

Bakers of Danbury

Heritage Builders Since 1878

July 2023

WORDS FROM THE MD...PETER SMYTH

I hope this message finds you in good health and high spirits. As we welcome in the summer months, I am delighted to provide our new look Summer 2023 newsletter giving an insight into what Bakers of Danbury have been up to over the past six months.

As Managing Director, it is my privilege to lead a dedicated team of professionals and craftsmen who share a passion for the preservation and restoration of our architectural heritage. Over the last half-year, we have taken on fascinating projects, faced unique challenges, and embraced innovative solutions, all while staying true to our objective of safeguarding the legacy of the past for future generations.

Of course, no journey comes without its fair share of challenges. Supply chain disruptions and a more challenging labour market have posed some unforeseen obstacles. However, through our willingness to adapt and ability to seek new solutions, we continue to ride the storm, ensuring that our projects progress with the utmost care, quality and attention to detail.

Looking ahead, the next six months promise to be equally exciting and rewarding. We have an inspiring collection of projects on the horizon, each presenting its own set of unique opportunities. From bringing new life to a collection of derelict barns to protecting our future environment via a solar panel roof repair programme, we remain steadfast in our commitment to protect and preserve properties.

I invite you to take a read of our newsletter and wish you a very happy summer.



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PROJECTS IN FOCUS

Contracts Department...

Refurbishment and T.S Eliot at St Stephen's Church, Gloucester Road, London

Refurbishment work has taken place at this West London church. The existing kitchen, WC's and vestry have been extensively renovated, with the provision of new high quality bespoke oak joinery units and upgraded electrical and lighting installations. The internal walls were sympathetically repaired with lime render, floors sanded and resealed and damaged glazing replaced providing a revitalised interior. Externally, we focused on replacing a lead roof which had reached the end of its useful life and introduced a new conservation rooflight in keeping with the existing fabric to allow more daylight into the building. We improved access for persons with disabilities, upgraded the existing drainage systems and landscaped the external churchyard, creating a serene space within this bustling London location. Of particular note is the new inset stone roundel commemorating the Church's long association with T.S Eliot, who served as churchwarden for 25 years.



Upgraded BA Chamber at Clacton Fire Station as part of investment in fire service training

A breathing apparatus training centre at Clacton Fire Station in Essex has undergone significant renovations as part of a fire service training investment programme. The building has undergone concrete repairs along with the expansion of the internal layout through the creation of a high-level crawl space. Fixtures and fittings have also been added to further enhance the facility's functionality. The centre is designed to create realistic building conditions within a smoke-filled environment. These developments offer firefighters greater access to life-like training scenarios enabling them to effectively prepare for real-life emergency situations.



Church Department...

Church spire, tower and weathervane brought back to life at Broomfield Church

Scaffolding surrounding the refurbished spire at St Mary with St Leonard Church in Broomfield, Essex, is soon to be dismantled unveiling its magnificent restoration. The shakes on the spire had significantly deteriorated with little structural integrity to the supporting frame. Extensive repairs were undertaken to strengthen the frame and new shakes were crafted using hard and durable high-quality oak. To reinforce the structure and protect against woodpeckers and squirrels, stainless steel strips were laid between the layers of the shakes. The stone tower itself was also sensitively restored with repointing and masonry repairs carried out. The weathervane was repaired and regilded so adding the final touch to this remarkable renovation.



Grave matters at Highgate Cemetery with Gothic restoration underway

Work has now finished at Highgate Cemetery following extensive roof and masonry repairs to the 1800 Grade 2 listed Gothic building which stands at the main entrance. This project follows the successful completion of external conservation works to the brick colonnade to the rear of the main building in 2017 which involved Jos Torque sensitive abrasive cleaning techniques, brick repairs and repointing as well as asphalt roofing work to ensure the future weather protection to this structure.



Nave and chancel roof replacement at St Mary's Church, Hertfordshire

Extensive flintwork repointing, reconstruction of chancel walls and replacement of sandcast lead roof coverings and clipsham stone quoins are all part of the recent renovation works to St Mary's Church in Baldock, Hertfordshire. This beautiful church has royal roots dating back to Charles I, who is known to have passed through Baldock on his way to his execution in London in 1649.





Special Works Department...

Vikings and a peasants revolt: The rich history of Bocking as barn restoration in Essex begins

Restoration work has begun in the grounds of Dorewards Hall to four 15th century barns. Bocking has a rich history dating back to the 10th century, when it was under the lordship of Aetheric, an esteemed East Saxon nobleman who survived the Battle of Maldon against Viking invaders in 991AD. Bocking also holds significance as a gathering place for rebels during the Peasants Revolt prior to the march to London. Clearance around the site and the design and installation of temporary structural supports is in progress. The goal is to make the structure safe and for the roof to be removed so the extent of the damage can be assessed. The structures will be photographed and the original flint, timbers and Welsh slate preserved and re-used.



Timber and roof repairs continue at The Fox and Raven Public House, Essex

Work continues at The Fox & Raven, a public house and restaurant in Chelmsford, Essex. A substantial timber framed building with a sand and cement finish, the property had suffered from major water ingress from the roof and valley gutter level resulting in substantial timber decay. The removal of cement render also revealed widespread beetle infestation. An extensive timber and roof renovation programme is underway. This has included timber resin repairs to preserve the original timbers wherever possible as well as reinstatement of the roof using the original tiles. A stainless steel EML mesh with lime render has been applied externally. Internally a number of the lath and plaster walls have been stripped and reinstated with new laths & lime render finish.



Chapel round house starts to take shape

The new build construction of a round chapel for the Greek orthodox community in Essex is taking shape. The foundations and steel frame to this beautiful structure are in place and the external flintwork and brickwork is now in progress.



Insurance Repairs Department...

The Insurance Repairs department continue to work closely with leading insurance companies, loss adjusters and policy holders to effectively address fire, water and subsidence damages. Regrettably, the team are observing an increase in fire and subsidence claims which can be attributed to the exceptionally hot summer of 2022.

Heading the team is Paul Francis, who highlights, 'The claim process can be intricate. We oversee the entire journey from the initial assessment through to completion. Our responsibilities involve undertaking emergency measures to ensure site safety, pricing, scheduling and comprehensive project management. Our goal is to provide high quality repairs with minimal disruption and inconvenience.'

Joinery Department...

Traditional and bespoke timber windows and sliding doors are nearing completion ready for the team to install at a Bakers of Danbury Grade 2 listed barn conversion project in Essex. The units are double-glazed and feature multi-point locks, they are stained black to enhance the beauty of the property. Our skilled craftsmanship has also been in evidence with the hand-carved creation of an ornate screen featuring an intricate design of grapevines for installation at an Essex rectory.



Get in touch...

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OTHER NEWS

Awards, racing and a coronation ... there's been a lot to celebrate



2023 Gold Award winners...again!

Mark Holland was delighted to receive the City of London Considerate Contractor Scheme 2023 Gold Award for the second year in a row for our work at St Lawrence of Jewry Church. This has been a long standing project involving extensive repairs with traditional materials in keeping to the 17th century construction of this beautiful building.



Boy racer Paul Revill takes pole position

Everybody needs their moment of glory!

A team outing to the race track put Paul Revill from our Special Works Department firmly in the drivers seat as he took pole position. By all accounts it was a highly competitive event with a few sore backs afterwards!



All the fun of the coronation at Danbury

We were delighted to get involved and sponsor the coronation fete organised by Danbury Parish Council. The sun shone and the crowds came to enjoy a traditional day out with cream teas, Pimms and great music and entertainment. A wonderful way to celebrate our new King.

News from our valued partner companies



Pickford Builders continue to re-focus their business activities into expansion of the insurance repair stream whilst still offering local building services in the Great Dunmow, Essex area. Projects

have been varied, requiring a multiple skill set from all their trades people. Traditional building methods are the most in demand as they deal with repairs to older properties requiring processes not necessarily used in modern construction. This included work to rebuild an old flint wall after it was hit by a car and renovation of a rendered property that was at some time covered in galvanised EML and modern render, which failed to perform in the way that a traditional lath and lime plaster would on a timber framed building.



Over a busy six months, Collins & Curtis continue to work on multiple projects using a variety of stones sourced from quarries in the UK and France. A key project for their stonemasonry work

is a large newbuild house in Norfolk. Yorkshire Cadeby Limestone is being used for door and window surrounds, plinths, and special features to the facades. Lepine, a pale limestone with a very fine grain allowing for intricate carving, was sourced from France for particular window details. Masonry work also continues at St Osyth Priory in Essex working with Park Lane, Portland and Stoke Ground Basebed stone for the replacement of various architectural features such as jambs and copings. They also continue to fulfil orders for custom made memorials for private clients in Essex and Suffolk crafted using Portland Stone, Granite and Yorkstone.

New Starters...

Dan Shaw, Health & Safety Manager



It is with great pleasure we welcome our new Health & Safety Manager, Dan Shaw. Dan brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the field having worked previously at Fedex for over 25 years. His extensive

experience will undoubtedly strengthen our existing safety culture and elevate our standards even further.

We also welcome Rachel Finlay as our new Marketing Manager, Teddy Cornwell who joins us fresh from college ready to embark on his building career and Steve Warren, Site Manager for the Heritage Special Works Department.

...and a fond farewell

We bid a heartfelt farewell to Ron Lowe who is embarking on a well-deserved retirement after an impressive career spanning 51 years with 18 of those at Bakers. From his early days, Ron's natural leadership, expertise and a genuine love for construction shone through with Ron going on to play a pivotal role in shaping the success of our company. We wish him all the very best.

We also say our goodbyes to Aiden Fothergill and Kim Lambourn.

