

## *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*

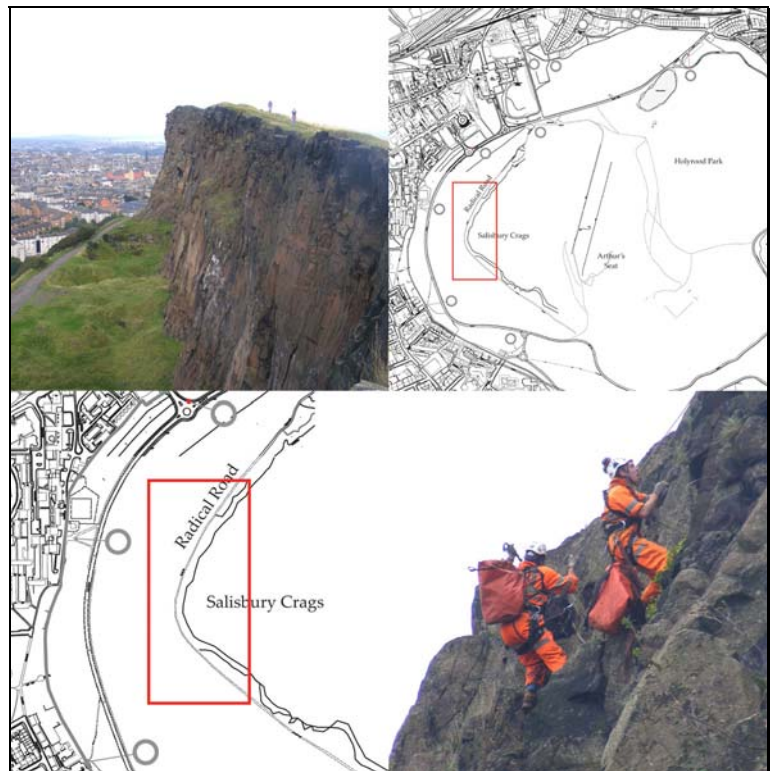
Updated on 15/06/2007

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Edinburgh, City Of
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Holyrood Park – Salisbury Crags
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	HSCO-90131-2008-05
<b>PARISH:</b>	Edinburgh, City Of
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	David Murray
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Kirkdale Archaeology
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NT27SE 197
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Park
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>	Centred c NT 267 734
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	8 September 2008
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	14 October 2008
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	<i>A series of watching briefs was maintained to monitor work undertaken by contractors to stabilise the cliff face known as Salisbury Crags in Holyrood Park, Edinburgh. This entailed periodic site visits over the five weeks of the project to ensure no features of archaeological importance were under threat. There were no finds or features of archaeological significance encountered during these works.</i>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Historic Scotland
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<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	Archive to be deposited in NMRS

Historic Scotland  
Properties in Care  
Minor Archaeological Works 2008

# Holyrood Park (Salisbury Crags): Archaeological Monitoring, September - October 2008

HS PIC Index number: 90131  
Project code: HSCO-90131-2008-05



15 December 2008  
Kirkdale Archaeology

<b><u>Site</u></b>	Holyrood Park
<b><u>N.G.R</u></b>	Centred c NT 267 734
<b><u>Project Description</u></b>	Archaeological monitoring
<b><u>Project code</u></b>	HSCO-90131-2008-05

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*SUMMARY: September - October 2008: A series of watching briefs was maintained to monitor work undertaken by contractors to stabilise the cliff face known as Salisbury Crags within Holyrood Park, Edinburgh. This entailed periodic site visits over the five weeks of the project to ensure no features of archaeological importance were under threat. There were no finds or features of archaeological significance encountered during these works.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract Kirkdale Archaeology was asked by Historic Scotland to monitor work undertaken by contractors to stabilise the cliff face known as Salisbury Crags within Holyrood Park, Edinburgh. This entailed periodic (generally twice weekly) site visits over the five weeks of the project, rather than continuous monitoring of the project.

Salisbury Crags are a dolerite sill close to the W limit of Holyrood Park, 'V'-shaped in plan, with the tip of the 'V' formed by the area known as the Cat's Nick, pointing to the W. To the S of this the cliffs run SE to NW, while to the N they run SW to NE, with the Cat's Nick as the highest point. The face of the Crags is typically 25 m high, but they sit at the top of a steep grassy slope which reaches some 70 m high at its highest. At the base of this slope is an artificial berm, designed to stop any rock falls from travelling further W. On the W side of this is a relatively flat grassy area, the site of a loch until 1507, the W edge of this is today marked by a public road.

Between the base of the crags proper and the top of this grassy slope is a track, known as the Radical Road, which was built in the 1820s as a means to provide work for unemployed weavers. This varies in width considerably along its length, at some points evidently being at least partially cut into the cliffs. At both N and S ends of the cliffs various quarry workings are evident in the face of the crags. Access tracks to these are often evident particularly at the N end these routes presumably pre-date the Radical Road. There are references to quarrying here dating back to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, and this activity was not stopped until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

At the top of the Crags an earthwork runs roughly N-S to cut off the bend around the Cat's Nick. Although unexcavated this is thought to represent the remnants of a

late prehistoric enclosure. The N end of this earthwork has been truncated by a series of hollows, known collectively as the Camstone quarries, with access to these being obtained via a track on their NE side. These quarries were accessing the sandstone deposits protected from the glaciations behind the crags, rather than the dolerite of the cliffs themselves.

In July of 2008 a landslip caused the closure of the Radical Road, and Historic Scotland felt that it was appropriate to consolidate the crags as much as possible. To this end a contractor (CAN) was nominated who had the specialist skills appropriate to this site. This essentially meant a company with rope access abilities.

The work was undertaken between 8 September and 14 October 2008

## **2.0 DESCRIPTION**

The brief given to the contractor, CAN, was to stabilise the section of cliffs to the N of the Cat's Nick, but ending just to the S of the old quarry workings at the N end of the Crags. This meant an area some 400 m long, to be divided into four distinct areas of working, labelled as phases 1 to 4 from S to N.

The work was typically carried out by a team of three using ropes, who pried out loose rock, and vegetation growing out the cliff face. At least one team member was always at the top of the cliff, to keep the public back from the area being worked. A further two people were positioned on the Radical Road, to prevent people from walking under the area affected. A final team member stayed at the foot of the grassy slope to the W, to keep pedestrian traffic away from its base.

The work was undertaken using pinch bars, with the detached rock allowed to fall and come to rest naturally. The majority of the large amount of rubble produced went no further than the Radical road, but some material, often the larger pieces, bounced over this and fell down the grassy slope. The flat grassy area at the base of this slope varied considerably in width, where the road ran close to the foot of the slope measures were taken to protect the traffic. At points only fencing was required, but the public road was closed to traffic when it was felt that this rubble posed a danger. In the event while a number of stones did pass the berm at the foot

of the slope, none reached the road.

The topsoil at the top of the cliffs was a thin layer of reddish brown clayey silt, but very little of this was disturbed. Most of the loose material was found towards the base of the cliff, presumably much of that higher up had already fallen naturally. Once the work of prying free the loose rock was finished it was removed from the Radical Road by Historic Scotland personnel.

In the event a total of nine site inspections were carried out during the six weeks that the project ran for. The first of these (8 September 2008) was a site meeting immediately before the work started to discuss the project and set up lines of communication. The last of these (14 October 2008) was undertaken once the scaling work was finished and involved walking the length of the Radical Road and examining the loose rubble. No evidence of artefacts or structures was noted during any of these visits, and nothing of note was reported by the team undertaking the work.

### **3.0 CONCLUSIONS**

During the duration of these operations nothing of archaeological interest was recorded. The work did however demonstrate that such a programme of periodic inspections of sites considered not too archaeologically sensitive can be a cost effective method of control. This depends upon good communication between the archaeological team and those undertaking the work, as well as sufficiently frequent site visits.

## Digital Photographs – Film 1

#	Description	From	Date
1	Crags from Holyrood Palace	NE	9/9/08
2- 3	View from crags	SW	9/9/08
4- 5	Holyrood Palace from crags	SW	9/9/08
6	NE end of Radical Road blocked off	NE	12/9/08
7	Contractors at top of crags	SW	12/9/08
8	Quarry at SE end of crags	NW	12/9/08
9	Quarry at SE end of crags	SE	12/9/08
10	Contractors on crags	SE	12/9/08
11	General view of crags	W	12/9/08
12- 16	Contractors on crags	W	12/9/08
17	SE end of Radical Road blocked off	SE	16/9/08
18	Crags and Radical road	NE	19/9/08
19	Detail of rubble on Radical Road	NE	19/9/08
20	Detail of rubble on Radical Road	SW	19/9/08
21- 22	Contractors on crags	SW	19/9/08
23	Rubble on Radical Road	SW	19/9/08
24- 25	Rubble on Radical Road	NE	19/9/08
26	Contractors on crags	SW	19/9/08
27	Rubble at base of scree slope	SW	19/9/08
28	General view of crags	W	19/9/08
29	Contractors going down cliff	W	19/9/08
30	General view of crags	NW	19/9/08
31	Contractors going down cliff	NW	19/9/08
32- 33	General view of crags	NE	23/9/08
34	Rubble on Radical Road	NE	23/9/08
35	Fencing at base of scree slope	SE	23/9/08
36	Moving rubble from Radical Road	NE	23/9/08
37	Shifting rubble from Radical Road	S	23/9/08
38	Quarries at SE end of crags	SE	23/9/08

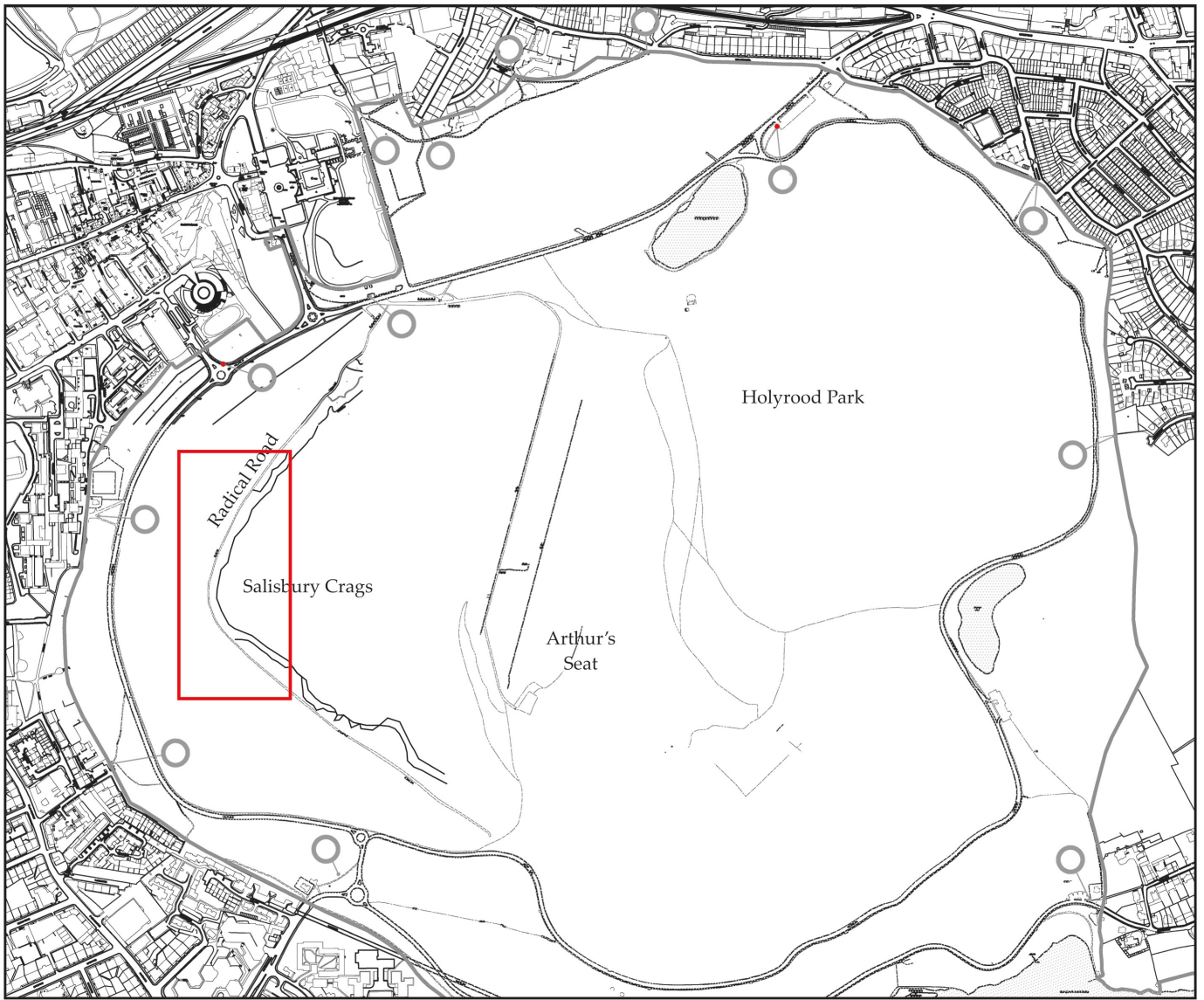
## Digital Photographs – Film 2

#	Description	From	Date
1- 4	General view of crags	NW	24/9/08
5	Rubble at base of scree slope	N	26/9/08
6	Rubble at base of scree slope	E	26/9/08
7	Rubble at base of scree slope	NE	26/9/08
8	Rubble at base of scree slope	E	26/9/08
9	General view of crags	W	26/9/08
10	General view of crags	SW	26/9/08
11- 13	General view of crags	W	26/9/08
14	General view of base of scree slope	SE	26/9/08
15	Detail of base of scree slope	SE	26/9/08
16- 17	General view of crags and scree slope	N	26/9/08
18- 19	General view of crags and scree slope	W	26/9/08
20- 21	General view of crags and scree slope	SE	26/9/08
22- 23	Contractors on crags	W	1/10/08
24- 25	Contractors at top of crags	SW	1/10/08
26	Rubble on Radical Road	SE	1/10/08
27	Contractors at top of crags	E	1/10/08
28- 29	Contractors on NE end of crags	NE	1/10/08
30- 31	Quarry at SE end of crags	SE	06/10/08
32	Rubble being cleared from Radical Road	NE	14/10/08
33	Rubble on Radical Road	NE	14/10/08
34- 37	Rubble being cleared from Radical Road	SW	14/10/08
38	Rubble being cleared from Radical Road	NE	14/10/08
39- 41	Rubble being cleared from Radical Road	W	14/10/08

## Digital Videos

#	Description	Date
1	Contractors at work on crags, 34 sec.	12/09/08
2	Contractors at work on crags, 22 sec.	19/09/08





**Fig. 1 : Map showing location of works**

