

Martin Gwilliams  
Progress update February 2020

### Out of hibernation

At the beginning of February Martin and his colleagues emerged from their winter hibernation in the workshop in the Stonemasons' Yard. They began to prepare the parapet on the north ambulatory for fixing the stones that he and the other masons have been making over the winter period. In this last month Martin has been making a series of mullions, vertical members that form part of the embrasures. The shape and form of these mullions, mainly plan, angled surfaces with elements of delicate mouldings, have given Martin the chance to develop and challenge his masonry skills as he got to grips with a variety of different chisels that have helped him to shape these stones; he has really enjoyed using hand saws too.



Gloucester Cathedral welcomes thousands of pilgrims and tourists each year. It is important that the floor of the Cathedral is well maintained to prohibit any slips or trips on broken or wobbly floor tiles. A couple of weeks ago, Martin and his work-based tutor, James Bayliss were deployed to the Cathedral to repair and replace several tiles. This involves removing the damaged or suspect tiles, taking away the old bed of mortar and any loose debris until a firm surface is found. During one

such excavation around the entrance to the Song School, Martin and James discovered the old medieval floor complete with encaustic tiles. When discoveries like this are made, the archivist and archaeologist are informed.

Martin's studies for his Foundation Degree continue. Last week he submitted his latest assignments, *Architecture and Archaeology of Historic Buildings*. This essay and module traced the history and heritage of classical Roman architecture and its influence on the design, plan and form of English cathedrals and abbeys. Martin has submitted proposals for two forthcoming assignments. One is setting out project which will see Martin test and develop his geometry skills and the other is a fixing project which will give him the chance to expand his masonry skills as he then makes the stone components for the arch which he will have set out. At the end of February Martin travels to Exeter for a few days for the next set series of lectures and workshops for the next modules of the degree, delivered by the Cathedrals Workshop Fellowship (CWF).

*Martin says, February has been a really enjoyable month. I feel like my banker skills are coming on each time I work another stone component. Working the mullions has been a*

*good challenge for me and has given me a chance to use some new and unusually shaped chisels to work some tiny and awkward surfaces and spaces.*

*It was nice to get out of the workshop for a couple of days too. First to prepare the next bay of the north ambulatory where I'll be working along with my colleagues in the next weeks and months to repair and restore the parapet. Secondly for discovering the medieval floor of the Cathedral while replacing some of the floor tiles, this was a real highlight.*

*The things I'm learning through reading and researching for the CWF modules are adding a whole other layer to my knowledge and understanding of Gloucester Cathedral and historic buildings.*