

Shootinglee - Excavation, 2015

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During 2015, Peeblesshire Archaeology Society continued excavations at Shootinglee. The strategy was to complete the excavation of the early 17th century Building in Trench 2 to see if it was one phase of construction and to extend Trench 1 to try and find out what the function of the paved area uncovered in the initial excavation was. Additional questions about the origins of the site have arisen from the pre-17th century oven under the N wall of Building 1 and the pottery finds suggesting medieval occupation of the site. To this end, trenches (Trenches 3-5) were opened on the house platform at the N end of the row of five buildings that make up the settlement, henceforward called Building 2. Tree cover inhibited the opening of a single open area.

Trench 1: This was extended 4m to the SE, and 1m to the NE and SW respectively. This revealed a paved floor c.2.5 across and a partly robbed wall along its SE edge. This suggests an outbuilding either used for storage or as a byre (Fig 1). A piece of post-medieval slipware was found in the interstices of the paving. The structure was built over a silty soil, which was almost free of any finds, but included charcoal fragments suggesting a cultivated soil and an occasional medieval potsherd

Trench 2: The remainder of the N wall of Building 1 was excavated, revealing that it abutted the revetment wall along the back of the house-platform. The revetment wall was itself coeval with the paving on the exterior to the N, all of which suggests that the platform, N building wall and external paving were part of the same period of construction, even if there was a practical phasing in the order of construction. In the N baulk section, an E-W alignment of large stones suggests a wall. If so this belongs to a structure lying outside the trench to the N that is not visible on the surface (Fig 2).

Trench 3 (encompassing 4 & 5): Three trenches were opened up to explore the house platform at the N end of the row, henceforward called Building 2, working around the conifers that grow on the site. Only topsoil and tumble were removed during this season. This revealed a building of at least two phases. The main structure is rectangular and measures c.10m from N to S by 7.2m transversely over clay-bonded stone walls, 1.2-1.4m in thickness, still standing to c.1m in height at the N end (Fig 3). With most of the wall-face on the W side uncovered and most of the N

wall no entrance has yet been found. A trench that was opened to examine a possible wall-line at the S end of this structure shows a greater degree of robbing than that at the N end, and an E-W drain under the tumble where the wall-line was expected contained a piece of un-abraded, well-fired, late-medieval pottery in its upper fill. A slightly narrower structure that appears to be an extension to Building 2 extends 5m to the S. Its E and W walls have been largely robbed of stone, but enough survived to indicate the structure was 6.2m in breadth with a rounded external SE corner. Its S end is marked by a slightly narrower wall, c.1.1m thick, of similar construction to the main structure. Both the interiors of the main structure and the extension are paved with flat stones, and there are traces of burning on the paving beside the two end walls suggesting fireplaces. Partial robbing of the floor in the N part of the main building revealed traces of an earlier phase of flooring. A Bellarmine potsherd, clay pipe and vessel glass suggest the building was abandoned in the 17th or early 18th centuries. The size and construction of the main part of Building 2 compares with peel houses like Kilnsike, Slack's Tower, or Mervinslaw in Southdean parish.



Fig 1 Trench 1 extension: The hard stand of a small outbuilding is clearly visible with the robber trench of its SE wall to the right. The garden plot was to the left of the image.



Fig 2 Trench 2: Structural remains in the N baulk section



Fig 3 Trench 3: NE corner of peel house showing the clay-bonded 1.2m thick walls.