**Alex Gibbons, Clay Dabbin Specialist/Conservation Builder**

Alex Gibbons is a craftsman, specialising in the repair of clay dabbin buildings and lime plastering on the Solway. Having originally gained a degree in Surveying, he decided to return to working practically with an apprenticeship in natural building at the Cascadia Institute of Vernacular Architecture in Oregon, USA. On his return, he began applying what he had learned from the 'natural building' context to old buildings, teaching himself earth wall repair while working on his own house in Normandy, France. On return to the UK, Alex worked with a Master Thatcher in Somerset, while establishing his own business, Stick in the Mud Conservation. It was at this point that he was offered a place on the prestigious Fellowship with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, being the first and only earth builder to undertake the programme. In the final block of the programme, Alex was shown the clay dabbin buildings of the Solway by former conservation officer, Peter Messenger, and decided to stay forever! He now spends his days repairing local vernacular buildings in earth and lime, while working on his own Category A listed clay and cruck framed building, living off-grid. Alex delivers lectures and workshops regularly to groups such as the Prince's Foundation, Universities and Cumbria Vernacular Buildings Group, and sits on the education committee for the SPAB. He also now acts as Fellows’ Mentor, and is Chairman of the William Morris Craft Fellowship Trust and the Mudwallers’ Union for Crafts and Conservation in Earth.