

Scales Moor Project Field Sports

Whereas game shooting on the southern flanks of Ingleborough and between Gearstones and Newby Head is well documented, no archival sources have been found for this activity on Scales Moor. Judging by the ground evidence, shooting on the Moor may well have died out long before that elsewhere in this part of the Dales. Most of the shooting butts on the Moor are crudely built – some very much so – which may suggest they are older than most early 20th-century butts. In addition, the sparseness of heather on Scales Moor, resulting from overstocking of sheep in the past, is another possible indicator that organised shooting here ended long ago. It is most probable that grouse was the targeted species.

Whenever it was underway, though, it was clearly done in an organised manner. There are three broadly parallel lines of north-south trending shooting butts in the central part of Scales Moor: 11 in the eastern line (FS1-11 on the spreadsheet), 3 in the central (FS13-15) and 5 in the western (FS16-20), with two isolated butts (FS21-22) in isolated positions further to the west.

At the southern end of the main sets of butts is a now-roofless stone-built cabin, with mortared walls rendered on the inside, a doorway facing east and a window facing west. It is 2.8m by 2.8m internally, and it had a monopitch roof. This was without doubt a shooting cabin used by the guns and perhaps beaters during rest periods on formal shoots.

The butts themselves can be grouped according to their plan form, as shown in the table below.

Plan form of shooting butts on Scales Moor

Plan form	Number of butts
linear	8
curvilinear	5
L-shaped	3
three-sided	4
2 parallel walls	1

All the butts were built of locally-gathered stone, dominantly limestone, with 13 built on the edge of low limestone outcrops or slabs of limestone pavement, giving a greater height outside the butt than inside. Eight can be considered to be in sound condition but 11 are tumbled or degraded.