

YORK MASON GOES “OPERATIVE”

Steve Coupland, a “banker mason”, has been awarded certificates for completion of the Traditional Building Skills Bursary Scheme at an awards event evening at the Tower of London

Steve, a holder of London Grand Rank, is a member of Mitre Lodge of York No.7321

He said: “I started going to evening classes about nine or ten years ago at York College. I got more and more interested in it and learned more and more about the craft.

The bursary was created to enhance the number of skilled workmen in the heritage sector. It is largely funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and is being run in partnership with English Heritage, The National Trust, the National Heritage Training Group and Construction Skills.

Dr Jo Reilly, head of Participation and Learning at the Heritage Lottery Fund, presented certificates to the 25 people who had been awarded the bursary, worth £1.2 million.

The bursary enabled Steve, 55, to take six months sabbatical from his job with William Birch and Sons to gain experience at York Minster Stone Yard.

Steve has been working on the stone-work of the Great East Front of York Minster, as part of the five-year repair and restoration programme included in “York Minster Revealed”.

Upon completion of his level 2 NVQ, Steve gained York College’s Marazion Prize for ‘Dedication in Stonemasonry Studies’.

His six month placement at York Minster’s Stoneyard ended on Christmas Eve and will contribute to his completion of a level 3 NVQ.

