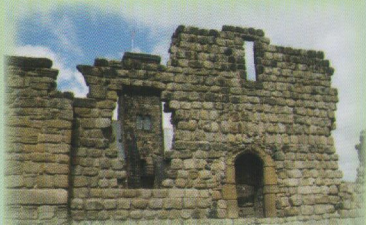


Verses from **The Roman Wall** by Thomas Doubleday, 1822

How many a cloud of ignorance hath cover'd,
Like creeping mists, these once illustrious stones!
How many a superstitious legend hover'd
Above those warrior's slowly-mouldering bones!
The peasant stops, and thinks he hears the tones
Of demons in the wind, that in its speed
Above the branch'd and ivy'd ruin moans;
The monk of all his exorcisms hath need,
Unless that gownsman lie — the Venerable Bede.

For, on an hour, haply, from Jarrow's Aisle,
The cowl'd Chronicler would venture o'er;
What time the summer sun smiled a last smile,
Or the moon-silver'd ripple chafed the shore;—
This were a scene for his historic lore;
Here the mild sage might muse — the saint might pray;
Here trace that empire, limitless of yore,
And mark how Power and Grandeur pass away,
And doubt if e'en his Church might not these, decay.



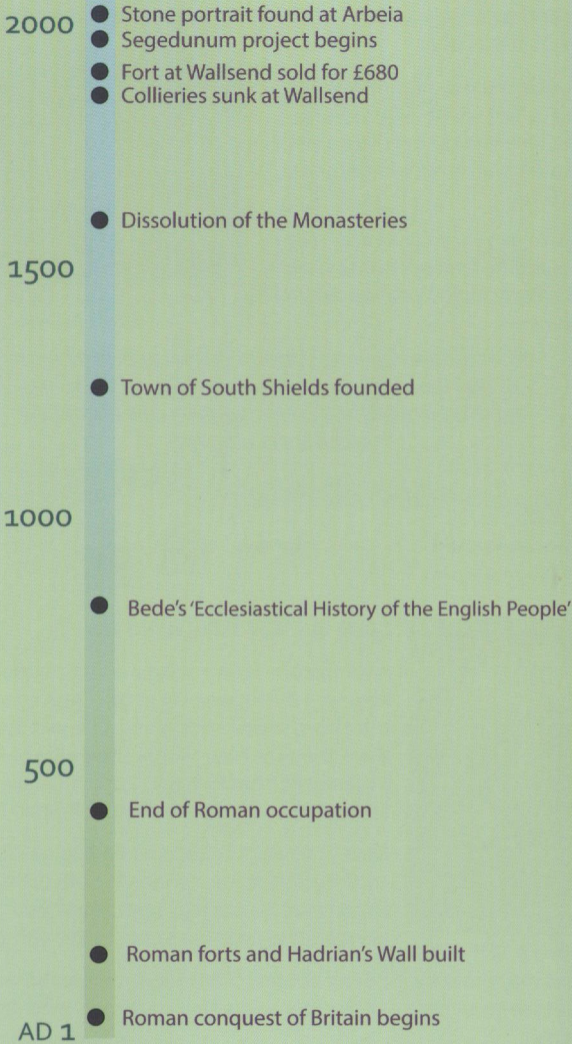
Ruins of St Paul's Church, Jarrow © Phil Brown.

This leaflet is one of a series covering the length of Hadrian's Wall. They were inspired by the **Tales of the Frontier** project undertaken by Durham University. We hope they encourage you to visit new locations and to explore the Wall and its influence on people and places through history.

To view and download other leaflets in the series and an accompanying booklet, or to find out more about **Tales of the Frontier** please visit www.talesofthefrontier.org

This work was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council with support from Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums and Durham University.

Timeline



Links:

Hadrian's Wall Country: www.visithadrianswall.co.uk
Hadrian's Wall Path: www.nationaltrail.co.uk/hadrians-wall-path
Hadrian's Wall on Tyneside: www.hadrianswalltyneside.org.uk
Great North Museum: greatnorthmuseum.org.uk
Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums: www.twmuseums.org
Segedunum Roman Fort: segedunumromanfort.org.uk
Arbeia Roman Fort & Museum: arbeiaromanfort.org.uk
Bede's World: www.bedesworld.co.uk
Wallquest: www.hadrianswallquest.co.uk/

Cover image: Northern Goddess head found at Arbeia Roman Fort. ©Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

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Tales of the Frontier

People, places, past and present
around the **TYNE ESTUARY**



No. 9 Eastern Ports: Reconstructing Rome

The eastern terminus of Hadrian's Wall at Segedunum (Wallsend), and the supply fort of Arbeia (South Shields) were critical to the military strategy and the logistics of the Roman presence on the Northern Frontier.

Later, the Roman stones were used to build the twin monasteries at Jarrow and Wearmouth, home to the Venerable Bede, whose writings document the Roman remains.

Today excavations are revealing tantalizing glimpses of the ancient past, and reconstructions of Roman buildings give fresh insight into this ancient landscape.

**Come and find the people of Roman Tyneside
amongst the terraces and shipyards**



SEGEDUNUM

In about AD 127 the Roman Wall was extended east, ending at the fort of Segedunum. A further section of Wall ran from the south-east corner of the fort to the river, extending to the low water level. A monumental statue of Hadrian may have stood at the very end of the Wall - an impressive site for approaching ships.

An extensive settlement developed but when the fort was abandoned in around AD 400 the area became open farmland. In the 18th century, collieries were sunk and a pit village grew up. The site of the fort, still open land, was up for sale in 1887 for £680. A local committee tried to raise the funds to buy it but a developer bought it and the whole fort disappeared under terraced housing.

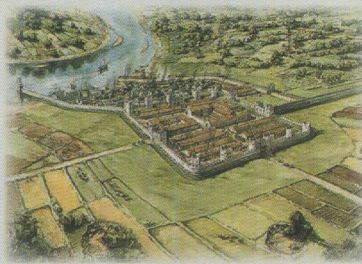
Excavations in 1929 recorded the outline of the fort, which was marked out in white paving stones. In the 1970s the houses covering the site were demolished. A section of Wall was excavated and a reconstruction of it was built in the early 1990s. The Segedunum project began in 1997 with a series of excavations and the reconstruction of the bath house.

Romanisation of Tyneside

If you travel on Tyneside's Metro system you may need to brush up on your Latin. All the signs at Wallsend Metro Station - from 'Mind the gap' to 'No smoking' have been translated into Latin, to celebrate the area's Roman history.

A map of Hadrian's Wall, based on the tube system, is also displayed.

The project, by artist Michael Pinsky, was part of the Newcastle-Gateshead bid for European Capital of Culture status in 2008.



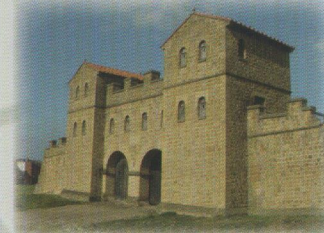
© English Heritage. Artistic impression of Segedunum in AD 200 by Peter Dunn.

ARBEIA

The fort stands on the Lawe Top, overlooking the River Tyne. It became the maritime supply fort for Hadrian's Wall, and contains 26 permanent stone-built granaries.

A possible meaning for the name 'Arbeia' is 'fort of the Arab troops'. At one time it was home to a unit of Mesopotamian boatmen from the Tigris River.

A Roman gatehouse, barracks and Commanding Officer's house have been reconstructed on their original foundations.



Reconstructed gateway at Arbeia. ©TOTF Archive.

When the Swan Hunter shipyard was being built a section of Wall foundation was uncovered. Some of the stones travelled around the world in a display case aboard the ocean liner Carpathia!



Regina's tombstone at Arbeia © TOTF Archive.

Barates may himself be buried at Coria (Corbridge), where there is a tombstone to someone of that name, also from Palmyra, who died aged 68 years.

Bede and the 'wretched Britons'

Born in AD 673, on land that would form part of the monastery estates, Bede was only 7 years old when he joined the monks at Wearmouth. His gift for collecting and connecting information gave him a unique view of the world. Amongst many achievements he wrote the 'History of the English Church and People', and was the first historian to use the term 'English'.

It is from Bede's writings that we have one of the first descriptions of Hadrian's Wall. He may have had personal experience of the monument and refers to the physical structure of Wall and Vallum. He describes how a Roman legion was dispatched to Britain and, with the help of the Britons, built a strong wall of stone in a straight line between the fortifications. He refers to the Wall as 'famous' (famosum) and notes that it is still highly visible (conspicuum), being 8 feet wide and 12 feet high. Bede then describes the inability of the Britons to defend this Wall against the attacks of the Irish and the Picts:

"The cowardly defenders were wretchedly dragged from the walls and dashed to the ground. In short they deserted their cities, fled from the walls, and were scattered. The enemy pursued and there followed a massacre more bloodthirsty than ever before".

Northern goddess?

In around AD 208, Roman workmen filled in an aqueduct channel to make way for the enlargement of the fort at Arbeia. Perhaps deliberately, they buried there a small, finely carved female head. She was brought to light again 1800 years later by archaeologists, and still has traces of paint on her face and lips. She wears a crown in the form of a town wall with battlements. This indicates that she is a protecting goddess, perhaps Brigantia, a local deity connected to the Brigantes tribe who inhabited northern Britain during Roman times. We know that Brigantia was worshipped at Arbeia because an altar dedicated to her (see inscription right) was found close to where the goddess lay buried. It was dedicated by 'Congenniccus' whose Celtic name suggests he may have been a Brigantian Briton.



South Shields (Arbeia)

Rebuilding Rome

In the years following the Roman withdrawal, the fort at Arbeia may have continued to have a political role, perhaps becoming a royal centre for Anglo Saxon rulers.

In the 7th century, King Egfrith gifted land to Bishop Benedict Biscop to found two monasteries at Wearmouth and at Jarrow. This land may have included one of his own residences within the fort at Arbeia: petrological surveys have recently revealed that both St Peter's (Wearmouth) and St Paul's (Jarrow) were constructed almost entirely from recycled Roman masonry, allowing the new Christian architects to 'rebuild Rome'.

Often, the Roman stones and inscriptions were placed in prominent positions, creating visible reminders and links both to the Imperial past and to 7th century Christian Rome.

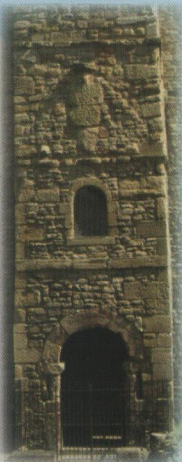
Tower at St Peter's Wearmouth built with Roman stone from Arbeia. © Phil Brown.



Northern Goddess head found at Arbeia Roman Fort. ©Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

DEAE
BRIGANTIAE
SACRVM
CONGENNCCVS
VSLM

The North Sea



Sunderland

