

Located about 230m to the west of the fortlet at Wilderness Plantation is the site of an “enclosure” on the Antonine Wall. The sites of two other enclosures are located within the fields to the north of Balmuilty Road, but while these are visible in aerial photographs, no traces are visible on the ground.

HISTORY OF DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION:

The Wilderness West enclosure was first identified from aerial photographs in 1977, along with two other nearby examples located at Buchley to the west and at Wilderness East about 230m east of the fortlet at Wilderness Plantation. The Wilderness West example is the only site of this type to have been excavated, by Prof Bill Hanson and Gordon Maxwell in 1980.

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION:

This enclosure is one of three such sites located in the section of Wall between the forts at Cadder and Balmuilty (see also Wilderness East and Buchley). Excavations revealed a sub-rectangular enclosure defined by a bank and ditch with an internal area of about 6m square. The enclosure was built up against the Antonine Wall Rampart on its south face, and was therefore later than the Wall itself. No traces of a floor surface or internal structures

were identified, but a few fragments of Antonine black burnished ware pottery were retrieved. The function of this enclosure, as well as those located nearby, remains uncertain. Based on the evidence from this excavation, the excavators have suggested that it was probably designed as a permanent feature, but is unlikely to have been either a watch-tower or signalling platform.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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Press. [Enclosures on the Antonine Wall are discussed on pages 80, 96-98.]

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