

July 2018
Issue 25

Bakers of Danbury Ltd Newsletter

A foreword from Peter Smyth, Managing Director

As many of you will know, or will have seen from our website, local press or national trade magazines the company celebrates it's 140th anniversary this year, so it seems somewhat appropriate to remind ourselves about the history of the business.

William Baker founded the business at the current Eves Corner site on 11th June 1878, with £50.00 and the loan of a horse and cart as a millwright, wheelwright and carpenter, working mainly on the local mills. As the mills fell into decline however, the business adapted to work more on local houses and churches whilst training and employing skilled local craftsmen.



Frank Baker and Charlie Baker

William became very successful as the company worked on most of the local churches and also built many of the historic houses around Danbury, usually using red bricks from his own local brickyard.

In time, William's sons Frank and Charles took over the business and continued with works to churches and housing, with the business being further handed down in the family and then into private ownership, becoming Bakers of Danbury in 1971.

The current company continues to train and employ local people and continues to benefit from a highly skilled, loyal and motivated workforce enabling us to have the pleasure of working on many prestigious buildings producing the quality work for which it is very well known.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your hard work, support and interest in Bakers of Danbury, including it's sister companies Collins and Curtis Masonry and Pickford Builders.

If you would like to keep up-to-date with Bakers' latest projects, you can do so by visiting bakersofdanbury.co.uk



Bakers Brickyard "Peartree Farm" 1908



Lingwood Close, Danbury 1920

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Alan Titchmarsh dedicates Fountain to Capability Brown

After recently completing roof works and the renewal of below-ground drainage within the Great Cloister to Westminster Abbey; Chris Norman, Contracts Manager for Bakers of Danbury Ltd, was invited to attend a Dedication Ceremony during which a new Cloister Garth Fountain was dedicated to the famous 18th-century landscape gardener Lancelot "Capability" Brown.

Positioned in the centre of the Great Cloister to Westminster Abbey, the lead cistern fountain sits over an old monastic well in the Garth. It is formed on York Stone paving provided by Bakers of Danbury's sister company Collins and Curtis Masonry. The fountain was designed by Ptolemy Dean, the Abbey's Surveyor of the Fabric with the assistance of TV gardener Alan Titchmarsh, who also attended the dedication and gave reflection.



The Cloister Garth Fountain marks the tercentenary of the birth of landscape gardener Lancelot "Capability" Brown. Known as "England's greatest gardener", "Capability" Brown designed over 170 parks and gardens – for many of which water plays a part in their design. He was nicknamed "Capability" because he used to tell his clients their property had "capability" for improvement. Some of his work can still be admired in Kew Gardens in South West London, Chatsworth House in Derby, as well as Warwick Castle and Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

The Ceremony took place following the Evensong taken by the Dean of Westminster, the Very Reverend Dr John Hall. A week later Alan Titchmarsh attended Westminster Abbey again, this time to meet the Queen during the formal opening of "The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries", a new museum and gallery located in the Abbey's medieval Triforium.

70ft above the Abbey floor, the new gallery provides visitors with magnificent views down over the Great Cloister, Abbey buildings and Palace of Westminster. From the gallery, Alan Titchmarsh showed Queen Elizabeth the new Cloister Garth Fountain. The roof works carried out by Bakers which involved stripping the existing roof, recasting original lead and re-leading part of the South Triforium and Main Cloister can also be viewed from The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries.

Saving the Angels

Bakers recently carried out restoration works to Petre Chapel, said to be one of Essex's miniature treasures. Inside, the ceiling is gloriously decorated with gilded angels on the hammer-beams and richly painted with gold leaf in parts. In 2016 detailed surveys of the roof revealed that it was in worse condition than originally feared. Many roof timbers were found to have been damaged by wood weevil. There was concern as to the fragility of the beautiful ceiling.

Bakers stripped the roof tiles, baton and felt and erected a temporary roof. A natural based fungicidal and insecticidal wood preservative (HSE registered) was applied to the timbers and new felt and baton installed. Where possible the original roof tiles were reused on the repaired roof. Bat roosts were accommodated under the tiles.

Whilst the scaffolding was up, Bakers carried out restoration works to the masonry. These works included new gable end crosses in Hartham Park Stone, re-pointing and replacing of coping stones and a new chimney built in Caen Stone. All stone masonry was handcrafted and supplied by Bakers' sister company Collins and Curtis Masonry.



Photos of Petre Chapel including photos of the gable end before and after a new gable end cross was added.



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Layham Mill House and Mill

At present Bakers are carrying out repairs and restoration to both the Grade II Listed former Mill and the Mill House in Layham, Suffolk.

Works to the Mill House are in progress. External works include the removal of all modern sand and cement render, repairing decayed sections of timber and applying lime plaster as well as repairing sections of the roof. Internal works include the installation of new heating and electrical systems, internal repairs and some minor alterations and redecoration.

The restoration of the 18th Century Mill back to its original working condition is programmed to commence when the repairs and restoration to the Mill House are complete.



Grade II Listed Layham Mill House

Conservation works to St Swithun's Church

Bakers recently carried out conservation and alteration works to St Swithun's Church, Great Chishill.

Works involved extensive conservation of the church tower including re-pointing and replacement of external flint, the refurbishment of the clock dials, replacement of the oak belfry louvres and new lightning protection. Further works to the base of the tower included the addition of a disabled W/C facility and the provision of new mains water and drainage to the church.

Bakers also recently supported fundraising for St Swithun's Church Restoration Appeal by sponsoring their annual Summer's Ball, which raised just over £13,500.



Bakers' Specialist Joinery Division

Bakers benefit from having a Specialist Joinery Workshop on site, which meets all the joinery requirements of the company, as well as taking orders directly from clients.

Our highly skilled craftsmen offer bespoke woodcarving and architectural joinery. We also provide a full design and manufacture service for high quality joinery and furniture for civic, ecclesiastical and private clients.

Phase 2 for St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden involved the manufacture and installation of a bespoke DDA and Dementia friendly toilet, storage cupboards, children's library and pew storage area. All were crafted by our Joiners, Laurence Plumb and Robin Palmer, from English Oak in our joinery shop and fitted by our onsite carpenters. Great attention was paid to the highest spec soundproofing, with the WC door alone weighing over 100kg. Every post included a hand carved crocus detail to the top. To watch a video of our skilled Joiner hand carving a crocus detail visit bakersofdanbury.co.uk/services/specialist-joinery/

Other projects include an external access ladder with a handrail crafted from European Oak for Westminster Abbey. This freestanding ladder was a good project for our recently qualified Joiner Jack Darvill to work on.

We recently crafted new solid oak legs for 50 chairs belonging to Clare's College, Cambridge. Each chair leg was turned on a lathe. The new legs were slightly taller than the original as the original castor wheels were replaced with foam pads, to prevent scratching the floor surface. We are currently crafting 220m² oak wall paneling to be installed on Cleveland Street, London.

Our Joinery Workshop Manager Paul Revill would like to take this opportunity to thank all of his talented Joiners for all of their hard work and dedication.

Photos of St Mary's Church in Saffron Walden, Westminster Abbey and Clare's College in Cambridge



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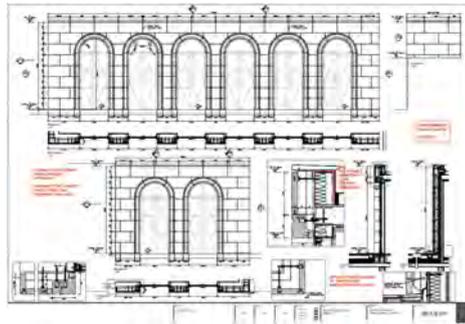
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Collins and Curtis Masonry are currently busy working on a number of projects including the manufacture of Portland Stone Broadcroft Whitbed for a rooftop extension to The Lava Club in Mayfair.

We are also working on ornate tracery balustrade in Hartham Park Bath stone for St James' Church, Sussex Gardens in London.

We recently supplied stone to the new build of two new wings to Bartlow Park in Cambridge. New stone for the two wings include plinths in Cadeby Yorkshire Limestone, paving in Lower Edge York stone and porticos in Stoke Ground Basebed Bath Stone.

We also recently carved stone letter signage for Denmark Works in Corsehill Sandstone.

Photos are of our skilled Stonemason working on Portland Stone Broadcroft Whitbed for The Lava Club in Mayfair and of ornate tracery balustrade for St James' Church, London. The detailed plans are also for Lava Club.

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It's been a busy first half of the year for Pickford Builders with a surge in insurance works, mainly due to damage caused by the "Beast from the East" earlier this year. The Insurance Department have welcomed Sue Watts to their team. Sue joined as an Insurance Administrator back in May.

Other works range from a number of extension and alteration projects including a barn conversion in Royston, to refurbishment and alteration works due to take place in a number of schools over their summer break.

Pickford Builders recently completed a full restoration to a Grade II Listed 18th century cottage, which was on the East Hertfordshire Heritage at Risk Register.

The cottage which had been left unoccupied over 50 years has a thatched roof and is timber framed with a render flint and brickwork cladding. There were no mains water or electricity.

Works included alterations key to bringing the cottage back to functional use as well as a sympathetically designed new rear extension. The cottage is a heritage asset and contributes to the historic building stock in the Albury area. Therefore the alterations were designed to result in very little loss of historic fabric and have a positive impact on the use of the building and its ongoing usefulness.

The cottage required extensive underpinning to the majority of elevations, due to being situated adjacent to the River Ash. During works, a 13 metre deep well was found at the rear of the property, directly under the proposed new build extension. As a result of the find, Pickford Builders instructed structural engineers to re-design the foundations.

The project started February this year and was completed at the beginning of July.



River Cottage before and after restoration

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