

# A castle in the making

Dear virtual visitors,

Throughout the season we bring you news of progress on the construction site; now as certain rooms within the castle near completion, we are ready to begin the finishings of some interior walls. Ever since we first discovered the quarry here at Guédelon, the yellow ochre found on the blocks of ferruginous sandstone made us dream of mural paintings, colour, and new crafts. We have had to wait patiently for the 2012 season and now, finally, colour will burst on to the castle walls. The commonly held belief is that the Middle Ages were a sombre age; however, the walls of castles and cathedrals were brightly painted. At Guédelon, we want to offer a true vision of the Middle Ages, full of light and colour!

On your way to see us, make a detour to Moutiers church, less than a league from here, and visit the mural paintings there; for us, they are both an inspiration and an archaeological reference.

Maryline Martin

## The work in progress

### On the great tower

The masons have begun laying out the octagonal contour of the 2nd-floor chamber of the great tower. In order to continue with the construction of this tower, which now stands 16m above the dry ditch, the treadmill winch has been hoisted onto the great tower itself. It is now placed on the width of the tower's outer walls.



Fixing and adjusting one of the octagonal chamber's corner

### On the western corner tower

Another team of masons has started work on the west tower. Flagstones have been laid on the bases of the three arrowloops and work has started on the piers (= the independent sections of masonry).



## On the southern curtain wall

On the curtain wall, next to the corner tower, a drainage system has been installed to collect rainwater from the courtyard and direct it away into the surrounding ditch. This system is made up of a settling basin which traps the sand, a sandstone gutter and a guttering spout. The different stones have been fixed with molten lead sealing joints.



Rainwater drainage system



The molten lead is poured into a clay mould

## On the eastern corner tower

A team of masons have fixed the limestone lintel above the doorway and have begun work on the vaulted corridor which leads into the chamber. Lagging (= narrow strips of wood) has been placed on forms to provide support for the masonry of the vault. Flagstones were first quarried and dressed before being edge-bedded on the lagging. The masons start by first laying the flags on each outside edge and work towards the centre. Work has also begun on the cupola with the laying of first sloping stones: the cupola's webbing.



lintel

vaulted corridor

beginning of the vault

## In the north range's antechamber

### For the first time at Guédelon, mural paintings will be applied to one of the castle's chambers

These mural paintings are inspired by those found in certain monuments such as Meauce Castle in Nièvre, Alluyes Castle in Eure et Loir, or the neighbouring church at Moutiers. However, just as medieval patrons ordered customised designs, a "personal touch" will also be reflected in the choice of designs for the paintings at Guédelon.



Moutiers church (89)  
[www.peinturesmurales.com](http://www.peinturesmurales.com)

### The work involves a series of stages:

- 1 : Lime renders**, made from clay-rich sand and non-hydraulic lime putty, are applied to the walls. This creates a good bond essential for the next stage.
- 2 : Lime plaster** is then applied to provide a smooth surface.
- 3 :** The walls will then be smoothed over with a **levelling coat** - a covering to bring the surface to an established plane.
- 4 : Limewash** is then brushed onto the wall. This white surface can now be painted on.
- 5 :** The first trial **line drawings** and paintings of **motifs and friezes** will be made on the whitewashed wall.
- 6 :** Final **application of mural paintings** (from the 1st-15th August).

The first trials of this new craft were carried out in partnership with Juliette Rollier (PhD in Art History and mural painting specialist) and Marie-Paule Dubois (specialist heritage painter and decorator) and with the support of a team from Guédelon, which will, in time, take on the task of completing all of Guédelon's mural paintings.



Applying lime render to the antechamber's walls.



The first trial paintings at Guédelon

