

Hadrian's Wall

Scotland was not part of Roman Britain. Although the Romans won a big battle against the Caledonians in A.D. 84, prompting all the people of Scotland to band together as 'The Picts', Scotland never became part of the Empire because the Roman Army were called back closer to home to deal with more pressing matters.

In A.D. 122 the Emperor Hadrian ordered his soldiers to build a wall between Roman Britain and Scotland to defend the Roman occupied land from frequent attacks by the Picts, and also to control who was entering and leaving Roman territory. This meant the Romans could charge taxes to people who wanted to come in. Historians believe that the wall may have been covered in plaster and then white-washed, the shining surface would have reflected the sunlight and made it visible for miles around, this would show how powerful the Roman Empire was.



Photo courtesy of Bryn Pinzgauer
@flickr.com



The wall ran from Wallsend on the East coast to Bowness on the West coast.

You can still see parts of Hadrian's Wall today, it is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Northern England.

Hadrian's Wall was built in stone. It was 117.5 kilometres long, up to 6 metres high and 3 metres wide. This meant it was wide enough for two soldiers to do sentry duty side-by-side.

It wasn't just a wall. There was a **mile-castle** containing twenty soldiers every 1.5km. **Turrets** guarded by soldiers were built every 500 metres. Major **forts** were built along the wall every 8 kilometres. These could accommodate between 500 and 1000 Roman soldiers. One of the forts was called Housesteads. It had a hospital, granary, barracks, workshop and toilets. Grain was kept dry in a store by the use of a hypocaust

similar to the system used in Roman baths. A Roman road called the Stanegate was built to supply the soldiers based at Hadrian's Wall.

Just like the Roman roads, the wall was designed by Roman engineers and built by the Roman soldiers.

Did you know?

In A.D. 140, the Romans added another wall further north. It's called the Antonine Wall.

Hadrian's Wall was repaired, maintained, patrolled and guarded for almost 250 years.

More to think about

The wall was not that high in some places, people would have been able to climb up and get over it. What do you think Hadrian's purpose was in building the wall? A deterrent? A marker of Roman territory? A show of power? A way to control people's movements? Strategic positioning of troops? Discuss with a partner and explain your thinking.



Hadrian's Wall Comprehension

Name:.....Date:.....

Answer these questions in full sentences.

- 1) Who did the Romans fight against in Scotland in AD84?
- 2) In your own words, why did Hadrian build the wall?
- 3) Historians believe the wall may have been whitewashed (painted white).
Why might the Romans do this?
- 4) Does the wall run East to West, or North to South?
- 5) How long was the wall?
- 6) Why was it made 3 metres wide?
- 7) How many soldiers would you find in a mile castle?
- 8) Why was the Stanegate road built?

