

Bakers of Danbury THE NEWS



Issue 16

Winter 2011

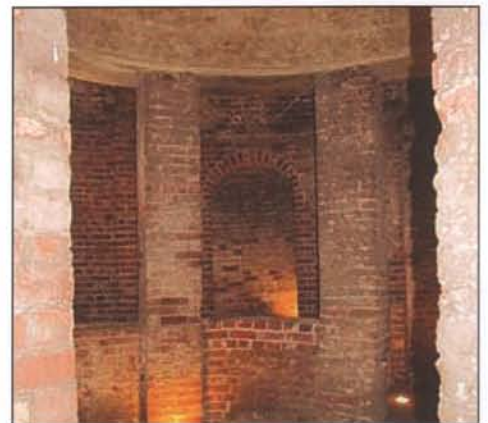
Where next? That's what we said this time last year as well ...

Another very difficult year has passed. Nothing seems to have improved in the world economy, indeed recently it seems to have taken a turn for the worse. Closer to home long established local construction companies such as F J French and W A Hills have gone into administration while slightly farther afield specialist companies such as Stonewest, Rattee and Kett and Linfords have gone the same way over the last six months. The construction industry is suffering particularly badly from "... the most serious financial crisis we've seen at least since the 1930s, if not ever" according to Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England. However, Bakers are still here and that is something we really should be proud of. Business is very tough and it would be foolish to sit on one's laurels. We seem to have to keep doing more for less as each month goes by but we continue to pick up work which has meant that we have kept almost the entire workforce employed for another year, which is something that very few construction companies of our size can say. It remains difficult to foresee what will happen next. Belts have been well and truly tightened and spending is greatly depressed, grants have been slashed and material costs have risen. However, Bakers' operational diversity allows us to adapt to carry out work in almost any field of construction and this combined with the quality and attitude of the workforce sets us aside from others and is undoubtedly a major strength of the firm. Your help has been invaluable and will allow Bakers to be in a strong position when the day finally dawns when this economic crisis is finally put behind us. Our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The Directors and Shareholders.



Puzzling building wins Maldon District Conservation Award 2011!

There is a brick building constructed in the dam wall of the lake within Braxted Park. It has, in part, a brick barrel roof and is capped with a platform of polygonal basalt blocks, like those found on the Giant's Causeway, Northern Ireland. Nobody knows exactly what it was used for. Ideas have included a Grotto, Ice house, Bath house, Classical Garden Temple or Hermitage, with current thinking leaning towards the latter. Listed Grade II*, it had deteriorated structurally and was in a dangerous condition. With assistance from English Heritage, the client set about restoring the building with Bakers securing the contract and working through the summer. Being an important winter roost site for bats, the work had to be finished by the autumn. Led by Robert Barber and Basil Gilbert the very delicate repair of the structure was carried out to a very high standard. It was a very demanding job but the team carried the work out to their usual excellent standard and to crown their achievement it won the Maldon Conservation Award 2011, the judges noting that they were "... immensely impressed by the magnitude of this extraordinary project. The timely structural intervention has saved an enigmatic and exceptional historic structure from collapse". It is the sixth time we have won the award and the third year in a row, after Mundon St Mary's church (2010) and White House Farm, also Mundon (2009).





St Clement's Church, Leigh-on-Sea

Over the years Bakers have carried out many and varied works of repairs to St Clement's Church, so it was pleasing to win a contract to build a completely new south porch that provided the church with toilet and kitchen facilities. The new building was constructed over a very carefully positioned piled raft foundation that had to avoid an old brick vault. The Kentish Ragstone walls and stone dressings were constructed by Tony Heard and Lee Welbourn who, as you can see from the photograph, produced a fantastic job.

Health and Safety Handbook

With the distribution of new Handbooks now complete, can I remind everyone to ensure that they do not lose them! They are for your reference and use and should be kept at hand for whenever needed.

Enlarged premises for A. G. Smiths Funeral Directors

Early in the year saw the opening of the enlarged A. G. Smith premises at 7, Spital Road, Maldon. The funeral directors have been on the site for decades but with the passing of time it was recognised that the old premises was not meeting modern client expectations. So the decision was made to obtain planning consent to convert the ground floor of the original building which was being used as a flat [although ironically this was where the original funeral directors was housed]. The works were carried out over the winter of 2010/11 and into the spring. The formal opening took place in late April. A. G. Smiths will celebrate its centenary next year, the original firm being founded in 1912 by Arthur George Smith as a general builders and funeral furnishers. It is one of the oldest surviving businesses in Maldon.



Draper's Hall, City of London

In just 27 working days over the summer holiday, Church Works had to strip and repolish all the oak panelling, fit five sets of new oak doors, new cabinets and four new mirrors, regild the ceiling, fit new alarm and fire protection systems and new LED lighting throughout the corridor area shown left. The programme was achieved despite the remarkably difficult working environment and the location of the property. Drapers Hall is the headquarters of the Worshipful Company of Drapers and is regularly used for important meetings and events, and the fact that our works were in the entrance corridor added to the difficulty of carrying out the works to the extremely tight programme.

House on the move in Ipswich

Bakers Insurance department first viewed this property over two years ago. It is in a precarious state and is suffering from a combination of thin flank walls, minimal footings and possibly underground springs or streams. It has been temporarily supported internally and is currently unoccupied. The original scheme was to construct a new raft foundation but following Bakers concern that the structure was probably too unstable to take such disturbance a revised scheme involving piling, resin injection of the walls to stabilise them and a new floor slab has been proposed. Work has however yet to begin on site, assuming that it is still standing when we go to start!



Collins and Curtis

carved three of the panels in Ancaster Hard White stone, shown to the left, for a London-based stone supplier. Currently our masons are producing stone for a large portico and have produced stone for various colleges in Cambridge including Jesus and Gonville and Gaius. A new sand blasting machine has been acquired for the use of the memorial side of operations. This will not only improve the speed and quality of the monuments that we produce but also ensures that we meet current Health and Safety requirements for the containment of the dust produced by the operation.

Cromwell Road, Maldon

In very difficult circumstances and in a fairly confined area Terry Barber and his team of groundworkers worked extremely hard to complete the ground retaining structure at Cromwell Lane. The work involved demolishing an existing brick wall, excavating to depths of more than 3.5m and constructing a sectional concrete retaining wall faced with reclaimed red facing bricks, with the added complication of consolidating the adjacent garage walls and underpinning to a depth of 4m. Unfortunately, photographs do not do justice to the amount of blood, sweat and tears shed by all involved on this contract and Ron is a making a good recovery in Severalls outpatient's department!

Pickfords – refurbishment in Tolleshunt Major



During the summer Pickfords carried out the major refurbishment of three recently constructed cottages for the NHBC. The works, which were lead by Brian Smith, included stripping the failed external coatings and applying a proprietary insulation and render finish, reducing surrounding ground levels and relocating services, supplying and fitting new doors and guttering and constructing a new dwarf wall to the front of the properties.

Our Lady of Ransom School, Rayleigh

Large Contracts recently completed an extension to the existing school for the Diocese of Brentwood. It was the first project for Steve Hurry operating as a site supervisor. Despite the non-traditional construction of the extension, the most difficult and challenging aspect of the contract was maintaining the normal day-to-day running of the school with minimum disruption. The £400,000 contract ran from January to October 2011.





"BUILDING ON OUR REPUTATION"

Bakers of Danbury

Eves Corner, Danbury,
Essex CM3 4QB
Phone: 01245 225876
Fax: 01245 226821

Email: enq@bakersofdanbury.co.uk
Editor: simon.wood@bakersofdanbury.co.uk
www.bakersofdanbury.co.uk

Arrivals and departures...

The continuing expansion of the Insurance Dept has seen the following arrivals in the last year or so - Paul Francis, Anne-Marie Tooley, Chris Norman, Gary Ashdown, Jack Crowther, Colin Marshall, David McKoy, Bradley Thomas and John Welch. In other departments, new faces are Stuart Nightingale in Funerals, Sam Cox, James Woollard and Lee Burley in Special Works, Steve Lilywhite in Church Works, Stuart Asher in the Joinery Shop, Natalie Harvey and Diane Etheridge at Pickfords and Spencer Wix at Collins and Curtis. Yvette Arnold returned to Danbury Admin. from maternity leave.

Meanwhile the last 12 months has seen the following leave - Keith Bodimeade [retired], Dominic Budd, Peter Flindall, James Franklin, James Miles, Ron Lipscomb [retired], Brian Thorogood [retired], Rod Willett [retired] - although he will continue with the odd job]. Our best wishes to them all for the future.

New Doors and Triptych at Chelmsford Cathedral



Before and after ...



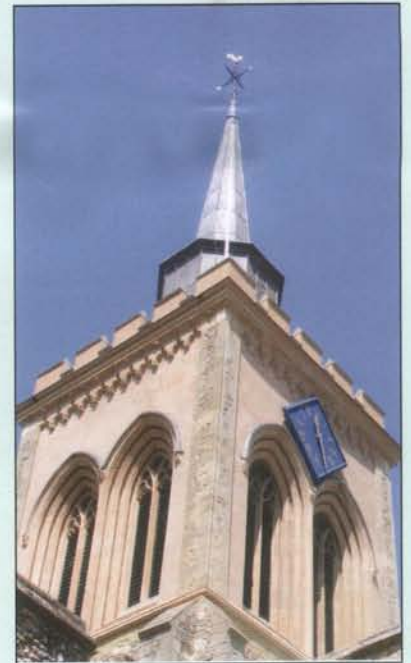
Providing new doors for the south porch of the Cathedral may sound a straightforward job, but this was far from it! The demanding brief required glazed doors that incorporated the carved motifs from the original, which had been carved in the solid, and for the doors to operate automatically without push-pads. The final design used structural glass on under-floor-mounted automatic door openers with oak cladding on both sides to give the appearance of a timber framed glazed door, at the same time incorporating all the necessary cables for the sensors! Simple! Well done Neil. The Joinery shop also constructed a lined oak Triptych for the north Transept together with a Tulip Wood board onto which the Triptych was painted; all in the 14th century tradition.



Baldock, St Mary's Church

Work at St Mary's was finally concluded in the early months of 2011 and as can be seen from the photograph below, Tony Heard and his team produced a magnificent piece of work. All the windows visible were made up with shaped bricks which were then rendered over. All of the ornate detail below the stringcourse is also made of render. The spire and belfry was substantially repaired and releaded. New louvres were provided to the four belfry windows and the rainwater goods were re-ordered. The

work carried on throughout the winter months of 2010/11 and meant particularly demanding conditions for all those involved. The contract was recently a runner up in the national Ecclesiastical Architects & Surveyors' Association (EASA) King of Prussia Gold Medal Award 2011.



Timber frame extensions

Little St Leonards is a Grade II listed timber framed house which is being extended by Martin Burley and his team of carpenters and plasterers, including Rod Willett who has come out of retirement. The two rear extensions including the stair tower are constructed in oak frame with some sections as large as 300mm x 300mm. The frames have been constructed and jointed using traditional joints as well as the traditional connections to the existing frame. The walls are currently being lime-rendered on oak lathes. Internal alterations are in progress to form two further bedrooms, a further bathroom and extend two of the ground floor reception rooms.

