



WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

Promoting careers in the built heritage



MARCH 2024

STIRLING HIGH SCHOOL

EVENT REPORT



Stirling City
HERITAGE TRUST



Women in Construction 2024

Women in Construction is a series of events conceived and organised by Stirling City Heritage Trust (SCHT), with the aim of inspiring female high school students to consider a career in the construction sector. Our events showcase how varied and rewarding work in the sector can be, with a focus on roles which involve working with the historic built environment.

This year's event was held on the 8th March to mark International Women's Day. According to the Office of National Statistics* women currently make up only 16.6% of workers in the construction sector, and only 2.5% of Modern Apprentices in Scotland‡, with a 23% gender pay gap within the construction industry's biggest companies†. These events are therefore much needed.

On the day, pupils participated in a series of hands-on activities led by demonstrators, the majority of whom were women. They also heard about each demonstrator's own career journey, highlighting that there is 'no wrong path' into the sector. Resources on career opportunities were provided by RICS, RIAS and HES. Apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities were also signposted to school staff and pupils and career resource packs were given to every pupil to take home.

With our thanks to BEAR Scotland, who awarded SCHT with £250 of funding for the event. Two of their staff members joined us for the day and had a great time trying out the demonstrations.

* ONS Data March 2023, [Labour Force Survey](#)

‡ Skills Development Scotland, Modern Apprenticeship Statistics Q4 2022/23

† CIPD gender pay gap reporting 2022-2023, [Construction Management](#)

'I found that women are just as able and can be independent which I find strong and I am now very enthusiastic about it!'

- Student, S6



Our Demonstrators



Mosaics - Helen Miles

Helen is a mosaic artist and author based in Abbeymount Studios in Edinburgh. Helen trained in the art of mosaic making with master crafts people in Greece who taught using traditional methods with a focus on Byzantine iconography. She later became interested in Roman mosaics and now makes contemporary pieces for interior and exterior spaces. Helen also teaches workshops and classes and runs an annual residential mosaic workshop in Greece.

Pupils got the chance to learn about mosaics in the historic built environment, as well as make their own small mosaics. They used traditional flour and water glue and cut and placed glass tessera. Every one was different!



Stonecarving - Gillian Forbes

Based in Glenfarg, Gillian is an award-winning stonecarver. She primarily undertakes private commissions to create unique hand-carved memorials, lettering and carved features in a wide variety of British Stone. Gillian also exhibits her work at The Scottish Gallery in Edinburgh.

Using traditional hand tools, pupils drew and then carved shapes inspired by the natural world into blocks of stone. By the end of the day we'd seen carvings of cats, leaves, flowers and insects.

Digital Documentation - Sophia Mirashrafi, Charne Janse Van Rensburg & Laura O'Connor

The Digital Documentation and Innovation team's work feeds directly into the care of Historic Environment Scotland sites and collections. They use cutting edge digital technologies to document heritage in 3D and create data that informs conservation and heritage management decisions, learning and interpretation.

Pupils were introduced to the software and scanners used by Historic Environment Scotland to create 3D digital and printed models of everything from Stirling Castle to the Crown of Scotland.



Drone Flying - David Philips, My World of Work Live Adviser, Skills Development Scotland

David delivers Skills Development Scotland's My World of Work programme. This programme helps young people, as well as their educators and guardians, to think about and realise their future careers. Skills Development Scotland is the national skills body supporting the people and businesses of Scotland to develop and apply their skills.

Flying small drones indoors, pupils got the chance to use a tool which is becoming more and more common in surveying and recording the historic built environment.





Plastering - Gemma Crook, Plaster Lass

Gemma Crook is a plasterer and artist working with natural and sustainable materials including lime and clay. Based in Glasgow with her zero emissions electric van, Gemma has recently taken part in the King's Foundation Building Craft Programme at Dumfries House.

Getting muddy, pupils learned about different types of plaster and their various applications, before mixing-up some clay plaster and trying their hand at applying it smoothly to boards.

Signwriting - Rachel E Miller & Hana Lindsay, Bungo Sign Co.

Rachel and Hana are behind the award-winning sign painting and design studio Bungo Sign Co., based in the south side of Glasgow. They host gilding and sign-writing workshops in their shop, a transformed former fishmongers, and they paint murals, shop signs and shop fronts, as well as smaller commissions.

Using traditional paint, brushes and techniques, pupils very fittingly learned how to paint the letters 'W I C' with a steady hand.



Slate Cutting - Chris Menzies, Stirling City Heritage Trust

Chris is Stirling City Heritage Trust's Traditional Buildings Inspector. He has an MSc in Technical Building Conservation from the University of Stirling and Historic Environment Scotland, and he has spent the past 12 years maintaining, repairing and inspecting traditional buildings as well as lecturing on roofing and construction crafts.

Pupils learned about the many different slate types found across the UK and then cut slates into a variety of shapes, including hearts, with traditional slate knives and a guillotine.



Patternmaking- Ruth Davies, Pollock Davies

Ruth Davies provides high quality patternmaking and woodcarving services to the architectural, artistic, heritage and conservation sectors, as well as private clients. Pollock Davies specialise in traditional wood patterns for ornamental cast iron, but they also produce moulds and castings in fibreglass, plastics, resins, rubber, plaster etc, as well as the gilding and painting of metal castings.

Pupils learned about the art of traditional patternmaking for cast iron, and then using hand-carving tools, got the chance to do some wood carving themselves.

Thermography - Fiona Park & Callum McRae Stirling City Heritage Trust

Fiona, SCHT's Retrofit Inspector, has a MSc in Architectural Design for the Conservation of Built Heritage from the University Strathclyde and a Bachelors in Architectural Engineering. Callum recently joined the SCHT team as a Heritage Trainee, he has an honours degree in Building Surveying.

Using a thermal camera to search for hidden hot spots in the workshop, pupils learned about energy efficiency and heat loss in traditional buildings, subjects that are becoming more and more important in the sector.



Careers Quiz - Raymond Quinn, CITB Scotland

Raymond supports apprentices and gives young people an insight into careers in the construction sector, guiding them to roles that may suit their interests and skills. CITB Scotland is the Construction Industry Training Board for Scotland. They help the government to recognise industry needs for skills development, support training priorities, and link employers to decision makers through events such as Scottish Apprenticeship Week.

Raymond talks to pupils about everything from what pay they can expect for various roles in the sector, to what job career path might suit their likes and dislikes. He boosts pupils self-confidence by ending the session with each pupil saying three positive things about themselves, giving them confidence for future interviews.



Outcomes

The SCHT Women in Construction events bring together women with a variety of skillsets and experiences from across the construction and heritage sectors to inspire the next generation.

Women in Construction has been designed to encompass a wide array of activities, catering to diverse skills and interests. From hands-on skills such as joinery and stone carving to digital-based recording, thermography and drone piloting, there was something for everyone.

Awareness

School staff and pupils now have a greater awareness of the variety of job roles and career paths in the construction sector.



Encouragement

Pupils have been encouraged to see a career in the sector as a viable option for themselves.



Insight

Participants received career advice from women working in the construction and heritage sectors, providing mentorship and inspirational role models.



Experience

Pupils received encouragement to try different practical hands-on activities relating to careers in the sector.



Understanding

Increased understanding of the importance of traditional skills & materials and the historic built environment amongst pupils.



'Was great to see lots of women taking the sessions. All girls were engaged and able to learn important skills.'
- Teacher

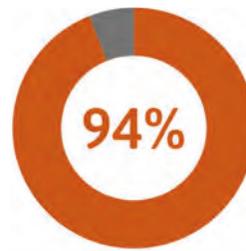


Feedback



BEFORE

of students would consider a career in construction/heritage before the event



AFTER

of students would consider a career in construction/heritage after the event



BEFORE

the event **63%** of students were mostly looking forward to the event



AFTER

the event **73%** of the students loved it and **100%** enjoyed the event

Most Enjoyed Activities



Mosaics

8.4

average score



Pattern Making

7.7

average score



Slate Cutting

7.7

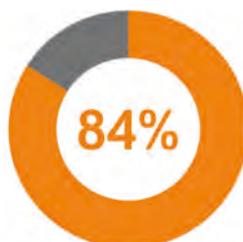
average score



Drone Flying

7.7

average score



AFTER

of students felt better prepared to make choices about their career options as a result of the event



AFTER

of students would recommend this event to other students

'I very much enjoyed the event and I am excited to be involved with women in construction in the future.' - Student, S2



WHAT THEY SAID

BEFORE THE EVENT

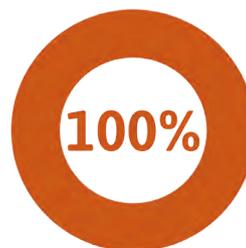


AFTER THE EVENT



100%

of teachers felt better able to support students looking at careers in construction/heritage sectors



Teachers

would recommend this event to other schools

'Pupils seemed to really enjoy the day. Girls that I've spoken to said it was a great day.'

- Teacher



'It was very fun I would like to do it more' - Student, S2



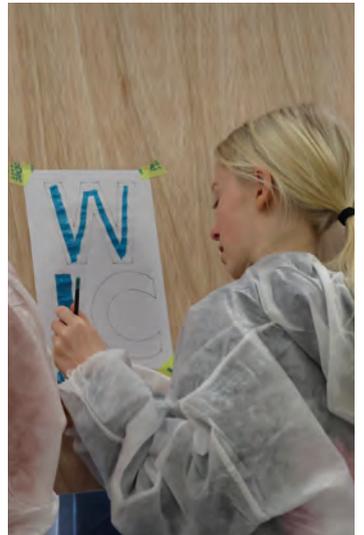
'Loved it thank you.' - Student, S2



'It was very challenging but also rewarding.' - Student, S2



'Excellent day, very well organised.' - Faculty Head



ABOUT SCHT

A registered Scottish Charity and a private company limited by guarantee.

The Trust is managed by a Trust Manager and overseen by a Board of up to 11 voluntary Trustees. Funding is from **Historic Environment Scotland** and **Stirling Council**.

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