

JENNY EDGE: CIVIL ENGINEER

Once upon a time there was a girl who loved pinching her dad's toolbox and getting to work with a hammer. Jenny had a curious mind and would spend hours taking things apart just to see what was behind them.

Although she'd liked primary school, by the time she was a teenager Jenny disliked school and learning. She felt constrained and wanted to be free. By the time she was 16 Jenny had done all sorts of jobs, but nothing seemed to fulfil her. One day she decided it was time to ask for careers' advice. After being asked to answer a number of questions about her likes and dislikes she was told she might like one of three career paths: air traffic controller, quantity surveyor or civil engineer.

"I'd never heard of any of them, so read up on all three, and decided civil engineering piqued my interest. Mostly because it was a job where you could travel, work onsite and build infrastructure like roads and bridges."



After doing a number of exams and aptitude tests to prove herself, Jenny was offered a civil engineering apprenticeship. From that day forward, her life changed completely. Jenny was introduced to an entirely different world and went from someone who had hated learning, to someone who couldn't get enough of it and loved a challenge.

As a civil engineer Jenny was responsible for taking a construction drawing, simplifying it and figuring out the order of a build, from what materials to use, to how to go about actually breaking it down into stages to build it. She was also responsible for determining whether a drawing was possible to build or if there was a problem with it. Sometimes problems had to be dealt with onsite and it was Jenny's role to figure out the best solution and to get the right workmen in to do it.



Jenny worked her way up from engineer to construction manager, which means she now manages construction projects to ensure that works are carried out on time and to the specifications they are supposed to. She also makes sure they are safe. Today she works for a water company, United Utilities, and works on lots of projects that get clean water to hospitals, schools and peoples' homes.

Jenny absolutely loves being able to get a drawing, knowing how to build it and then building it, from roads and bridges to waste and water systems. She also loves how the industry is continually changing and evolving, which is maybe why she's a huge fan of civil engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel who, in her opinion, was the pinnacle for a lot of change for how things were built in the industrial revolution.

Jenny knows a lot of people think civil engineering is a physical job but that's a big misconception. It's a problem-solving job and a multitasking job which she believes women are naturally good at it. She thinks if more young girls were told about civil engineering, they would think about doing it. She also thinks the more girls that become civil engineers, the better, for only that way can the industry become more inclusive and expand.