

Martin Gwilliams
Progress update March 2020

Learning and fixing

Martin writes: *I really loved my few days in Exeter at the end of February. There were a valuable set of lectures, the highlight for me being the ones delivered by John Allen, the Cathedral Archaeologist at Exeter. He was very passionate about his field of expertise and that really came across to me and left a huge impression. What great skill he and his fellow archaeologists have, looking into the history of the cathedral by peeling back it's fabric to reveal its identity.*

Don't tell Pascal and the good people of Gloucester, but I think architecturally Exeter is my favourite cathedral so far of all those I have visited as part of the CWF programme. From the pleasing west front, the beautiful rhythm of the pillars and dimension of the nave, the choir with its lovely example of corbels and splendid cathedra.



Martin's time in Exeter set him up nicely to begin working on his latest assignment, *Architecture and Archaeology of Historic Buildings*: assignment two, which he handed in this week. Martin used the lessons from the lectures delivered in Exeter as a platform to begin researching into the archaeology of Gloucester Abbey and Cathedral.

Martin writes: *This assignment has given me the opportunity to see the Abbey, as it was formerly, and now the Cathedral in a whole new light. Many things I took for granted at first and so many things I thought I knew to be part of church's story have been reshaped. I have discovered why there's a rash of ball-flower ornamentation on the south aisle windows and buttresses - and a couple of other windows, and why Norman stonework has been re-used around the window of the south transept.*



The assistance of the Cathedral Archivist at Gloucester, Becky, was most welcomed as she gave me access to some superb documents: books, reports, drawings and photos which helped to illustrate some of my findings and increased my understanding.

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The practical work continues on site and in the workshop. Martin and one of his colleagues, Paul, have been re-constructing the parapet, the main portion of work of the north ambulatory project. Martin has learnt the nuanced and fastidious skills needed for fixing stone.



Martin writes: *It would be quite easy and tempting to simply re-build the stonework quickly and by eye – if it looks right, it is right! However, it's important to set string-lines, to use straight edges, levels and other tools (and to take the time) at every stage of the fixing process as the next section of the building depends on the last for being plumb and level. The challenge with the fabric of the Cathedral is that we're often fixing new stone onto old and the older stones have possibly weathered a little making the face of the stones difficult to use as reference points. Thanks to the expertise and experience of my colleagues, I'm learning the fine art an adding to my skills set.*



Back in the workshop Martin has continued to make various stone components, a series of long mullions for the north ambulatory project.

Martin writes: *Working these long mullions is continuing the development of my banker skills, which are slowly improving.*

Martin's studies and assignments for the CWF degree continue. For his Setting Out module and Work Based module he will be using a hood mould above a 14th century window for the basis for these projects. The hood mould has weathered, and it is Martin's task to take various references – measurements and profiles of the existing stones and from these, create templates from which new stonework will be made and fixed by him.

