

**Site**      **Kinneil House**

**N.G.R**      NS 983 806

**Project Description**      Monitoring of the excavation of a well

### **Report**

The house comprises two main buildings, a fortified tower-house, built between 1546 and 1550 and a 'palace' block whose foundations were laid in 1553. Both buildings are of sandstone build, deriving from local outcropping sources.

The palace is a long, three-storeyed wing extending E from the NE corner of the tower, with the whole presenting an 'L'-shaped plan. It is within the palace wing that the well was located in a room known as the 'boiler room', in the extreme SE corner of the building. This room is a small, barrel-vaulted chamber, presumably originally functioning as a service room for the building. The floor of the chamber comprised stone flags, and it was the subsistence of these into the softer well-fill deposits which first led to the discovery of the sub-floor feature around three years ago. Excavations were then undertaken, and approximately 4m of the fill of the well was removed. Nothing is known of the results of this work, but at the time of the current watching brief, a circular hole c2m in diameter with a stone and mortar lining had been exposed. It must be stressed that, due to the necessity of shoring within the hole, all dimensions were recorded approximately.

The watching brief concerned the monitoring of the drilling of the remaining material by Raeburn Drilling & Geotechnical Ltd. The remaining upper fill was a loose, coarse ashy silt (001), which was removed by hand. Five standard bulk samples were retained of this material, which extended to 0.8m depth, whereafter the fill became more stony (002), and drilling was commenced. A further three samples were retained of the stony lower fill. The drilling indicated that the lower fill was 0.4m in depth, beyond which the base of the well was encountered. Thus a total depth for the well of c5.20m from the floor level could be estimated.

### **Interpretation**

Finds from the excavated material included large quantities of burnt and unburnt bone as well as some diagnostic finds from the upper fill; a near-complete clay pipe, a fragment of white tile, and an iron spanner. It would seem likely therefore that the well was back-filled in Victorian times or later, as a deliberate act. The sandstone blocks at the base may represent either an earlier episode of infilling, or the initial fill of the final blocking of the well. The soft nature of the deposits would also allow for the settling of the heavier sandstone component toward the base of the well.

Due to the location of the house on a raised beach, the well was probably not intended to tap an underground water supply, instead being intended as a lined cistern. A similar feature, 75m away from the house on the edge of the raised beach, may have served a similar function.

### **Contexts**

No contexts were defined

### **Finds**

No finds were retained