



## Training the craftspeople of the future

*The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment Residential Summer School at Lincoln Cathedral*

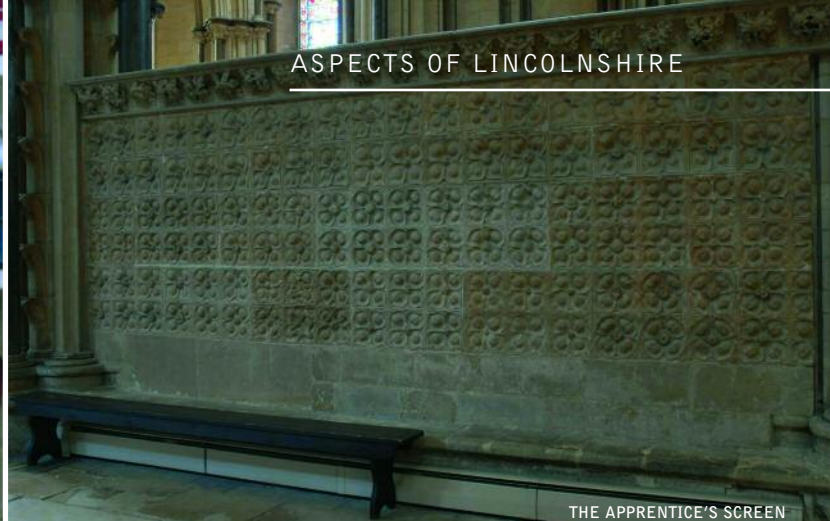
Words: Helen Wilson Photographs: Lincoln Cathedral

"An opportunity too good to miss" was how apprentice Ed Smith from Derbyshire described his week long summer school in the workshops at Lincoln Cathedral.

He was there, along with eleven of HRH The Prince of Wales's Building Craft Apprentices, six Prince's Foundation Graduate Fellows and six external delegates, at a week long summer school in July

organised by The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment.

The Apprentices spent the week in practical and theoretical training in a range of different craft skills under instruction from experienced works department staff. They had a very busy week. In just one day they carved a stone panel based on the design in the Apprentice's screen (found in the Cathedral south choir aisle). The next day would see them producing a 6"x 6" glass panel, based on the same design, in the glazing workshop.



Another day was spent completing a mock-up roof section with lead guttering and roof sheets. The workshop sessions were followed by lectures from some of the Cathedral's professional team – the architect, archaeologist and structural engineer.

The Apprentices themselves come from a wide range of backgrounds. Their ages range from 19-44. The Building Craft Apprentices all come with experience in their preferred craft – usually to NVQ 3.

Mohammed Bangura from London hopes for a career in stonemasonry. He explained that he liked the history of stonemasonry and wanted to help keep alive a dying craft. Lynda Crabbe from North Wales is a trained theatre nurse and is about to begin a three year applied arts course specialising in glass, eventually she hopes to run her own business. Ed Smith, originally from Huddersfield, now works in Derbyshire repairing dry stone walls. The course will give him the chance to learn different traditions and techniques of walling.

All of the apprentices were really enthusiastic about the opportunities The Prince's Foundation course was giving them. They spoke glowingly of working with skilled craftsmen on this summer school, of the several months work placements that will follow, and of the unique experience the whole apprentice programme gives them with people from a mix of backgrounds, crafts and professions.

Carol Heidschuster, Works Manager at the Cathedral said: "The staff here get an immense amount of pleasure sharing their skills with such enthusiastic and committed students.

The Cathedral benefits by working in partnership with The Prince's Foundation. We all recognise the importance of maintaining our traditional skills. This is the second year that The Prince's Foundation has come to Lincoln Cathedral. Last year, to everyone's delight, Prince Charles made a surprise visit."

The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment was set up by HRH The Prince of Wales. It is described on their website as an 'educational charity which exists to improve the quality of people's lives by teaching and practising timeless and ecological ways of planning, designing and building.'

Dr Steven Parissien, The Prince's Foundation's Director of Education and Skills, explained that the seven month apprentice programme was open to anyone with the skills and interest. It consists of a three week Residential Summer School followed by work placements all over the UK plus a week long business session. They also have the opportunity to achieve the new NVQ in Heritage Skills. He described the core objective as ensuring the continuation of the traditional skill base by bringing these skills into new build projects.

Unfortunately there are no students from Lincolnshire this year but applications are welcome for the next programme which starts June 2009. Anyone interested needs to apply before January 1st 2009. Further information can be found at [www.princes-foundation.org](http://www.princes-foundation.org) The scheme is also very happy to work with companies who might wish to discuss secondments or other arrangements.