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VINDOLANDA

Stanegate Fort and Settlement

Chesterholm, Northumberland

NGRef: NY770664

OSMap: Hadrian's Wall, OL43, LR87.

Type: Stanegate Fort, Fort, Minor Settlement, Bath House, Temple Or Shrine

Roads

Stanegate: E (0.75) to Barcombe

Stanegate: E (10) to Cilvrnvm (Chesters, Northumberland)

Stanegate: E (1) to Crindledykes

Stanegate: W (4.5) to Great Chesters (Great Chesters, Northumberland)

Stanegate: ENE (3) to Grindon Hill

Stanegate: W (3.5) to Haltwhistle Bvrn (Northumberland)

Stanegate: W (7) to Magnis Carvetiorvm (Carvoran, Northumberland)

Stanegate: ENE (7) to Newbroggh (Northumberland)

Stanegate: W (2) to Seatsides

Probable road: NE (4.25) to Vercovicvm (Housesteads, Northumberland)

Vindolanda - The White Enclosure



Painting of a Nymph
from the walls of the
Nymphaeum Vindolandenses

The history of Roman Chesterholm appears to have begun c.90AD when the first timber fort was built here during the administration of governor **Sallustius Lucullus**, who was tasked to organise a piecemeal withdrawal of units from Scotland for use in emperor Domitian's wars in Dacia. The original fort was considerably extended within a few years of being built and became part of the so-called **Stanegate Frontier** organised by governor **Neratius Marcellus** who is thought to have been resident at the fort himself (see *Vindolanda Tablets* below).

Chesterholm was abandoned shortly after the completion of **Housesteads** fort on **Hadrian's Wall** c.125AD, but was reoccupied and rebuilt in stone during the late-second century following the withdrawal from the **Antonine Wall** in Scotland.

The first reference to the fort at Chesterholm is contained within the *Notitia Dignitatum* of the late-4th/early-5th centuries, where the station *Uindolana* is listed between the entries for *Borcouicio* (Housesteads, Northumberland) and *Aesica* (Great Chesters, Northumberland). The only other classical mention of the fort occurs in the *Ravenna Cosmography* of the seventh century, wherein the entry *Vindolande* (R&C#132) is listed this time between the entries *Camboglanna* (Birdoswald, Cumbria) and *Longovicium* (Lanchester, Durham).

The Roman fort at Chesterholm is thus named *Vindolana* or *Vindolande* in the geographies, while an inscription from an altar recovered in the neighbourhood refers to the civilian inhabitants as the *Vindolandesses* (RIB 1700). The name now accepted is *Vindolanda* which has been variously interpreted as The White Cross or The White Enclosure. Compare modern Welsh: *gwyn-dafadfa* white sheep-fold. [Ecodunus](#)

The Epigraphy of *Vindolanda*

There are 47 Latin inscriptions for *Vindolanda* recorded in Volume I of the *R.I.B.*; comprising 24 altars and votive stones, 6 building inscriptions (1 undateable), 4 legionary and centurial stones, 6 tombstones, and 7 other undated stones and inscribed artifacts including four *vousoir* stones each inscribed with a different engineer's number: X, XI, XIII and XIII (RIB 1720a-d).

The Dateable Inscriptions

RIB # (clickable)	Date	Description
1702	122-126AD	B.I. of governor Aulus Platorius Nepos by <i>Leg II Augusta</i>
1703	163-6AD	B.I. of governor Sextus Calpurnius Agricola
1705	213AD	B.I. of emperor Caracalla by <i>Coh IV Gallorum</i>
1706	223AD	B.I. of governor Claudius Xenophon by <i>Coh IV Gallorum Severiana</i>
1710	276-82AD	B.I. by <i>Coh IV Gallorum Probiana</i>

Building Inscription of Governor Sextus Calpurnius Agricola

... SVB SEXTO CALPVRNIO AGRICOLA LEG AVG PR PR

[...] under Sextus Calpurnius Agricola,¹ pro-praetorian legate of the emperor.

(RIB 1703; dated: 163-166AD)

1. The governor [Sextus Calpurnius Agricola](#) administered Britain from 163/4AD to c.166.

The *Vindolanda* Writing Tablets



Fragment of Virgil's *Aeneid* (9:473) from the *Vindolanda* hoard.

Excavations carried out at Chesterholm in the late 1980s in a ditch used for dumping waste material from the fort, uncovered hundreds of fragments from writing tablets, mere slivers of wood in most cases. Waterlogged conditions at the site had kept the tablets in such a remarkable state of preservation that many of the fragments, though nearly two-thousand years old, were still legible. Most of the writings discovered at *Vindolanda* have proved difficult to read and interpret, but have so far yielded a very treasure-trove of epigraphic information; most importantly there are copies of military rosters (*vide infra*) and other official documents regarding the fort's garrison units, there are examples of correspondences between the wives of the fort's commanders, letters written to the soldiers at the fort and drafts of their replies home, even a schoolboy's notes quoting

from Virgil's *Aeneid*.

What else awaits discovery?

Writing tablet found at Vindolanda in 1988 and dated to 146AD

18th May	
First Cohort of Tungrians, Julius Verecundus commanding.	
Total strength (including 6 centurions)	752
Absent:	
Attached to the Governor's Guard at the office of Ferox	46 men
At Coria [Corbridge]	337 men (with 2 centurions)
In London	1 centurion
Various others	26 men (with 2 centurions)
At ... [illegible]	46 men
Total absent	456 men
Present strength remaining	296 (with 1 centurion)
Of these, sick	15
injured	6
eye ailments	10
Total	31
Balance present and fit for active duties	256 (including 1 centurion)

Hadrian's Residence at *Vindolanda*

During the 1992 digging season at Chesterholm, remains were uncovered of a fifty yard square timber building of some fifty rooms which has been dated to the 120s AD. It is evident from both the floor plan and the recovered fragments of wall paintings that the building was a somewhat palatial residence, of an opulence not often seen in the north of the province. It has been suggested that this veritable palace in the wild lands of North Britain, located at the mid-way point of the Wall and only one mile south of its intended line, was built to accommodate the emperor and his imperial party during the visit to Britain in 122AD. It was perhaps here that the fertile and active mind of the highly-intellectual emperor began first to visualise what was to become his lasting monument.

Building Inscription of Emperor Hadrian and Governor Platorius Nepos

IMP CAES TRAIANO HADRIANO AVG LEG II AVG A PLATORIO NEPOTE LEG PR PR

For Imperator Caesar Trajanus Hadrianus Augustus,¹ the **Second Augustan Legion** [made this under] Aulus Platorius Nepos² the propraetorian legate.

(RIB 1702; dated: 122-126AD)

1. The emperor Hadrian ruled from the death of his adoptive father Trajan in August 117AD until his own death of natural causes at Baiae in July 138.
2. **Aulus Platorius Nepos** was a personal friend of Hadrian who accompanied the emperor during his visit to Britain in 122AD and was the governor who oversaw the actual building of the Wall. He returned to Rome in 126.

The Auxiliary Forts



Ditches of late-Flavian Fort
beneath western industrial complex
under the trowel in 2004 monsoon

Prolonged and almost incessant excavation of the *Vindolanda* environs over the years has revealed a sequence of at least five turf-and-timber forts underlying two later forts built of stone. This military site had its *genesis* during the Domitianic withdrawal from Scotland c.85AD and continued to be occupied, almost without a break, until the end of Roman rule in Britain.

Occupation during the early-Trajanic period is attested by archaeology here and at other sites such as **Corbridge** in the east and **Carlisle** in the west, where the two military roads northwards into Scotland were situated. These sites and others stretching across northern England from the Tyne to the Solway were linked by a lateral military highway, later named the **Stanegate**, which formed one of the first true frontiers of Roman Britain and predated the Hadrianic barrier by a generation.

- **Timber Fort 1** - Erected c.85AD and demolished c.92, this fort enclosed an area of about 3¼ acres (c.1.5ha) and probably housed *Cohors I Tungrorum*. This phase was dated by pottery sherds which had been dumped into the ditch no later than 90AD.
- **Timber Fort 2** - Built hastily and with poor quality timber upon the site of Timber Fort 1 which was demolished in preparation, this new fort extended more to the west and covered an area of just over 5 acres (c.2ha); possibly garrisoned by *Cohors IX Batavorum*.
- **Timber Fort 3** - The third period of building occurred c.97AD and entailed a refurbishment of the existing fort and an extension of its defences westward, now covering an area of almost 7 acres (c.2.8ha); this fort was abandoned c.102-3AD.
- **Timber Fort 4** - Following a short period of abandonment another similarly-sized fort was built with a different (internal?) layout and was again garrisoned by *Coh I Tun* until c.120AD.
- **Timber Fort 5** - In 120AD the fort's defences were refurbished and its interior buildings rebuilt using superior quality timber, presumably in preparation for emperor Hadrian's visit; this last turf-and-timber fort remained occupied until c.150AD.
- **Stone Fort 1** - Originally built of turf and timber sometime around 155AD but quickly replaced in stone by about 160AD, this fort was sited upon the eastern remains of the earlier timber forts but on a different alignment somewhat to the north-west; its internal buildings were also made of stone. This fort continued to be occupied, supporting a thriving *vicus* community outside its south-west gateway, until it was demolished in 211AD.
- **Stone Fort 2** - By 212AD work had started on another fort, built of stone from the outset, upon the levelled platform of the preceding Stone Fort 1; work on these substantial fortifications was to take several years to complete. This final fort was to remain occupied until c.400AD.

In its final construction phase during the Severan period the *Vindolanda* fort measured 508 feet N-S by 306 feet E-W (c.155 x 93 m), covering an area of about 3½ acres (c.1.4 ha). It is the consolidated remains of this fort that visitors to the site witness today.

Legionary and Centurial Stones

LEG II VEXIL

A detachment of the Second Legion.

(RIB 1707)

CELER < P P

The century of Celerius the *Primipilus*.¹

(RIB 1709)

< VLERIANI

The century of Valerianus.

(RIB 1711)

1. The *primus pilus* (literally first spear) was the most experienced centurion in a legion, usually placed in command of the most experienced troops in the First Cohort.

Building inscriptions and legionary stones from all three main British legions have been unearthed at Chesterholm; there is an undated building plaque of *Legio XX Valeria Victrix* (RIB 1708), probably the builders of the original fort on the site during the Agricolan campaigns, and an altarstone dedicated to the goddess *Fortuna* by *Legio VI Victrix* (RIB 1684), but the legion best represented is *Legio II Augusta* from *Isca Silurum* (Caerleon in Gwent, South Wales), which has an altar to *Silvanus* by a *Bene ciarius Consularis* (RIB 1696), a B.I. of governor Aulus Platorius Nepos (RIB 1702; dated: 122-126AD), which must record refurbishment prior to the arrival of the emperor Hadrian in 122AD, and an undated building plaque of a *vexillatio* or legionary detachment (RIB 1707).

Legio Vicesimae Valeria Victrix

The Twentieth Valiant and victorious Legion

LEG XX V V

The Twentieth Legion Valiant and Victorious [made this].

(RIB 1708)

Legio Sextae Victrix - The Sixth Victorious Legion

FORTVNAE PR G IVL RAETICVS > LEG VI VICT

To *Fortuna* on behalf of Gaius Julius the Raetian, centurion in the Sixth Victorious Legion.

(RIB 1684; altarstone)

Legio Secundae Augusta - The Second Augustan Legion

... SILVAN M AVRELIVS MODESTVS B F COS PROVINCIAE SVPERIORIS LEG II AVG

[For the god] *Silvanus*, Marcus Aurelius Modestus, *Bene ciarius Consularis*¹ of the province of [Britannia] Superior and the **Second Augustan Legion**

(RIB 1696; altarstone)

1. A *bene ciarius* was a soldier excused normal duties in order to perform a specific task for a superior officer, from whom he obtained his authority, in this particular case the *consular* governor of the province. In many cases *bene ciarii* were recruited from among the family, friends and clients of the officer in question, thus, for example, a legionary legate might employ his brother-in-law among his personal staff with the honorary rank of *bene ciarius legati*.

The Chesterholm Garrison

Cohors Primae Tungrorum - The First Cohort of Tungri



Bronze Military Standard
recovered from *Vindolanda*

The original garrison of *Vindolanda* is not known, and the earliest identified unit at the site has only recently been revealed on one of the *Vindolanda* writing tablets. The garrison of the mid-second century was *Cohors I Tungrorum*, an infantry unit from the *Tungri* tribe who inhabited the north-western fringes of the *Arduenna Silva* in *Gallia Belgica* (the Ardennes Forest on the border between Belgium and Germany). This unit had been active in the campaigns of *Agricola* in Central Scotland, and saw action in the final battle at *Mons Graupius* which resulted in the near-total destruction of the Caledonian tribes. During this time the **First Cohort of Tungrians** was known to be a *cohors quingenaria peditata*, a five-hundred strong infantry unit, but by the mid-second century the complement had been increased by half again to a total strength of over 750 men (*vide supra*).

Cohors Secundae Nerviorum - The Second Cohort of Nervii

DEO COCIDIO DECIMVS CAERELLIVS VICTOR PR COH II NER VSLM

To the god *Cocidius*, Decimus Caerellius Victor, prefect of the **Second Cohort of Nervians**, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

(RIB 1683; altarstone)

The late-second century garrison was possibly *Cohors II Nerviorum*, another quingenary cohort, whose soldiers were raised from among the *Nervii* tribe of Belgic Gaul. These warlike neighbours of the *Tungri* had in the past rebelled against Julius Caesar and were severely put-down in response, though they were later to provide the Roman *Auxilia* with foot soldiers of excellent repute. There are two stones attesting the presence of *Cohors II Nerviorum*, an altar to the god *Cocidius* (RIB 1683) and an altar to Mars and Victory (RIB 1691). The latter stone is dedicated by *Coh III Nerviorum*, however, but the numeral III is

assumed to be an error.

MARTI VICTORI COH III NERVIVM CVI PRAEEST T CANINIVS MIIVS

To Victorious Mars, the **Second Cohort of Nervians** under the command of Titus Caninius [...] a vow fulfilled.

(RIB 1691)

Cohors Quartae Gallorum - The Fourth Cohort of Gauls

Altar Dedicated to the Guardian Spirit of the Regimental Headquarters

GENIO PRAETORI SACRVM PITVANIVS SECVNDVS PRAEFECTVS COH IIII GALL

To the sacred *Genius* of the *Praetorium*, Pituanus Secundus, prefect of the **Fourth Cohort of Gauls**.

(RIB 1685; altarstone)

The third century garrison was *Cohors IV Gallorum*, a mixed unit of infantry and cavalry with a nominal strength of five hundred men, the fourth to be recruited from among the tribesmen of central Gaul, now modern France. The unit is mentioned on seven inscribed stones from *Vindolanda* three of them dateable to the third century; an altar to the *Genius* of the *Praetorium* (1685), three altars to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* (1686 - 1688), a B.I. of the emperor Caracalla (1705; dated: 213AD), a B.I. of governor Claudius Xenophon (1706; dated: 223AD) and another B.I. of emperor Probus (1710; dated: 276-282AD). The regiment is also attested at *Vindolana* at the end of the fourth century in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

Building Inscription of *Cohors Quartae Gallorum*

IMP CAES M AVRELIO ANTONINO PIO FELICI AVG PARTHI MAXI BRITANI MAXI PONTI MAXI TRIB POTEST XVI IMP II COS IIII
PATRI PATRIAE PROCOS PRO PIETATE AC DEVOTIONE COMMVNI ... COH IIII GALLORVM CVI PRAEEST

For Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius Felix Augustus,¹ greatest in Parthia, greatest in Britain, High Priest, holding tribunician power for the sixteenth time, hailed *Imperator* in the field twice, consul four times, Father of his Country,² holder of proconsular power, out of the loyalty and devotion of the inhabitants [...] commander of the Fourth Cohort of Gauls.

(RIB 1705; dated: 213AD)

1. The emperor *Caracalla* was the elder son of the emperor Septimius Severus, who ruled the empire after his father's death at *Eburacum* in February 211AD, at first jointly with his younger brother Geta, then alone after he had him killed in December 211. He was himself murdered at Rome in April 217.
2. Caracalla held the powers of a tribune for the sixteenth time and was consul for the fourth time in 213AD. The further victory title *Germanicus Maximus* was added in September that same year.

Building Inscription of *Cohors Quartae Gallorum Severiana Alexandriana*

... COH IIII GALLOR SEVERIANAE ALEXANDRIANAE DEVOTAE NVMINI EIVS PORTAM CVM TVRRIBVS A FVNDAMENTIS
RESTITVERVNT SVB CL XENOPHONTE LEG AVG N PR PR BR INF CVRANTE ...

[...] the **Fourth Cohort of Gauls**, Severus Alexander's own,¹ devoted to his divinity, restored this gateway together with its towers from ground-level, under Claudius Xenophon,² pro-praetorian legate of our emperor in *Britannia Inferior*, under the direction of [...]

(RIB 1706; dated: 223AD)

1. The emperor Severus Alexander became emperor in March 222 after the death of his adoptive father Elagabalus and ruled until his murder in March 235 at *Vicus Britannicus* (Bretzenheim, Germany).
2. **Claudius Xenophon** was governor of Britain 222/223AD.

Building Inscription of *Cohors Quartae Gallorum Probianae Equitata*

... COH IIII GALL PROBIANA EQ Q C A MVC ...

[...] the **Fourth Cohort of Gauls, Probus Own**, part-mounted, the undertaking of which has been managed by Muc[ianus? ...]

(RIB 1710; dated: 276-282AD)

Altar to Jupiter from the *Vindolanda Praetorium*

I • O • M	Jovi Optimo Maximo
CETERISQVE	ceterisque
DIIS IMMORT	diis immortalibus
ET GEN PRAETOR	et genio praetorii
Q PETRONIVS	Quintus Petronius
Q F FAB VRBICVS	Quinti lius Fabia Urbicus
PRAEF COH IIII	Praefectus Cohortis Quartae
GALLORVM	Gallorum
...	...
EX ITALIA	ex Italia
DOMO BRIXIA	domo Brixia
VOTVM SOLVIT	votum solvit
PRO SE	pro se
ET SVIS	et suis

To Jupiter Best and Greatest, most immortal among gods
and to the *Genius* of the *Praetorium*,
Quintus Petronius Urbicus,
son of Quintus, of the Fabian voting tribe,
Prefect of the **Fourth Cohort of Gauls**
[...] a native of Brixia from Italy,
ful lled his vow for himself and his (family).

(RIB 1686; altarstone)

More Altarstones Dedicated to *Iupitter Optimus Maximus*

I O M ET GENIO DIISQ CVS DIB COH IIII GALL ET VINDO
CAECIL...E...I... OP CELER...

For *Iupitter Optimus Maximus* and the *Genius*, the guardian spirit of the gods, the **Fourth Cohort of Gauls** and Vindex Caecil[ianus ...] this work quickly [...]

(RIB 1687; altarstone)

I O M COH IIII GALL CVI PRAEST II ...GIVS PVDENS PRAEFECT
ARAM POSVIT V S M L

For Jupiter Best and Greatest, the **Fourth Cohort of Gauls** under the command of the prefect Ju[lius Ser]gius Pudens,¹ made this altarstone willingly and deservedly in ful lment of a vow.

(RIB 1688; altarstone)

1. This prefect's first two names (*praenomen* & *gens*) have been arbitrarily restored.

The *Notitia Dignitatum* Entry For *Vindolanda*

Tribunus cohortis quartae Gallorum, Uindolana

The tribune of the **Fourth Cohort of Gauls** at *Vindolana*

(*Notitia Dignitatum* xl.41; 4th/5th C.)

The Gods of Roman Chesterholm



Romano-British Temple
outside the visitor centre
at the entrance to the site



A Reconstruction of a Nymphaeum
beside the Bradley Burn east of the fort
in the grounds of Chesterholm House

During excavations carried out at the Chesterholm/Vindolanda fort there have been twenty-four altars or votive objects uncovered, dedicated to a large variety of gods, both classical (Graeco-Roman) and pagan (Germanic). There are five stones dedicated to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* including three of *Cohors IV Gallorum* (RIB 1686-1688 *supra*) and two others bearing little detail (RIB 1689 & 1690; not shown), another five to the Germanic warrior-god *Vheterus* (RIB 1697-1699 & 1722e/f), two stones to the Mother Goddesses (RIB 1692, 1722a), one of which may be tentatively dated to the late-third/early-fourth centuries, and single altarstones to *Cocidius* (RIB 1683), to *Fortuna* (RIB 1684), to *Viturus* (RIB 1722g), to *Neptune* (RIB 1694), to the *Genius* of the *Praetorium* (RIB 1685), to the goddess *Sattade* by the council of the *Textoverdi*, the local British tribe (RIB 1695), to *Silvanus* by a *Bene ciarius Consularis* of *Leg II Augusta* (RIB 1696), to the Divine House and the god *Vulcan* (RIB 1700) and another to *Mogons* and the Local Guardian Spirit (RIB 1722d).

Altarstones to the Mother Goddesses

MATRIBVS ET NVMINI D N MAXIMINI...

For the **Mother [Goddesses]** and the Divine Spirits of our lords
Maximinus¹ [...]

(RIB 1692; altarstone)

DEABVS SVIS MATRIBVS ... VSLM

For our Mother Goddesses [...] willingly and deservedly fulfilling
a vow.

(RIB 1722a; altarstone; *Britannia* i (1970), p.309, no.16)

1. This stone may be dedicated to Maximinus Thrax (*Imp.* 235-238AD; with his like-named son), Maximian (*Imp.* 286-308AD; with Diocletian 284-305), or possibly (but not likely) Maximinus Daia (*Imp.* 310-313AD).

Altar to the Sea-God Neptune

DEO NEPTVNO ARAM PO SVIT... NO

To the god *Neptunus*, this altar was placed [...] of us.

(RIB 1694; altarstone)

Altarstones to the Germanic Warrior-God *Vheterus*

DEO VETERI

To the god *Veterus*.
(RIB 1697; altarstone)

VETERIBVS POSSENACVLVS

For the *Veteran [Gods]*, placed by Senaculus.
(RIB 1699; altarstone)

VETERI ...TIN... ...S

to *Veterus* [...] fulfilled.
(RIB 1698; altarstone)

DIBVS VETERIBVS POS LONGINVS

For the *Veteran Gods*, placed by Longinus.

(RIB 1722e; altarstone; *Britannia* iv (1973), p.329, no.11)

VETERIBVS POSVIT SENILIS

For the *Veterans*, placed by Senilis.

(RIB 1722f; altarstone; *Britannia* iv (1973), p.329, no.12)

Altar to the God *Mogons* and the *Genio Loci*

DEO MOGVNTI ET GENIO LOCI LVPVL V S M

For the god *Mogons* and the Guardian Spirit of This Place, Lupulus deservedly fulfilled his vow.

Altarstone of the God *Viturus*

ARA VITVRVM

The temple of *Viturus*.

(RIB 1722g; altarstone; *Britannia* x (1979), p.346, no.8)

In addition to altarstones there are a number of other votive objects; a dedicatory slab bearing an inscription to *Mars* and *Victory* (RIB 1691 *supra*), a relief of *Mercury* bearing the text DEO MERCVRIO (RIB 1693; relief), a silver *lunula* of the god *Maponus* inscribed DEO MAPONO (RIB 1722b/2431.2; silver *lunula*; *Britannia* ii (1971), p.291, no.12), and another altar inscribed simply DEAE For the Goddesses. (RIB 1701; altarstone).

Vindolanda Textoverdorum?



The Buildings of the *Vicus*
looking westwards across the
central buildings of the fort

The civilian settlement at Chesterholm has been positively identified as a *vicus* - the lowest form of self-governing settlement recognised by Roman law - on an altar to the god *Vulcan* found 120 yards to the west of the fort (RIB 1700, *infra*). The settlement grew mainly along the north bank of the Doe Sike to either side of the roads issuing from the *porta principia sinistra* (west gate) of the fort. The shops and dwellings have narrow frontages ranged along the street and stretch back at right-angles from it for quite some distance; it is thought that the buildings within a Roman *vicus* were taxed according to the length of street they occupied, which is why they were built to such a long and narrow ground-plan.

Altar to the god *Vulcan*

PRO • DOMV	Pro domu
DIVINA ET • NV	divina et nu-
MINIBVS • AVG	-minibus Aug-
VSTORVM • VOL	-ustorum Volc-
ANO SACRVM	-ano sacrum
VICANI VINDOL	vicani Vindol-
ANDESSES • CV	-andesses curam
AGENTE ... OI ...	agente ... io
V S L M	Votum Solvit Libens Merito

For the Divine House and the Spirits of the Emperors.

This sacred offering to *Vulcan*

[was set up] by the *vicani*¹ of *Vindolanda*²

under the direction of the acting-[...]

willingly and deservedly fulfilling their vow.

(RIB 1700; altarstone)

1. The Latin word *vicani* could be literally translated as 'those of the street-settlement', a modern English equivalent would be 'villagers'.

2. This altarstone is one of only four pieces of epigraphic evidence recording the actual names of places on the Wall, the others being pieces of Roman cookware such as the *Rudge Cup*, found in Wiltshire in 1725.

Altar to the goddess Satiada

DEAE Deae
SAIADAE Satiadae
CVRIA TEX Curia Tex-
TOVERDORVM -toverdorum
V • S • L • M Votum Solvit Libens Merito

To the goddess Satiada,¹
the **Council of the *Textoverdi***²
willingly and deservedly fulfilled their vow.

(RIB 1695; altarstone)

1. The goddess *Satiada* (or *Saitada*, or *Sattada*, or even *Saiiada*) was probably a local deity, for whom there is no evidence other than this one small, unadorned altar stone; either in Britain or elsewhere.
2. The *Textoverdi* are likewise unsubstantiated by further evidence.

Another altar to a local goddess found at nearby Beltingham Chapel is presumed to have come from the Chesterholm site, and suggests that the *Vindolanda* settlement may have served as the *civitas* capital of the *Textoverdi*, seemingly a minor British tribe who were probably subject in past times to the powerful *Brigantes* of Northern Britain.

Some Tombstones from *Vindolanda*

Six Roman tombstones have been unearthed from the environs of the Chesterholm fort, many of them damaged. There is also a heavily damaged stone which is thought to bear a funerary inscription (RIB 1718; not shown).

D M CORN VICTOR S C MIL ANN XXVI CIV PANN FIL SATVRNINI P P VIX AN LV D XI CONIVX PROCVRAVI

To the shades of the departed Cornelius Victor, *Singularis Consularis* with twenty-six years service, a citizen of the Pannonians, son of Saturninus the *Primus Pilus*, he lived fifty-ve years and eleven days. His wife saw to this [memorial].

(RIB 1713; tombstone)

D M INGENVI VIXIT ANNIS XXIII MEMSES IIII ET DIES VII

To the shades of the departed Ingenuus, who lived for twenty-four years, four months and seven days.

(RIB 1714; tombstone)

D M AVRELIS... IS VIXIT ANNOS XX FILIA AVR LVC...

To the shades of the departed Aurelia [...] twenty years old, the daughter of Aurelius Luc[...]

(RIB 1715; tombstone)

D M FLA EMERITA FL IN... N...

To the shades of the departed Flavia Emerita, Flavius In[...].

(RIB 1716; tombstone)

Roman Milestone from Chesterholm/*Vindolanda*

Milestone Found 115m East of Chesterholm/*Vindolanda*

¹ BON REI PVBLICAE NOTO

Born for the benefit of the republic.

(RIB 2308)

1. There is also an underlying primary inscription, the only surviving text of which reads: ...DRI.

The Military Bath-House



The Praetentura and NW Angle
viewed from the western bath-house

The military bath-house outside the north-western corner-angle of the 3rd/4th century stone fort (NY 769663) was completely excavated in 1970. Four building phases were identified but none could be positively dated; a changing-room and latrine were added in the 2nd phase and a verandah and service rooms were included in the 3rd. Pottery indicates that the bath-house was no longer functioning by c.367AD, and by the Theodosian period part of the site had been re-used for some sort of industrial purpose. A child's sandal recovered from the site indicated that the baths were opened to the public sometime during the early-4th century.

Chesterholm / Vindolanda Today



Reconstructions of Hadrian's Wall
on the slopes south-west of the fort



The Southern Bath-House

consolidated excavations in 2004


Chesterholm Roman Fort and Vicus



Almost everything one could expect from a Roman site is preserved at Chesterholm. Approached along the line of the Stanegate from the east, beyond the Museum and Gift Shoppe there lie the square foundations of a Romano-British temple with the drainage-channels and water tanks of an industrial area to the south, currently (2004) under excavation by the *Vindolanda* Trust, while, beyond the buildings of the civil settlement and two independent bath-houses lies the superbly-preserved remains of the fort itself. The consolidated remains, together with reconstructions of a section of a turret on Hadrian's Wall, a Turf Wall timber mile castle, a picturesquely sited *nymphaeum* and several Roman tombstones, justifiably make this site amongst the most visited in Britain.

Man, you gotta go here!

Vindolanda Bibliography

- See: *Hadrian's Wall Map and Guide* by the Ordnance Survey (Southampton, 1989);
Hadrian's Wall in the Days of the Romans by Ronald Embleton and Frank Graham (Newcastle, 1984) pp.210-222;
Hadrian's Wall History Trails Guidebook IV by Les Turnbull (Newcastle, 1974), pp.29-56;
Britannia ii (1971) pp.249, 291 & 301;
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The Roman Inscriptions of Britain by R.G. Collingwood and R.P. Wright (Oxford 1965).
 All English translations, including any inherent mistakes, are my own. 

Link to maps of the area from: [StreetMap](#) [Old-Maps](#) [MultiMap](#)



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