

Shootinglee Excavations 2022

Excavations took place during April to September 2022 on the site of a building previously recorded in 2012 as part of the survey of Shootinglee, a forest stead in what was formerly Ettrick Forest (2012 report). The main focus of this season's excavation was to gain more evidence of the earlier enclosure that was found to underlie the byre and terraced platform excavated in 2021 (Trench 7). The enclosure is made up of two differing walls which abut in the northwest corner of the trench. The wall to the west comprises a bank 0.4m in height and 1.1m in breadth lined with large stones along its length. By contrast, the wall to the north is a more substantial structure. It comprises a clay base, 1.5m in breadth, 0.2m in height and edged with stones, which is topped with large stones in a red brown silty clay matrix, adding a further 0.3m in height. In the corner formed by the junction of the two walls, a narrow revetment wall parallel to the north wall, 0.4m in width and 0.25m in height, lined the south edge of a hollowed out area, 1m wide, cut into the underlying clay to a depth of 0.15m. The hollow was completely filled with red brown clay silt which produced a sherd of late medieval Red Ware pottery, the presence of charcoal and worm holes suggest it had been open to normal soil processes. It is suggested the revetment encloses an animal pen in the corner of the enclosure. Further charcoal samples for dating were retrieved from the north wall and the soil in the hollow.



Figure 1 section through the gravel make-up for the 17th century byre in Trench 7. Copyright J. Durham

In addition to this trench, further excavation was carried out to elucidate a cobbled surface originally revealed in 2019 in an exploratory trench, Trench 6, a short distance west of the peel house (2019

report). The cobbling was edged with large stones on its west and overlay a largely robbed out stone wall on a NW-SE axis marked by a row of large stones with some packing of smaller stones and silty clay between. This may be a relic of a stony bank that was plotted in the field to the west in the 2012 survey. It was cut by a later and more complete stone wall to its west at right angles to it. The cobbles were dated to the 17th century by clay pipe and there were also a few sherds of late medieval Red Ware pottery in its make-up.

A final trench, Trench 8, 1m wide by 9m in length, was opened during the season to see if there was a building present in the platform to the north of the peel house and, if so, to determine its date. This revealed two parallel walls 3.8m apart, set at the front and back of the terrace and both robbed to their footings. The walls were about 1.2m in breadth, faced with large stones and packed with red brown silty clay and smaller stones. The area between the robbed walls was overlain by a pinkish-grey layer of silty clay up to 0.4m in depth over an uneven hard-packed brash of angular stones in red-brown silty clay and a large flat stone in the middle on its surface that might a remnant of paved surface. The finds from this post-occupation layer included a piece of haematite, bottle glass and 4 sherds of post-medieval pottery suggesting that the building was demolished in the late 17th or early 18th century. The walls compare well with those of the peel house, but its uneven floor suggests it is an outbuilding rather than domestic structure.



Figure 2 the clay-bonded back wall of the post medieval building in Trench 8. Copyright P. Dixon.

All trenches were backfilled and the ground restored. No further excavations are planned and post-excavation work started in 2020 is continuing.