

A castle in the making

Dear virtual visitors,

Welcome to this first edition of **Guédelon Medieval Construction Site's** English-language newsletter. At Guédelon, we are welcoming growing numbers of European and overseas visitors, and attracting increasing attention from the international press. This newsletter will allow English-speaking visitors to stay in touch with the latest developments of the only construction site of its kind in the world!

The winter here was long, but productive: an ambitious building programme for the new season was established; a new book on medieval measuring systems published; a children's geometry workshop created; a competition organised for primary and secondary schools, and members of the team undertook a trip to Burkina Faso in order to build a school classroom.

As you read on, you will see that the 2010 season is one of the most exciting yet. The big stories of this year are the completion of the great hall and the construction of the ribbed vault in the lord's chamber. All the technical expertise gained by the team over the past 13 years will culminate in the building of this vault: it will be the widest, highest and most elaborate vault in the castle. The building of this unique structure - which will support over 120 tons of masonry - is not to be missed!

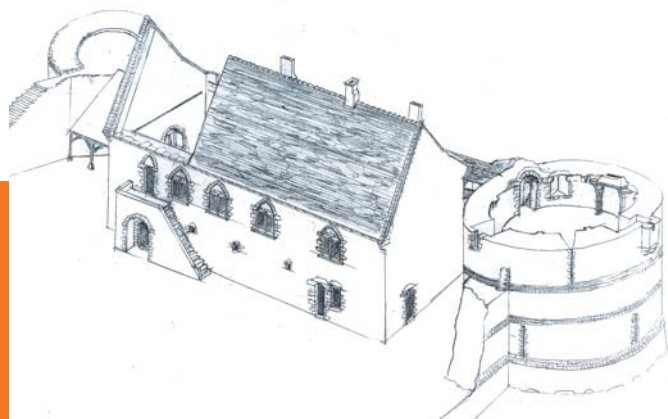
Maryline Martin, Managing Director



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Building programme 2010

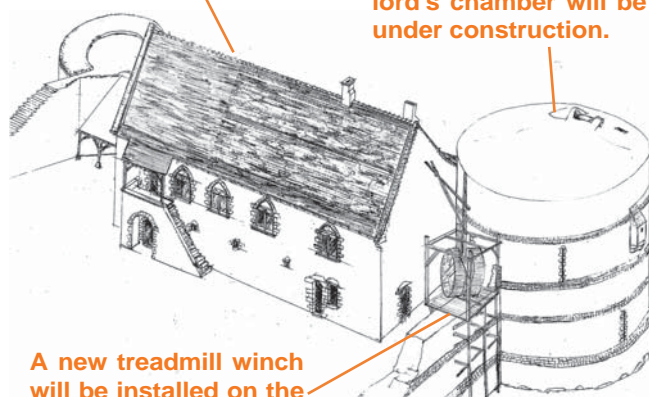
View of the **north range** and great tower in March 2010 ...



... and in November 2010

The final roof timbers will be assembled.

The rib vault in the lord's chamber will be under construction.



A new treadmill winch will be installed on the east curtain wall.

The season in close-up



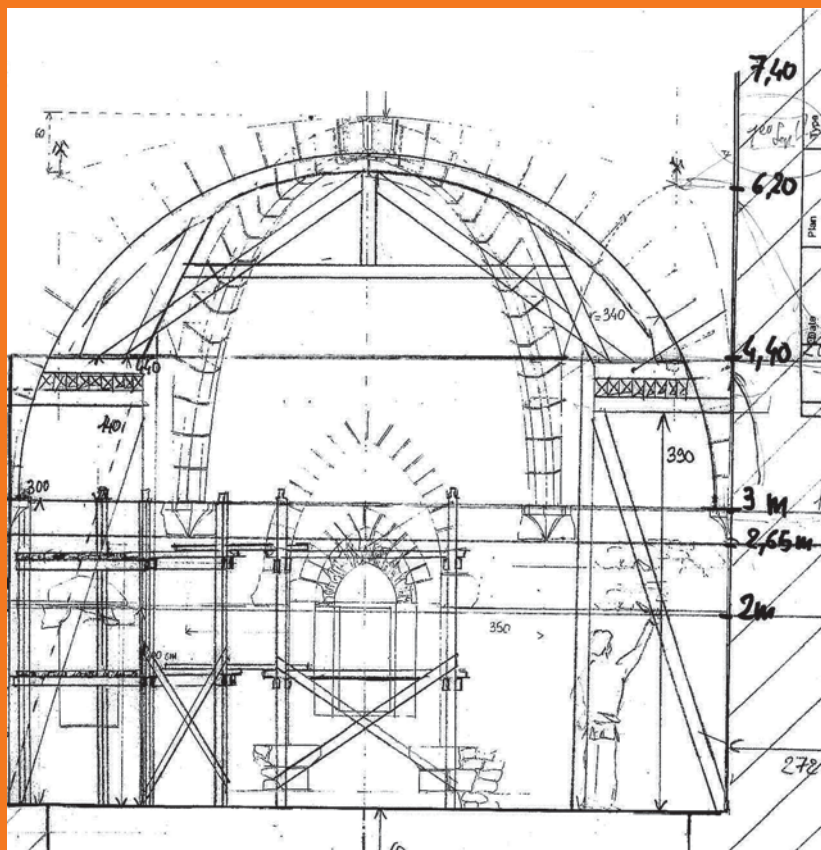
The great tower

2010 marks an important phase in the construction with the building of a limestone **ribbed vault** in the lord's chamber. The building of this vault will mirror the construction of the chapel tower's ground-floor vault in 2002. It will have 6 limestone **ribs** and will be crowned by a sculpted limestone **keystone**.



Chapel tower's ribbed vault 2002

How to build a ribbed vault



4th step

7.4 metres : lowering of centering

3rd step

6.2 metres: top of wall arches

2nd step

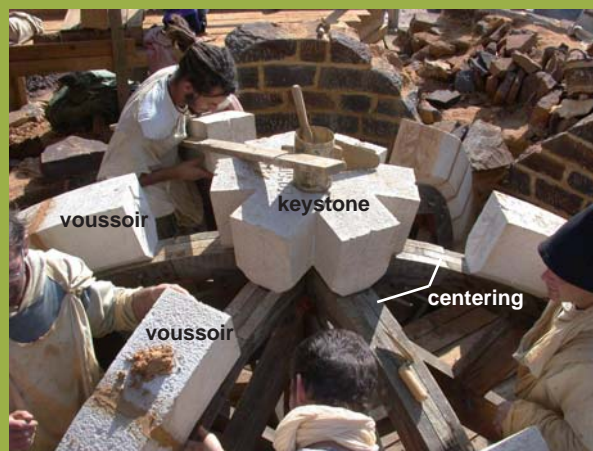
4.4 metres: the first voussoirs are in place

1st step

3 metres: position of corbels

Glossary

- north range:** building built against the curtain wall.
- ribbed vault:** vaulting based on a framework of stone arches (or ribs).
- keystone:** stone at intersection of ribs.
- corbels:** stone projecting from face of wall to support a load.
- centering:** a timber framework used to support the vault during construction.
- voussoirs:** wedge-shaped blocks of stone which make up the ribs.



- arrow loop:** a narrow, vertical slit in a wall, through which arrows or bolts could be shot.
- garderobe:** latrine or lavatory.
- levelling courses:** row of dressed stones in rough walling allowing masons to check that masonry is level.
- counter-scarp:** slope opposite inner face of a ditch.

Carving a corbel

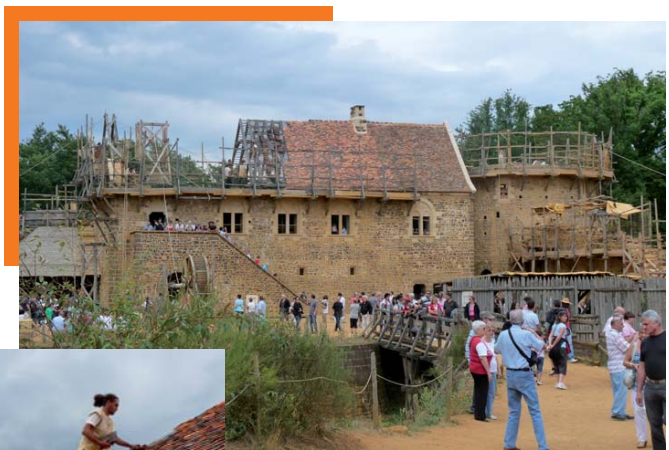


- 1** The contours of the corbel-to-be are drawn on the limestone block.
- 2** The block is roughed out and the upper part of the corbel can be seen.
- 3** The moulding takes shape. The carving becomes much more precise.
- 4** The corbel is nearly complete. Only some moulding on the lower part needs to be carved.

North range

The masons must build up the north curtain wall which the north range is built against, raise the west gable and finish the fireplace in the great hall. The carpenters are shaping and putting together the final roof timbers in preparation for hoisting them onto the north range.

The team are continuing to cover the great hall with roof tiles made and fired in the forest.



East curtain wall

A team of masons are continuing to raise the east curtain wall. It must reach 6m above the level of the ward so that a new treadmill winch can be installed later this summer. 3 **levelling courses** have been built and the desired height is at close at hand! The carpenters have moved the treadmill winch - which was previously positioned at the base of the great tower on the north side of the castle - to a position on the **counter-scarp** opposite the east curtain wall.



A roof over our heads

28,000 tiles will be needed to cover the north range. The tiles are made on site from clay found on the site. The tiles are first shaped in moulds, and having been left to air-dry, are then fired in the tile-kiln. Up to 4,000 tiles can be fired in the kiln; each firing lasts from 12 to 16 hours.



The east curtain wall in July 2009



The same view in August 2010



The wood-fired kiln



The tiles after firing

A French Invasion

In March 2010, Maryline Martin, Guédelon's managing director, was invited by a UK conservation organisation, The National Trust, to present the project at the Trust's headquarters.

Following this meeting, on the 3/4 July a team from Guédelon and members of The National Trust, organised a weekend of castle-building activities at Corfe Castle in Purbeck. After the success of this event a similar collaboration is planned with Bodiam Castle, Kent in 2011.

Guedelon - The Ultimate Grand Design
Time well spent

Building a Medieval Castle - Corfe Castle, Dorset
Sunday 14 June 10am - 4pm
at Corfe Castle, nr Wareham, Dorset BH20 9LZ

Come and witness a French invasion by some of the most fine craftsmen ever seen building a castle using traditional methods, tools and materials.

By your hand, at some carving, walls and stone and discover the history of the 13th century.

Photography, video and presentations by craftsmen and staff from the site in France.

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A reduction for all National Trust members (on presentation of valid a NT card) is on offered throughout the 2010 season.

Group tours are available for booking in French, English, Dutch and German throughout the season. English guided tours for individual visitors run daily in July and August at 2 pm*. We have a growing number of staff who speak a range of foreign languages. For our European and overseas visitors the welcome has never been warmer!
*subject to visitor numbers and guide availability

Press clippings

This season, Guédelon is attracting global attraction. A film about Guédelon shown on the **BBC** website recieved 385,000 hits in a day:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10440300>

and an article in **The Independent**
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/medieval-history-in-the-making-2034074.html>

and an article in **The Times**
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/europe/article2686388.ece>

and an article in **The New York Times**
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/01/world/europe/01castle.html?_r=3&src=me&ref=world

and an article in **Die Zeit**
<http://www.zeit.de/2010/22/Guedelondrei>

