

NEWSLETTER

Bakers of Danbury

Heritage Builders Since 1878

July 2025

Words from our new Pre-Construction Director...Mark Holland

Welcome to Summer 2025 and our latest edition of our newsletter, where we are excited to share updates on our recent projects and company news.

To begin, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself in my new role as Pre-Construction Director. Having been with the company for nearly 20 years as both Contracts Manager and Board Director, I've seen firsthand how much the construction industry has evolved and how we, as a business, must continue to evolve with it.

As our business continues to grow and as the projects we undertake become more diverse, we've recognised the value of introducing a role dedicated to setting up projects for long-term success right from the start. The Pre-Construction role is designed to bring together the key areas of early-stage planning, tendering, estimating and risk management as well as the development of strong client relationships. It's a role focused on laying a strong foundation for successful project delivery, and I am very much looking forward to the challenge ahead.

I also want to highlight some exciting recent developments that reflect our commitment to continuous improvement. We have recently been awarded membership to the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), and we're also absolutely delighted to have been shortlisted for two categories for the National Federation of Builders' Excellence in Construction Awards—a real testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team. We also have some great projects to share with you, from medieval church spires, to Georgian restoration to the completion of the stunning Round Chapel.

I look forward to working with you in this new capacity and sharing more about how we're shaping the future of the company and our projects.



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PRE-CONSTRUCTION DIRECTOR**
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PROJECTS IN FOCUS

Major Works Department...

Progress Update: Structural works underway on River Crouch project

Works are progressing well at the property restoration project overlooking the River Crouch, in Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex, where the existing roof has been removed and a series of complex, detailed structural steels are now being installed. Each component is positioned with precision and in a carefully planned sequence to support the rebuild and accommodate the striking new cantilevered balcony, which will extend over the water.

A key feature of the site is the bespoke scaffolding system, designed specifically to overcome the challenges of building above a tidal riverbank. The multi-level scaffold wraps the structure and extends out over the River Crouch, incorporating cantilevered platforms, birdcage towers, and secure access routes to ensure safe working conditions throughout all phases of the build.

We've also completed additional foundation works at the top of the original sea wall, reinforcing the base to support the new structure above. This phase marks an exciting step forward in delivering what promises to be an architecturally ambitious and visually stunning property transformation.

Great Ormond Street Georgian listed building renovation begins

In the heart of London's Bloomsbury Conservation Area, we are beginning the restoration of two 4-storey Grade II listed Georgian townhouses, owned by Great Ormond Street Hospital. Having previously served as offices and accommodation, the property has stood vacant for several years with the building suffering as a result. However, many of its outstanding historic features remain and our work is focused on preserving the building's rich heritage whilst sensitively upgrading the property to meet modern standards.

Our work has begun with the initial strip-out and then begins the extensive restoration programme. Planned works include structural repairs to the walls, floors, and staircases along with the careful restoration of the original sash windows and historic joinery features such as the wood panelling, doors, and the main staircase. The property will also undergo a full electrical and plumbing overhaul, incorporating a low-impact heat pump system, energy-efficient LED lighting and secondary glazing all to improve thermal efficiency.

Heritage Special Works Department...

Consecration of the Round Chapel celebrates this stunning, spiritual building

We are proud to have delivered the Round Chapel now formerly named as the House of Our Father, a striking new chapel for the Community of St John the Baptist in Tolleshunt Knights, Essex. With construction complete and the surrounding grounds beautifully landscaped, we were delighted to see the chapel being formally consecrated on Sunday 22nd June 2025. The celebration welcomed over 1,500 guests from around the world, with the service live-streamed across Europe and marquees set up on the grounds for the occasion.

The chapel itself is truly breathtaking with its unique circular design coming from a vision first shared over 30 years ago when monastery elders were gathered and plans announced for a new church dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The circle design was instrumental to the vision, chosen as a sign of globality and condition without beginning or end.

Bakers of Danbury began work in 2022 with groundwork and site preparation and by 2023 the complex steel frame was in place. Every aspect of the design and choice of materials were carefully considered. The exterior brickwork was faced with a traditional flint and stone panels, while the complex domed and barrel roof, clad in handmade clay tiles, was created with precision and skilled carpentry.

Inside, the impressive domed lath ceiling, now displays a beautiful hand-painted gold-leaf mural above an oak alter screen crafted in our own Bakers Joinery workshop. Arched windows, copper-clad concrete domes, and raised sanctuary flooring all add to the outstanding design of the building all working together to create a truly remarkable place of worship.





Church Department...

Repairing the medieval broach spire and tower at St Martins of Tours Church in Kent

Bakers of Danbury have completed major restoration works to the medieval broach spire and tower at St Martin of Tours Church in Kent. With a history dating back to the 1100's, this Grade II listed church is named after St Martin, Bishop of Tours who was a Roman citizen and Christian. The spire is the original medieval broach spire and has stood the test of time even surviving a lightning strike in 1616 during a Sunday service when it famously snapped in two.

Weathered cedar shingles which had succumbed to damage from woodpeckers, were removed and replaced with a more durable option of hand-split oak shakes. Internal timber splicing work took place to stabilise the spire with protection measures against lightening strikes added. Helibar stitching was used to repair large cracks in the tower walls and masonry work included flint rebuilding, lime mortar repointing, and new Bath stone indents to window mullions, chimney cappings, and cills. A complex scaffold design allowed safe access to all elevations, with works carefully planned around the church's daily use.

Tracery and tradition to restore the gothic windows of St Mary's in Hitchen

We are delighted to be leading the restoration of one of Hertfordshire's most historic parish churches, St Mary's in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. As part of a phased programme of conservation work, the first stage involves the repair of four large Gothic stone tracery windows which each stand at an impressive 15ft tall by 8ft wide. Originally built from locally quarried Clunch limestone, the windows have suffered significant erosion making the restoration both delicate and complex.

On site, a full-scale survey of the existing windows was carried out to document their shape and design features. Using string lines stretched across the window openings, each stone's profile was plotted onto large sheets of plastic to create a full-size template to ensure every curve and joint was accurately matched. The new tracery stones are being shaped from Ancaster Hard White Limestone using a blend of traditional hand tools and machine cutting, then installed with lime-based mortars.

This careful restoration work is just the beginning of a broader, long-term programme of improvements at St Mary's. Future phases will include the reordering of the tower's ground floor, the provision and fitting of high-quality oak joinery, and introducing new water and drainage services to accommodate modern toilet facilities and a utility area.

The project has drawn strong support from the local community with over 250 visitors attending their recent Churchyard Day, and the launch of their "Sponsor a Stone" campaign, which is a truly engaging initiative to raise funds to support the restoration.



Get in touch...

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Insurance Department...

Careful planning equals minimum disruption for policy holders

Our Insurance Division works hard to support both policyholders and insurers, and we share a recent project to showcase the team's expertise. The project involved a detached residential property affected by subsidence, leading to internal and external cracking.

With the policyholder remaining in residence throughout, careful planning was key to ensure the property stayed fully habitable with access to all essential amenities. Works included removing and replacing a bespoke kitchen to allow for floor re-levelling, as well as a full bathroom refurbishment using premium materials. Externally, we replaced the patio and carried out the essential structural brickwork repairs, inserting helical bars to stabilise the rear and side elevations.

This is just one example of how our Insurance Division combines technical skill with care and co-ordination. From fire and flood to escape of water and subsidence, our experienced team works sensitively in occupied homes and returning properties to their pre-loss condition with quality and professionalism.

OTHER NEWS

What's been in the news at Bakers?



Achieving CIOB Membership

We are delighted to have achieved company membership of the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB). To reach this milestone, we have demonstrated our commitment to quality, safety and ethical standards. We are proud to be part of this respected organisation and look forward to upholding its values as we continue to deliver excellence in our work.



Marathon Glory for Colin

Colin Wishart, Church Department Project Manager, was honoured to take part in this year's London Marathon. With a rigorous 16-week training plan and despite the hot conditions, he completed the race in a hugely impressive 3 hours and 20 minutes. An amazing atmosphere and crowd support kept him motivated every step of the way. Congratulations to Colin on his fantastic achievement!



Up Close to Centuries of History at Stebbing Church

The floor-to-roof scaffolding at St Mary's Church in Stebbing, Essex, gave the team a rare chance to get up close to the church's medieval architecture, details hard to see from the ground. We documented carved wooden angels, distinctive stone faces, and the 14th-century stone rood screen, one of only three in the world. This unique access allowed us to capture the craftsmanship and intricate detail from centuries ago.



Golfing Around at Pitch and Putt

Another year and another fun evening at the annual pitch and putt event all in the name of team building and having fun with colleagues. Great swings, great style and a few rouge shots was all part of the fun. Our photo shows Mark Holland presenting the winning cup to Pat Thurgood a member of the Pickfords team. Great putting Pat!

Hear from our valued partner company Pickford Builders

Subsidence repairs, summer wins and keep a look out for our new website coming soon!

The team at Pickford have been busy working on behalf of loss adjusters and policy holders over the last six months covering all perils from storm and flood damage to fire and escape of water claims. With subsidence claims on the rise, a recurring theme is the misconception 'we have subsidence, therefore we need to have foundations underpinned.' In reality, underpinning is rare. Most cases are resolved with simple crack repairs once the cause is identified and removed. A recent project in Wilby, Suffolk is a great example of this. Following property movement caused by clay shrinkage, an Arboricultural Report confirmed that nearby trees and shrubs were to blame. Once removed, and with no foundation work needed, we carried out a crack repair and redecoration programme.

Outside of our projects, we're excited to be launching our new website, designed to be faster, easy to use and packed with helpful advice. And finally with summer in full swing we're looking forward to hosting a T20 cricket match and congratulations to our very own Pat Thurgood, who proudly took home the winning cup at the recent Bakers of Danbury summer pitch and putt day!

New Roles...

We congratulate Dean Harvey on his promotion to Manager of the Major Projects Department and we look forward to the insight and leadership he will bring to this key position.

We are also delighted to announce that Gary Williams who has been a valued member of the Heritage Special Works department as Supervisor and Carpenter has been appointed as our new Joinery Manager. Gary brings with him a wealth of practical experience which will be invaluable in overseeing operations in the workshop.

Additionally, we extend a warm welcome to Adrian Higgs, who joins us as Stores and Yard Manager. We are delighted to have him on board and look forward to the contributions he will make to the team.

Training Congratulations...

Members of our church team Aaron Harman-Day and Dave Turner are making great progress with the Bakers of Danbury Heritage Training Scheme as they move through the modules with continuous assessments and interview-style examinations.

Meanwhile, many members of our management team have also been getting back to the classroom achieving NVQ 7 qualifications to formally demonstrate their expertise. Embracing training and professional development is key at Bakers of Danbury.