career, there are so many diverse roles that you can do and so much opportunity to build upon your skills and qualifications. It is where you can see the fruits of your labours and buildings, houses & infrastructure are there forever for everyone to see. The Construction Industry is full of amazing individuals from all walks of life building a better future.

Being female should not discourage you!!

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