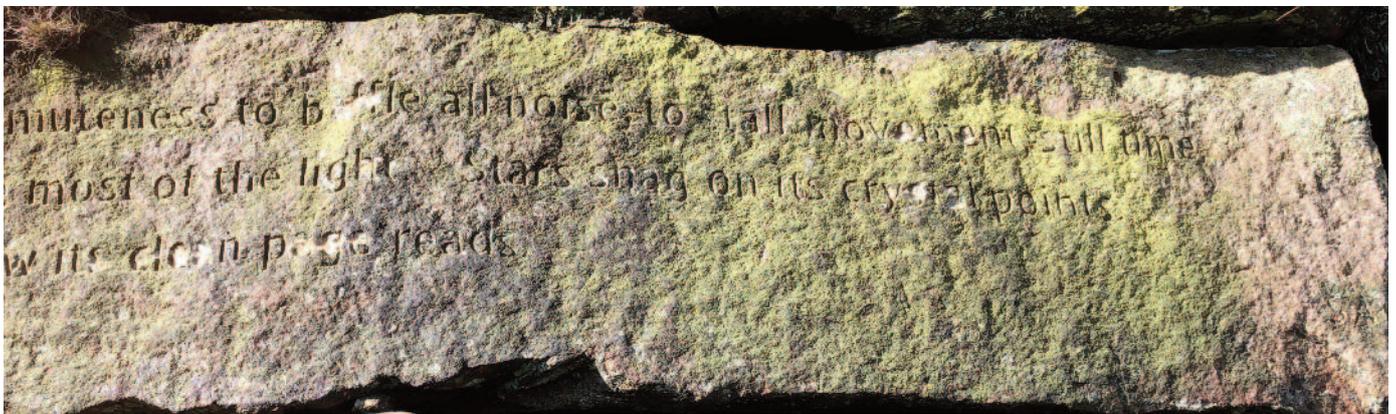


Stanza Stones: Snow Stone repairs

I carried out repairs and cleaning at the Snow Stone (in rain and shine, in true Stanza Stone style) between 18th and 21st March 2019. The following is an illustrated description of the process.

The nature of the damage

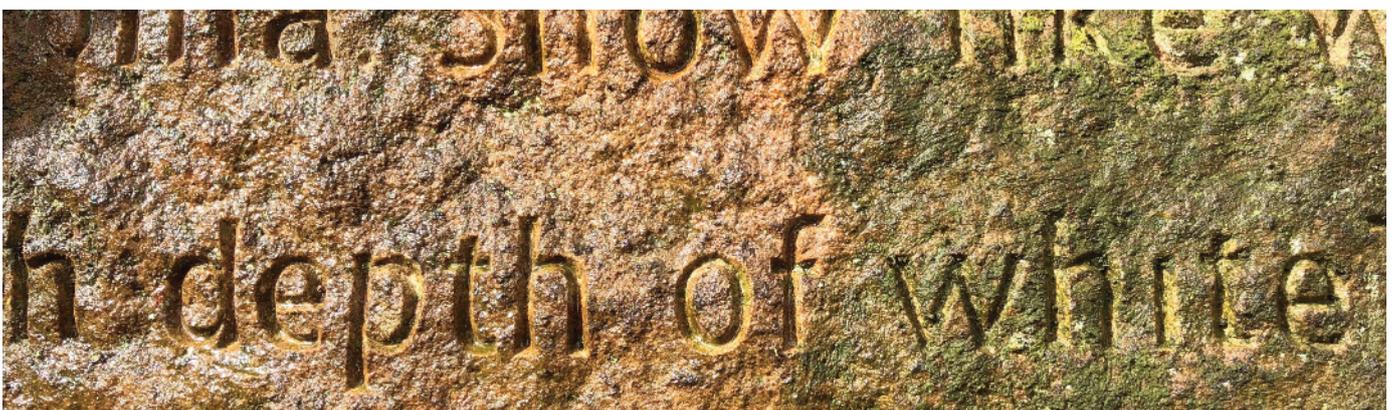
Inscribed areas of the stone surface had been hacked out, effectively removing parts of the poem. Roughly 30 letters had been affected by this treatment. Freshly broken rock stands out in a weathered inscription. A year or so on, weathering softens this effect – as Tom suggested, ‘it is almost self-healing’. This subduing of colour, while making me feel better about the task ahead, nonetheless did not alter the fact of the damaged letters.



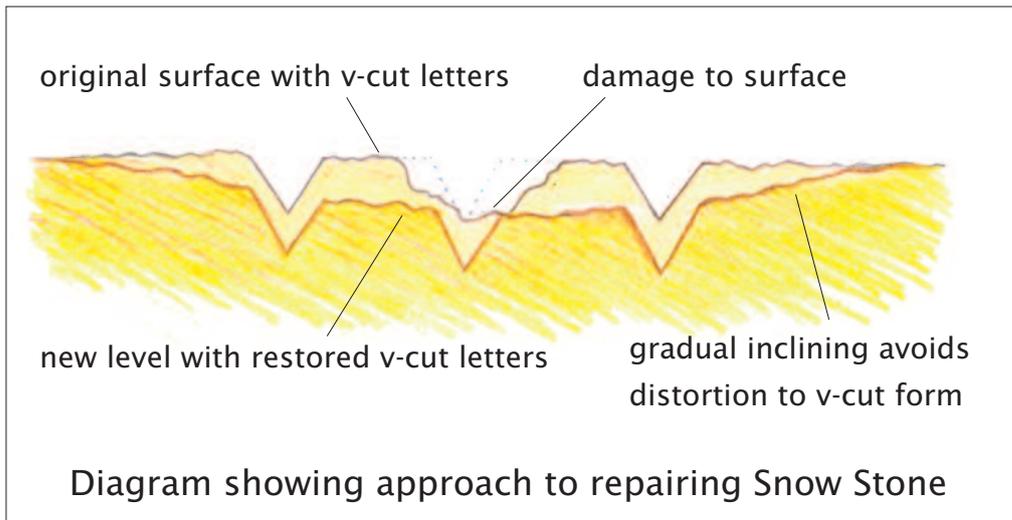
Some of the damaged letters

Cleaning

The rock and v-cut letters had developed a healthy community of moss, algae and lichen after nearly 8 years, aiding and restricting in varying degrees the readability of Simon’s poem. A decision was made to remove this ecosystem from lettering and surface alike. I used a chisel to scrape out the letters and then a toothbrush for further cleaning. I cleaned the surface of the rock with a softish scrubbing brush, which involved a lot of water squirting with Tom’s agricultural sprayer.



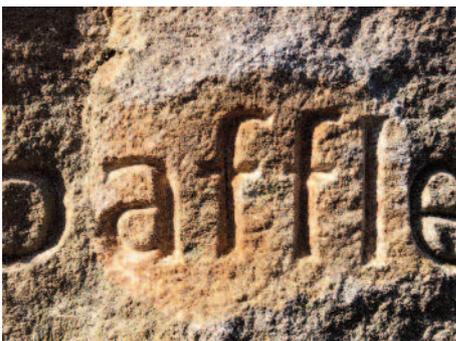
Cleaned section of Snow Stone



Damaged letters



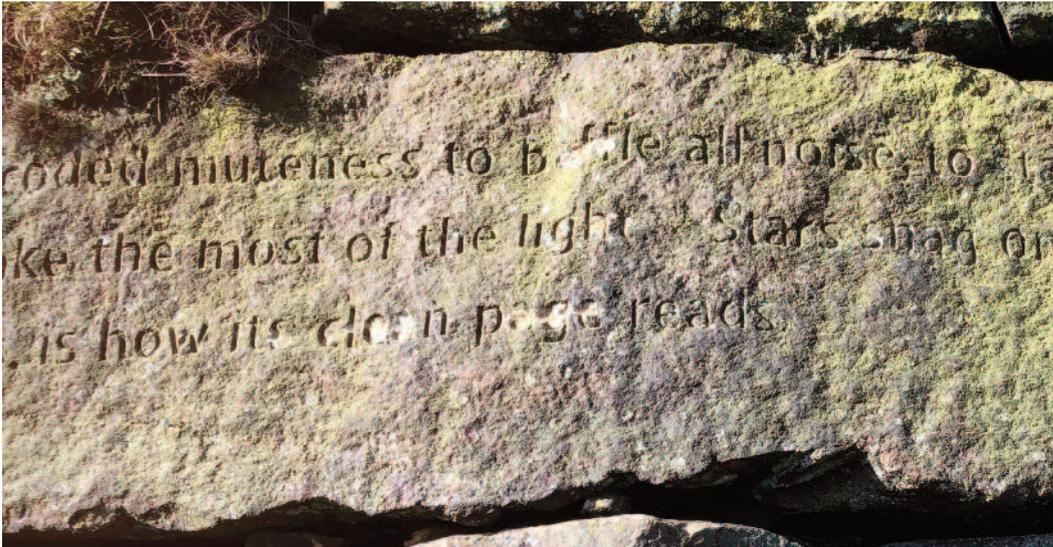
Surface chiselled to new level



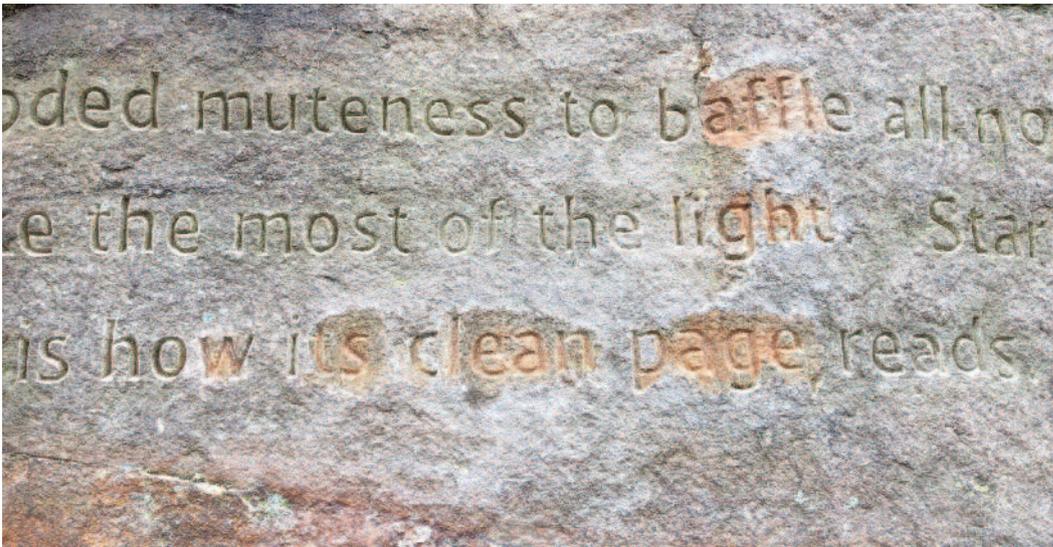
Letters recarved at new depth

Repairing

Once the stone was clean it was easier to decide on the best approach to the repairs. Starting at the deepest point of a damaged area (as much as 20mm), I carved out a deeper surface, plucking and chiselling the rock, gently inclining towards the original level. Finishing with a wire brush helped to match the texture on the freshly-cut area to the surrounding surface. Nearby letters were necessarily chiselled out in the process, to create a surface in which I could recarve without distortion to the v-cut forms. A total number of 45 letters were partly or wholly recarved in this way.



Before



After

All those wordless marks are now erased, letters are restored to their original depth and the Snow poem is fully readable again. The freshly cut stone tells the story for now: the weather will add its modifying touches over the next few years.

I am grateful to Tom Lonsdale for transporting my equipment up to Pule Hill Quarry, for lending his sprayer and water cannisters and for discussing approaches to repairing and cleaning the Snow Stone.

Pip Hall, 23 March 2019