We continually revise our Statements of Significance, so they may vary in length, format and level of detail. While every effort is made to keep them up to date, they should not be considered a definitive or final assessment of our properties.
ANTONINE WALL - CASTLECARY

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The property is part of the Antonine Wall and comprises 570m length of extant sections of the ditch and upcast bank, with section of Military Way to the south but not visible. The Military Way at the west end of the property cuts a possible Bronze Age barrow. Two Roman temporary camps, known as Garnhall 1 and 2, abut or lie close to the southern side of the rampart. The property lies in open fields to the north of modern housing at Castlecary.

The Antonine Wall is a linear Roman frontier system of wall and ditch accompanied at stages by forts and fortlets, linked by a road system termed the Military Way, stretching 60km from Bo’ness on the Forth to Old Kilpatrick on the Clyde. It is one of only three linear barriers along the 2000km European frontier of the Roman Empire. These systems are unique to Britain and Germany.

CHARACTER OF THE MONUMENT

Historical Overview

- Antonine Wall construction initiated by Emperor Antoninus Pius (AD 138–161) after a successful campaign in AD 139/142 by the Governor of Britain, Lollius Urbicus
- Antonine Wall system abandoned, possibly after AD 165, and the line of frontier shifted again to Hadrian's Wall
- Brought into Guardianship in 1962

Archaeological Overview


1955: Garnhall 1 Temporary Camp noted by J K St Joseph.


1965: Garnhall 2 Temporary Camp noted by J K St Joseph.

1977: Excavations around site of old Garnhall Farm house, now demolished, revealed wall base, defined the edges of the ditch and located a trace of the Military Way.


1994: Barrow excavated by D J Wooliscroft and found to be earlier than Military Way; also Garnhall 2 temporary camp ran up to and in effect abutted the Wall. Defensive pits, *lilia*, were found on the berm (the area between the rampart and the ditch) near here.
The property provides much evidence on the line, nature and construction of the Antonine Wall.

Artistic/Architectural Overview

The ditch is the main surviving feature and is spread out to a width of some 20m and up to 2m deep. The upcast bank is extant, up to 2m high in places in the western part of the property, although the line is confused by hedgerows and a trackway.

There are surface indications of the Military Way as a terrace c. 6m wide.

The temporary camps are not visible, but are large rectangular structures of turf or earthen walls with a single ditch around them. The abutment of Garnhall 1 Camp to the southern side of the Antonine Wall is unique.

The use of defensive pits, *lilia* (pits containing stakes and covered by foliage), on the berm is also unique.

Social Overview

This stretch of Wall, along with other sections, allows the walker an uninterrupted stretch of 9km access along the Antonine Wall.

In 2003 the Scottish Executive announced that the Antonine Wall (including this stretch) would be nominated as a World Heritage Site. Such a designation brought enhanced social significance to the monument and its setting.

Spiritual Overview

The site has no current spiritual role.

Aesthetic Overview

This property lies in a stretch of woodland and open fields with good views to the north.

What are the major gaps in understanding of the property?

The date and nature of the barrow are still unresolved.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Key Points

- Part of second best preserved Roman frontier after Hadrian’s Wall
- Good section of ditch with occasional bits of upcast bank
- Unique evidence of abutting temporary camp and berm defensive pits
- Shows imposition of Military Way over earlier Iron Age structures in landscape
Associated Properties

Barrhill; Hillhead; Bearsden Bathhouse; Croy Hill; Castlecary; Rough Castle; Tamfourhill; Westerwood; Cumbernauld Airfield–Wyndford Road; Wyndford Road

Keywords

Roman frontier; limes; Antonine Wall; Hadrian's Wall; World Heritage Site