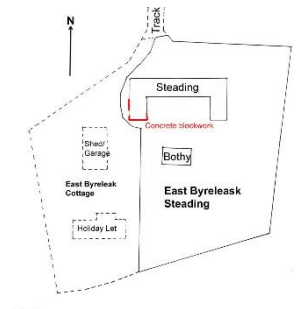


## June 2018 – Hedges and Blocks

We had booked flights to Aberdeen over the late May bank holiday, expecting to work on granite sills & lintels. The granite was delayed but we went up anyway and had four sun-shiney working days.

**Hedging:** We completely cleared the hedging of weeds, took off and replaced the tree tubes and confirmed that even the plants that were flooded over the winter had only had a few failures. Most of these are single plants, where we will let neighbouring ones fill the space. We may need to buy or grow-on a small number of replacements.

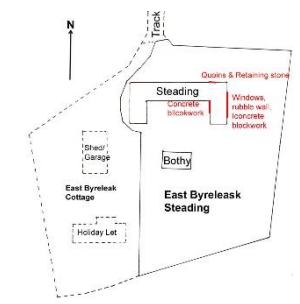


**Concrete blocks:** The rest of the time we spent building up concrete blockwork, mostly on the first gable-end we demolished, in the west wing. We just about got it all up to upstairs-

window sill-height, to match the other gable-end. There is really no need to do more on them until we need to rebuild the granite skin.

## July 2018 – Sills, Quoins, Lintels, Rubble

I spent a week in early July at the steading, with Ric. The big job is to prepare for installing roof trusses on the east wing later this year. We need to get three windows built up, the granite outer facing around and above the windows, and then raise the wallhead with concrete blockwork. We fitted in several other small jobs.



**Gable-end repairs:** The north end of the east wing had been in a bad state of repair. Ric sorted out one side of it in April, installing quoin stones, then the retaining stone that will support coping stones on the parapet at the top, then



running blockwork up the inside edge of the wall. I did the honours this time on the other end of the wall.

**Lintels:** I tracked them down to our local builders merchants. The bad news? There

were only 18 of the 41 we ordered. The good news? We had the ones that mattered and several days later, the missing ones were traced to somewhere in Liverpool - to join us at some point.



### Concrete render:

Ric carried on rendering the bottom metre of the inside wall of the east wing, ready for tanking membrane. Because the walls are basically good quality & flat, he was able to apply just one coat with a fair finish - it will not be seen again once we build the timberwork to hold the insulation in place.

**Door sills:** Ric experimented with the kitchen door onto the courtyard. After much measuring up, he chiselled out grooves in the quoins at the base of either side of the door opening, cut one of Jill & Andy Walker



## East Byreleask Steading Conversion – Newsletter 27

our 150mm lintels to length, then trimmed the ends of to match the grooves. He simply slid the completed sill into the grooves. Very neat. About a half-days work. We will mix up concrete to build up under the sill and to set the doorstep into place.

**Windows sills:** He tested out his ideas for sills on the main bathroom window. It needs to slope on top to shed rain water, so he used the angle grinder to trim the front face to the vertical, then bush-hammered it to get a roughened finish. He cut the projecting underside of the sill to horizontal and cut a drip groove along. He made a little wooden jig to guide him in trimming rough areas off the rest of the underside, to allow it to lie flatter. About 2 hours work per sill, for an excellent rustic finish. We used self-adhesive tanking membrane over the width of the window opening and ran it just over the inside wall, so that when we tank the bottom 1m of wall it will lap over and form a continuous barrier to water. We rested the sill on strips of double-sided adhesive foam, to spread the load evenly across the sill, then screwed steel straps from the back of the sill onto the concrete blockwork behind the sill. These stop the sills from sliding forwards. It all worked really well, we can squirt foam under any gaps under the sill when we are ready.

**Window openings and rubble walling:** With one sill in place I could get going with quoin stones, overlapping onto the top of the sill by 30mm or so each side. I built back from each quoin to the original granite wall. Then after a day, for the mortar to go off a bit, we put the final concrete structural lintel in place and one of our new granite lintels in front,



with a gap that we filled with concrete. We waited another day for it to go off, then built up courses of granite rubble above the lintels, up to the original wallhead. We worked on the other two window openings at the same time. By the time I drove back southall three had sills, quoins and lintels.

**Splayed window:** We found a complete set of quoin stones that are

designed for a window with a splayed recess. We decided to build it in to the room that has the gallery above it, so it is the third one along on the wall that we are working on. The front edge of each quoin has a square lip, the window frame pushes up against the back of this. The back part of each stone slopes about 40 degrees or so to the side, to form the splay

**Roof trusses:** I got in touch with the local manufacturer, Stevenson & Kelly and got straight into the debate we had 18 months ago with them, about raised-tie trusses (which the architect wants and that they think they cannot design) v attic trusses. We independently measured up the dummy truss Ric made earlier in the year just to make sure that whatever we order will fit!

Ric is there for another two weeks – he has around 4-5 days work to complete the stonework, then a couple of days for the blockwork on top to lift the roof and we are ready for roof trusses! He will probably work part way down the north wing, so that we can install half the roofing for the north wing at the same time.

