

Walls in history – Hadrian's Wall

Hadrian's Wall marks the boundary between Scotland and England. The Romans constructed the wall to prevent the tribes of Scotland from entering their colony, Britannia. Built in the early 2nd century AD, it stretches from the Irish Sea to the North Sea for 72 miles across north of England and it is the longest wall in Europe. Even if only parts of it are visible today, it still attracts thousands of tourists every year.

Built on the orders of the Roman Emperor Hadrian and located in Great Britain, Hadrian's Wall was a defensive fortification that marked the northwest frontier of the Roman Empire for three centuries. The wall measured 73 miles in length and stretched from coast to coast across Northern England. Construction likely started around A.D. 122, after Hadrian visited the Roman province then known as Britannia, and it is thought to have taken about 15,000 workers for at least six years to complete it. The biggest part of the wall was made from stone, although some portions were fabricated from turf. Small forts called *milecastles* were built at every Roman mile (the equivalent of 0.91 modern miles) along the wall, and two



observation turrets were placed between each milecastle. Additionally, there were more than a dozen larger forts along the wall's length where soldiers were stationed. An enormous earthwork consisting of a ditch flanked by parallel mounds, and now referred to as the *Vallum*, was created just south of the wall, in the early 5th century. In the following centuries, stones from Hadrian's Wall were removed to build homes and roads; however, portions of the wall still survive. Today, a long-distance walking path follows the wall's route across Northern England.



1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

1. Why did the Romans build Hadrian's Wall?
2. When was it built?
3. What has it become today?
4. Who ordered its construction?
5. What was Hadrian's Wall at the time of its construction?
6. What was its length?
7. How many people worked to complete its construction?
8. What building construction materials were used?
9. How was the wall structured?
10. What was the so-called *Vallum*?
11. What happened in the following centuries?
12. What is there today besides Hadrian's Wall?



J. Malcolm's graphical reconstruction of Hadrian's Wall