

Shootinglee – Excavation, 2016

Joyce Durham and Piers Dixon

NT 31600 31400 (Canmore ID 180363)

Funder: Peeblesshire Archaeological Society

Trench 3: Excavation continued from 19th March to 5th November 2016 on Building 2 at the northern end of the row of buildings which formed the Ettrick Forest stead of Shootinglee. During the previous season a series of trenches revealed a peel-house with a substantial 1.2m thick clay-bonded stone wall standing up to c.1m in height on the N, W and N part of the E. The walls at the S end were more ruinous: a result of stone robbing and forestry ploughing. At the S end of the site was a narrower extension to this building with a 1.1m thick clay-bonded stone wall. This wall has a curved corner at the SE and overlays a cobbled surface.

At the start of the current season it was decided to extend excavation to all the available area within the buildings not planted with trees (Fig 1). The N part of the building was uncovered down to an occupation surface. A sondage was dug at the NW corner which shows that the sloping site has been levelled up, possibly re-deposited occupation debris; stones packed on end and a clay infill. There is a hearth on two levels in the NE corner. The extent of the E wall has yet to be fully determined and much of the S wall has been entirely robbed. Between the occupation surface of the N part of the building and an E-W drain-like feature in which an un-abraded piece of well-fired late-medieval pottery was found in 2015, there is evidence of an earlier phase of occupation, comprising a stone-lined drain aligned N-S, which is yet to be fully investigated. At the S end of the site, the cobbles on which the S wall of the building was built, extended into the interior and are overlaid by paving slabs on which there is a hearth close by the wall (Fig 2). The W wall of the S part of the building has been badly robbed of stone.

There have been prolific finds of clay pipe pieces, some dating to the early 17th century and green bottle glass of the same era, mainly retrieved from the clay overburden. Some 17 sherds of late-medieval pottery, largely green-glaze, have been recovered most of them associated with disturbance caused by the ploughing.



Fig 1 Excavation amongst the trees.



Fig 2 Hearth against the S wall of the extension to the peel house, showing the paved floor and part of the earlier cobbling in the foreground.