

CWF HOF Craft Training Project Phase 1

Student Blog Report for HOF: Tony Murphy

Report 1 - April 2021

It's been just over two months since I started at Gloucester, thanks to the funding support from the [Hamish Ogston Foundation](#) and the [Friends of the Cotswolds](#), and I've been able to hit the ground running, having done a variety of work already and started on my first few assignments for CWF.

Banker work

I started in January on the banker, working some pinnacle shafts and mullions for restoration work that is currently ongoing on the north ambulatory of the choir. This is the first banker work I have been able to do since last January 2020 and it was a wonderful way to start my time at Gloucester. I worked four pieces of stone, two shafts and two mullions, all in Lavoux, which is a French limestone and one of the two primary building stones currently used at Gloucester. The other stone used at Gloucester is also a French limestone, called Beaunotte-Beauval, which I hope I will get a chance to work in due course. The working process at Gloucester is similar, but the finish used is different to what I am used to; at Canterbury we used a 'bolstered' finish, which is a final pass of the stone with a wide flat chisel, while at Gloucester masonry work has a 'clawed' finish, a final pass with a toothed claw chisel. The clawed finish is used at Gloucester because this was the finish used in the medieval period. Though the two finishes are similar, the clawed finish requires a different angle with the chisel and a slower pace with the mallet and it took me a little time to adapt to the change.

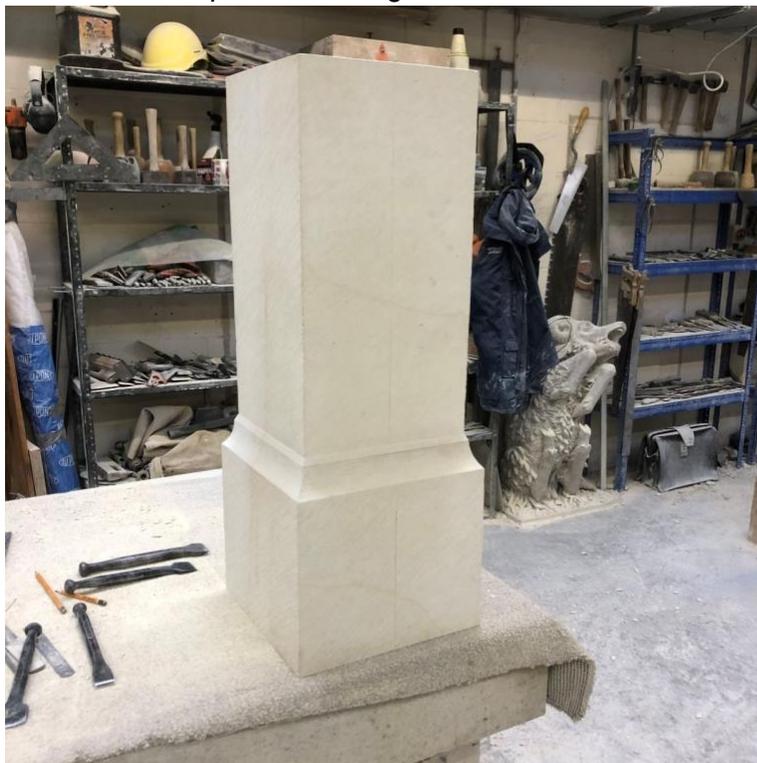


Figure 1. Completed pinnacle shaft



Figure 2. Completed mullion

Fixing

Once the weather improved in February we were back on site and I was able to help fix the stones that I had produced in the workshop (and make sure they fit). The programme of works on the North Ambulatory has involved the replacement of the majority of the pinnacles, sections of the parapet and the introduction of a series of new gargoyles to serve as secondary drainage for heavy rainfall. The majority of this work was done before I arrived, and I helped to install the last three pinnacles and the final section of parapet. The pinnacles being replaced were actually only installed in the 1960s, but because the stone used at the time was of poor quality, they have almost all required full or partial placement. The section of parapet we replaced is where the North Ambulatory meets the North Transept, where movement over time in these two sections of the building has caused the parapet stones to crack and fail. Again, the fixing process at Gloucester is a little different to what I have done in the past. Most of the fixing work I have done previously has been building straight onto mortar, whereas at Gloucester most of the fixing is done dry onto lead packers, which is then grouted with lime mortar, compressed back and pointed. This was particularly useful for both the pinnacles and parapets, allowing us to make small adjustments as we built up. It was also useful learning another building method.



Figure 3. Original section of parapet dismantled and ready for new masonry



Figure 4. Cill and mullions, two of which were worked by me, fixed.



Figure 5. Full parapet fixed and waiting on final pointing.

Conservation

As well as restoration work, we have also been carrying out a lot of conservation work, maintaining as much of the historic fabric as possible. Whilst the majority of the pinnacles have required replacement, I also consolidated one of the remaining pinnacles by installing steel cramps to prevent any future movement across a section where soft beds had caused serious decay, repointing it and shelter coating it in a lime and stone dust mix. We've also been doing a lot of repointing on the north transept, replacing inappropriate cement with a lime based mortar.

CWF Work

For CWF, we've already had four workshops since the second year started in January, covering teaching for the investigative skills, architecture and archaeology, fixing and professional development modules. Our first substantial deadline will be a ten-minute presentation in April for Investigative Skills for Historic Building Research. This presentation will discuss the research we have undertaken on at least two areas of the cathedral in advance of selecting one to cover in detail for the architecture and archaeology assignment due in May. This research module has been a really useful framework for bringing myself up to speed on Gloucester Cathedral, it's history and architecture. As well as generalised study, I have read four books specifically on the cathedral in the last few months, some slim introductions and some very thick and detailed histories included. Having selected two areas of the cathedral to look at in detail I'm now doing some broad research on both.

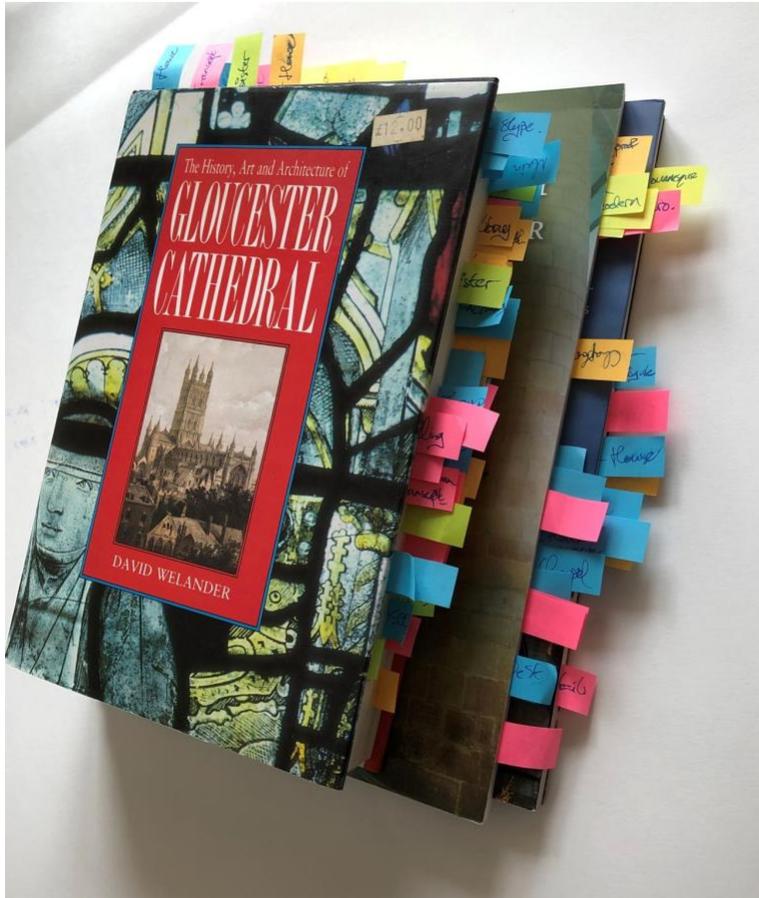


Figure 6. Getting up to speed on Gloucester Cathedral!

Tony Murphy
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Gloucester Cathedral