

On high ground to the west of Cleddans Farmhouse is the site of a Roman fortlet on the Antonine Wall. No remains are visible on the ground today.

HISTORY OF DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION:

The Cleddans fortlet was discovered in January 1980 during two days of trial trenching along the line of the Antonine Wall. Despite no previous history of Roman remains being reported, the site was selected because it is the approximate mid-point between Castlehill and Duntocher forts and the sole location that provides a clear view of both adjacent

forts. Only small portions of the fortlet were actually excavated (parts of the north-east and north-west corners, as well as a small section along the south rampart), but this was enough to determine that the structure was in fact a fortlet, and to also indicate its overall dimensions.

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION:

Excavations revealed that the Cleddans fortlet was an approximate square, measuring 18m east-to-west by about 17.6m north-to-south, with turf ramparts set atop a 3.6-4m wide stone base (east and west ramparts were 3.6m, while the south rampart measured about 4m wide). Trenching focused on the junctions between the fortlet's ramparts and the Antonine Wall Rampart indicated that the fortlet was constructed before the Wall, but the fortlet's northern corners did not survive well enough to determine if they had been rounded or squared in anticipation of the Antonine Wall Rampart. The excavation yielded no small finds and did not investigate the fortlet's interior or its ditch system. Despite the limitations of this small-scale excavation, it has been important for providing direct evidence for two adjacent fortlets (Cleddans and Duntocher) located at precisely one Roman mile apart. While the locations of only nine fortlets have been definitively identified

so far (but with possible sites at Carleith and Girnal Hill), the distance between the fortlets at Cleddans and Duntocher provides compelling support for the current hypothesis (originally argued by John Gillam in 1976) that the Antonine Wall was originally built with fortlets at approximately each Roman mile. If this hypothesis is correct, we would expect to find many more fortlets along the line of the Wall.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

CANMORE Record: <http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/44555/>

Gillam, J.P. (1976) Possible Changes in Plan in the Course of the Construction of the Antonine Wall. *Scottish Archaeological Forum*, 7: 51-56. [This paper argues for the Antonine Wall's original plan including fortlets at intervals of one Roman mile, which the evidence at Cleddans appears to support.]

Keppie, L.J.F. and Walker, J.J. (1981) Fortlets on the Antonine Wall at Seabegs Wood, Kinneil and Cleddans. *Britannia*, 12: 143-62. [Cleddans is specifically discussed on pages 154-56.]

Robertson, A.S., revised by Keppie, L. (2001) *The Antonine Wall: A Handbook to the Surviving Remains*. Glasgow. [Cleddans is discussed on page 114.]