

TOLLPARK: SECTION OF DITCH AND TEMPORARY CAMP

Immediately east of Cumbernauld Airport, at Tollpark, between the forts at Castlecary and Westerwood is a long visible section of the Antonine Wall Ditch and Outer Mound and, about 410m south of the Wall, the site of a Roman temporary camp.

The camp is now built over by the Wardpark North Industrial Estate, and there are no visible traces on the ground. Combined, the Tollpark and Garnhall sections provide one of the longest continuous stretches of the Antonine Wall that can be seen on the ground today. Due to modern development in the area, the views to the south are now diminished, but Tollpark offers a wide view of the landscape to the north of the Wall.

HISTORY OF DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION:

The line of the Antonine Wall Ditch and Outer Mound remain well preserved at Tollpark, and was recognised by the seventeenth and eighteenth-century antiquaries. The temporary camp at Tollpark was discovered in aerial photographs in 1949, with later photographs confirming the site. In 1956, R.W. Feachem attempted, but failed, to locate the camp's ditches. Trial trenching in 1998

sought to uncover further information in advance of industrial development in the area, but concluded that previous construction had removed all traces of the Roman period archaeological deposits. Further excavations were carried out in 2005 and 2006, in which a 300m length of the camp's ditch was excavated.

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION:

Examination of aerial photographs and limited excavations have revealed that the Tollpark Roman camp was rectangular with rounded corners (in a typical playing-card shape), enclosed an area of about 2.5ha (6 acres), and was oriented on a slight north-east to south-west axis. No features have been uncovered from within the camp's interior, but a piece of worked wood was recovered from an "ankle-

breaker" slot within its ditch. The camp cannot be definitively dated, but its location so close to the Antonine Wall suggests that it may have been used as a construction camp during the building of the Wall. This was one of three temporary camps in very close proximity, with two others located just east of Tollpark at Garnhall.

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