

## Royal Award Success for Building Curriculum Project

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A local construction curriculum project set up at the beginning of this year with the help of funds and expertise from the Construction Industry Training Board has given a Lancashire school for children with special learning needs the chance of a top award in a national competition to mark the 40th anniversary of the Queen's accession.

Wigan's Tanfield Special School entered the competition — for the Royal Anniversary Trust Award — with a project to design and produce a garden for handicapped people, including special touch-sensitive features to provide enjoyment for those with impaired vision.

They include dwarf walls with inset tiled panels of varying surface textures, and pathways suitable for wheelchair access combining a variety of concrete finishes, cobbled areas and differing patterns of block paving.

Pupils from the school, which caters for children between the ages of 7 and 18, won through the bronze and silver stages of the competition with the help and advice of Wigan Built Environment Centre.

They will hear how successful they have been in the final (gold) stage when they attend the award presentation in London on 26 November, where they will also meet the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

The Wigan Centre was set up in February and is one of a nation-wide network of more than

50 construction curriculum centres established by the CITB over the past two years.

The centres are funded chiefly by the CITB and local education authorities on an equal basis, with additional money in some cases from Training and Enterprise Councils and local construction firms.

The Board's initiative, which is thought to be unique in its size and scope, has the overall aim of firmly establishing construction as a context for learning within the framework of the national school curriculum.

The Wigan centre is located at the town's college of technology. Six second-year bricklayer trainees attending the college on the Board's YT programme were assigned for a four week period in May and June to carry out the construction of the garden — at Haigh Hall Country Park — as a training exercise.

One of the trainees, Mark Gettings, will accompany the Tanfield School pupils to the award ceremony. Mark, who is employed by local builders D. C. Steele, of Orrell, is now in his third year at the college — where he is training for a City and Guilds Advanced Craft qualification in brickwork.

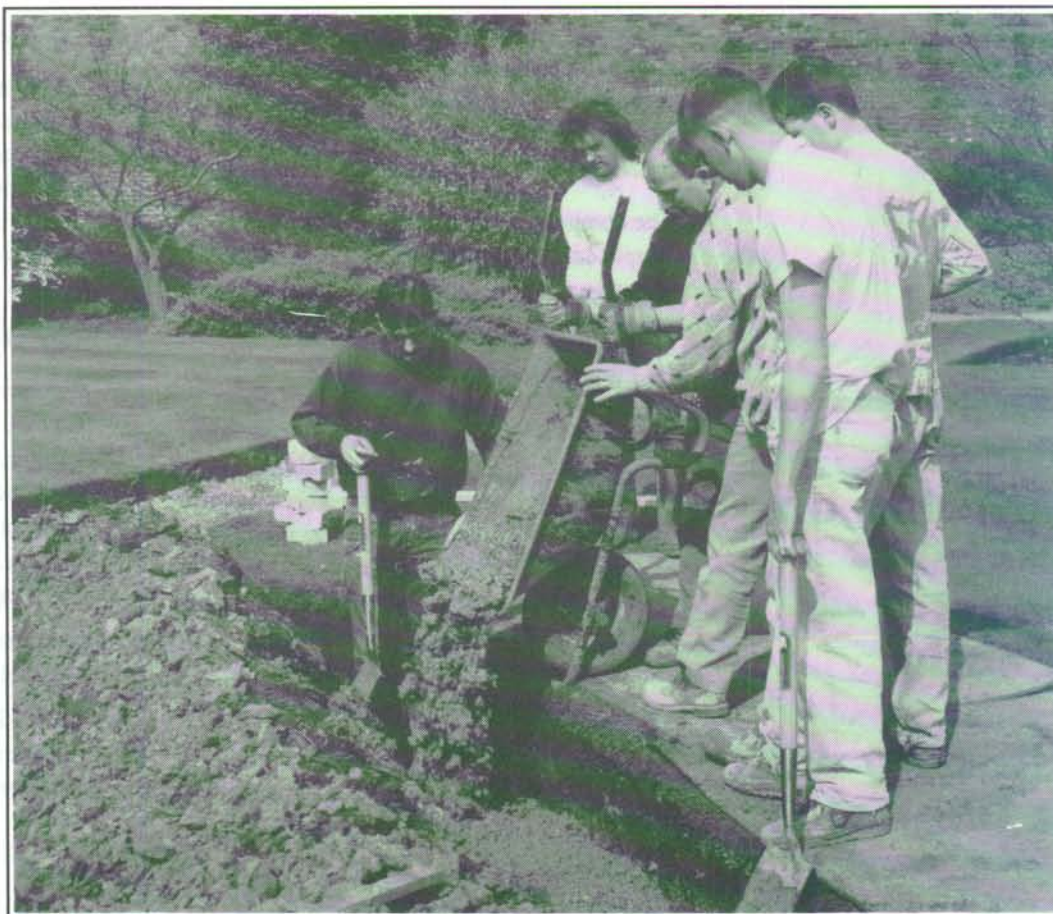
College brickwork lecturer Keith Twist, who is also co-ordinator of the curriculum centre, described the Tanfield School project as a typical example of the way such centres are directly involved with schools and colleges in their areas.

CITB students loading concrete





## Concrete foundations being poured by CITB students



He said 'we have a variety of functions, including acting as a resource centre for local schools and as a provider of construction-based workshops. In this particular case we fulfilled both of these roles.'

'As well as giving the school technical advice we were able to locate local firms who were prepared to donate materials for the project at no cost.'

'And as a college providing direct craft training for those in the industry, we are pleased to have produced trainees who could work to an award-winning standard in a competition of the importance and prestige of the Royal Anniversary Trust Award.'

CITB's chairman, Sir Clifford Chetwood, said the Board alone had invested more than £2 million in establishing centres like the Wigan Built Environment Centre during the past two years.

Their work was increasingly bringing schools of all types into contact with the construction industry and in doing so was providing pupils with a new dimension to their studies.

Sir Clifford said: 'Not only do they benefit from a greater understanding of construction, which affects all our lives, but so does the industry from the closer contacts forged with people who will be its future customers and, in many cases, its future workers.'

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