

Tour de force

A GOUROCK computer whizz has used his skills to immortalise Inverclyde's 2,000-year-old Roman heritage.

Louie Pastore, a computer animation lecturer at James Watt College, has created a virtual tour of a spot that marked the northern edge of the Roman Empire around the year 142 AD.

Louie, who has previously lent his talents to Channel 4's Time Team Big Roman Dig TV programme, says the people of Inverclyde should be campaigning to have the Roman remains recognised as a World Heritage Site.

Louie, 45, said: "The Antonine Wall was recently nominated to become a World Heritage Site. The Roman causeway, roads and fortlets on this side of the Clyde were an integral part of the Antonine system and the people of Inverclyde should seek to have them included as part of the World Heritage Site.

"The Antonine Wall was built by Emperor Antoninus Pius following the successful re-conquest of southern Scotland in 142 AD.

"From then till about 165 AD, the Antonine Wall was the north-west frontier of the Roman Empire, but few people realise the remains of a possible Roman patrol track running across the hills above Loch Thom marks the very edge of the empire."

Louie carried out meticulous research of the area around Knocknairshill Cemetery in the Strone, and found plenty of evidence of Roman occupation.

He said: "It took a lot of hard work going through the hills and matching up what I saw with the archeological evidence and going through the history books. It was a labour of love."

Louie's work for Channel 4 focused on the remains of Roman forts and roads.

He said: "I have been inundated with requests for more information on this period of local history. To coincide with the world heritage nomination, and to promote our section of the Antonine system, I've made a series of virtual tours which can be accessed on the YouTube website.

"They combine video and 3D animation, leading the viewer from the Antonine Wall at Bearsden, across the Clyde to the forts at Greenock, Bishopton and Largs.

"The tour includes a walk into the middle of the Clyde, across the Roman causeway that spanned the river, and a hike on

the Roman road that leads over Corlic Hill and under Loch Thom."

This story appeared in the Greenock Telegraph on Tue, 24 Oct, 2006