

Auchendavy fort is the only known Antonine Wall fort to have never been excavated. The fort is now cut across by the B8023 and mostly covered by the buildings and carpark of Auchendavie Farm and the Auchendavie Steadings housing development. Only slightly visible traces of the ditches on the east and south east sides remain.

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## HISTORY OF DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION:

The Roman fort at Auchendavy remains unexcavated, despite having been known since at least the eighteenth century, when the antiquaries Alexander Gordon, the Rev John Horsley, and General William Roy described its defences and provided plans. In 1771, the most significant finds to come from the site were discovered during the construction of the Forth and Clyde Canal, which probably destroyed the fort's southern defences. In the early 1800s, the local landowner had much of the site levelled, but enough remained visible to allow for detection of the fort's

east ditches and south-east corner by aerial photography in the 1940s. Further aerial surveys have continued to reveal aspects of the fort's defences, largely confirming the dimensions provided in the late eighteenth century. Geophysics in 1998 and 2000 plotted parts of the fort's defences and limited internal features. Further geophysical surveys were carried out in 2006 and 2007, covering large areas in the fields to both the east and west of the fort, looking for signs of an annexe or civilian settlement (*vicus*). These did not identify any clear Roman period features.

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## DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION:

Antiquarian plans, aerial photography, and geophysics reveal that the fort had an internal area of about 1.09ha (2.7 acres). The fort was defended by two ditches on the south and east, and probably had an annexe, but this has not yet been located. The fort's main road (via *principalis*), probably also the Military Way running through the fort, may be represented by the current B8023 Kilsyth to Kirkintilloch road. The fort is frequently considered to be an optional choice (as an alternative to Bar Hill) for one of the so-called "primary" forts on the Antonine Wall; that is, one of the six forts that were part of the original plan for the

Antonine Wall, before a decision was made to add additional forts to the Wall. Finds from the site, mostly recovered during construction of the Canal, include a large collection of ballista balls, a building inscription (RIB 2180), four complete altars (RIB 2174-77) and part of a fifth, two tombstones or religious dedications (RIB 2179, 2181), a stone bust, two iron mallets, and a small *intaglio*. The inscriptions record the presence of the Second Legion, and all four complete altars were dedicated by the Second Legion centurion Cocceius Firmus (RIB 2174-77). It is likely, therefore, that the fort was occupied by a detachment of the Second

Legion. The lack of evidence for an annexe at Auchendavy is puzzling in light of this feature's universal appearance at other Antonine Wall

forts. It is very likely that an annexe was located here, probably attached to the fort's west side, where survival has been poorest.

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