

## A foreword from Peter Smyth, Managing Director

On behalf of all of our Directors I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work, support and interest in Bakers of Danbury and its sister companies Collins and Curtis Masonry and Pickford Builders during 2020.

This, our 30th newsletter marks the 15th year we have been publishing a biannual newsletter. Although we still strive to maintain a blend of traditional ethics with modern capabilities, so much has changed over the last 15 years. We continue to receive the majority of our enquiries through existing customers and architects, but we certainly spend more time writing PQQs and tender submissions which are sent through online portals! Gone are the days of winning a project just through personal recommendation!

2020 has been a strange year for everybody. Frustrating, as our productivity has been impacted; first through the spring lockdown which saw 90% of our projects put on hold for around ten weeks, and for the foreseeable future due to self distancing measures in place to help protect our workers, colleagues, customers and the public. We are very thankful that the construction industry was able to remain open for business during the second lockdown this Autumn. Like the rest of the world, we hope 2021 will bring a vaccine programme accessible to everyone, so that we can continue with life and work as before.

For the second half of this year we have been very busy across all companies and departments working on current projects and tender submissions. We have been successful in winning a number of projects across all departments, which will keep us busy well into next year. Although the industry does look quite unsettled due to the impact Brexit and Coronavirus have had, for the Bakers of Danbury group of companies the outlook into next year is very positive.



Photo: 2005 Newsletter



Photo: Bakers donated a Christmas tree to the village again this year

Bakers of Danbury recently underwent a two day audit of Bakers' Quality Managements Systems, for both onsite and our head office. We have completed our assessment for ISO 9001 successfully, and the auditors for ISO have recommended us for acceptance to the awarding body, which we understand is now just a formality.

On behalf of the Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. If you would like to keep up-to-date with Bakers' latest projects, you can do so by visiting [bakersofdanbury.co.uk](http://bakersofdanbury.co.uk)

## Westminster Structural Repairs & Underpinning

Bakers began work on another project for Westminster School three months ago. The project involves external repairs to 3 and 3a Deans Yard, Westminster which are also known as the Western Buildings.

The external repair works to the buildings which sit adjacent to the grounds of Westminster Abbey include the underpinning and structural repairs to a large bay window to the front of 3a. Full Structural repairs to the bay have been undertaken, tying the bay back into the building by use of Cintec anchors and sleeves. These have been made reversible so to protect the fabric of the building. Various external brickwork and stonework repairs and repointing will be undertaken, with some stonework which is found to be beyond repair being replaced with Bath stone indents.

Overhauling the cast iron rainwater goods will be undertaken in conjunction with repairs to the parapet gutters and mansard roofs.

Leadwork will be renewed to include new string course flashings. All 45 hardwood windows and doors which include sash and dormer windows will be overhauled and redecorated. The project is due to be completed February 2021.

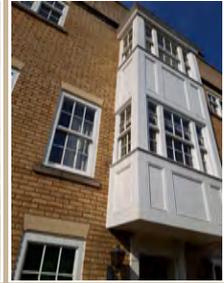


Photos: The Western Buildings, Deans Yard, Westminster

## Bakers' Specialist Joinery Division

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

- **New Front Door and Frame**  
Front door and frame manufactured in Accoya. Existing leaded lights and furniture were used.
- **St Andrews Church, Impington**  
New bespoke staircase with a glass balustrade and entrance screen, manufactured from oak to provide access to new mezzanine floor within tower.
- **Oak Bays**  
Complete replacement of two large window bays in hardwood.
- **Oak Larder Unit**  
Bakers' joinery workshop recently carried out a complete design and build of a larder unit which included a secret walk through section to lead to the living room. The bespoke larder unit was manufactured from solid Oak and Oak veneer boards.  
Bakers also constructed a 4.8m wide bench seat with a lift up seat to provide storage. This bench seat was also manufactured using Solid Oak and Oak veneer boards.
- **New Village Sign**  
Bakers recently manufactured a new village sign for Steeple. Jack Darvill, one of Baker's younger craftsmen hand carved the design which was taken from a painting by a local artist. After Jack had spent many hours carefully hand carving the design, it was hand painted. Once the village sign was completed, Bakers of Danbury installed it with a solid oak post.



*Photo top: New door and frame in Accoya*

*Photo middle left to right: Bespoke oak staircase for St Andrews Church, Impington. Two large hardwood window bays.*

*Photo bottom left to right: Bespoke larder unit in Oak. New hand carved and hand painted Village sign.*

## Church Fire Damage Repair

Bakers of Danbury were initially tasked with phase one of works at St John the Baptist Church in Royston. Phase one began May 2019 and involved six weeks stripping all fire damaged material and making the structure safe after it had suffered a devastating fire in the early hours of the 9th December 2018. The fire which started in the tower devastated the tower and bell ringing chamber and caused significant damage to the medieval nave roof, in particular the west end of the roof.



After completing phase one of works, Bakers were awarded phase two of works which began in February 2020. Later the following month, due to the nature of the works and the confined working space, the project had to be put on hold during the national lock down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In May the works resumed with the introduction of social distancing measures, sensible planning and safe working procedures which were implemented by Bakers' SHEQ Manager, Contract Manager and Site Manager for the project.



To the nave roof, which suffered significant damage, Bakers repaired the original inner wall plate and introduced a new outer wall plate to support the rafters. New rafters were installed where the fire had damaged the original ones beyond repair. Those original principal rafters which were salvaged have been repaired and supported by installing large stainless steel brackets (individual brackets weigh 175 kg each).

All timbers have been ice blasted to remove fire and smoke damage, taking particular attention to preserve historical graffiti which although had been damaged by the fire, was still legible. A new code 7 lead roof will be installed and all rainwater goods will be replaced with cast aluminum. Ice blast cleaning has also been carried out in isolated areas of the church which suffered fire and smoke damage, for example around the windows and doors. Various cleaning trials have been carried out throughout the interior and exterior of the church.



## Restoration of Roman-era Church Remains

Restoration works have recently been carried out by Bakers of Danbury Ltd, to the remaining stonework belonging to what is said to be the oldest Christian Church in England. The remains of the Church next to Colchester Police Station in Essex, are believed to date back to AD 320, toward the end of the Roman occupation in Britain. Originally excavated more than 40 years ago, the apsidal remains consist of septarian stone together with reclaimed roman tiles and pammments.



Commissioned by Colchester Borough Council and supported by Colchester Archaeological Trust, Bakers of Danbury's stonemasons repointed the stone wall foundations with Lime Mortar and restored all visible stonework, using traditional methods which have been handed down through generations of the 140-year-old company. Despite the starkness of the pointing against the older, dirtier masonry, Bakers' stonemasons matched the original core mortar as closely as possible. The recent restoration works will protect the remains for many years to come, by preventing further erosion which can occur when the weather gets into the original core structure of the walls. All oak marker posts which mark the positions of the aisles and partition have been replaced with new.

Philip Wise, Colchester & Ipswich Museums said;

***"These works will help to safeguard the future of these important Roman remains for the people of Colchester."***

Although Colchester Archaeological Trust agree the ruins are a "probable Romano-British Church", the building was associated with two cemeteries one pagan and one Christian, which help support alternative theories around the buildings original use - perhaps later being converted to a Romano-British Church. These theories suggest it may have been originally been a pagan temple, a Roman mithraeum (Roman temple) or a hall for funerary feasts predating AD.320.

The remains were awarded Scheduled Monument status by Historic England on 07 October 2020, ref 1470104.

**Top photo:** Roman-era apsidal remains and replacement oak marker posts which mark the positions of the aisles and partition. **Bottom two photos:** Restoration of the remaining stonework which consists of septarian stone together with reclaimed roman tiles and pammments.



## New Build Home

Bakers of Danbury recently completed the new build of a 3 bedroom chalet style home. The house was of a timber frame construction with a hand cut roof with a slate finish with rendered external walls.

The house was designed specifically for the use of the family as a forever home. The clever design will enable the house to adapt to the family's changing needs. For example low thresholds will allow disable access if it should be needed in the future.

Downstairs the house boasts an open plan living area comprising of a kitchen, dining room and lounge area. Bakers manufactured a bespoke sliding screen which gives the flexibility to separate the lounge area from the dining and kitchen area. When the screen is closed it looks like a wall, but when it is open it is cleverly hidden to provide the family with open plan living. As the house is chalet style, the two downstairs bedrooms are serviced by a modern wet room.

Upstairs the large landing space leads to the master bedroom, bathroom and study. The large landing area and study benefit from natural light through the feature windows at the front of the house.

The house external grounds were landscaped to include a large drive laid with stone chippings, paving laid to both sides and exterior of the house with a decked entertainment area to the rear.



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After implementing safe working systems to ensure we can continue to work during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have had a busy six months supplying masonry to both the private and commercial sectors.

We have supplied a number of fire surrounds in Portland stone and hearths in a variety of sandstones, limestones, granites and slate.

Intricate carving projects include the repair and reinstatement of a cross for Bildeston Church and the supply of a new cross in Stoke Ground Basebed for Great Wrattling Church. Other details we have supplied include two new finials in Park Lane Bath stone for a Mausoleum at St Remigius Church in Hetherset and an unusual Ball Finial in Portland stone for Lloyds bank in Worthing.

We have supplied Ancaster Hard White details for the renewal of the chimneys to Cherry Hinton Hall and various details for masonry repairs to many churches including the reinstatement of window surrounds in Stoke Ground Basebed to St Nicholas Church, Harwich.

Further stone has been supplied for repairs to Little Maplestead Church. In Caen stone we supplied new window surrounds, quoins and two complete sills.

Quoins were also supplied for the two buttresses. In addition to a door jamb previously supplied in Chicksgrove stone, we recently hand carved an intricate label stop to the north window.

We are currently working on a large restoration project at Lincolns Inn Fields in London, supplying Cadeby stone details for the repair of the parapet including copings, merlons and embrasures. Another large project includes the supply of Portland stone details for the repair of the facade to the Barkers Arcade building in Kensington.



**Top photo:** Repaired cross for Bildeston Church.

**Middle photos:** New finials in Park Lane Bath stone for a Mausoleum at St Remigius Church in Hetherset.

**Bottom right photos from left to right:** Ancaster Hard White details for the renewal of the chimneys to Cherry Hinton Hall.

Ball Finial in Portland stone for Lloyds bank in Worthing.

**Bottom left photos from left to right:** Before photo of label stop at Little Maplestead Church in need of repair. After photo showing the new hand carved label stop.



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It has been a strange year for everyone. Pickford Builders have been lucky enough to receive a steady stream of incoming enquiries from both the general public and professional organisations. We have implemented many changes to ensure safe working and protection against Covid-19 both onsite and in the office. We have developed a Covid 19 Policy Statement and adapted the risk assessments for every project. In the office we have erected perspex between desks as an extra self distancing precaution.

An interesting project recently completed by Pickford Builders was repair work to a Manor near Royston, after water leaking from the bathroom upstairs had damaged the dining room ceiling below.

The damaged plaster and lathe ceiling was removed and a Gyproc sound bloc plasterboard on a sure fix gypframe was installed, then skimmed and painted and spotlights replaced. All works were carried out whilst protecting the dining room wallpaper which had been hand painted by De Gournay 12 years ago at the cost of approximately £26,000. The estimated cost of replacing the wallpaper today is between £50,000 and £60,000. We used a Protek ultimate seal foam and clean screen method, to protect the wall paper without touching it and where necessary an Artist made small repairs to the wallpaper.



We also recently refurbished the roof and repaired the wooden windows for a large home in Finchingfield. The roof was cleaned of all debris, all accessible ridge tiles to one elevation were replaced and repointing was carried out to all ridge tiles and the chimney stack. All wooden windows were repaired by cutting all rotten timber and replacing it with new. After being repaired the windows were all filled, rubbed down and painted.

**Top photos:** Photos of the water damaged dining room ceiling and the De Gournay hand painted valuable wallpaper. **Bottom photo:** roof and window repairs to a home in Finchingfield



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