

Warwick Bridge Corn Mill Progress Report January 2019

The month has seen further excavation for foundations and a drain run within the ground floor store [R0.08]. The work has revealed a wall foundation of well mortared squared rubble sandstone and successive cobbled surfaces which pre-date the present building with its heavy flagstone floor.

The earlier wall is founded on bedrock at its eastern end but overlies a thin layer of small cobbles at the western end of the trench. This appears to be contemporary with several small rock cut drains, which may have been intended to intercept groundwater seeping through weaknesses in the bedrock. All the drain runs had silted up. The two eastern sections retained evidence of thin stone cover slabs with the drain leading away from their junction towards the tail race covered by hand made bricks laid flat.



General view of features revealed by foundation trenches (looking NE. entrance door to L.). Old wall foundation on line of shorter partition trench. Large (yard?) cobbles at higher level seen in retained section behind. Cobble floor revealed in longer partition trench in foreground



Looking along old wall foundation towards east wall of room. Brick drain covers running under wall to L. and cobbled surfaces to R. running into bedrock towards east wall

The wall foundation shows no sign of bonding with the west wall of the barn and presumably relates to an earlier building range on the site. The wall continued beyond the trench towards the west wall of the current room. On the south side of the old wall foundation, above the layer of small pebbles (and a surface, continuing at the same level, of

broken stone fragments) set in clay, was a layer of fist sized cobbles, set in clean sand. These were in marked contrast to a layer of larger cobbles set in a darker sandy fill on the north side of the wall, suggesting a floor within a building to the south and a yard surface to the north of the wall. The only dating evidence recovered from the bedding layer was two small fragments of glazed pottery suggesting a relatively recent (C18/C19) date for the cobble floor.

The wall foundation happened to coincide with the foundation required for one of the new partitions and the structural engineer has confirmed that it can be re-used to support the partition, which means that most of the feature can be retained in situ. The cobbled surfaces have been removed only for the width required for the new partition foundations and the drain run, again retaining the greater extent of the archaeology undisturbed.

Replacement and reinforcement of structural timbers within the mill has continued, including reinforcement of the hurst timbers which support the millstones on the floor above.



Cutting rebates in a new structural timber to fit around existing elements of the hurst (right). The new timber will provide additional support to the vertical timber at the NE corner of the hurst. Acrow props in the middleground are providing temporary support to the weakened floor beam above

The masons' work has progressed with the cutting and fixing of pad stones to support new structural elements and completion of the south gable of the barn. Work to the interior of the kiln has revealed more of the curious broad arrow scratch markings on stones (?re-used) in the west wall of the mill building.

The roof works have continued with the majority of the graduated slate roof of the barn now completed.

The millwrights have been in regular attendance with the rebuilding of the wheel almost complete. Stays have been added to prevent distortion of the buckets.

Outside the buildings clearance of vegetation on the west side of the escape race has revealed a substantial masonry retaining wall below the subsiding overlapping slabs which form a coping alongside the escape race. The improved visibility of the surviving structures will enable more detailed planning of the Phase 2 works required here.



Ivy covered masonry wall alongside the escape race with settled coping stones above

Two test pits were dug on the slope beside the escape race at the end of the month to establish the depth of the rock head. These revealed

an extensive layer of relatively recent dump deposits, consisting of metalwork, several shoes, pottery and a large quantity of glass bottles and jars – an interesting bit of social history, including several Carlisle State Management Brewery bottles, which had presumably made their way down the mill race from The George or across the yard from The Spinner's Arms if that was still going! An interesting reminder of Lloyd George's social improvement policy which sought to regulate the trade during the First World War.



Excavating test pits on the bank beside the escape race