

July 2019  
Issue 27

# Bakers of Danbury Ltd Newsletter

## *A foreword from Peter Smyth, Managing Director*

On behalf of our Directors, I would like to thank you for your hard work, support and interest in Bakers of Danbury Ltd and its sister companies Collins and Curtis Masonry Ltd and Pickford Builders Ltd.

Whilst across all three companies we have been very busy with some very interesting projects, we remain conscious of the uncertainty within the economy; especially with the recent sad news that Britain's oldest construction company R. Durnell & Sons has recently ceased trading. With this in mind Bakers of Danbury are currently in the process of achieving the ISO 9001 accreditation - we hope it will not only help streamline our Quality Management Systems, but also improve our competitive position within the market.



Photos: Westminster School



Bakers of Danbury are nearing the completion of the extension and refurbishment to Westminster School which was featured in our last newsletter. The final finishes and internal fit out will be ready for the school's new academic year. The re-ordering to St. Mary the Virgin, in Saffron Walden was recently awarded "Highly Commended" in the Diocese of Chelmsford Design Awards 2019.

I would like to welcome the following office staff; Poppy McMillan our new Claims Co-Ordinator and Seb Slaughter our new Contracts Manager both within Bakers' Specialist Insurance Division. Dean Harvey (Contracts Manager) has recently transferred from Pickford Builders to Bakers, also Sarah Wood our new Credit Controller and Wendy Bingley our new Funeral Arranger for Bakers Funeral Services in Danbury.

## *A Fond Farewell to David Wood*

I would like to take this opportunity to remember David Wood, my father, our former Managing Director and a dear friend to Bakers of Danbury, who sadly passed away on 5th June 2019 at the age of 89 years. Dad joined Baker and Sons in 1956 with which he was involved, in one way or another, for the next 60 years or so.

After joining Baker and Sons, Dad soon rose through the ranks from Cost Clerk, quickly establishing himself as indispensable to the Managing Director. In 1965 he became a Director and later Managing Director in 1968.

In 1971, with the help of John Knott and Bernard Speakman, Dad took the company over; they were to remain lifelong friends. The company became Bakers of Danbury Ltd for which Dad remained Managing Director until the early 1990's. Under their control the company's reputation soared and it went from strength to strength, with work on churches and ancient buildings becoming a particular speciality.

Dad was personally involved in major refurbishment works at Waltham Abbey, St Albans Cathedral and Writtle Church as well as projects on countless other parish churches. He stopped working full-time in 1994, but continued working part-time until 2005. He also served on the Fabric Committee for Chelmsford Cathedral from 1991 to 2015.

In 2013 Dad wrote within the book "A History of Bakers of Danbury Ltd";

*"I am proud to have been part of the team responsible for carrying the firm forward for such a long period. I feel satisfied that we have been able to maintain the standards set by William Baker so long ago, in a world that is so vastly different to that in which he worked. I am also confident that the now well-established new managers hold similar aspirations to all those of us who have gone before, and will continue to give valuable service to the local and also the more widespread community which the firm now serves."*

I know Dad's visits to the office to offer support and advice or just for a chat in recent years were always welcomed and he will be sadly missed by all. Without his dedication and commitment to the company for near on 60 years we may not be where we are today. I would like to thank each and every one of you for the lovely comments, support and cards we have received following the death of my father.

**Antony Wood, Contracts Director**



## Bakers' Specialist Joinery Division

Bakers' joinery workshop located next to the head office in Danbury, has been very busy taking joinery requirements from both Bakers and directly from clients. Current projects include:

- **Westminster Abbey (the infirmary)**

We are constructing a new oak staircase and balustrade to provide access to a galleried mezzanine floor. New bespoke fitted cupboards and kitchenette are currently being handcrafted from softwood to seamlessly infill the space beneath the gallery level.

- **Marygolds Barn**

A new European oak straight flight staircase with a glass balustrade and 21 new sepele sash casement double glazed windows have been manufactured by our joinery workshop.

- **St Marys Church, Islington**

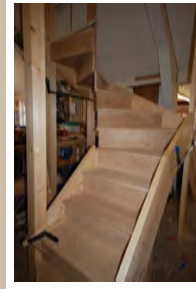
We are currently making a new oak kitchenette servery area and storage units, all featuring oak panelling and a bevelled detail. This is a time-consuming project with detailed profiles achieved by using a spindle mould machine.

- **Little Loveney Hall**

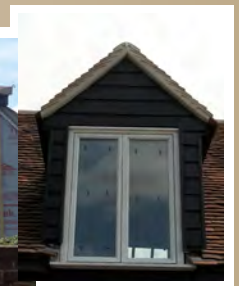
Our joinery workshop are making a kite winder staircase consisting of oak strings, spindles and handrail, and MDF treads and risers. We have recently made 14 new oak frames to take new slimline crittall windows.

- **College of Arms, London**

Our joinery workshop have recently manufactured 8 large sash windows from sepele hardwood, to replace the existing sashes in the Garter room.



**Photos:** A new oak staircase for Westminster Abbey (top left), oak storage units for St Marys Islington (top right), new sepele sash casement double glazed windows for Marygolds Barn (bottom)



Later this month, our joinery workshop will be hand crafting bespoke fitted furniture including wardrobes, vanity units and television units from solid tulip wood for Leewood house. All joinery will be factory finished.

## St Johns the Evangelist Church

Bakers are currently working on St Johns the Evangelist Church, a landmark within the market town of Bury St Edmunds.

As one of England's first great Victorian Gothic churches, it has a turret and conical spire at every corner of the church and every stage of the tower. Bakers recently rebuilt two of these conical spires with yellow stock brick which had to be handcut with compound angles to achieve the octagonal pyramid profile.

Half of the coping stones were replaced in Stoke Ground Base Bed stone which was templated, scheduled and supplied by Baker's sister company Collins and Curtis Masonry Ltd.

Bakers' in-house Joinery Workshop hand-crafted a new oak louvre for the east end of the church, to provide venting to the attic vaults, where we have installed 270mm of new insulation.

Outside, the existing roof slates were at the end of their lifespan so were stripped and replaced with new Cwt-y-Bugail Welsh slates.

Collins & Curtis have also crafted a large new cross out of Stoke Ground stone, to sit atop the east gable. Following a dedication service and blessing of the cross, it was hoisted into position to put the finishing touch to the project.



**Photos:** St Johns the Evangelist, a new spirelet (top left), and the new louvre (bottom right)

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## Little Loveney Hall

Bakers are currently working on an oak timber framed extension and other alterations and restoration to a Grade II Listed home in Essex. Believed to date back to the late 16th century, Little Loveney Hall lies within a well preserved medieval moat.

Bakers' team of carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers and ground-workers led by Matt Edwards and Terry Barber have carried out extensive internal restoration and alteration works which include new floors and finishes, plastering between the rafters using thermalime, re-pointing to the inglenook fireplace and repair and re-pointing to the central chimney stack, which has three diagonal shafts. New heating, plumbing, electricity and lighting systems have been installed.

Externally Bakers have carried out roof repairs (inc. exposing new and existing roof timbers) and applied new render with pargeted panels to match the existing.

The new Oak timber framed extension was all hand-cut, traditionally jointed and assembled on site. It will provide a kitchen and dining room extension as well as a first floor bedroom with en-suite. The works are nearing completion.



**Top photo:** Hand-cut oak timber frame roof

**Bottom:** New oak timber framed extension

## Sawston Village College

Work has now started on phase two at Sawston Village College which is an academy school, founded in 1930. Phase one started April this year, and involved the installation of a temporary roof whilst the stripping and re-roofing of the Grade II Listed Henry Morris building took place. The existing pantiles were re-laid to the front elevation of the building and new handmade pantiles were installed to the back.



**Photo:** Sawston Village College

Below the roof, the deteriorating lath and plaster ceiling to the main hall was replaced with new, which included the installation of new laths, scratch coat and a finish of thermalime plaster previously approved by the Conservation Officer. Existing fascia boards were replaced and the cast iron gutters and downpipes were thoroughly sanded back to metal and painted. The bell tower underwent extensive repairs to the leaded lights, structural timber and boarding.

Phase two works include roof works to the North Wing of the College, similar to the roof works to the Henry Morris building. Works are progressing in-line with the programme and are due to complete in August.

## Restoration of the Birthplace of Feminism

The restoration and alteration of Newington Green Meeting House in north London is well underway. The £1.1 million project started February this year, and is on track to meet the project deadline of February next year.

Built in 1708 the Grade II listed Newington Green Unitarian Church is one of England's oldest Unitarian churches. It has had strong ties to political radicalism for over 300 years and is known as the "Birthplace of Feminism" due to its connections to activist and writer Mary Wollstonecraft. The Dissenters, a group that campaigned for religious freedom, social reform and the abolition of slavery, also used the Meeting House.

A grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund has given the Meeting House the opportunity to future-proof and preserve its iconic heritage legacy. The project will provide a new visitor centre to enable local schoolchildren, researchers and community groups to make the most of the building's rich heritage. Bakers are also restoring the Schoolroom and constructing a basement to accommodate facilities including a meeting room, three w/c, a plantroom and a lift shaft going from basement level to the first floor.

To construct the basement, Bakers have excavated 4m deep, formed a new steel reinforced slab, carried out underpinning and structural steel works to support the ground floor walls. An underground drainage and tanking system was installed to the basement level as well as a ducting and airflow system. As part of the restoration works the existing external render will be removed to enable localised brick repair, before new render is applied. Some roof repairs will take place and a new roof light installed within the apse roof (a semi-circular recess at the end of the chapel). A new raised entrance ramp and reception area into the chapel will be formed, as well as an extensive AV package, new kitchen area and teapoint facilities.



# COLLINS & CURTIS MASONRY LTD

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Collins and Curtis Masonry are currently busy working on a number of projects across the whole of the masonry spectrum, including Architectural supply, memorials, fireplaces and restoration works.

We have completed the supply of stone to the large portico for Bartlow Park using Stoke Ground Basebed. We have also supplied springers and an apex to the pediment for Park Farm House using Portland stone.

We have recently handcrafted finials in Hartham Park Bath stone for Our Lady Star of the Sea Church in Lowestoft as well as numerous other small projects using a variety of Limestones and Sandstones.

We are supplying all of the new stone detail for an extension to a large country house in Surrey, including the door and window surrounds, pediments and copings in York stone.

We continue to supply fire surrounds and kitchens using a variety of marbles and granites.

**Photos top (left to right):** A York stone feature for Beeleigh Abbey's new orangery, a quatrefoil in Portland stone, a fireplace in Statuary Marble

**Photos left (top to bottom):** Finial in Hartham Park Bath stone for Our Lady Star of the Sea Church and a feature in York stone for Beeleigh Abbey

# PICKFORD BUILDERS LTD

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We would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new starters Patrick Thurgood as our new Contracts Manager and Alexandra Michaels our new Insurance Project Co-ordinator.

In February we completed a barn conversion in Hatfield Broad Oak. The conversion provided a two bedroom guest annex including a kitchen, bathroom and an open plan lounge/ dining area.

Work commenced in April to create eight new apartments within the shell of an old industrial unit in Braintree. The pictures below show both the original building and when the old roof was removed (including new internal footings, drainage and steel frame to support the first floor). Works are due to complete at the end of this year.

We recently finished a Listed building renovation and remodel in Wicken Bonhunt. The renovation included the construction of a new roof to the kitchen and garden room extension with oak king post trusses, exposed oak rafters and a re-configuration of the kitchen and utility.



**Photos above:**  
Barn conversion in Hatfield Broad Oak

**Photos bottom left:**  
Warehouse conversion

**Photos bottom right :**  
Renovation and remodel in Wicken Bonhunt



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