

HADRIAN'S WALL ON TYNESIDE

AN INTRODUCTION AND GUIDE TO THE LATEST DISCOVERIES



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The magnificent 'water stone', a Latin inscription which records the building of an aqueduct at the fort of Arbeia, South Shields, in AD 222



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The fort baths at Wallsend (Segedunum) rediscovered after 200 years

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INTRODUCTION

Hadrian's Wall stretches all the way from Wallsend, in eastern Newcastle, to Bowness, on the Solway Firth, a distance of 73 miles.



Hadrian's Wall and other Roman military sites in northern Britain

The most famous visible remains of the Wall are preserved in the remote upland landscape of Northumberland. The eastern 27 miles of the Wall, from urban Tyneside to the river North Tyne, are largely invisible, its remains mostly buried beneath modern highways and buildings. Yet there are important archaeological remains preserved beneath the ground, and the Wall has shaped the townscape of modern Tyneside. Many of the most important archaeological discoveries about the Wall in recent times have been made in excavations in urban Tyneside, and the area contains three of the major forts of Hadrian's Wall – Wallsend (Segedunum), Newcastle (Pons Aelius) and Benwell (Condercum), as well as South Shields (Arbeia), the Roman fort and supply-base at the mouth of the Tyne.

This book gives an introduction to Hadrian's Wall and its legacy on Tyneside, explaining what we know about Hadrian's Wall in these less-visited areas. It also describes discoveries made by WallQuest, a community archaeology project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and others, and managed by Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums. WallQuest aimed to improve the understanding and interpretation of Hadrian's Wall on Tyneside, and to give local people, who wouldn't normally have the opportunity, a chance to get involved in real archaeological work to find out more about the Wall. Between 2012 and 2016, 550 individual volunteers from the local community have taken part and investigated a number of different sites, not just in Tyneside but throughout the eastern 30 miles of Hadrian's Wall.



HADRIAN'S WALL

Within a few years of becoming emperor in AD 117, Hadrian was confronted with a major war in Britain, and here and on other frontiers of the Roman empire he decided to give security to the provinces by building substantial barriers 'to separate the Romans from the barbarians'. Almost half a century earlier the Romans had conquered Scotland, but military problems in other parts of the

empire had meant cuts to the number of troops in Britain and a gradual abandonment of the lands north of the line that would be chosen for Hadrian's Wall.

The Wall was built across the 73 miles (80 Roman miles) between the Tyne and Solway, and inscriptions show that work was in progress in the years immediately following a personal visit to Britain by Hadrian in AD 122.

Left: Coin portrait of the Emperor Hadrian

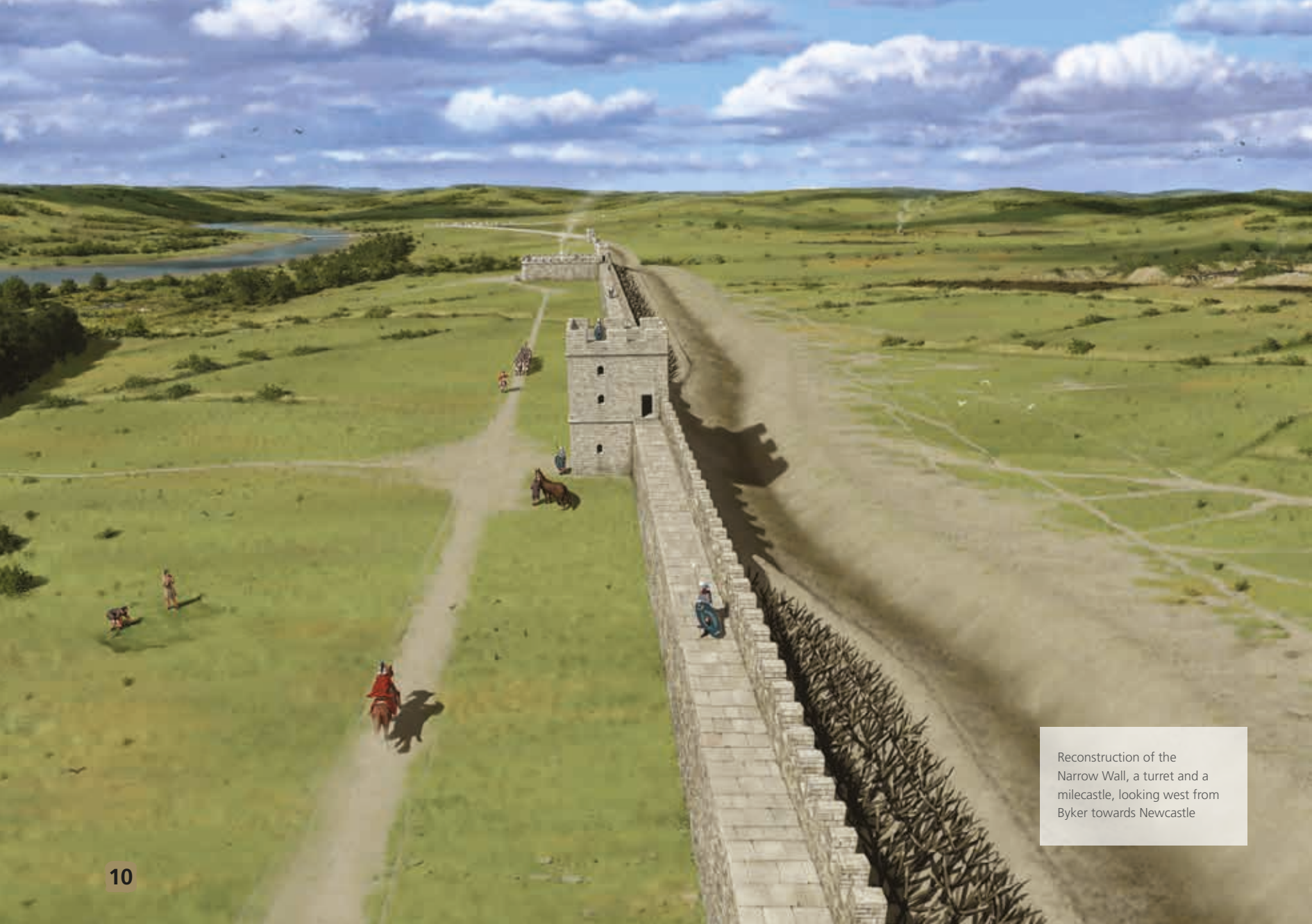
Right: The 80-Roman mile course of Hadrian's Wall from sea to sea (map by Frontiers of the Roman Empire Culture 2000 project (2005-2008))

The eastern 49 miles of the Wall were built of stone, the western 31 miles of turf, later replaced in stone. The stone Wall was started to a width of 10 Roman Feet (RF) (3m) and was originally some 20 feet (6m) high, almost certainly with a walkway and battlements along the top. The 10 foot wide 'Broad Wall' only occurs west of Newcastle. Between Newcastle and Wallsend the Wall is narrow (2.4m wide) – this stretch was a slightly

later addition. 6m (20RF) in front of the Wall ran a great V-shaped ditch, generally over 8m wide and up to 3m deep.

The wide space between the Wall and its ditch was a deliberate measure to provide space for extra obstacles – sharpened branches set in pits – a previously unknown element of the Wall, seen for the first time in recent years in excavations on Tyneside.



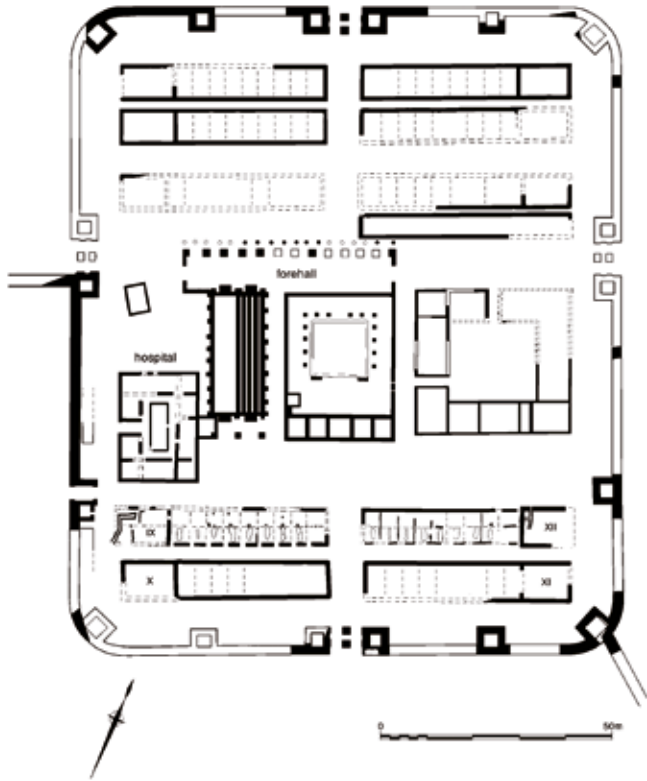


Reconstruction of the Narrow Wall, a turret and a milecastle, looking west from Byker towards Newcastle

At every Roman mile was a small fort which functioned as a fortified gateway through the Wall – a 'milecastle'. Between every two milecastles were two towers ('turrets'). The milecastles are numbered from east to west, and the turrets in each Wall-mile have the number of the preceding Milecastle with the suffixes A and B. So, for example, between Milecastles 48 and 49, we find Turrets 48A and 48B. Note however that few positions of milecastles in Tyneside are known with certainty: we can guess where they should be from the regular spacing, but rarely have the actual structures been discovered in the urban areas. No turret has been reliably seen in the whole 7-mile stretch from Wallsend to Denton, west of Newcastle. In some areas, particularly in Newcastle City centre, the line taken by the Wall itself is still not known, and will only be discovered by future archaeological research.



Right: Reconstruction at Wallsend-Segedunum showing cross section through the Wall as it would have appeared originally



Above: Plan of Wallsend (Segedunum) Roman fort in the 2nd century AD. Note Hadrian's Wall joining the west side and south-east corner of the fort

Major garrison forts, for full Roman army units, also occur along the Wall, some 15 in all. In urban Tyneside there are three: Wallsend, Newcastle and Benwell, each of which had a civilian settlement (vicus) outside its walls. The series of forts continues west of Benwell, with sites at Rudchester, Halton Chesters, and Chesters, the last guarding the crossing of the North Tyne.

To the rear of the Wall (but not east of Newcastle), was a linear earthwork, the so-called Vallum. This was a flat-bottomed ditch, 6m wide and 3m deep, with a substantially built mound to either side. This formidable obstacle demarcated and secured the southern edge of the military zone of the Wall-forts, milecastles and turrets.

Along this corridor, between the Wall and the Vallum, there ran a Roman road, the main means of communication and supply, known as 'the Military Way'. Apart from a brief period in AD 140-60 when the Romans advanced to build another wall, known as the Antonine Wall, in Scotland, Hadrian's Wall was continuously held by the Roman army for three hundred years, until Rome lost control of Britain in the early fifth century.



How the building of the Wall would have looked - scene from Trajan's Column in Rome showing legionaries building

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF HADRIAN'S WALL?

The Wall was the most massively built of all Roman frontier barriers, an extraordinary construction, deliberately built to impress and overawe the warriors of the unconquered part of Britain and to proclaim the glory of Hadrian and Rome. But it also had a practical purpose, as its maintenance for 300 years by later Roman emperors shows. When first built, the forts on Hadrian's Wall housed around 10,000 soldiers (not legionaries, but non-citizen troops called auxiliaries, originally recruited from native warriors in other frontier areas of the empire). This great army was obviously intended to repel invasions and raids on the province of Britannia, and probably to raid the lands to the north. Archaeologists disagree on how the Wall itself, and the milecastles and turrets, were supposed to work. Some believe that the barrier controlled peaceful movement in

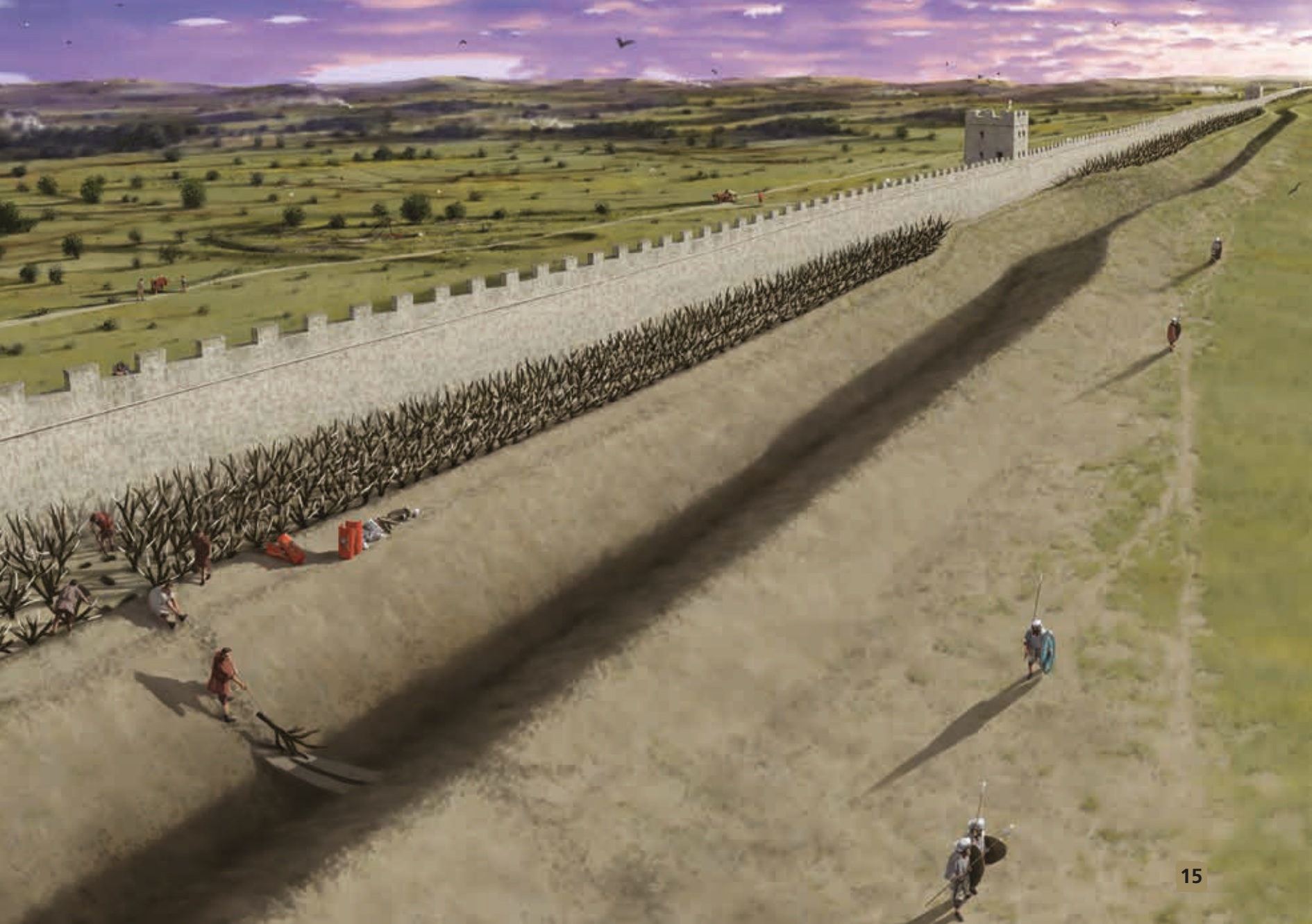
and out of the province, preventing unauthorised access.

Others suggest that in emergencies the Wall helped to defend against raiders and even larger-scale invasions. The discovery on Tyneside, as recently as 2000, of an extra-layer of defensive obstacles between the Wall and its frontal ditch, tends to suggest that the Wall was designed with defence against attackers in mind. The Wall was not meant to be an impregnable fortress for withstanding long sieges, like a medieval town or castle wall. It was merely one layer in a deep zone of military defence, which included outpost forts to the north and many forts far behind the Wall. As a defensible structure the Wall would allow small numbers of troops to fight off small-scale raids or to delay larger attacking forces for long enough for messengers to seek reinforcements and for a wider military response to be organised.



Left: How a typical Wall-soldier would have looked, around AD 230

Right: Hadrian's Wall and its system of obstacles on Tyneside reconstructed



WHAT HAPPENED TO LOCAL PEOPLE WHEN THE WALL WAS BUILT?

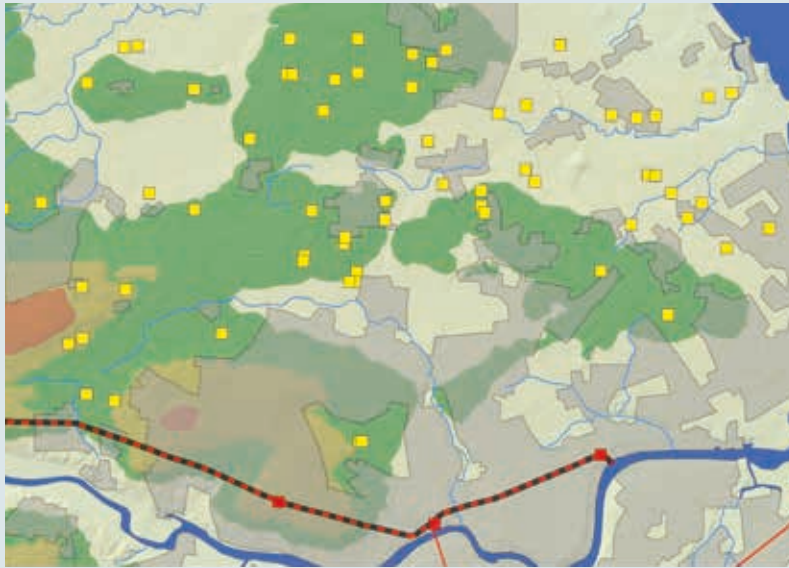
The pre-Roman people of Tyneside, Northumberland and Durham were Iron Age farmers, who lived in a cleared and cultivated landscape. They lived in big timber roundhouses, not clustered together in villages, but in family farms of various sizes. The biggest of these, occurring roughly every 1,000m or so across the landscape, were surrounded by impressive banks and ditches, marking them out as the settlements of the leading members of society. This was a stable society that had existed in this form for hundreds of years. In the area north of Newcastle rescue archaeology in advance of housing development and opencast

mining has revealed many more of these sites since the turn of the millennium, and radiocarbon dating techniques have allowed their history to be understood for the first time. These settlements continued in occupation for the first 50 years of Roman rule, following the invasion of the region in the 70s AD. But when the Wall was built in the 120s, the traditional way of life was disrupted. Many settlements were abandoned. To the south of the Wall the traditional structure of family farms gave way to Roman-style towns, country houses and estates which profited from supplying the army.



The area immediately north of the Wall was still under Roman control, but traditional society vanished, replaced by new groups who supplied the Roman army with the cattle it valued for meat and leather. Further north, in Scotland, warrior groups began to emerge, who raided over long distances, maintaining their lifestyle by plundering the province south of the Wall. It was probably from a zone between 100 and 300 miles distant from the Wall that raiders trying to get through the barrier came, rather than from the area immediately north.

Left: Plan of typical pre-Roman Iron Age settlement in the Newcastle area. Shortly after the Wall was built, sites like this to the north were abandoned



Above: Pre-Roman Iron Age settlements known north of the Wall in the Newcastle area

Left: A large pre-Roman Iron Age roundhouse under excavation at Newcastle Great Park

HADRIAN'S WALL ON TYNESIDE TODAY

Hadrian's Wall was originally inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1987. Today, Hadrian's Wall is part of the transnational Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site, inscribed in 2005 and currently comprising Hadrian's Wall, the German Limes (frontier line) and the Antonine Wall in Scotland.

The Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail (opened in 2003) avoids the actual line of Hadrian's Wall through the urban areas of Tyneside, instead taking a riverside route for the 12 miles between the eastern end of the Wall at Wallsend and Heddon-on-the-Wall. Many walkers with a real archaeological interest in the

Wall will want to follow the actual route the Wall took, and there are good reasons for doing so. Although the Roman remains are mostly invisible beneath the modern streetscape, there are places where they can be seen, and there is much else of interest to see, including the historic centre of Newcastle upon Tyne. Even in the urban areas the walker can appreciate the landscape through which the Wall ran. WallQuest volunteers produced a booklet and app, *Walking Hadrian's Wall on Tyneside*, offering a safe and practical route which runs as close as possible to the actual line of the Wall.



The foundations of the Narrow Wall revealed on the south side of Shields Road, Byker, in 2000

SOUTH SHIELDS – ARBEIA



The Roman fort and supply base at the mouth of the Tyne lay at South Shields, on the other side of the river from the east end of the Wall at Wallsend. Somewhere close to the fort at South Shields was a Roman seaport, where travellers to the Wall arriving by sea would disembark. The precise location of the port is still unknown.

South Shields Roman Fort – known as Arbeia in Roman times – was largely covered with housing between 1875 and 1895, but this was cleared away in the 1960s and 1970s and now Arbeia is one of the most extensively excavated forts in the Wall area, with a museum containing spectacular finds and several reconstructed Roman buildings, including the impressive west gate.



View over the Roman fort of Arbeia, South Shields

www.arbeiaromanfort.org.uk

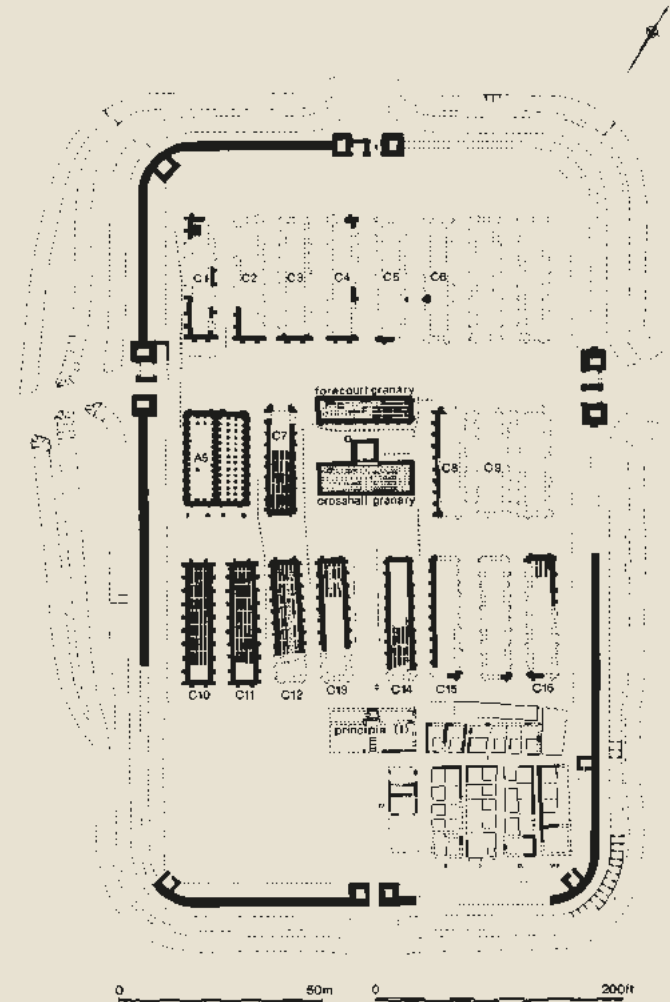


The reconstructed west gate at Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields

The site of the first Roman fort at South Shields remains undiscovered. The known fort was first built about AD 160, and enlarged in 208-11 so that it could be filled with 24 granaries (grain warehouses) to supply the army of the emperor Septimius Severus. Severus came to Britain in person in AD 208 to fight the barbarians north of the Wall, in what is now Scotland. After that the fort, garrisoned by the Fifth Cohort of Gauls, functioned as a supply-base for Hadrian's Wall. In the fourth century it was a naval base manned by a unit of boatmen from the river Tigris, in Iraq: the splendid house of the fourth century commanding officer has been completely excavated and partly reconstructed. The Roman

army abandoned the site around AD 410, but the place was refortified by a local community in the fifth century and was used by the Anglo-Saxons from around AD 600-900, before finally being abandoned to agriculture.

The WallQuest excavation at Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields, in 2012-16 concentrated on an area immediately outside the fort wall, at the south-west corner of the visible stone fort, to find out what life was like in the Roman civilian settlement that lay outside.



Plan of the supply-base at Arbeia, South Shields filled with 24 granaries



The reconstructed fourth century commanding officer's house at Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields



Up against the fort wall the volunteers found defensive ditches, and the fallen fabric from the fort wall which had collapsed in post-Roman times. One eagle-eyed volunteer spotted a finely carved Roman altar which had been re-used in the fort wall at a late period. Another important find from this area was a fine bronze figurine of Ceres, goddess of crops and fertility.



Figurine of the goddess Ceres, found by a WallQuest volunteer in 2015

The ditches in this area date to about AD 208, when the fort was extended south to form a supply-base. The innermost ditch seems to have been recut when the fort was re-fortified sometime in the early 400s.

Further out, beyond the defensive ditches, buildings and activities relating to the civilian settlement, or vicus, which flourished outside the fort walls in the third century AD were found. During the main third-century phase this area was occupied by metalworking hollows for gold- and silversmiths.

The demolition fill of the metalworking hollows contained pottery dated to after AD 250, yet

was overlain by a road, resurfaced many times, and by a new stone building. This is important because with a few exceptions fort civilian settlements or vici in north Britain were abandoned after c. AD 270, yet the final phase in this part of the vicus at South Shields must have been built in the late-third century or even in the early 300s. South Shields emerges as one of a handful of places that because of their importance maintained an urban function as a market centre as well as having a fort and a military garrison.

This is probably explained by its role as the major seaport at the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall.

Head of a protective goddess ('tutela'), 2nd century AD, found by a volunteer (2)



Underneath the remains of the civilian settlement was a sequence of clay deposits which had been used to fill up a valley so it could be crossed by a Roman road, about the time the first stone fort of AD 160 was built. A well-built stone drain ran alongside the road. This clay levelling was heightened around AD 200, then immediately cut by the ditches of the extended supply-base fort built around AD 208. This sequence of deposits produced the most spectacular find from this area, the stone head of a tutelary (protecting) goddess, wearing a mural crown – a crown in the shape of a battlement city wall, symbolising protective power.

This construction overlay a layer of rubbish and demolition material from burnt timber buildings, containing pottery of AD 120-140 – this is a sign that buildings associated with an early, undiscovered, fort cannot be far away. This rubbish dumping in turn directly overlay plough-marks – the pre-Roman Iron Age cultivated fields, abandoned when the Roman army arrived in the area.

Thanks to the volunteers of WallQuest, we now know more about life outside the fort walls, and about the earliest history of the Roman occupation of South Shields – important information which complements what has been revealed about the fort interior by 30 years of excavation and research.



Unfinished silver ring and gold fragment from the workshop in the vicus at South Shields



WallQuest volunteers excavate the second century Roman landscape at South Shields

WALLSEND – SEGEDUNUM



Top left: Watercolour of the south-east corner of the fort at Wallsend, looking west, as it was in 1848 (Laing Art Gallery)



Left: From the same viewpoint, Segedunum Roman Fort as it is today (photo Graeme Peacock)

Hadrian's Wall did not run all the way to the east coast. It started four miles inland, at Wallsend – a name that is recorded as early as the eleventh century. At the south-east corner of the fort can be seen remains of the 'Branch Wall', the very last portion of Hadrian's Wall which ran down into the river Tyne, probably terminating in a magnificent monument to commemorate the decision of the emperor Hadrian to build the Wall. East of Wallsend the Tyne was wide enough to make a wall unnecessary.

The fort at the east end of the Wall, with the Roman name Segedunum, was situated to command magnificent views along two straight stretches of the river Tyne.

Built under Hadrian around AD 124 it housed a 600-strong cohort of mixed infantry and cavalry. For most of the Roman period the regiment concerned was the Fourth Cohort of Lingones, originally raised in eastern France. The fort was completely built over in the late nineteenth century, but revealed again in excavation campaigns in 1975-84 and 1997-8 which mean that it has the most completely known plan of any Wall-fort. The modern highway (Buddle Street) bisects the fort, but its outlines are marked out on both sides of the road. There is a modern museum housing the finds excavated from the fort and a reconstruction of the fort baths.

www.segedunumromanfort.org.uk



Wallsend (Segedunum)
Roman fort as it would
have looked in the
third century AD



The hot room of the newly-discovered fort baths at Wallsend (Segedunum)



WALLSEND FORT BATHS REDISCOVERED



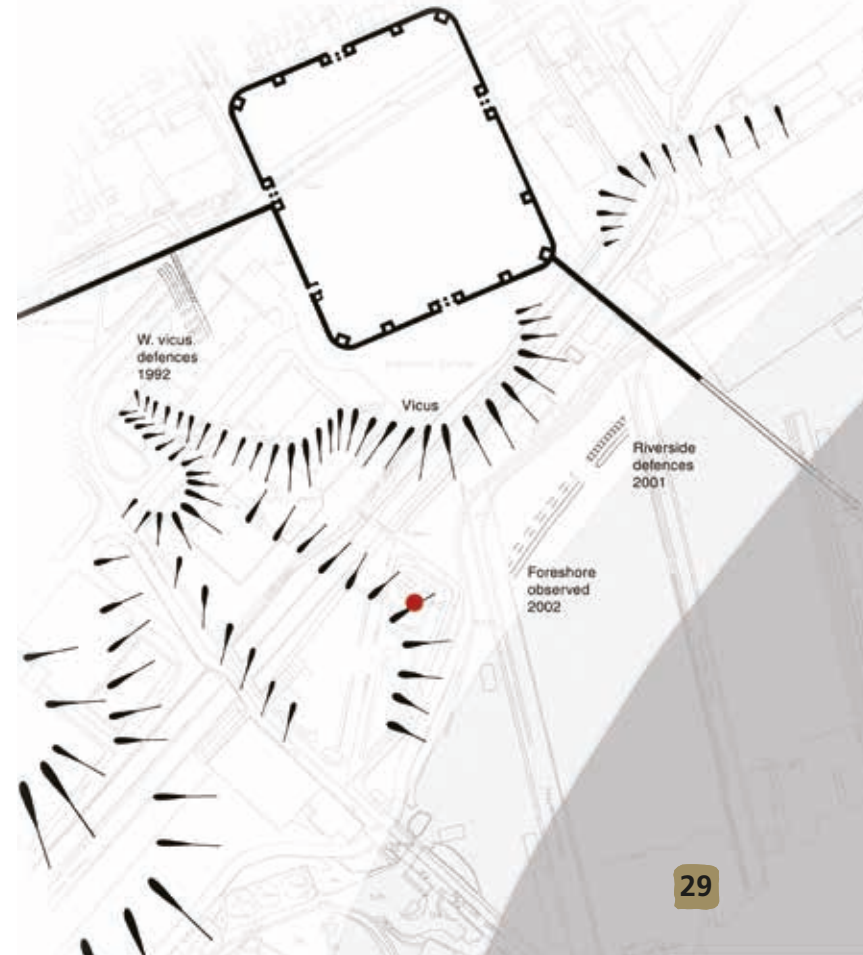
In 2014 local residents relocated the Roman baths that once served the Roman fort of Segedunum. The reconstructed baths at Wallsend are not on the site of the Roman original, whose exact location was unknown. As part of WallQuest, a group of individuals centred on the Wallsend Local History Society and Friends of Segedunum Roman Fort formed a steering group and designed a project to locate the long-lost site of the baths.

There were some clues – the Northumberland county historian and pioneer Wall-archaeologist John Hodgson made a description of some Roman baths discovered at Wallsend in 1814, but unfortunately he did not record the location precisely. His description, which explains that the baths had been encountered during the construction of a wagonway, makes

it clear that the baths must have been in the vicinity of the Ship Inn in Gainer's Terrace, 120m from the fort and much closer to the Tyne than the reconstructed baths.

Over the winter of 2013-14 volunteers researched historic maps and records which pointed to the conclusion that the former Ship Inn, now demolished, lay directly over the original Roman bath-house. The site was made available for excavation by North Tyneside Council and the first trenches were dug in May 2014. Thanks to the quality of the research organised the WallQuest volunteers the trenches were in the right place and found the long-lost baths at the first attempt, exactly 200 years after John Hodgson made his description. A preliminary season of excavation took place in 2014.

Location of the
baths, 120m south
of Wallsend fort



ROMAN BATHS AND BATHING



The bather's equipment
- an oil flask and blade
(strigil) for scraping dirt
from pores

Both the soldiers and civilians of Hadrian's Wall would have bathed regularly. For the Romans, bathing was essentially a social activity, combined with games, exercises and conversation, preferably in the afternoon. Unfortunately we have no evidence for when or how often the soldiers bathed, whether it was an entirely off-duty activity, how much they paid, or the rules and regulations for sharing the baths with women or other civilians.

Baths were usually built outside auxiliary forts, since the standard fort layout had evolved before auxiliaries (non-citizen soldiers like those who manned the Wall) had adopted the Roman custom of bathing by about AD 80.

The baths could be a considerable distance from the fort – some 300m at Benwell, 120m at Wallsend, 70m at Chesters – convenience of water-supply, usually by aqueduct, dictating the position.

The baths were impressively built of stone with glazed windows and contained a series of heated rooms through which the bather could progress from tepid heat to the hottest steam room with hot plunge bath. The hot water was supplied from a boiler over a furnace from which gases were drawn beneath the raised cement and flagstone floors, up wall-flues and even through the ceiling vaults, giving radiant heat from every surface. The bather began or finished with a cold plunge or douche in an unheated room.



How the baths worked - underfloor heating and flues in the walls (in the reconstructed baths at Segedunum)

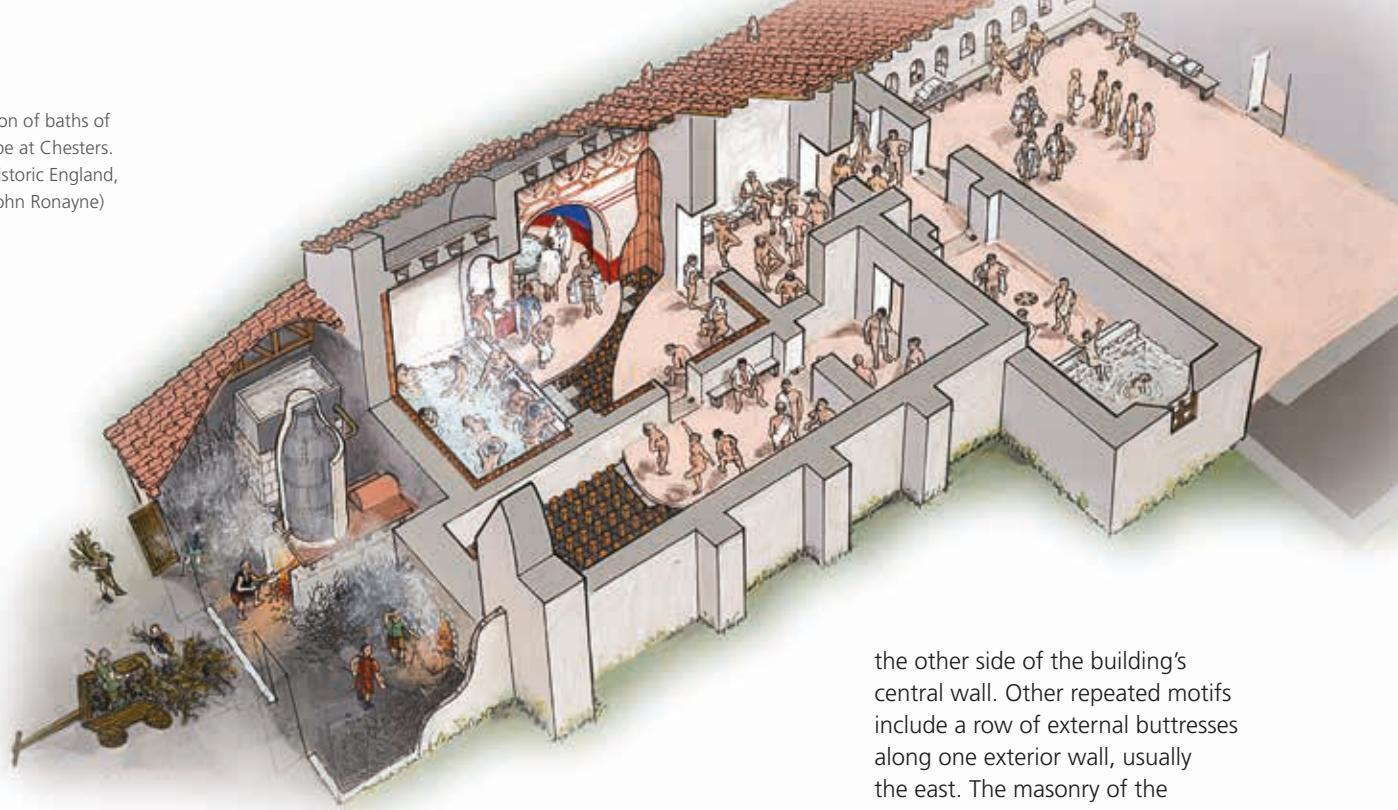
THE EXCAVATION OF THE BATHS AT WALLSEND



The discovery of the fort baths at Wallsend in 2014 generated considerable publicity and partly as a result of the find the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in March 2015 that, as part of the 'Northern Powerhouse' initiative, H.M. Treasury would fund £500,000 of improvements to Segedunum, and that this should include placing the newly discovered baths on permanent display. On the strength of this, more of the remains were exposed in 2015, and a combined team of professional archaeologists and WallQuest volunteers has carried out a detailed excavation of what amounts to about 50% of the whole Roman building.

This has been the first opportunity to carry out large scale excavation on the baths of one of the Hadrianic Wall forts since the development of modern techniques in archaeology. Nearly all previous investigations of baths on the Wall took place in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. At Wallsend it has been possible to understand in detail for the first time how and why a Roman bath building was altered over the one and a half centuries it was in use. The excavation confirmed that the Wallsend baths date back to the Hadrianic period, originally built to a distinctive plan that is known also at Benwell, Chesters, Carrawburgh, Netherby and Bewcastle.

Reconstruction of baths of Hadrianic type at Chesters. (copyright Historic England, illustration John Ronayne)



In this plan, which in the whole of the Roman empire is unique to Hadrian's Wall, the rooms are in a block arrangement which allowed the bathers to circulate around the building, ending up at their starting point without retracing their steps. The central motif is a block of four rooms – with square frigidarium leading to narrow heated lobby, but square and rectangle reversed on

the other side of the building's central wall. Other repeated motifs include a row of external buttresses along one exterior wall, usually the east. The masonry of the original Hadrianic construction at Wallsend is of a very high quality, using small finely dressed and liberally mortared squared facing stones. There is now no doubt that the baths at Wallsend were originally built to this well-known 'Hadrianic' blueprint, which was part of the 'ideal' overall design for the Wall and its forts, possibly overseen by Hadrian himself.



The main hot room of the second phase of the baths, with hypocaust pillars in situ

DESTRUCTION AND REBUILDING IN THE ROMAN PERIOD



At some point, however, the southern part of the baths, containing the heated rooms, was abandoned and what remained was adapted to form a smaller bath house with a quite different plan, with two semi-circular bays, or apses, projecting to the south, built over the concrete basements of the demolished former heated ranges.

The explanation seems to be that the baths suffered from landslip and that the south and east parts began to split away and slide the slope towards the Tyne. The baths seem to have been built to hang on the south-east facing side of a stream valley.

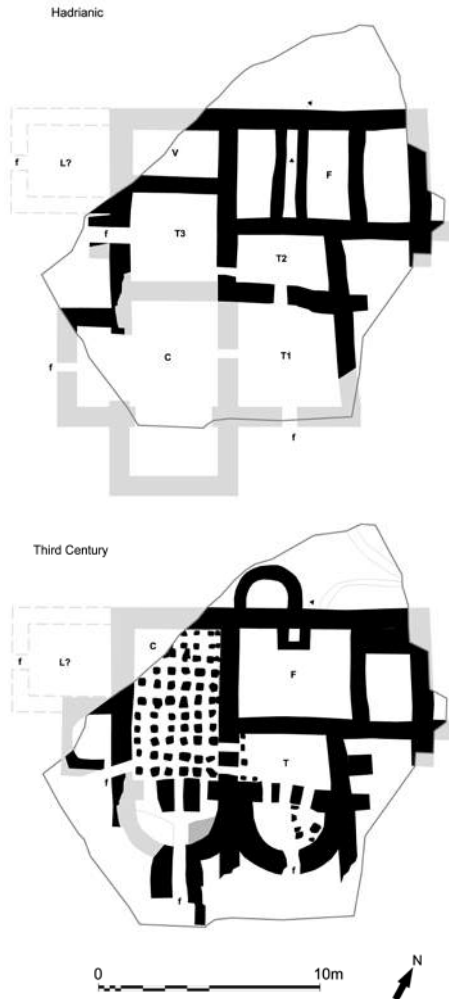
Much evidence suggestive of landslip, in the Roman period or later, was found: the buttressed

exterior east wall was on a distorted alignment, having shifted wholesale out of its original alignment; significantly one of the buttresses was an addition, perhaps a response to the initial problem. The cold bath lining was sheered in half by a prominent crack or fissure, as if the south-east section had split away and begun to move east.

An inscription found at the west rampart of the fort in 1998 records the building or rebuilding of a bath building 'from the ground level up' – 'a solo' in Latin – at some date in the late-second or third century. Probably this was taken from the newly discovered site for re-use in the late-Roman period and refers to the drastic re-planning of the main fort baths following landslip.

This second phase of the baths consists of a cold room (frigidarium), with a well-preserved cold plunge bath lined with waterproof cement, 1m shorter than the Hadrianic cold bath that underlies it; a very small warm room (tepidarium), which had simply been a heated lobby in the Hadrianic baths; and a larger hot room, (caldarium), whose rows of hypocaust pillars, badly heat damaged monoliths, survived. Apses project south from the warm room and the hot room; these probably contained warm and hot immersion baths. The west apse, containing the hot bath, was served by a very large stokehole with cheeks of stone and tile, re-faced on many occasions and showing much damage from heat.

AN AMAZING SURVIVAL



The Wallsend baths as originally planned and as rebuilt after landslide

When he saw the baths in 1814, John Hodgson wrote a description of what sounds like a small warm immersion bath, the remains of which were found attached to the west side of the hot room in 2015. Hodgson also lamented that: 'it was, however, only the last part of a considerable building that was remaining when I visited the spot, all the rest having been removed before I heard of the discovery'. One of the most gratifying aspects of the rediscovery of the baths is the fact that although they were clearly levelled in 1814 there is a wealth of archaeological information left and the remains of the building have certainly not been entirely 'removed'.

Datable finds – pottery and coins – indicate that the baths were abandoned by the late third century. This is the case with other external baths on Hadrian's Wall, and in some cases these were replaced by internal baths, as at Housesteads and Chesters.

The exposed portion of the Wallsend baths, the first to be discovered at a Wall-fort since 1897, has now been placed on permanent public display.

HADRIAN'S WALL WEST OF THE FORT

Immediately west of Wallsend fort, in an area of the Roman fort park just north of Buddle Street, is an excavated stretch of Hadrian's Wall 33m long. West of Newcastle Hadrian's Wall was started with a thickness of 10 Roman feet (3m) ('Broad Wall'). The four-mile stretch of the Wall from Newcastle to Wallsend, including this section, was a slightly later addition, built to a width of 7.5 feet (2.5m) – so-called 'Narrow Wall'. The ditch which ran 6m in front of the Wall is not visible. Oak posts mark the positions of emplacements for an impenetrable entanglement of sharpened branches – a previously unknown obstacle found during excavations on the site and since found elsewhere in the space between Hadrian's Wall and its ditch.



Reconstructed Wall west of Segedunum Roman fort. The posts mark the positions of pits to hold obstacles on the berm between the Wall and ditch

THE RECONSTRUCTED WALL AT WALLSEND

Just south of the real Wall foundation is a reconstruction showing how the Wall may have looked. This reconstruction is based on the available evidence for the appearance of Hadrian's Wall in Roman times. It is likely that the Wall has a walkway and battlements like this, but this still has to be proven. The Wall may have been plastered or painted: alternative possibilities are shown on the south side of the reconstruction.

The reconstruction is 12 Roman feet high to the walkway (a Roman foot = 295mm). This is the minimum possible height for the Wall. Bede, writing in the eighth century, about 300 years after the Romans had left Britain, described the Wall in this area as still surviving 12 feet in height.

The excavated stretch of Narrow Wall west of Segedunum fort, showing evidence of collapse in the Roman period



THE COLLAPSED SECTION OF HADRIAN'S WALL



Excavation of a further 50m of the Wall, first uncovered in 1998-9, was completed by WallQuest volunteers in 2015. This has now been consolidated for public display.

Here the Wall crosses a small valley which has filled up, preserving the Wall, which stands much higher here than is usual in urban Tyneside. This means that archaeologists have been able to study the construction of the Wall much more closely here than anywhere else in the area. They found that the Wall here was built at the same time as the fort at Wallsend. The Romans brought the stone for the Wall from local quarries, although some of

the grittier sandstone may have been transported from further away, using the river. No mortar was used between the carefully squared facing stones of the Wall. The inside of the Wall (the core) consisted of tightly-packed rubble. The mortar visible today is modern protection to safeguard the remains of the Wall.

The original 7.5 foot thick Narrow Wall can be seen at the eastern and western ends of the site, but in the middle part, where the Wall dips into a stream valley, the remains of the Wall appear much wider. This is because this part was rebuilt several times following collapses caused

by the unstable slopes of the valley. Impressive evidence of collapse can be seen on the north face of the Wall, which is tilted at a crazy angle.

A series of channels are visible running through the base of the Hadrianic Wall in the valley bottom. These probably housed pipes supplying water to the fort baths and other buildings south of the Wall. A much bigger culvert, wide enough for a person to crawl into, ran through the Wall when it was rebuilt following its collapse.

FROM WALLSEND TO NEWCASTLE



The Wall foundation revealed at Shields Road, Byker, with emplacements for obstacles discovered in 2000

A mile west of Wallsend fort the Wall converges with the Fosseway (a modern road) just west of Miller's Dene recreation ground, probable site of Milecastle 1. Just west of the Turbinia pub the Wall-line is indicated in the pavement on the north side as it converges with the Fosseway, which then follows the Wall-line west.

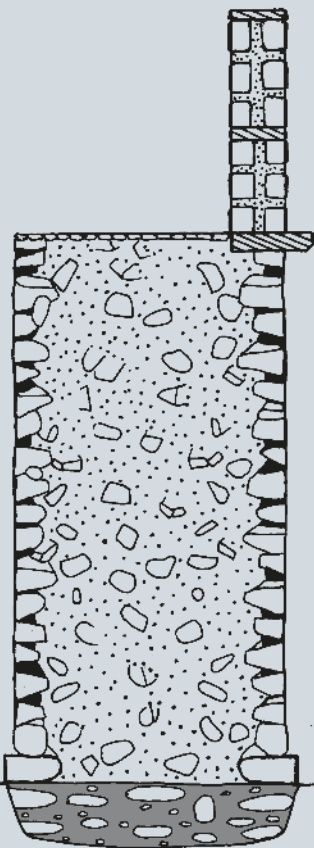
Milecastle 2 was probably in the vicinity of Tunstall Avenue, west of the Brough Park dog racing track (south side of the Fosseway). The north face of the Wall has been seen under the fence just south of the pavement between Brough Park and Tunstall Avenue.

At the east end of Shields Road, at the big roundabout at Byker Hill, is the probable site of Turret 2A. At Union Road (east end of Shields Road) the piece of Hadrian's Wall displayed outside the east wall of the cycle shop is not real and is about 20m north of the true line.

The Wall runs under the shops on the south side of Shields Road – a displayed section of the Wall foundation excavated in 2000 can be seen at the Library/Pool forecourt. The discs in the pavement to the north mark the positions of a defensive system of timber obstacles in the space between the Wall and Ditch found here for the first time.



Displayed section of the Narrow Wall foundation excavated in 2000 at the Library/Pool forecourt, Shields Road, Byker (photo Graeme Peacock)



The Ouseburn Valley
(photo Graeme Peacock)

Diagram to show the
kind of obstacles set into
the pits on the berm
between Wall and ditch



The next major feature is the Ouseburn Valley (where the Wall crossed the Ouseburn near Byker City Farm). Milecastle 3 lay in the vicinity of the BP station on the east side of the valley at west end of Shields Road, and appears in a drawing of 1723 by the antiquary Stukeley.

At the top of Stepney Bank, on the west side of Crawhall Road, a plaque and cross-section of the Wall can be seen on the side of a building bearing the street sign 'Red Barns', where the Wall was found in 1981. Modern excavations have recorded the Wall under Staybridge Suites (Melbourne Street) and at Garth Heads, next to the Keelmen's Hospital. From this point west to the site of Newcastle Roman fort, under the Norman Castle keep, despite claimed sightings of the Wall-ditch at Silver Street and Painterheugh, the line of the Wall is still uncertain.

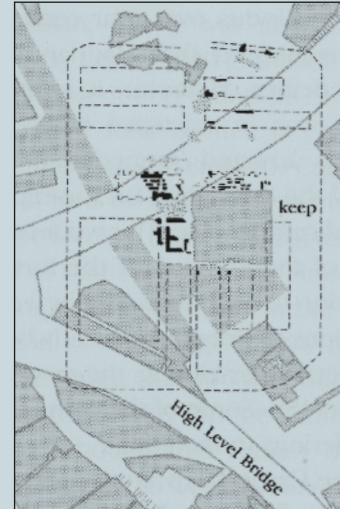


ROMAN NEWCASTLE AND GATESHEAD

The best view of the layout of Roman Newcastle is obtained from the top of the Norman castle keep of c.1175. Both the Norman Castle and the Roman fort beneath it stood on a tongue of land high above the river. The Roman bridge across the Tyne, the Pons Aelius, 'Hadrian's Bridge', which gave Newcastle its Roman name, lay on or close to the site of the small Swing Bridge, just west the elevated Tyne Bridge of 1928. There was no Roman fort at Newcastle when the Wall was first built.



Possibly the Tyne crossing was guarded by a pre-existing fort at Gateshead on the south side of the river; there was certainly Roman settlement there, found in the 1990s on the site of the Hilton Hotel which dominates the view on the Gateshead side. A small fort was added on the Newcastle side in the late-second or early-third century. This lies directly beneath the Castle Garth and has been partly excavated, but its plan is only known in disconnected fragments. In the paving around the keep the outlines of some of the Roman buildings (headquarters building, commanding officer's house and granaries) have been marked out in cobble stones.



Above left: Conjectural plan of Newcastle fort, based on excavated fragments

Left: Inscription found in the Tyne at Newcastle recording the transfer of legionary detachments from Germany to Britain (or vice versa) (courtesy Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne and Great North Museum: Hancock)



View from Castle Keep
towards site of Roman
bridge and the settlement
at Gateshead (photo
Graeme Peacock)



Headquarters building at centre of Newcastle fort marked out in modern pavement, viewed from Castle Keep (photo Graeme Peacock)

The unit attested at Newcastle in AD 213 was the First Cohort of Cugerni (originally recruited in northern Germany). The fort was occupied into the early years of the fifth century.

The Great North Museum: Hancock, one mile north of the Castle Garth, in the University area (free admission: nearest Metro station: Haymarket) contains the most important collection of inscribed and sculptured stones and other finds from Hadrian's Wall.

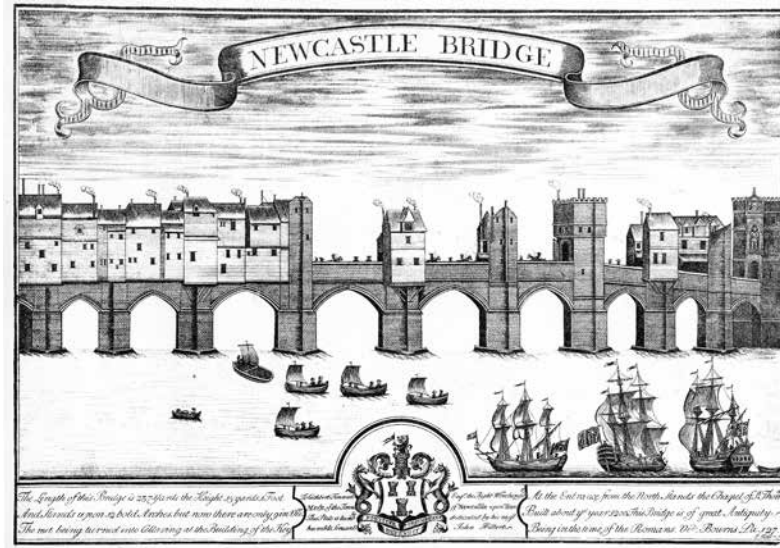
Newcastle was the original starting point for Hadrian's Wall (the length of narrower wall running east to Wallsend being an addition). All the way from Newcastle west to Heddon-on-the-Wall, the Wall, where its width has been measured, is to the original 10 foot broad width. Presumably the Broad Wall originally started at the Roman bridge, but the route by which it descended from the high ground where the Castle stands to the river below is unknown. The nearest sighting of the Wall has been at Cooper's Studios, 140m west of the Castle Keep.



Headquarters building at centre of Newcastle fort under excavation in the 1970s, viewed from Castle Keep

THE ROMAN BRIDGE AT NEWCASTLE

Timbers believed to be foundations of the Roman bridge were found when the swing bridge was built in 1872. Some of these were actually medieval, from the famous 13th century bridge here – but a Roman-period radiocarbon date obtained by the WallQuest project from one timber pile now proves that the Roman bridge was on the same site as the medieval and the swing bridges.



The famous medieval Newcastle Bridge, which stood on the same site as its Roman predecessor



Finds found in the river include two matching altars, dedicated to Oceanus and Neptune and a slab recording the arrival of Roman legionaries after a sea voyage from Germany (all in the Great North Museum: Hancock). The altar dedicated to Oceanus was the soldiers' way of saying they had reached the end of the known world. Alexander the Great dedicated to the same two gods, Oceanus and Poseidon (Neptune) when he reached the mouth of the river Indus (in modern Pakistan) in 325BC.

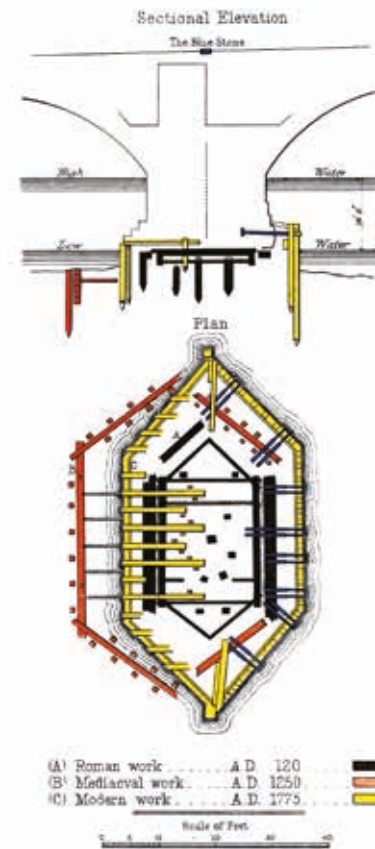
It was long believed that the Roman bridge would have had a timber superstructure, but it is now known that other bridges on Hadrian's Wall at Chesters and Willowford were built with graceful stone arches. Like that other Pons Aelius in Rome itself, Hadrian's bridge was probably stone, forming a fitting monument at the original eastern end of Hadrian's Wall.

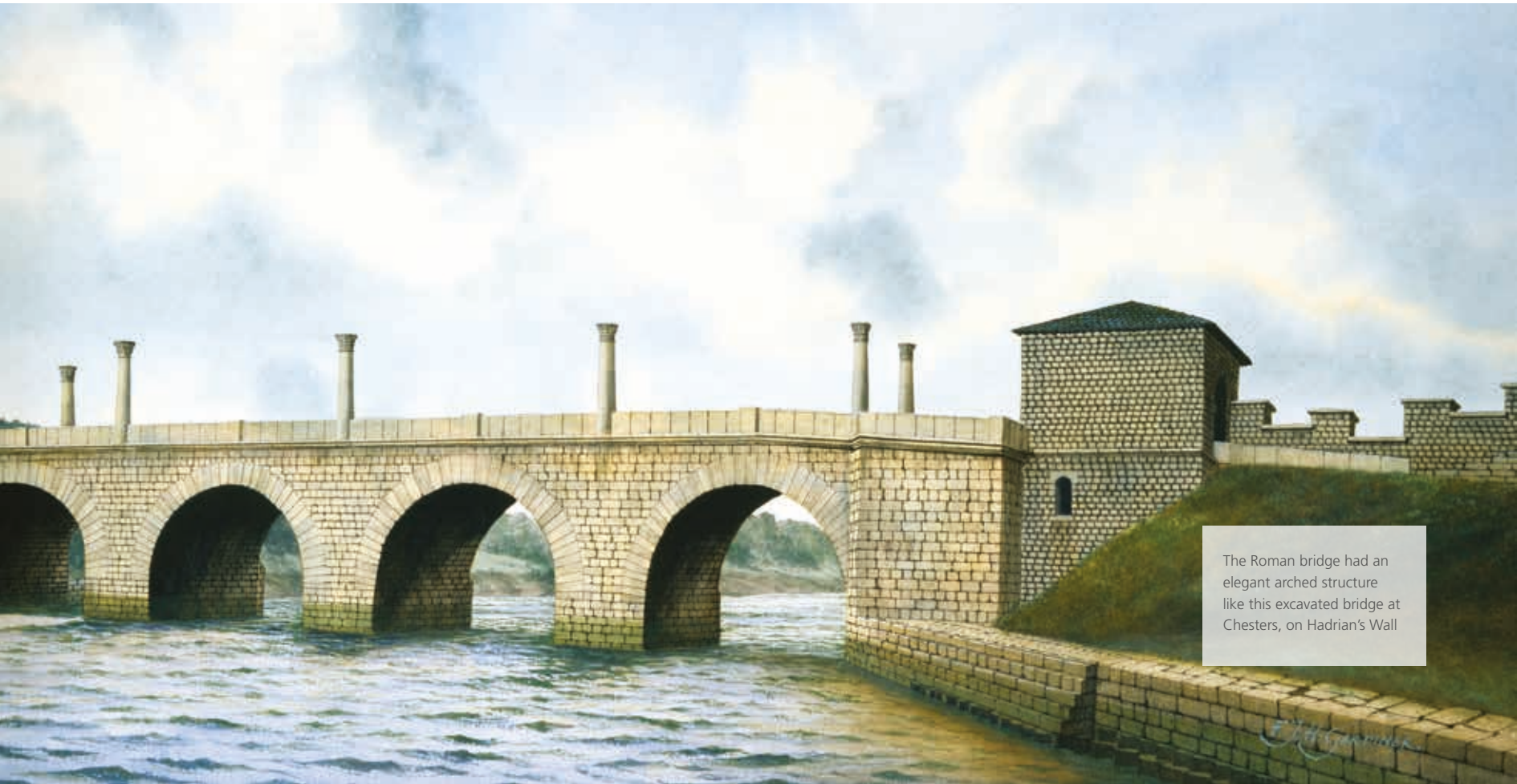
Right: Ancient bridge piers found in 1872 when the Swing Bridge was built. The 'Roman' timbers on this plan are probably medieval

Below: Altar to Oceanus dedicated by the Sixth legion. Note the anchor - the legion had just completed a sea voyage, having been transferred from Germany



DRAWINGS OF A PIER OF TYNE BRIDGE, Showing the Timber Framework of three periods





The Roman bridge had an elegant arched structure like this excavated bridge at Chesters, on Hadrian's Wall

FROM NEWCASTLE TO BENWELL

The south face of Wall (found here in 1952) is marked in red concrete in front of the Mining Institute: there is a plaque on the wall of the building. The Wall made a direct line towards the Stephenson monument.

In the city centre a few remnants may be seen of Milecastle 4, found in 1985 at the Arts Centre at 67-75 Westgate Road (south side of the road); go through the arch and turn right into the courtyard.

The Wall then follows Westgate Road out of Newcastle. The Wall lies under or close to the B6528/B6318 throughout the rest of Tyneside and indeed for a further 30 miles.



Wall found at
Mining Institute
in 1952

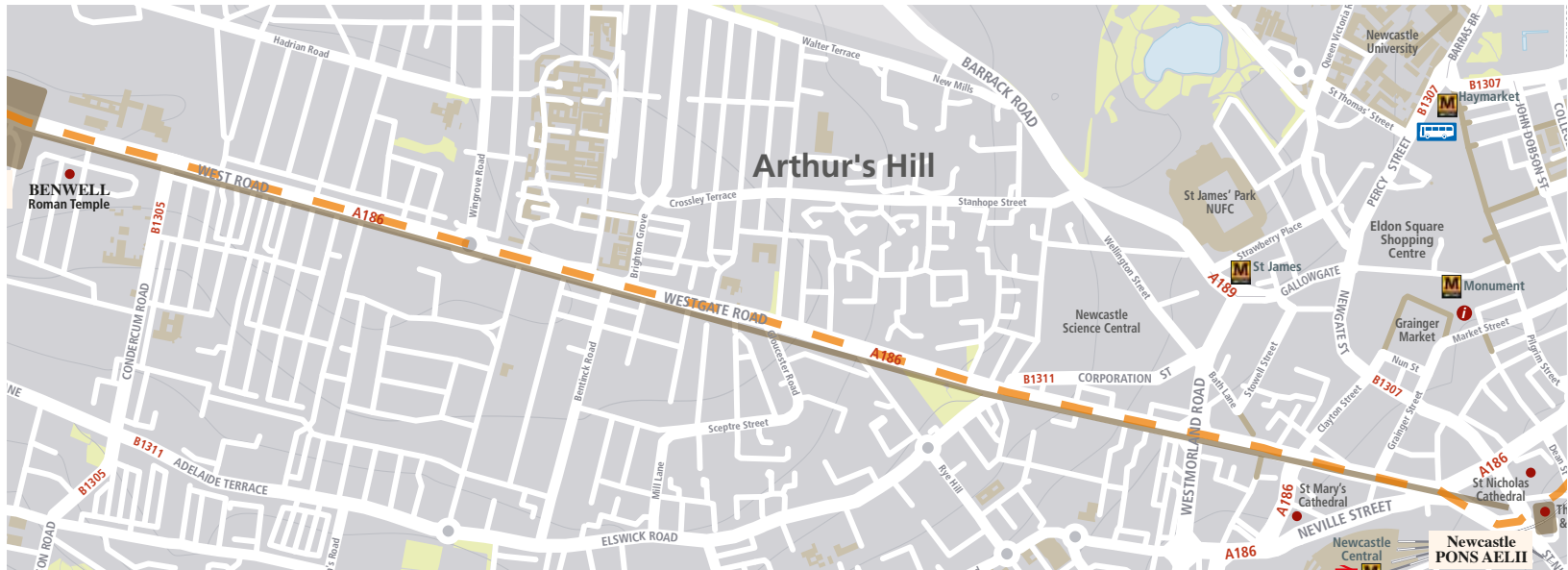
This situation is a legacy of the construction of a new military road between Newcastle and Carlisle in the aftermath of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, which utilised the line of the Wall and levelled it for hardcore. West of Newcastle this road is still known locally as 'The Military Road' – not to be confused with the Military Way, the name for the Roman road running between the Wall and the Vallum.

The positions of Milecastles 5, 6 and 7 are unknown.

Just east of Benwell fort the foundations of the Wall have been seen under the centre of the road and the ditch has been found just north of the north pavement in the grounds of the Westgate Centre for Sport and City Learning Centre.



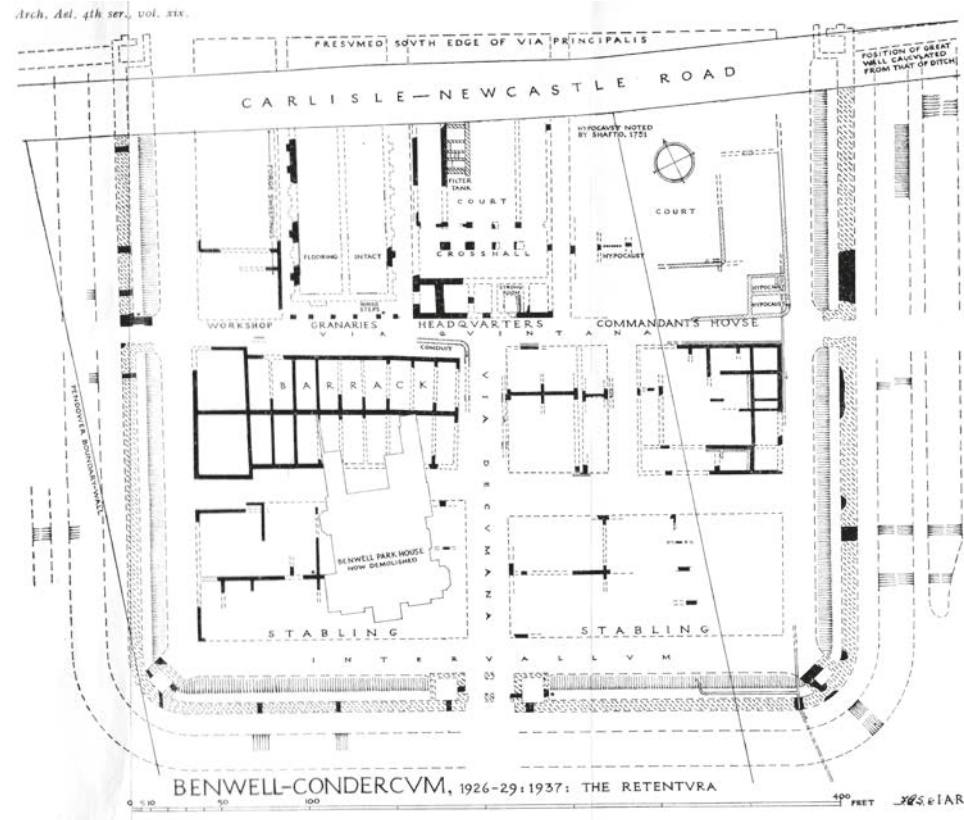
Remains of a milecastle, found at the Westgate Road Arts Centre in 1985



BENWELL FORT - CONDERCUM



Benwell fort is three miles from Newcastle, where the main road which overlies the line of Hadrian's Wall (known here as West Road) reaches its highest point. The Roman name for Benwell was Condercum, which means 'the place with a fine view'. The fort indeed commanded a splendid view from its hilltop position. It was built about AD 122 and occupied until the end of the Roman period, in the early AD 400s. For over 200 years of that time it was the home of a cavalry regiment of Asturians, originally recruited in Spain.



Plan of Benwell fort
obtained in 1937



British fleet inscription from Benwell, naming the emperor Hadrian

The part of the fort which projected north of the Wall is obliterated by a reservoir (a radio mast marks the northern wall of the fort). A locksmith's business, the entrance to the residential street Denhill Park, and a jobcentre now occupy the central part of the fort. The southern part was covered by houses in 1937, when a hurried but brilliant rescue excavation recovered something of the fort plan.

These excavations also found a magnificent inscription recording Hadrian and his governor Aulus Platorius Nepos as the builders of the fort, and stating that the building of the fort granaries (storehouses) was carried out by the classis Britannica – the Roman fleet in Britain.





Left: Vallum crossing as it might have appeared (courtesy Hadrian's Wall Trust, drawing by Graham Sumner)

Above: The Temple of Antenociticus at Benwell (photo Graeme Peacock)

Two excavated Roman structures are on display at Benwell: the gated crossing of the Vallum (the Roman earthwork running parallel to and south of the Wall), 60m south of the fort (walk down from West Road to the bottom of Denhill Park and obtain key from nearby house), found in 1933, and the Temple of Antenociticus, south-east of the fort in Broomridge Avenue (turn south into Weidner Road, sharp right into Spring Hill Gardens, and sharp left into Broomridge Avenue; the temple is on the left). This little temple (found in 1862) was dedicated to an otherwise unknown Celtic deity, parts of whose cult statue can be seen in the Great North Museum: Hancock, at Newcastle.



The god, Antenociticus, is depicted as a youth with luxuriant hair. His temple attracted a high class of worshipper: one of the altar inscriptions (those on the site are casts, the originals are in the Great North Museum) records the gratitude of a cavalry commander, Tineius Longus, on becoming a member of the Senate of Rome.

Archaeologists have long suspected that remains of Roman Benwell survive hidden below ground level. There are a few open areas suitable for investigation in the area of the vicus, or civilian settlement, outside the fort walls, and the WallQuest Benwell project wanted to mobilise interested local people to help find out what survives, and to add to our knowledge of the Roman heritage of the west end of Newcastle.



Head of the god
Antenociticus from
Benwell

Volunteers excavated in available open areas in 2013-14 to find traces of this hidden archaeology and to show for the first time how big the civilian settlement outside the fort was.

In the grounds of Hadrian School, about 175m west of Benwell fort and immediately south of Hadrian's Wall, which runs under the main West Road, volunteers immediately found Roman remains belonging to the civilian settlement, recovering significant amounts of second and third century Roman pottery from a complex of small ditched enclosures immediately behind the Wall. It is believed that these are agricultural plots on the western fringes of the civilian settlement that clustered around the fort at Benwell.

Excavation on ditched enclosures belonging to the civilian settlement, 175m west of Benwell fort in the grounds of Hadrian School





Roman road running behind the Wall (the Military Way) found by WallQuest at Hadrian School, Benwell

South of these ditches, and about 30m south of the centre-line of the West Road (the line of Hadrian's Wall) was the northern edge of the Military Way, very well preserved as a single layer of cobbles laid directly over bedrock, 7.5m (25 Roman feet wide), only 450mm (18") beneath the modern ground surface.

21m south of the Roman road was the centre-line of the north Vallum mound, which survived as a shallow upstand of mixed yellow clay, 6m wide. The rock-cut north lip of the Vallum ditch was located 9m from the south edge of the mound. This places the centre of the Vallum ditch at a distance of 80m from the centre-line of the West Road, meaning that the Vallum runs 20m closer to the Wall than previously thought and shown on OS Maps.

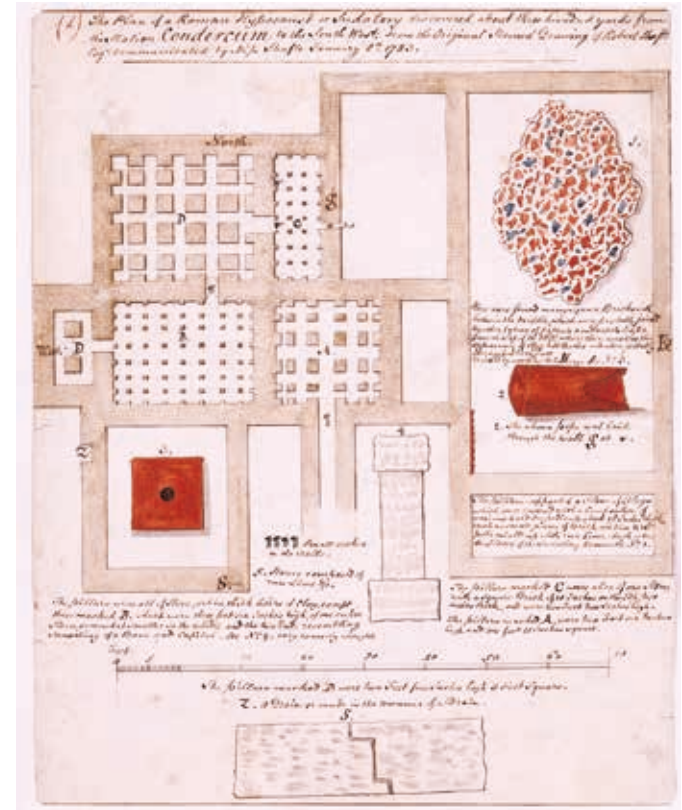


Reconstruction showing extent of civilian settlement (vicus) established outside the fort by WallQuest

Directly south of the fort, at a distance of between 200 and 275m, four excavation trenches were opened in the Pendower Estate, south of Hadrian School (former Dorcas Avenue, south of Bertram, Crescent). Three out of four produced Roman features and large quantities of Roman pottery. This establishes that surviving traces of the civilian settlement extend at least 275m south of Benwell fort down the slope towards the Tyne. Robert Shafto (1717-1780), who lived at Benwell Tower, recorded many Roman finds when the new military road between Newcastle and Carlisle was built through Benwell fort in 1751.

He is not the 'Bobby Shafto' of the famous local song, who belonged to a different branch of the family. The Benwell Shafto also discovered the fort baths in a field near his house, and made a detailed drawing of them, which still exists. They apparently lay 300 yards south-west of the fort, which would place them in the Pendower estate. As at Wallsend, the remains of this long lost Roman baths may still survive underground to be rediscovered one day.

Owners' names inscribed on Roman samian ware from Benwell



Plan by Robert Shafto of Benwell of Roman baths found 300m south-west of the fort in the 1750s (by kind permission of the Society of Antiquaries of London)

FROM BENWELL TO THE NORTH TYNE



Following the main road west, the ground falls steeply away from Benwell fort into the valley of the Denton Burn. Here for a short distance the eighteenth century Military Road ran parallel to, rather than overlying, the Roman Wall, which is exposed and visible in places on the south side of the road. At the Denton roundabout, there is a fake fragment of Wall in the forecourt of the Jet petrol station (against the east gable end of Solomon's Indian Restaurant), and a more substantial fragment of Broad Wall just west of Solomon's, by the Kwikfit garage.



The Wall fragment by Kwikfit garage, as it looked in 1802



Denton Turret, 7B
(photo Graeme Peacock)

This piece of the Wall was, until recent excavations at Wallsend, the 'first extant fragment' from the east, famously illustrated by the traveller Hutton in 1802 with an apple tree growing out of it. Further on, Turret 7B and good stretch of Broad Wall are visible on south side of the road immediately east of the A1 Bypass. The turret was excavated in 1929.

Between Turret 7B and Milecastle 9 the line of the eighteenth century Military Road and the remains of the Wall were heavily disturbed by the A69 dual carriageway, built in the 1970s.

Just west of Turret 7B the line of the Wall is also crossed by the A1 Newcastle bypass, opened in 1990. Although the bypass destroyed a length of the Wall and the Vallum, these were recorded in a rescue excavation and fully published. A spectacular cross-section across the Vallum was obtained. The Vallum ditch had been cut through solid rock by the Roman builders.

Between Throckley and Heddon a utilities trench in the road led in 2002 to the discovery of emplacements for timber obstacles in the space between the Wall and its ditch running for a distance of over one kilometre. This discovery showed that the obstacles at Byker, east of Newcastle, were not a localised feature, and that these extra defences also occur west of Newcastle.



Cross section across the Vallum at Denton. The Vallum ditch here is cut through solid sandstone



Above: The ruins of the Wall at Heddton as depicted in the mid-1800s

Right: Exposed stretch of Broad Wall at Heddton-on-the-Wall (photo Graeme Peacock)





Further west the Wall is completely hidden by, but known to survive under, the modern road surface of the B6528. Visitors armed with a good map, such as the English Heritage Archaeological Map of Hadrian's Wall, can trace the positions of various milecastles and turrets between Newcastle and the North Tyne, though there is little or nothing to see of them. The Wall itself is unencumbered by the road and visible only in two excavated stretches, at Heddon-on-the-Wall (Wall-mile 11) and at Planetrees (Wall mile 26), just before the North Tyne is reached. Nevertheless the Wall has left an unmistakable mark on the landscape, for the Military Road following its line rises and falls precipitately as it pursues the dead straight surveyed lines of the Wall across the undulating countryside.

The B6528 may be a modern tarmac road, but seen from the air or on a map it illustrates the ruthless, undeviating course of the Wall in a striking fashion.

Travellers along the line of the Wall pass through two more forts, Rudchester (Vindobala) and Halton Chesters (Onnum) before reaching the North Tyne. There is little to see at either except for faint earthworks.

At the North Tyne, 27 miles west of Wallsend, the Wall crossed the turbulent river by means of a magnificent bridge. The river crossing was guarded by the fort at Chesters (Cilurnum), on the west side of the river, where extensive excavated remains, in the care of English Heritage, can be visited.



The site of Milecastle 9 just before Blucher village is reached (photo Graeme Peacock)

AN EXCAVATION ON THE DITCH OF HADRIAN'S WALL



In 2013-14 soldiers from Operation Nightingale (funded by the Soldiers' Charity) which seeks to use archaeology to aid the recovery pathways of wounded, injured and disabled servicemen and women, along with soldiers from 5 Medical Regiment and volunteers from the WallQuest community archaeology project, excavated the ditch of Hadrian's Wall on either side of the entrance drive to Albemarle Barracks, halfway between milecastles 15 and 16. The Wall and the ditch had never previously been investigated in this area.

The excavation on the Wall-ditch at Albemarle Barracks (Wall mile 15)



The team revealed the upper profile of the Wall ditch in two places, establishing the approximate location of the Wall (which lies a standard 6m from the south edge of the ditch) under the road B6318 Military Road for the first time. Severe waterlogging prevented the excavation from reaching the bottom of the ditch. But there was an important discovery: the south lip of the ditch was found to have a previously unrecorded stepped profile – dipping suddenly before levelling out and dipping again. This may have been intended to accentuate a mound running the north edge of the berm (the space between Hadrian's Wall and its frontal ditch), of which some remnants were found in the excavation.

Elsewhere, on Tyneside, this mound occurs alongside the newly-recognised obstacles on the berm – it was probably to prevent people trying to crawl through between the bottoms of the timber uprights set in pits between the Wall and the ditch. Unfortunately at Albemarle the open area south of the mound in which these would have been situated lay outside the excavations, under the north carriageway of the B6318, so their presence cannot be proved, although the results of the excavation make it likely that they occur this far west.

The twenty-first century soldiers digging at Albemarle worked tirelessly in extremely difficult, waterlogged conditions, and went away full of admiration for their Roman predecessors who had first dug the ditch!



Cross-section through the upper profile of the ditch, showing a stony mound running along the south lip, and a steep drop from this to a stepped profile

QUEST FOR A LOST ROMAN ROAD

The WallQuest project activities extended as far west along the wall as the area of Hexham and Corbridge. An active group of local researchers based in the village of Acomb, helped by volunteers travelling out from Tyneside, decided to search for a lost Roman road – the Stanegate – in the area of the North Tyne.



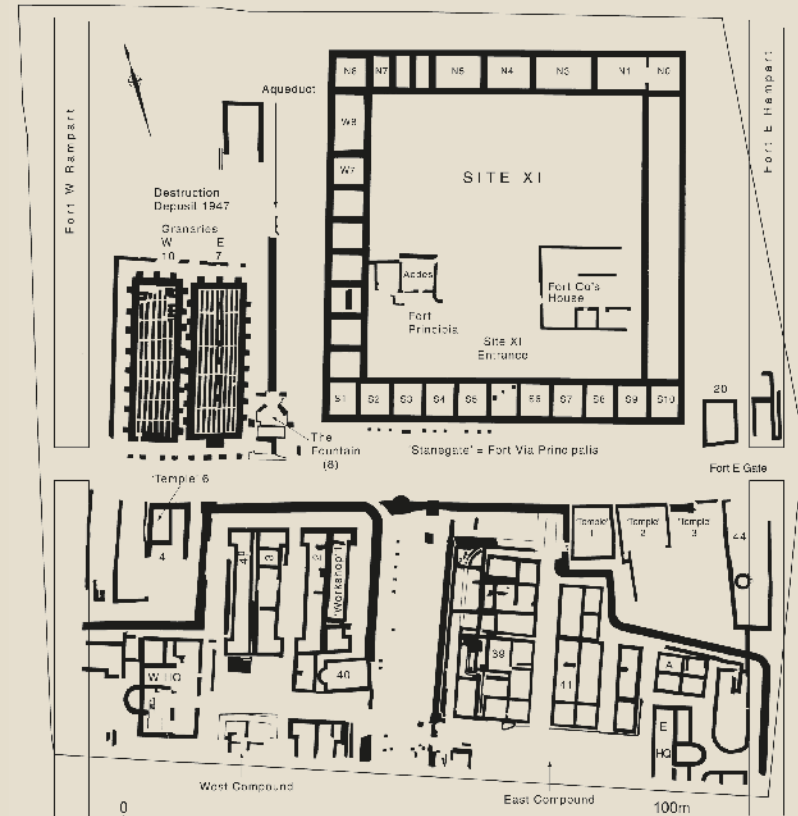
WHAT IS THE STANEGATE?

'The Stanegate' is the term used by archaeologists for a Roman road that runs in an east-west direction on low-lying ground to the south of Hadrian's Wall. The road was in existence before the Wall was built. The Stanegate road has only been traced for certain between Corbridge, on the Tyne, and Carlisle, in the west. The Stanegate has never been reliably traced east of Corbridge, in the Tyneside area.

Before the Wall was built, forts along the Stanegate formed a defensive chain against the north. After Hadrian's Wall was built (AD 122) the Stanegate road line ceased to be a fortified line but remained in use to the rear of the Wall as the most direct route between Corbridge and Carlisle. The road survives in the landscape and in places is still used by modern highways. Much of it was well-known to antiquarian writers: Horsley (1732) compared it to 'the string to a bow', the route being shorter than the Military Way that followed the Wall.

Left: The Stanegate road, with (dashed) the unknown portion between Corbridge and the North Tyne (map by Frontiers of the Roman Empire Culture 2000 project (2005-2008))

Right: The complex of remains at the centre of the Roman town at Corbridge



A LOST ROMAN ROAD

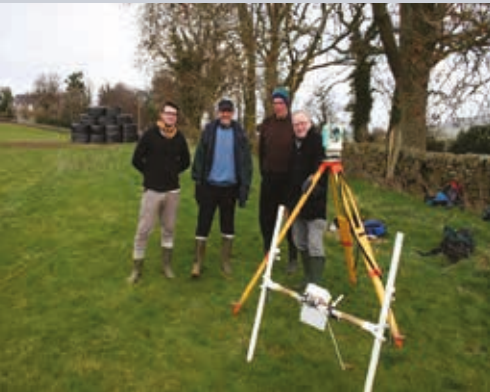
Archaeological excavation has found a Roman road – presumably the Stanegate – as it leaves Corbridge to cross the Cor Burn and head west. To the west, it has been traced from Newbrough via Fourstones, until it skirts the north side of Warden Hill and just begins to turn south. Between these two points it has never been seen. Exactly where the road ran, and most importantly, where it crossed the river North Tyne, are mysteries which have long intrigued archaeologists and local residents.

In 2013-14 WallQuest volunteers undertook 200ha of geophysical magnetometry survey – a remote sensing technique which can produce images of buried archaeological remains – in fields

around the villages of Wall, Acomb and Anick on the east side of the North Tyne, and in fields the Warden area on the west side. The results were negative: no trace of the Roman road line came to light. This does not prove that the Roman road never came through this area, as it is possible that it once existed and has been destroyed by ploughing. Also, in certain soil conditions, geophysical survey may not succeed in detecting buried remains.

But although it cannot disprove it, the survey does make it less likely that the road crossed the river by the village of Wall as has often been suggested.

If a straight line from the Wall to Corbridge looks unlikely, what



The WallQuest team at work in fields near Acomb

ROMAN CAMPS AT HOWFORD

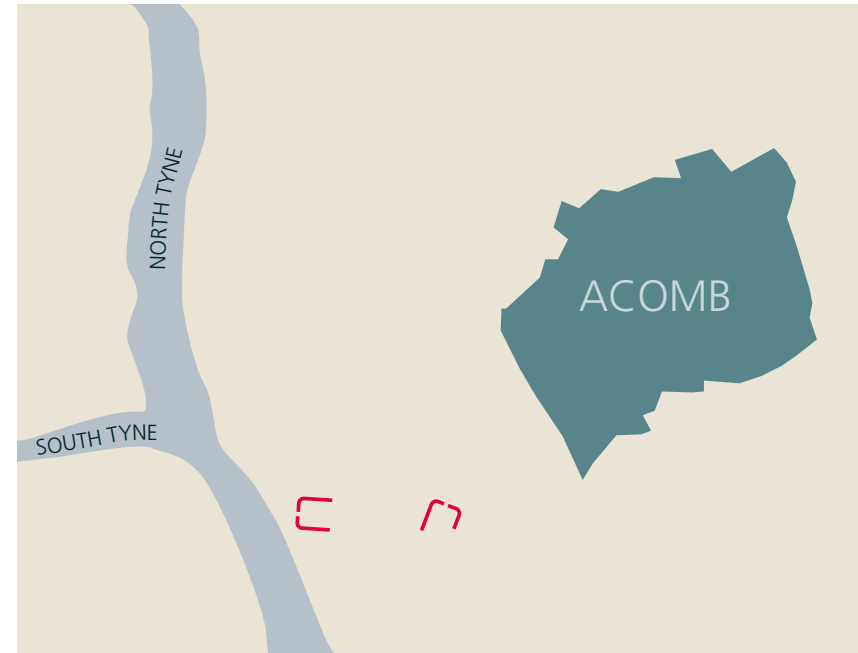


other evidence, old and new, did the Acomb team find to suggest the course of the Stanegate? One important clue was found on the recent English Heritage Archaeological Map of Hadrian's Wall (2010), which displays the findings of new archaeological sites made by the Hadrian's Wall section of the English Heritage National Mapping Programme.

The new map shows two Roman temporary camps in cultivated fields on the level haugh or floodplain immediately south-east of the meeting of the North and South Tynes. 'Camp' is the term used for Roman military sites that were used on campaign, or episodically, containing leather tents rather than buildings found in permanent forts. Groups or clusters of Roman camps like this often occur on major campaign or communication routes, and often sit alongside a permanent fort. The presence of

the camps here makes it very likely that this was the point where the main Roman east-west route – the missing Stanegate – crossed the North Tyne. In more recent times this has been a crossing place, as the name, Howford, belonging to a lane running to the North Tyne immediately north of the camps, shows.

If this is correct there should have been a permanent Roman post to guard the river crossing, at least in the early days when the Stanegate was a fortified line. A possible location is the higher ground surrounding Broom Park, 400m north of the camps, where a possible crop mark shows on an old air photograph, but unfortunately the entire area north of Howford Lane has been gravel-quarried, so the expected Roman fort may well have been destroyed.



Roman camps at Howford



THE 'ACOMB MAN'

One more discovery points to Howford as the likely crossing point: the discovery there of a piece of Roman period sculpture. The 'Acomb Man', now displayed in Acomb village, was found in 1970 on the banks of the North Tyne, just north of the watersmeet at Howford. A crudely executed frontal relief in celtic rather than classical style depicts a smiling, bearded figure holding a club-like object upright in his right hand and another, unidentified, object in his left. There is little doubt about the authenticity of this as a piece of the Roman period. It seems possible that the stone could have come from a shrine at the bridge or ford by which the road crossed the river; alternatively it might have stood by the side of the entry to the ford/bridge.

The Acomb Man

THE PROBABLE COURSE OF THE STANEGATE



What does a river crossing at the watersmeet tell us about the course of the Stanegate in general? East of the North Tyne the most natural route from Corbridge to the crossing by the camps would skirt the high ground: essentially the same route along the foot of the ground rising to the north as taken by the A69 dual carriageway and before that by an old carriers' route.

West of the North Tyne the most direct route would have been that of the modern road and railway skirting the south side of Warden Hill between Warden and Fourstones. But against this is the reliable sighting of the Stanegate

on the north slopes of Warden Hill, turning south just opposite Wall village. To get to the proposed Howford crossing from here the road would have run down the west bank of the North Tyne, along the general course followed by the old road from Walwick Grange to Warden known as Homer's Lane. The route around the south side of Warden Hill might have been thought too dangerous, confining travellers to a bottleneck between the river and the steep slopes of the hill, prone to flooding and inviting to ambush.



Map showing geophysical survey areas and the probable Stanegate river crossing to the south of these

A FINAL CLUE: THE CRINDLEDYKES MILESTONE

One other important piece of evidence remained to be considered. At Crindledykes Farm on the Stanegate, far to the west of the North Tyne, about a mile east of Vindolanda, a group of five inscribed Roman milestones was discovered in 1885, with fragments of two more. On one milestone, dated to AD 222-3, a distance is given: 14 miles. It has long been recognised that this is almost certainly the distance measured from Crindledykes to Corbridge. Roman milestone distances commonly understate the actual distance in Roman miles, because measurement was made not from centre-to-centre of towns and other settlements, but from some point in their outer limits. For this reason we should expect the distance on

the ground to exceed the milestone distance. At 15.5 Roman miles the proposed route via the north side of Warden Hill and Howford, is close enough to fit the distance.

The case for the missing Stanegate crossing of the North Tyne being at Howford is a strong one, but may never be proven. Not only has gravel quarrying probably removed some of the key evidence, but flooding, erosion and alluvial deposition at the meeting of the turbulent North and South Tynes may well have masked or destroyed traces of Roman and later routes. Despite the valuable clues found by the WallQuest volunteers from Acomb and Tyneside, further survey work is needed before this mystery can be finally resolved.

The Crindleykes milestone on the Stanegate, giving the distance (MP XIII = 14 miles) to Corbridge



THE FINAL ABANDONMENT OF THE WALL



Use of the Wall and its forts by the Roman army seems to have ceased quite suddenly when the Roman empire lost control of Britain in around AD 410. There is some evidence for the violent overwhelming of personnel in military sites at this time, seen at South Shields, where the remains of two individuals who had been executed with swords were found buried in the ruins of the commanding officer's house and radiocarbon dated to the early 400s. On the other hand, there are indications that some Wall-forts, including South Shields, were redefended and occupied by groups of people well into the fifth century. However, by the time that the Anglo-Saxon invaders arrived around 550, all Roman sites seem to have been in an advanced state of ruin.



Final devastation - remains of victims executed with swords, radiocarbon dated to the early 400s, found inside the Roman fort of Arbeia, South Shields

HADRIAN'S WALL AFTER THE ROMANS

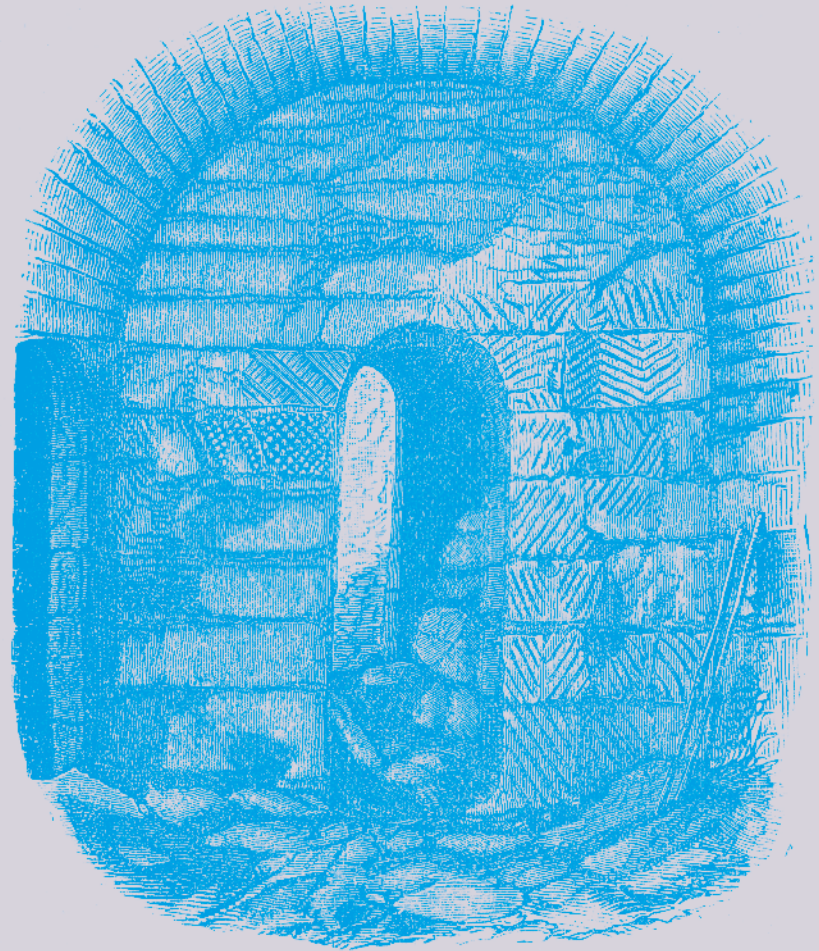
The remains of Hadrian's Wall strongly influenced the later pattern of human settlement in Tynedale and Tyneside. Occupation at some forts continued after the end of Roman rule. Burials at both Wallsend and Benwell show that these forts were used as pagan cemeteries after the Anglian invasions, and later in the Anglo-Saxon period Newcastle fort was the site of an important Christian cemetery, probably associated with an undiscovered monastery there.

South Shields (Arbeia) may have become an Anglo-Saxon royal centre: the site has produced finds of the seventh to ninth centuries, and there is a tradition that King Oswin was born there, in the early 600s.



Anglo-Saxon cross from
Arbeia Roman Fort
South Shields

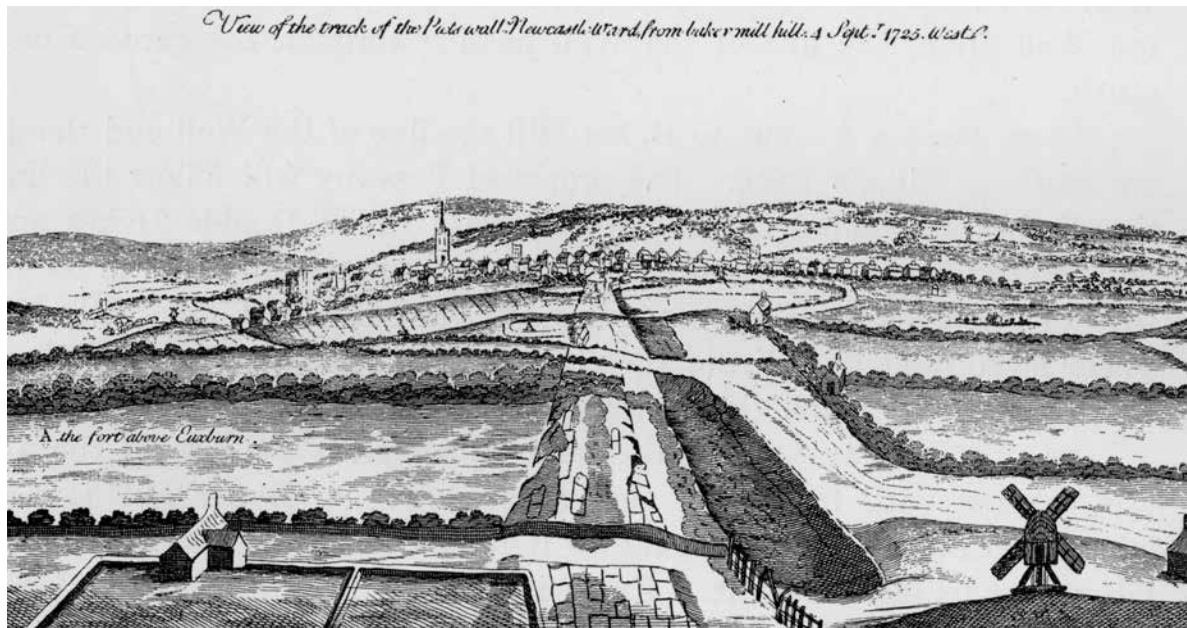
When the population began to expand, the Wall was used as a quarry for building stone, first for churches and then for other buildings. The Saxon church towers of Tynedale, such as Bywell, Ovingham and Corbridge, are built of stones taken from the Roman Wall. The plan of the medieval town of Newcastle was strongly influenced by the Roman remains. The Normans, for example, chose the site of the fort with its Anglo-Saxon cemetery as a site for their new castle. Westgate Road was built over the infilled Roman Wall-ditch and its line can be traced into the heart of the modern city.



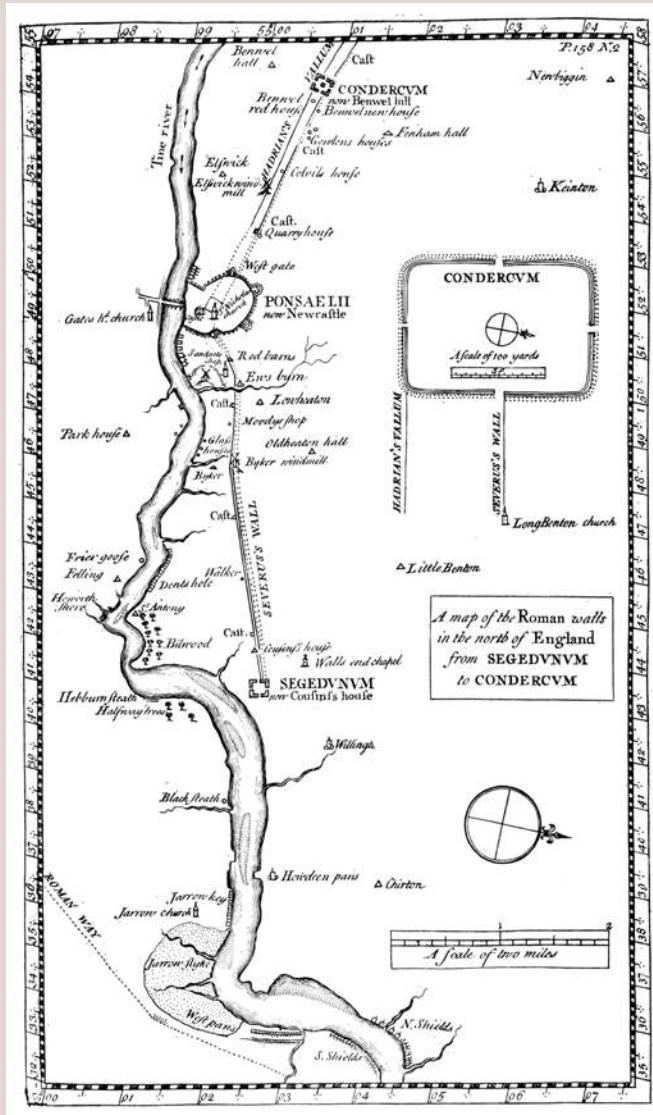
The crypt of Hexham Abbey, built entirely of Roman stones from Corbridge and Chesters

In the post-Roman centuries the visible remains of the Wall were a link to the Roman past. When the first stone churches were built in the Tyne Valley in the late seventh century, they were modelled on 'Roman' prototypes and probably drew some of their inspiration from the ruined Roman landscape that provided their setting.

Throughout the medieval period, the Wall was still known locally and its name is found as an element in many place-names (Wallsend, Walker, Walbottle, Wall, and many others). 'Chesters', which is such a common element in the modern fort names (but only in Northumberland, not in Cumbria), is derived from the Old English ceaster, and ultimately from the Latin castra (meaning a camp), and was applied in Saxon times to Roman forts and walled towns in Britain. Newcastle was known as Monkchester before the Norman castle there gave it its modern name.



View of Roman Wall at Byker by Stukeley (1776) showing how the turnpike road (now Shields Road) follows the Wall, on the north side of the ditch



Left: Horsley's map of 1732, showing Hadrian's Wall on Tyneside and a plan of Benwell fort



In medieval times the Wall was known of nationally and internationally, appearing in chronicles and being shown on maps of Britain. In the sixteenth century, specific sites on the Wall began to be described by antiquarians, and in the early eighteenth century detailed first accounts and plans were published.



Far left: WallQuest volunteers survey Roman blocks inside the Anglo-Saxon church at Corbridge

Left: Hadrian's Wall between Throckley and Heddon-on-the-Wall. The remains of the Wall lie buried beneath the modern road, which runs along the line of the Wall for many miles (photo Graeme Peacock)



The building of the Military Road over the line of the Wall in the 1750s has shaped the modern east-west route of travel all the way between Newcastle and the North Tyne and beyond. East of Newcastle, too, the line of the Wall has determined the modern road layout.

Although much of the eastern part of the Wall is invisible beneath the streets and buildings of a modern conurbation, thanks to the WallQuest project local people are now more aware of the Wall beneath their feet, and we have a better knowledge and understanding of Hadrian's Wall on Tyneside.

Hadrian's Wall on Tyneside rediscovered - some of the WallQuest volunteers who have made it possible to find out so much more



GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Paul Bidwell, *Hadrian's Wall 1989–1999: a summary of recent excavations and research* (Carlisle, 1999)

David Breeze, *Handbook to the Roman Wall* (14th edn, Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, 2006)

David Breeze and Brian Dobson, *Hadrian's Wall* (4th edn, London, 2000)

Anthony Burton, *Hadrian's Wall Path: National Trail Guide* (London, 2007, revised ed. 2016)

David Heslop, 'The Roman Imperial Frontier', in Graves, C.P. and Heslop, D., Newcastle upon Tyne, *The Eye of the North: An Archaeological Assessment* (Oxford, 2013), 31-64

Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: a Life* (Oxford, 2012)

Nick Hodgson (ed), *Hadrian's Wall 1999–2009: a summary of recent excavation and research* (Kendal, 2009)

Nick Hodgson, *Hadrian's Wall: Archaeology and History at the Limit of Rome's Empire* (Marlborough, 2017)

An Archaeological Map of Hadrian's Wall (English Heritage, 2010, revised ed. 2014)

Left: The excavated remains of Hadrian's Wall west of the fort at Wallsend, now permanently displayed

Right: Inscribed altar recording the elevation of the Benwell commanding officer Tineius Longus to the rank of senator





SOME USEFUL WEBSITES

www.segedunumromanfort.org.uk/about-us/friends

www.arbeiasociety.org.uk

www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk



Above: Intaglio (finger ring gem) from Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields, depicting Jupiter enthroned

Left: Volunteers excavate the baths at Wallsend



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The permanent display of Hadrian's Wall and the Roman baths at Wallsend have been supported by Arts Council England using public funding.



SIR JAMES KNOTT TRUST



1,900 years ago the legions of Rome built the great barrier of Hadrian's Wall from sea to sea. Although much of the eastern end of the Wall in Tyneside is now buried beneath the modern cityscape, research and excavation in the twenty-first century has given us a dramatic new view of the Wall in this area, and of the lives of the people who lived in its forts and civilian settlements over a period of three hundred years. This book explains how archaeologists and local people working together have made these discoveries, and offers a guide to where visible Roman remains and finds can be seen. Many illustrations and reconstruction images help bring Hadrian's Wall on Tyneside back to life.

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