

## Antonine Wall is nominated as a world class site

THE Antonine Wall, once the Roman Empire's northernmost frontier in Britain, has been put forward for World Heritage status - an accolade which could place it among the UK's most treasured attractions, including Stonehenge and the Tower of London.

Spanning the narrowest strip of lowland Scotland, between the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Clyde, the 37-mile structure is one of the three nominations by the British government for the prestigious award.

The others are the 1,000ft-long Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, which carries the Llangollen Canal over the North Wales countryside and the twin monastery of Wearmouth and Jarrow, in north-east England, home of the Venerable Bede 1,300 years ago.

The UK currently has 27 World Heritage Sites - including the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh, New Lanark village, the Tower of London, Stonehenge, Hadrian's Wall and Blenheim Palace.

The Antonine Wall was built by the Roman army on the orders of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, following the successful reconquest of southern Scotland in AD142.

For a generation, from AD142 to about AD165, the Antonine Wall was the north-west frontier of the Roman Empire.

The fortification is also known as Grahame's Dyke, in reference to a legendary breach of the defences by Gramus in AD420, who is credited as the founder of the Graham clan.

"The Antonine Wall is an outstanding international archaeological treasure," said Patricia Ferguson MSP, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport.

"This touch of Roman civilisation in central Scotland is a reminder of the many European links our country has and this bid for World Heritage Site status is widely supported, not just in Scotland and the UK, but by other countries that share this heritage."

If the nomination is accepted by conservation body UNESCO, the Antonine Wall would form an extension to the Frontiers of the Roman Empire Transnational World Heritage Site presently consisting of Hadrian's Wall and the Upper Raetian German Limes.

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