

**Caroline Ripper,**  
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THATCHER Julie Hendry turned heads when she was spotted working on roofs this summer. "If I'd stopped working every time anyone called up to me wanting to chat about my job, or take my photograph, I'd never have got any work done," said Julie. Her boss for the month of August was master thatcher Tim Hyde from East Knoyle. Tim said: "I think there are only about four female thatchers in the whole country so the sight of Julie working away on a roof was certainly a novelty for most people," Although living these days in Colchester with her soldier husband, Derek, and their sons of 12 and five, Julie had completed her four-year thatching apprenticeship with Tim in the late 90s. When he needed help he knew who to contact. "Julie's been wonderful," said Tim. "She came back here for the whole of August, left Derek to look after the boys and worked incredibly hard."

Julie loves thatching although she hasn't done any since moving to Essex. "It was when I was a legal clerk working for the Crown Prosecution Service that I decided to apply for a thatching apprenticeship with Tim in 1997," she said. "I swapped my high heels for a pair of Doc Martens, and just loved being out of doors, in the fresh air, working on something that you could see and that you could actually finish." This summer she and Tim have been replacing thatch at Woodgreen, in the



Donheads and at Harnham. Tim has been thatching for 20 years and on average completes about ten new roofs each year. He and Julie agree that, to be a thatcher, you need stamina as well as a good head for heights although, as Julie said: "Once you are up here you don't notice how far away the ground is." Qualified thatcher Julie Hendry spent the summer working with master thatcher Tim Hyde of East Knoyle.