



BENCHPRESS



The Parish and University Church of St. Mary the Virgin Oxford



This unique Grade 1 listed building, situated in the historic spiritual and academic centre of Oxford, is currently undergoing a major conservation restoration and modernisation programme. Funded amongst others by The Heritage Lottery fund and the Clore-Duffield Foundation, with the appointed Architects, Caroe Architecture of Cambridge and the main contractor EW Beard of Oxford, these works will encompass major repairs to the internal and external stonework monuments and windows and will also allow some of the buildings original features, lost through the preceding centuries successive works, to be uncovered and restored. With currently 300,000 visitors per year, the new visitor's centre will facilitate public access, particularly to the first floor and the tower areas.

The Parish and University Church of St. Mary the Virgin Oxford—Continued

St Mary's, situated on the South side of the stunning honey coloured Radcliffe Square, is joined by All Souls College and Brasenose College on the West and East elevations, with the Bodleian Library to the North, all framing to the centre, the Radcliffe Camera, the earliest English example of a circular library.

Benchmark Scaffolding are providing, to this major project, internal and external protected access scaffolds to all areas, including hoist provision and access stairs. In this technically demanding structure only one elevation is ground based with the other elevations being supported by steelwork and the push/pull prop system.

A site of worship since the 11th century, the earliest part of the existing church is the main tower built around 1280 with the spire, rumoured to be the most beautiful in England, added by around 1315. Atop this tower is the Ringing room, with the six bells first cast in the 17th century and then recast and rehung in the 1890's (the date of the last major restoration of St Mary's).

The building was then successively physically expanded around 1320 by the University, with the eastwards construction of the building comprising a library upstairs and a council chamber downstairs.

This library was the first University library of Oxford (and birthplace to Oxfam in 1942), whilst the westwards extension from the tower, the Adam de Brome chapel became home to the University Chancellor's Court. As well as the Library and Court this University church, during the Middle ages, became home for all aspects of the university life, including lectures, exams and even the University treasury.

As the University expanded to new College buildings, north of the church, St Mary's continued its progressive expansion with the Chancel having been built in 1453, the nave by 1510 and the "Virgin Porch" on the South elevation with its 'barley sugar' columns, in 1641. Named after the contained statue of the Virgin and the Child and targeted by Cromwellian Troopers, their bullet holes are still evident.

This 'weeping' chancel, so named because of its slight angle of alignment from the nave, is not a construction error! Intentional and a common feature of many early churches, it symbolises Christ's leaning head, whilst crucified on the cross.

This chancel held the trial of the 'Oxford Martyrs' in 1554, from where the three Anglican Bishops, Latimer, Ridley and Cranmer were then burned at the stake, outside the city walls. The nave itself, containing "Newman's Pulpit" (1827) has hosted, apart from John Henry Newman, John Wesley (the founder of Methodism, who preached here in his Oxford days, until he was barred!), Elizabeth 1, Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), C.S. Lewis and to date Desmond Tutu.

Mahatma Gandhi, in the form of a carved ceiling boss, looks down from the North corner of the Gallery.

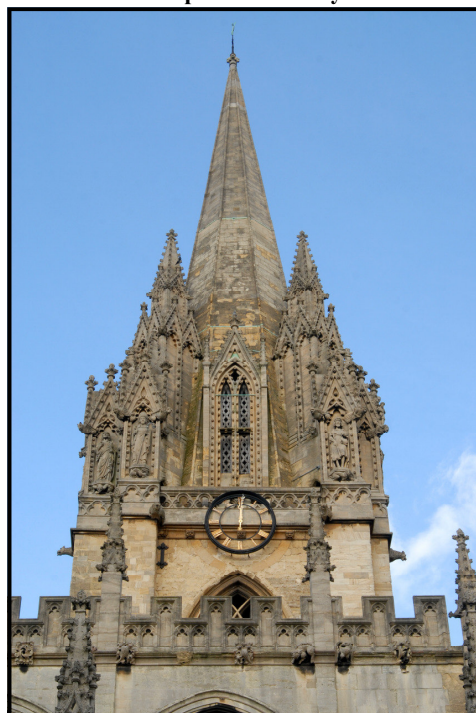
The Benchmark team, having started work in October, comprises Dave Crawford, Dave Hastings, Darren Redgrave, Lee Jones, James Monro and Connor Byrne with additional hoist expertise by Graham Parker and engineering design by Bob Young, Benchmark Technical Director.

Mel McMahon—Project Surveyor
London Region

One of the carvings, showing the extent of the erosion



The Spire of St Mary's



A detail of the Spire



Twin Joy



Tuesday 06:45am – “Mark, I think my waters broke!”

“Are you sure?” I shouted back up the stairs as I was heading out the front door, packed lunch in hand.

“Think so”, came the worried reply.

“Where’s the hospital bag!?” I yelled rushing upstairs.

This was *it*, go time. I bundled Laura into the car & flung the hospital bag on the back seat & rushed off to Doncaster Royal Infirmary.

We we’re rushed straight to the Labour ward, all was OK, until the quacks started turning up in their scrubs, filling forms in, going out, coming in. Then it hit me, its going down, I went into quiet mode, twiddling my fingers, tapping my feet with worry. My main concern was Laura, as this would be her 1st op (I consider myself a seasoned pro when it comes to operations) so I know how daunting it is, very stressful.

We were taken down to the delivery room, Laura went off to get injected & plugged into all the weird & wonderful machines in the anaesthetic room, I was in a tiny cupboard where I got changed & put on my scrubs, in the space of ten minutes I pee’d 5 times, no joke, I was that worried.

Then I was called in, about 12 people filled the room, buzzing about. I sat to her left as the anaesthetist was watching her vitals & pumping her with drugs every so often, felt like I was on set for Casualty! I had no idea what to say, I was numb with all these strange emotions. The anaesthetist was great, he was calming Laura down, talking to us both. I watched the screen moving about with lots of busy bodies working hurriedly behind, then he said

“Twin 1, 10:34. Congratulations, a baby girl” We both looked over.

“Sophia” We both said, extremely happy that she was ok.

Just as she started to cry in the arms of a Nurse he said

“Twin 2, 10:35. Congratulations, another girl”

“Ashleigh” We both said, smiling with tears in our eyes. They took them away for cleaning & then put them both in a trolley & asked me to come with them while they stitched Laura up. So I had the most memorable 5 minutes of my life, just me and these 2 beautiful babies glaring at me, I was totally overwhelmed with pride.



The midwife came in, and weighed them, Sophia weighed 6lbs 4oz & Ashleigh weighed 6lbs 10oz.

Then I spent 2 nights I’d rather forget; trying to sleep on a hospital floor in your shorts ain’t too comfy!

By Thursday they were happy to let our little (big) brand new family go home. (thank god my nice comfy bed!)

I now take great pleasure in dominating the shopping aisles in the huge double pushchair!

**Mark Knitter—Estimator
Northern Region**

The Mace Group.

33-35 Commercial Road London.

One of the current London projects, for the Mace Group, is the scaffolding shoring access and protection to Nos.33-35 Commercial Road, a development encompassing the demolition of many of the existing derelict buildings; the development of the former St. Georges Brewery (a grade 2 listed structure) and the associated Assam Street warehouse; the erection of new office and retail units along the Commercial Road and the erection of a 17 storey student accommodation block to the rear of the brewery building.

The surrounding area would support this student accommodation, with excellent transport links and close proximity to The London Metropolitan University campus, whilst the proposed alterations to the listed former brewery would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of this building, whilst bringing it back into modern usage.

Starting on site in September, the Benchmark Team, managed by Des McVeigh, and supervised by OJ Roynon, included Micky Harrington, Alex Wright, Jason Robinson, Graham Smith and Stuart Didd amongst others, aided by the engineering design works of Bob Young, Benchmark Technical Director.

On the Commercial Road frontage these works include the requisite pavement protection gantry, protection and shoring works to the retained facade whilst the Brewery Building and associated warehouse include a perimeter access and protection scaffold supporting a temporary roof. Approximately 75% of this scaffold is suspended off the perimeter brick walls, using the drilled push/pull jacking system, which not only leaves the surrounding areas free for the necessary ground works, but the internal floor areas are also kept free of (obtrusive) beam and associated scaffolding works.

With a project completion date of December 2012, it looks like a busy year for the onsite team.

Mel McMahon—Project Surveyor
London Region





Our *mission* is to not only "Set the Standards" but to progressively and continuously raise them across all aspects of our business.



Our *vision* is to be the scaffolding contractor of choice to our customers and employer of choice to our people.



33-35 Commercial Road, London



**Carillion Civil
Engineering
Billinge Green
Northwich**

Temporary footbridge
over a railway line

Don't let bad weather leave you under the weather this winter. Make sure you pack a car survival kit for any journey you make this winter.

The nights are getting darker, and as winter takes a hold of the UK, it is getting colder too and after last winter's heavy snowfalls touched most parts of the UK, motorists should prepare for the worst.

Last year's harsh winter left thousands of motorists in trouble. "With temperatures plummeting, snow and rain causing havoc, many travellers found themselves stranded."

Breakdown cover

Having breakdown cover in place is definitely worth considering. But what happens if breakdown teams can't reach you quickly enough— as happened to many motorists left stranded by bad weather last winter.

That's why it's important to have a few essentials in your car – think of it as your very own winter car survival kit.

Survival kit

Mobile Phone

Make sure you have a mobile phone handy with plenty of charge to contact the rescue services and to contact loved ones to keep them informed of your whereabouts.

Shovel

Dig yourself out of a snowy situation with one of these. You can also get a foldable shovel, which will take up less space in your car boot.

Torch

Make sure you keep a spare set of batteries as well or you can buy a wind-up torch, which will run without batteries.

Blanket

Any blanket is better than none but you can go one better by opting for a foil blanket which is highly effective at retaining body heat. Similarly, it's a good idea to keep a set of warm clothes in the car.

High visibility vest

Keep safe and be seen in one of these. In fact, wearing a reflective vest for roadside emergencies is a legal requirement in France & other European countries.

Screenwash

Salting can make roads easier to drive on but it can play havoc with your windscreen, making it harder to see. So keep your screenwash topped up to maintain visibility and prevent spray from freezing on the windscreen.

Make sure you know how to top-up your screenwash.

Food and drink supplies

A large bottle of water will make sure you don't dehydrate and a few high energy snacks such as chocolate, crisps, nuts and cereal bars should keep you going while you wait for rescue or for bad weather to clear.

Snow grips for your shoes

If you need to walk to safety, a pair of snow and ice grips will come in handy. Simply slip the grips over your shoe to reduce the chance of slipping or falling.

Scraper and de-icer

Did you know that it is a legal requirement to clear snow from your car before driving off? So clear the roof as well as your windscreen. If you fall foul of the law, you risk a fixed penalty of £60 plus three penalty points.

Plan ahead

Before setting off, make sure you check the tyres, oil, petrol, as well as the coolant level, and cooling fan. Plan your route carefully and check the traffic reports to avoid unnecessary delays.

Remember failure to prepare is preparing to fail so don't be caught out this winter.



WHO'S BEEN NAUGHTY OR NICE...



SAFETY AWARDS

October

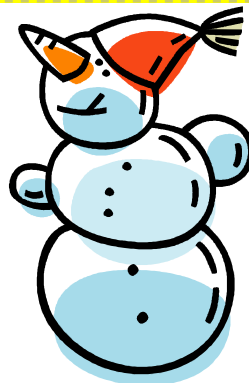
Glenn Smith (Laing O'Rourke, Wombwell) wins the Northern award for having no accidents or incidents throughout the duration of the contract, and being continually top of the site safety league.

Steve Richardson (SLAM, Woolwich) wins the London award for exercising his right to refuse to carry out a task without the correct safety equipment (our Worksafe policy).

November

Matthew Wilkinson (Carillion, Ellis Guilford School) wins the Northern award. Matt was required to erect a number of scaffolds inside voids. Instead of climbing through holes in the shaft wall, with a potential risk of falling, he erected a mobile tower on the floor below to access the areas from a safe working platform.

Jason Hill (Cafe Royal, Piccadilly) wins the London award for observing two operatives accessing an area of the scaffold that was not designated as a working platform (incomplete scaffold). Jason informed the operatives of the dangers of their actions and they promptly left the scaffold.



PUZZLE TIME

Dingbats Quiz

Can you solve the
phases below

Turn to the back page for the
answers

1 DD OO OO GG OO NN	2 ISISISISISISISISIS = ISISISISISISISISIS	3 GP DO	4 T I WATER A N I C
5 PREIST	6 M CE M CE M CE	7 CONTRO	8 TENT GENT
9 ee e arr. ee e dep.	10 NCLE SAM	11 Charlie Chaplin 0	12 REVIRDTAES

If you've recently had a new addition to your family,
or a birthday coming up
send us a photo to the Barnsley office
and we'll make sure we show them in the next edition
or you could email us

barnsley@benchmarkscaffolding.com

wear it pink day

Thank you & well done to everyone who joined in
on wear it pink day 2011 and to the guys in our
yard who persuaded anyone entering the yard to
dig deep into their pockets & donate.

We raised £123.87 for Breast Cancer.

A big thank you & well done



1 Up to no good 2 Tennis match 3 Doctor Doolittle 4 Watership Down 5 Clerical error 6 Three blind mice 7 In complete control 8 Undercover agent 9 Easy come, easy go 10 Uncle Sam needs you 11 Trampoline 12 Back seat driver

Answers Dingbats

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Setting the Standards