

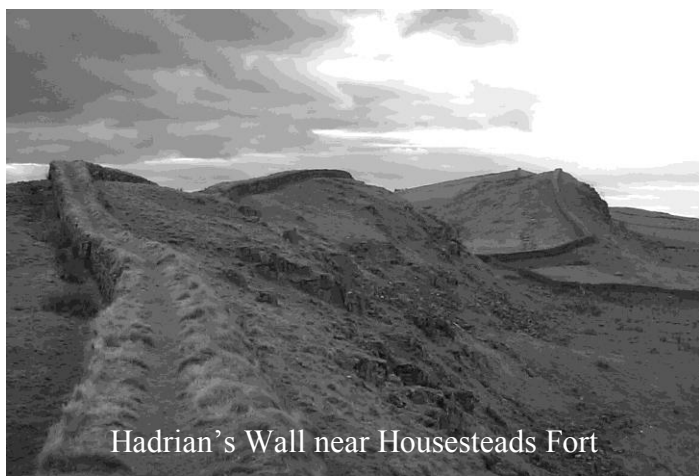


HADRIAN

117 – 138 AD

P. Aelius Hadrianus was born in Spain in 76 AD. His father died when Hadrian was 10 and the future Emperor Trajan was made one of his guardians. When Hadrian had established himself in a military career he married Trajan's niece Sabina. He was made Governor of Syria and eventually Trajan adopted him as his heir. He became Emperor on Trajan's death in 117 AD at a time when much of the Empire was in revolt and he decided to halt further expansion.

Hadrian spent much of his time travelling round the Roman Provinces, riding bare-headed (much to the annoyance of his generals who had to follow his example!), deciding where new frontiers should be fixed. Where natural barriers (like rivers) existed, these became the frontier. However in part of Germany and in Britain, no suitable natural barrier existed and he ordered suitable boundaries to be built. In 122 AD, Hadrian came to Britain. He probably brought with him a new Governor, Aulus Platorius Nepos, one of his friends. To this man he entrusted the task of supervising the building of the Wall he had decided should be the British Frontier. Although we know it as **Hadrian's Wall**, to the romans it was probably the **Wall of Aelius** (Hadrian's middle name)



Hadrian's Wall near Housesteads Fort

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Hadrian was a great admirer of Greece and this is probably why he adopted the Greek practice of wearing a beard, changing the fashion for future emperors for the next 200 years. He was also interested in architecture and paid for many fine buildings, including the Pantheon in Rome (below).

A wise ruler, whose reforms alleviated the worst excesses of slavery and from whose reign dates the famous 'Pax Romana', Hadrian brought peace and prosperity to the Empire.



Hadrian's adopted son and heir Aelius Caesar tragically died before him, so Hadrian adopted two more children as well as Antoninus Pius, his mature successor who raised these adopted youngsters, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, each of whom became Emperor in turn.



Hadrian



Sabina



Aelius Caesar



Antoninus Pius



Marcus Aurelius



Lucius Verus

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