

**THE first Women in Roofing conference took place on February 26 in Nottinghamshire, in the run up to International Women's Day. Women in the industry from around the UK were invited to the event, which featured talks and workshops from some influential figures in the sector.**

**Glasgow-based roofing and cladding specialist Curtis Moore is at the forefront of the quest to provide more opportunities for women in the construction industry.**

**With a female co-founder and women occupying several senior roles at the firm, they are ideally placed to comment on the increasing numbers of women in the industry and what further steps are required to help shed the image that construction is just for boys. Project Scotland's Fraser Rummens reports.**



Advocate's Close, Edinburgh

# Glasgow firm championing women in construction

**ROOFING and cladding contractor Curtis Moore has grown massively since husband and wife, Andrew and Yvonne Devlin, founded the firm 15 years ago.**

In that time the business has moved from the kitchen table to the garden shed to a base in Hillington, Glasgow in 2006, with regional offices in Inverness and West Yorkshire following.

The company has a diverse portfolio of projects including the £2.1 million Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Training Centre in Cambuslang and the £2 million Haymarket Station Capacity Project in Edinburgh, both of which won NFRC Roofing Contractor of the Year awards. They also recently completed work on the Wythenshawe transport interchange in Greater Manchester which has been nominated for this year's National NFRC awards.

Today Curtis Moore employs around 30 in-house and 50 on-site staff. Despite the growth, family values remain at the heart of the firm with Andrew and Yvonne's daughters, Ashleigh and Ailie, taking on

senior roles in recent years.

With a female co-founder, women in prominent positions and females making up around a quarter of the company's in-house workforce, Curtis Moore is challenging the perception that construction is a male-dominated industry.

Ashleigh Devlin, the firm's sales and marketing manager, said this came about not through a conscious effort - they simply take on the best person for the job, irrespective of gender. "Having women in key roles happened naturally for us. However, now with the press focusing on encouraging women in the industry, we can see the importance of this and will be ensuring that we focus our efforts on continuing to develop the female talent that we have in-house as well as encouraging others to start a career in this industry," Ashleigh said.

"Any role that we have advertised has never been gender specific. All positions have been offered to the



Ashleigh Devlin

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Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Training Facility, Cambuslang

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best candidate most suitable for the job and it's worked out that we have females in key roles within our buying, commercial, financial and sales departments."

Ashleigh said that, in her experience, the construction industry is still dominated by men on-site. "We have only got, I believe, one female site worker and that's not through choice, that's just because they're not coming through. It's all men who tend to be guided towards the construction sector in school and college."

So what can be done to encourage more females to come into the industry?

Ashleigh suggests going into schools to talk to pupils about the opportunities available and "take away the myth that it's only for men".

"In my opinion, I think it's more difficult to encourage women to work on-site, however for those looking to work in an office environment it's easy to highlight the fantastic opportunities on offer in the industry," Ashleigh added.

"The construction industry is thriving and because of this, I believe

there is an opportunity for constant progression to be made regardless of gender.

"There are so many different roles within the industry that are not gender specific - from sales and accounts to quantity surveying, buying and estimating, etc.

"A lot of the people I deal with on a daily basis are women and I think if you can get women in such roles to go out and speak with school and college students, it will make students think differently as they could be presented with opportunities they may have not considered before.

"There are so many different roles that women can excel in just as well as men and it's important that these opportunities are highlighted to the younger generation.

"If Curtis Moore, along with other companies and influential women in the industry, can get into the schools and colleges and speak with students to highlight the fact it's a great, progressive industry with a lot of opportunity then hopefully that will encourage more women to at least consider it as a career choice."

Ashleigh believes that things have progressed "massively" in the five

years that she has been with Curtis Moore, saying the number of women in the industry now is "night and day" compared to when she started.

"Even just five years ago, almost every person I dealt with was a man," she said.

"I now liaise with female directors, female head of departments and trainees and I would say probably a third of the people I liaise with are women which is a really significant change in a short space of time."

Ashleigh went on to say that women are heading up departments in a lot of other companies she works with, something she thinks is "really encouraging to see".

"These women know their stuff. They're very well trained and good at what they do. It's great to see that progress within the industry," she added.

Ashleigh said the company's aim for the next year is to "continue to grow". "Curtis Moore has progressed massively since forming in 2000 and our aim is to continue with this progression.

"We've been involved in many large, innovative projects over the years and we love the challenges these

projects bring.

"We have a fantastic team in place and our aim is to develop the talent within as well as new talent coming through.

"We are also aiming to have a stronger presence in England and Wales which we are actively working on achieving.

"We're looking to open up a new office around the Manchester area to assist with our aim of expanding the business down south.

"With regards to females within the industry, we're hoping to get out and speak with young people.

"We take on quite a few apprentices a year. Now, we're going to try and actively encourage women or young girls to do that as well. We can certainly bring them into the office; it doesn't need to just be site-based.

"Curtis Moore have a development programme in place and we're hoping to continue to grow this by bringing in more young people, male or female.

"Our aim is to get people in from an early stage, give them the opportunity to train in a variety of different roles, work their way up and see what they enjoy"



Strathaven Airfield



Wythenshawe Interchange, Greater Manchester