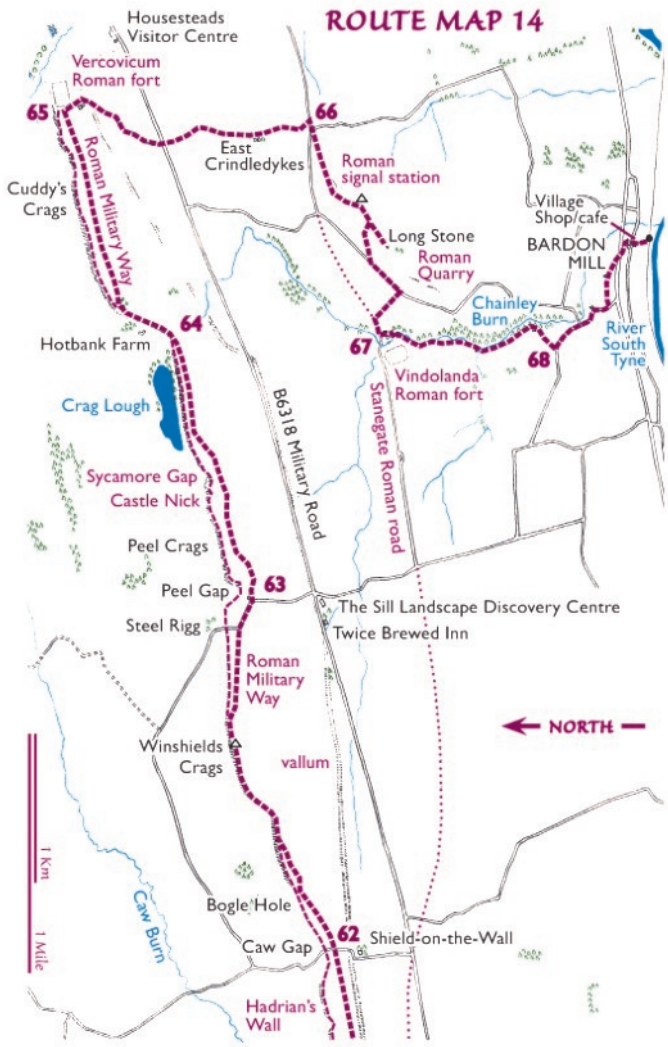


The fort has not received the archaeological attention of most other Wall sites, and remains in the hands of the farmer, so a happy mix of sheep, cattle, horses and hens may be encountered casually patrolling the interior paddock. The bounding stonework is fascinating - Magna apparently was in far more complete state before the farmer there sold off the stone! However, even here, within the last hundred years a tall bath-house stood on the south side of the fort, its stones sold for a modest bounty. The west gate is intriguing, composed of two cartways, the southern passage blocked with rubble infill in Roman times. In the centre of the enclosure, find a fenced sunken arch, which was the vault beneath the commanding officer's house, where the salaries of the garrison were once stored! At the south-east corner, spot a stone altar - a rare sight actually in a Wall site. It attracts a mixed bag of votive offerings and loose cash, usually in foreign currency - uninviting for light fingers! Exit the enclosure by the ladder-stile and keep east, the Military Way invisible in the improved pasture, though it remains tangible as the alignment of a footpath, with two further wall-stiles set down the wall from the National Trail. Pass Burnhead Cottage to skip over the wall-stile onto the road and cross Caw Burn.

61 Cawfields Quarry lies to the left, but the Military Way rewards attention hereon, so bear right and go through the wooden field-gate accompanying the fence bounding the quarry site, signed 'Caw Gap via Roman Military Way'. You are close to the considerable banks of the vallum at this point, dug to protect the



vulnerable south side of the Wall from hostile assault. Remember that the Roman presence, and manifestly the Wall itself, was an imposition within the Brigantes, Carveti, Votadini and Selgovae Celtic tribal territories and was resented every bit as much as they endured for benefits. Follow the fence down, round and back to the left to reach Hole Gap below Milecastle 42 - awkwardly set at a tilt. While of course you will be understandably tempted to follow the National Trail accompanying the consolidated Wall, the Military Way is no less worthy and can be followed confidently through the pasture as a green track, with just one damp spring crossing to reach a ladder-stile, soon reaching the road at facing stiles - down the slope from Caw Gap (where the National Trail crosses).

62 The Military Way is impossible to fathom on the steep slope ahead - there is even an old quarry conspiring to encourage you to revert to the National Trail at Caw Gap and climb the steps. But don't be so easily dissuaded. At the top of the first rise, bear off right and search and detect plausible lines for the Roman pony trod - it's real fun to judge. After a hollow with long grass, there is a coy wall-stile in the next intervening boundary, attesting to the old way's influence. The total lack of use ensures the grass remains rank and, when wet, disconcerting. So until the day comes when Hadrian's High Way is trimmed with the same intensity as the Wall-side path, you may reasonably choose to give it a miss - though I hope not, as you are a trailblazing pioneer after all!

The Military Way keeps effectively quite near the regular trail hereon, and joins it to go through a hand-gate on the rise out of the next depression, advancing to the triangulation pillar marking the top of Winshield Crags. It's the highest point on Hadrian's Wall - might Hadrian have been brought to this very spot by his senior scouts and tactical surveyors? Certainly, the all-round prospects are worthy of any emperor! The Military Way can be followed with a spot of detective work on the easy slope to the right of the ridge wall, and again a wall-stile betrays its line in the next intervening field boundary. The sward improves, heading on with hints of the Way approaching a ladder-stile/galvanised gate, coming down to a wall-stile onto the road. The alignment of the road down to Peel Bothy suggests it overlies on the Military Way too.



The Roman Military Way approaching Housesteads