

Repointing historic brick & testing a repointing gun.

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Leigh Bamford is a young tradesperson who takes historical restoration, even just old house repair very seriously. With five years of experience, she insists on using old materials and old techniques on old buildings. Rather than using a power grinder to remove the old mortar from between the bricks, and inevitably cutting into a brick now and again, she uses the slow but reliable mortar chisel. This is a special chisel made just to the width of the mortar and its only purpose in life is to partially and carefully remove old mortar. Then she mixes up mortar that is as close to the original mortar as possible, often grinding up old material to get the same coloured sand. She uses a lime mixture rather than today's Portland cement mixture, which gives a softer mortar. That is because she understands that she is not really trying to glue the bricks together but rather gently and firmly hold them apart. The wrong mortar often causes the brick edges to pop off and deteriorate. The right mortar is sacrificial so if anything needs to give, it is not the brick. Tools & Technique When she puts in the new mortar she uses the old traditional technique of sliding it right off of her trowel and packing it firmly, bit by careful bit, into place. No watered down mortar that will squeeze through a bag for her. A job done her way will last for another 200 years. Evaluating a mortar gun Back in our studios I surprised her and asked her to test out a power repointing tool that I got from the States. There is a hopper of mortar, the drill drives a vibrator that shakes the mortar down onto a screw drive that forces the thick mortar right out the front end. It did succeed in pushing her very thick mortar through the gun, but she was not at all convinced that this was a good tool. Far too much vibration and too little control to be sure she has filled the space and packed the mortar in as she would like to be sure it was packed in as well as too much spill over the face of the brick. No I couldn't talk her into this mass production tool. Stone Angels So if you see her high up on her scaffold with the peace and tranquillity of sliding her lime mortar firmly into some beautiful old historical building, you will understand why her company is called "Stone Angels". Yes she is available to repoint your brick in the Toronto area.

Keywords:

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