

IHBC South East Branch
Wattle and Daub day – 26th September 2008-10-06



A group of 20 South East branch members enjoyed a 'hands on' day at Chalk Down Lime on 26th September 2008. Paul Reed, an IHBC member, who has established Chalk Down Lime Ltd, ran the course. Chalk Down Lime is a supplier of slaked lime and other traditional building materials.

Sarah Sullivan attended the course and writes:

"Our day in the depths of the Garden of England was topped of by a bright sunshine after the mist haze had cleared. The gathering from the IHBC was a mix of both private practice and custodians of our heritage from various councils throughout southern region. This mix of people who can so easily be at odds with each other where for one day working in union. One colleague had commented we would have a really shi**y day, but this could not have been further from the truth. We did not use any manure in the walling mix!

Wattle and daub has been found to contain all sorts of materials and basically anything to hand was thrown in the mix. This basic and primitive survival technique cannot have been so wrong as these infill panels between oak timber framing remain in place hundreds of years latter. The same cannot be said for the use of concrete block that just after a decade rot the ancient timbers by trapping the moisture and not allowing the structure to breath. Our host for the day, Paul Reed of the Chalk Down Lime showed us examples of the use of modern materials that had failed to allow this breathing. In such a short space of time the existing timber framework was destroyed beyond all belief. Our lesson for the day was that the reuse of natural products is the answer to repairing and maintaining our historic environment.

Thank you for helping to organise such a fun day

