

The Antonine Wall's eastern end was located at or near Bridgeness on the Firth of Forth. There are no visible remains of the Rampart, Ditch, or a Roman installation here, but a replica of the Bridgeness Distance Slab, originally found nearby, was unveiled in Kinningars Park in September 2012.

HISTORY OF DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION:

The eastern terminus (ending point) of the Antonine Wall has been an unresolved matter ever since the Venerable Bede described the Wall around AD 730. Although various locations have been suggested, including Abercorn, Carriden, and Kinneil, the 1868 discovery of the Bridgeness Distance Slab (RIB 2139) confirmed that the Wall must have reached at least as far as the eastern end of Bo'ness. Throughout the early 1900s, Sir George Macdonald attempted to trace the line of the Wall, but could only clearly identify its line as far east as the Dean Burn. Despite the lack of structural evidence for the line of the Wall, the distance slab provided strong proof that the Wall had extended further east.

The original Distance Slab, the largest and most elaborate from the Antonine Wall, is now located in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. A Victorian replica of the inscription

was made and put on display somewhere near the original find-spot at the bottom of Harbour Road, but by 2000 this was barely readable. In September 2012 a new, full-size, sandstone replica including the inscription and sculptured side panels was unveiled further up the road in Kinningars Park.

Excavations in the area have included three trenches near Bridgeness Tower in 1985, in advance of redevelopment, in the hopes of identifying further information about the find-spot of the Bridgeness Distance Slab. A dry-stone wall was located, possibly the one described by those who initially discovered the distance slab, but this was found to be of medieval date. Further excavations to the east of Bridgeness, hoping to identify the line of the Wall on its way to Carriden, provided negative results, with no sign of Rampart or Ditch.

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION:

The Bridgeness Distance Slab records building work by the Second Legion. Its precise find-spot remains uncertain, and recent excavations have revealed that the likely stone foundation on which it was discovered was of late medieval date. The line of the Antonine

Wall's Rampart and/or Ditch have not been located further east than the area of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church on Dean Road, yet the nearest fort lies further east at Carriden. The Antonine Wall's precise ending point, as a result, is still debatable. Many scholars still

prefer the view that the Wall terminated at Bridgeness, while others think that it may have extended all the way to Carriden. Whether the Bridgeness Distance Slab was originally located near the location of the current replica, or was

transported there to be reused in a medieval building project, it remains the largest and most elaborate sculptured stone from the Antonine frontier.

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