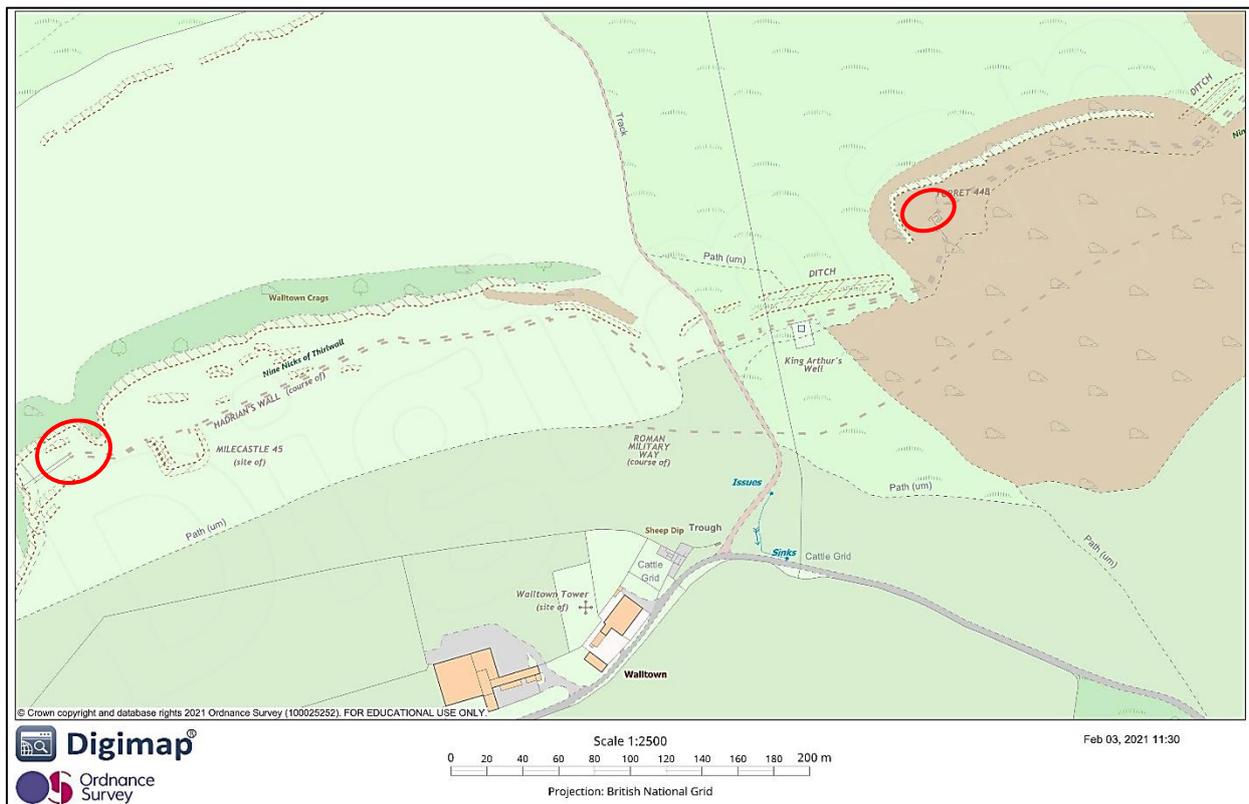


Report on Conservation Work carried out at Walltown Crags (SM listing: 10017535) and Mucklebank Turret 44b (SM listing: 115596) in 2020 as part of the WallCAP Project

Jane Harrison



Sites under discussion: Walltown Crags left, Turret 44b right

The *Heritage at Risk Register 2020* gives the following information on these two sites (<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>; accessed Jan. 2021):

‘Hadrian’s Wall from Cockmount Hill to Walltown, Greenhead, Northumberland (UA) - Northumberland (NP)

Sections of unconsolidated Hadrian's Wall in Wall Miles 43, 44 and 45. Issues lie with a short section of the Wall above Walltown quarry and the remains of Wall turret 44b. Initial inspections suggest limited consolidation and capping works would address the management issues, and initial discussions have taken place with Newcastle University about undertaking these using volunteers as part of a Lottery-funded community project.’

Walltown Crags conservation work: Issue 1

The WallCAP *Project Design*, which supported a successful application for Scheduled Monument Consent for excavation and conservation work at Walltown Crags, included the following on the planned conservation works, designed to address the issues described in the Register (Mucklebank Turret is dealt with below, p. 4):

‘5.2 The key problem along this stretch of Wall is the unstable core, which is actively collapsing. The project will undertake conservation work to the core along a 25 metre stretch of Wall between the old fence line in the west (no work will take place west of this line for health and safety reasons) and the site of Excavation Trench 2 [*excavated in October 2020 as WTC20 Trench 1 but in the same location*]. Within this area, any loose facing stones to either side of the Wall will be reset, if appropriate being tail-bedded ... Detailed records will be made of all places where tail-bedding is implemented.

5.3 Once the faces are deemed stable, clumps of turf will be placed, in an apparently random and uneven manner, on top of the Wall amongst the stones of the core [fig. 1]. Where necessary, this turf will be secured with short timber pegs. This newly introduced turf should merge into the wall top as the grass grows, providing support for the facing stones and precluding further collapse... The turf will be sourced as locally as possible, but from outside the scheduled area’ (WallCAP Sept. 2020, pp.10-11).

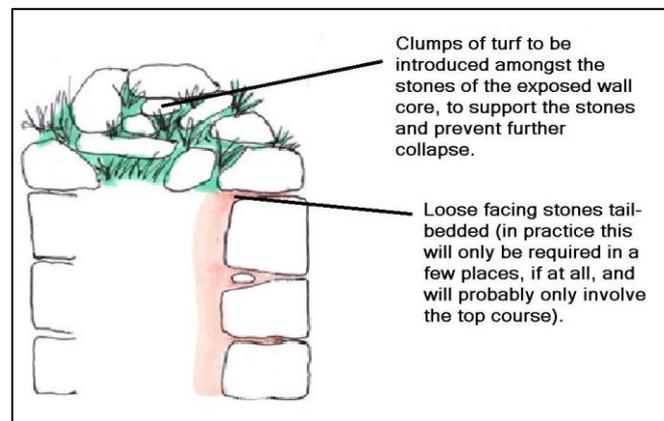


Fig. 1: schematic section across the curtain demonstrating clumped turfs supporting exposed stones of the core, stabilising the structure but maintaining a natural appearance.

After the completion of the excavation work by WallCAP in October 2020 (WTC20; fig. 2) the following conservation works were carried out by *Heritage Consolidation* in November 2020:

1. The uppermost slipped facing stone in the WTC20 Trench 1 area (NGR 367659.71, 566570.97) was replaced and tail-bedded. Facing stones in the course below were reset to consolidate the course but without tail bedding (fig. 3).

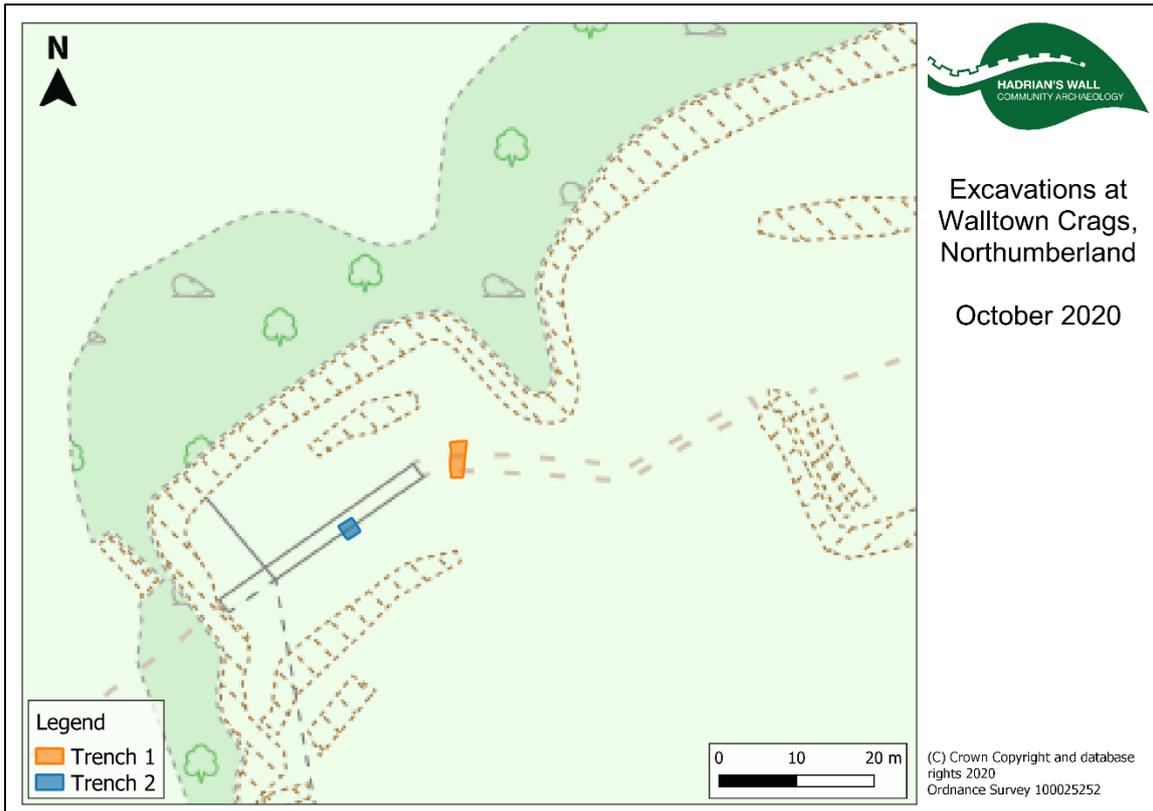


Fig. 2: location of trenches at Walltown Crag

2. The exposed stones of the core from just east of Trench 1 (NGR: 367657, 566571) south-west over and including Trench 2 and to the old fence line just west of the quarry (NGR: 367635, 566556), were consolidated as described above, using appropriately sourced turf (figs 4-6). This covered around 25 metres of Wall core.

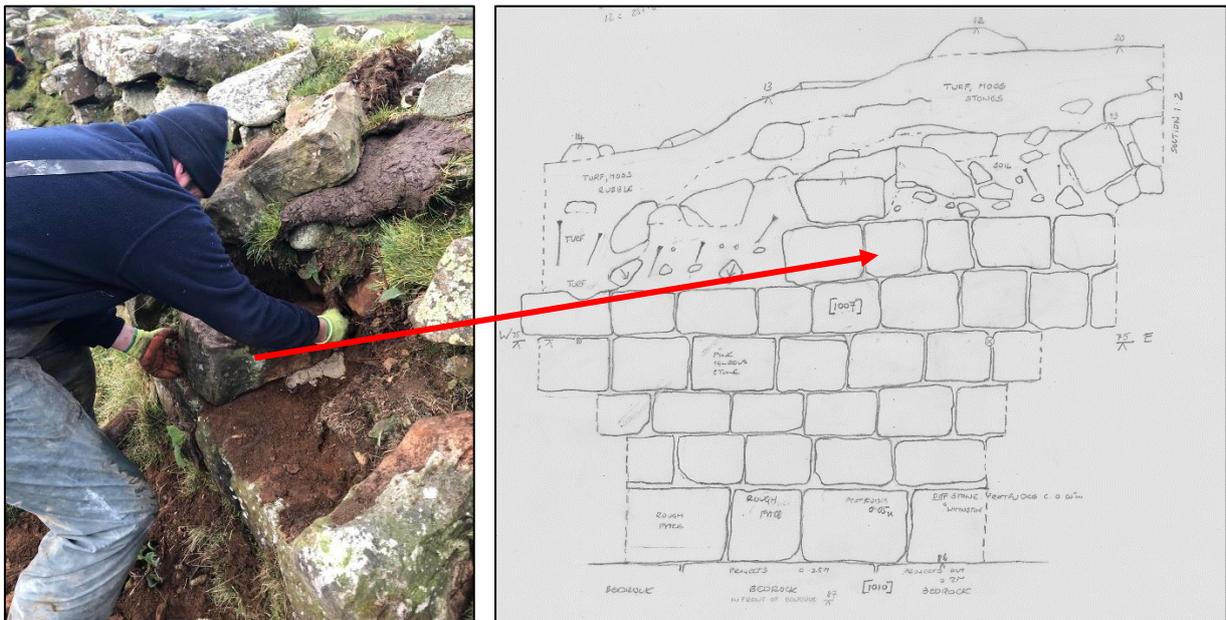


Fig. 3: left, rebedding at work in the Trench 1 area after backfilling; right, field drawing facing south showing re-set partial course and tail-bedded single stone of course above



Fig. 4: consolidated wall core looking west; backfilled Trench 2 is visible on the left in the photo against the south face of the Wall



Figs 5 and 6: left, consolidated wall core looking north-east; right, consolidating the Trench 1 area

Mucklebank Turret conservation work: Issue 2

The conservation work to address issues at Mucklebank Turret was carried out by *Heritage Consolidation* in October 2020 while the WallCAP excavations were underway at Walltown Crag. The loose stonework at the remains of Turret 44b (fig. 7) was consolidated and where necessary tail-bedded, and the top turfed using the method described above. Work focused on the SE corner (NGR: 3681409, 566703), which was where facing stones were tail-bedded (figs, 8-10).

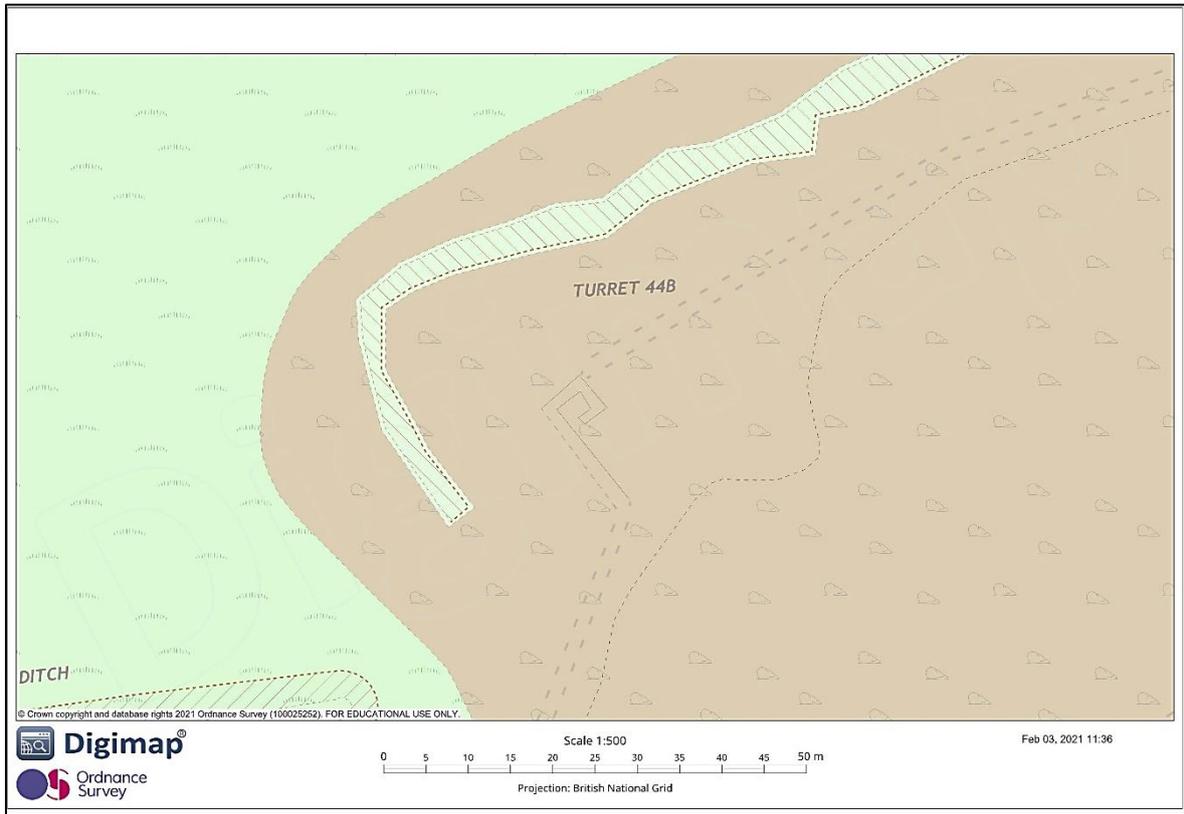


Fig. 7: Turret 44b



Fig. 8: SE corner, Turret 44b after conservation



Fig. 9: interior of Turret 44b looking east after conservation



Fig. 10: SE corner, Turret 44b after conservation

The WallCAP team are very grateful for the co-operation of the landowners and tenant farmer