

# A Castle in the Making

Dear virtual visitors,

The keystone which will crown the vault above the lord's chamber is in position on the centring. The great fear was that the stone would be damaged during its journey from the lodge. This was an exciting moment for the whole team. The "key" to success was the close co-operation of the stonemasons, carters and master-mason, which ensured that this sculpted limestone block arrived safely and in one piece on the great tower. A fine example of what Guédelon is all about: team work!

Maryline Martin

View of the north range and the vault under construction on the great tower



## The Building Programme

### The great tower

5 of the 6 **arcs formerets\*** have been built. The final one is under construction and will be finished by the end of August.

*\* cf A Castle in the Making N°5*

Building the great tower's thick walls requires an enormous amount of mortar and rubble stones. These materials are hoisted onto the tower using the double-drummed treadmill winch; the winch is in operation a dozen times a day in order to keep the masons supplied.





## Fitting the keystone

The moving, hoisting and positioning of the keystone onto the wooden centring was an exciting moment for the whole team. This manoeuvre was a delicate operation, because the central sculpted motif is extremely fragile and could be easily damaged by the slightest knock. Once the keystone was on the centring, it had to be positioned with great precision; it will act as a guide for the masons as they build up the vault's ribs.

## The programme for the coming weeks on the vault

- The voussoirs will be laid simultaneously on each branch of the wooden centring.
- Last-minute adjustments will be made to the **final voussoirs** - the counter-keystones - and the ribs will be finished.
- The **webbing\*** will then be built.

\***webbing**: the masonry between the vault's ribs.

## The North Range

An example of how the floor will eventually look has been installed in the great hall. An 8 **inch\*** layer of earth and straw has been placed on oak **laths\*** laid between the floor joists. Terracotta floor tiles, fired at Guédelon, have then been laid on a 2 inch layer of mortar.

\*a Guédelon inch "un pouce" = 2.5cm      \*lath: a thin strip of wood



A firing of the tile kiln took place on July 14th. This should provide enough tiles to finish tiling the northern slope of the north range.

This firing was also an opportunity to attempt the first trial firings of the floor tiles.

## The south and east curtain walls



First section of the southern curtain wall

The masons have completed the building programme on the east curtain wall (cf *A Castle in the Making N°4*); they have built the doorway into the corner tower and have started work on first section of the southern curtain wall.



The keystone is safely aboard the tumbrel



The keystone is hoisted up onto the tower



The keystone is gently positioned on the centring



Adjustments are made to the keystone's position