



# BUTTS FOR SHOOTING, SHELTER OR WATCHING

## BACKGROUND

Lines of dry stone shooting butts are a distinctive landscape feature on our upland heather moors, some of the earliest examples dating back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They usually consist of a dry stone enclosure to conceal the occupants and offer some shelter from the elements, topped off with turf.

## DESIGN

Shooting butts come in many shapes and sizes from large rectangular enclosures, "H", "L" or semi circular shaped stonewalls that will provide cover, but by far the most popular and distinctive are those of the traditional circular design. These are usually 3-4 meters in diameter and 1.5 meters high depending how many people they are intended to accommodate. Although the height is sometimes reduced as the floor is dug down below ground level, some examples are in fact excavated to the extent that when in use the occupants heads are at ground level.

The walls should be constructed with the majority of the batter or camber on the outside and almost vertical on the inside, enabling the occupants to lean comfortably on/against the wall without the foundations getting in the way of their feet.



*Shooting butt built below ground level.*

The top of the wall can be finished with copestones to match the local style although more commonly a turf or heather top is employed to provide a softer surface on which to rest a gun and more importantly to offer a certain amount of camouflage.

Access into the butt is normally through a squeeze stile, possibly tapering from 500mm at the top to 100mm at the bottom, enough to allow a person entry but narrow enough to deter stock. If the floor level of the butt were to be sunken then obviously a flight of steps would need to be incorporated into the design. Other features that might be included could be a stone seat formed by creating a step round the inside of the butt or by having large flat stones protruding from the inner face of the wall, niches or recesses for placing your lunch or coat may be useful addition.

*Circular butt with incorporated seat and paved floor.*



Shooting butts are usually positioned in lines although occasionally they are found in small groups of two or three about 80-100 meters apart sometimes marked by cairns of around 1 meter high. They should be positioned appropriate to the sight lines and take account of the prevailing weather

## CONSTRUCTION

Shooting butts due to their usual remote location will almost always be built with stone that is to hand, although suitable stone must be available for through stones, cheek ends, squeeze stiles etc. Structures of curved or circular design are not only more attractive but are also more suited to these remote locations as they do not require square stone from which to construct corners, which animals may then use as rubbing posts possibly loosening them and eventually causing collapse.

## OTHER USES

The basic design of a shooting butt can be adapted for many uses from bird watching hides to picnic sites and focal points to sit in and take in the view.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The Association endeavours to respond to all requests for specific information regarding dry stone walling. DSWA offers a mail order service on leaflets, books - which includes a number of technical manuals that would make useful reading - and produces a register of certificated working wallers. Full details are available upon request; a stamped, self-addressed envelope would be appreciated.



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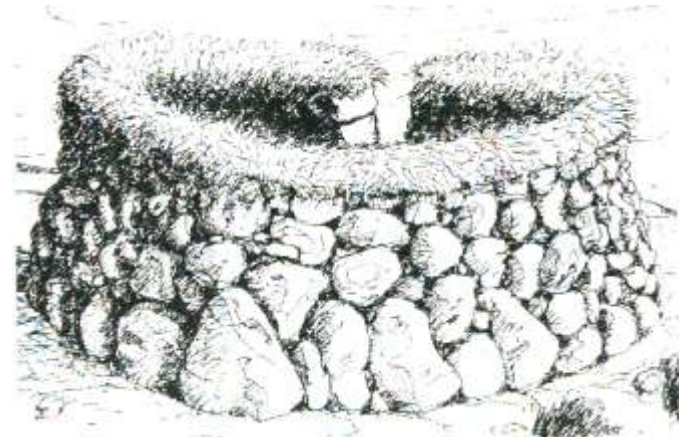
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# DRY STONE WALLING ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN



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