Hadrian’s Wall

Hadrian’s Wall was a defensive fortification in Roman Britain, begun in AD 122 during the rule of Emperor Hadrian. A significant portion of the Wall still exists today and we will be able to explore part of this wall during our visit.

Hadrian’s Wall is now the most popular tourist attraction in Northern England and the wall was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987.

Part of the Wall which we will walk along.

**Dimensions**

Hadrian’s Wall was 80 Roman miles or 117.5 km (73.0 mi) long; its width and height were dependent on the construction materials which were available nearby. East of the River Irthing, the wall was made from squared stone and measured 3 metres (9.8 feet) wide and 5 to 6 metres (16 to 20 feet) high, while west of the river the wall was made from turf and measured 6 metres (20 feet) wide and 3.5 metres (11 feet) high. This does not include the wall’s ditches, berms and forts. The central section measured eight Roman feet wide (7.8 ft or 2.4 m) on a 10-foot (3.0 m) base. Some parts of this section of the wall survive to a height of 10 feet (3.0 m).

**Purpose of construction**

Hadrian’s Wall was, if not wholly, at least partially, constructed to reflect the power of Rome, and was used as a political point by Hadrian. Once its construction was finished, it is thought to have been covered in plaster and then white-washed, its shining surface able to reflect the sunlight and be visible for miles around. The Wall marked the limit of the civilised peoples under Roman rule, beyond the Wall was to be found the uncivilised, barbaric tribes known as the Picts.
Housesteads Roman Fort

Housesteads Roman Fort was an auxiliary fort on Hadrian's Wall. It is widely recognised as the most complete example of a Roman fort in Britain, and is among the best-known from the entire Roman Empire. The site has been the focus of antiquarian and academic enquiry since the 18th century. Excavations have revealed all the major buildings and defences of a Roman fort and the civilian settlement outside its walls. Surviving inscriptions and sculptures provide a rich source for understanding the life and beliefs of the garrison.

History of Housesteads Roman Fort

Construction of Hadrian's Wall began in AD 122 and the fort at Housesteads, known as Vercovicium, was built within a decade of this date. It was garrisoned by an infantry cohort of about 800 men until the end of the 4th century. From the late 3rd century, however, the garrison was reduced in strength, as the Roman emperors were no longer so reliant on legions and auxiliaries in the frontier provinces, and the external settlement was abandoned.