

A castle in the making

Dear virtual visitors,

On Saturday 2nd April, Guédelon's workers took up their tools again and prepared to welcome you on the site for a fourteenth season of construction.

Last year a record number of European and overseas visitors came to witness the work of Guédelon's castle-builders. Our English newsletter, launched only late last season, already has some 1,000 subscribers. We are grateful for your continuing interest and support. Thank you for helping us spread the word!

On the first weekend of the season, we were also proud to welcome our first group of British *bâtisseurs*, from Bournemouth University, (Weymouth College in Dorset). They followed in the footsteps of medieval itinerant craftsman who, hundreds of years ago, travelled across Europe, learning new skills, sharing information and creating ties of friendship.

Our carpenter friends from central Bohemia, along with Guédelon's team of woodworkers, have installed a new, double-drummed, treadmill winch on the east curtain wall. This winch will be used to hoist materials up on to the 1st floor of the great tower, where a rib vault is under construction.

We hope to share our unique adventure with you in 2011!

Maryline Martin – Managing Director

The north range and the new double-drummed treadmill winch on the east curtain wall



Building programme 2011

The great tower

The masons will continue building the cross-rib vault. They will start by building up the chamber's walls. Then, on the wooden **centring***, they will position the first limestone **voussoirs*** which make up the vaults' ribs. The **keystone*** will then be placed at the summit, before the last voussoirs are positioned and the final adjustments made. **cf A castle in the making N°1*

The centring will then be gingerly lowered a few centimetres in order for the vault to come under load. Finally the masons will construct the **webbing*** and complete the castle's largest vault.

Webbing* : the infilled spaces between the ribs of the vault

The lord's chamber





The north range

The carpenters and masons will lay the **permanent floorboards in the antechamber**, and then in the north range's great hall. The woodcutters and carpenters will make the oak lattes which will be fitted to the joists. The masons will pour on a layer of mortar mixed with straw, the terracotta floor tiles will then be laid. Some of the temporary floorboards have been conserved and a handrail fitted in order to allow visitors to be at the heart of the action during the 2011 season.



The joists will be covered with oak lattes

Still on the north range, the carpenters will finish tiling the north slope of the north range's roof and fit the final ridge tiles.

The masons will build the **chimney stack*** above the great hall's fireplace; this will mark the completion of the north range's roof.

chimney stack* : part of the chimney above the roof



The fireplace in the great hall



The tilers

In the forest, the tilers will begin an experimental phase of floor tile production; these terracotta tiles will cover the floor of the north range's 1st floor. Just as they had to do several years ago, the tilers will carry out research into the shape and decoration of tiles dating from our period of reference, the first third of the 13th century. They will subsequently carry out trials to determine the length of firing time required and the temperature needed to be obtained in the kiln.



An even more impressive treadmill winch on site

Right from the re-opening of the site, you will be able to witness a third treadmill winch in operation on the construction site. The distinguishing feature of this new piece of lifting gear is its double drum which allows two workers to operate the machine at once. This new winch is even more impressive due to the fact that it has been mounted on the east curtain wall, 6m above the castle's courtyard. It will provide the team working on the construction of the rib vault with the hundreds of tonnes of stone they will require this year.

The treadmill winch is mounted high on the curtain walls



How to visit Guédelon in 2011



Guédelon opens its gates on April 2nd (closed on Wednesdays except in July and August).

For families and individuals there is no need to pre-book. Explore the construction site at your own pace or in the company of a guide*. On weekends and bank holidays, you may also take part in stone carving workshops in the forest. Tickets are available on site or online at www.guedelon.fr. Bookings for places on guided tours and stone carving workshops can be made directly from the brand-new ticket office.

(* for more information about stone carving workshops and guided tours in English, Dutch and German, please visit our website www.guedelon.fr)