Portgate to Wall

The Portgate was junction of Hadrian’s Wall and Dere Street, built 30 odd years before for the advance into Scotland. It is located south west of the roundabout, north of the Errington Arms. It was excavated in 1966 and built using large blocks of stone. It projected 10 to 12 feet north of the wall. With the building of the roundabout the road was moved from the original line of Dere Street. It was either a square or rectangular structure. It is surprising that Halton Chesters Fort was not moved to this location, as it was a major junction.

As with previous section of the wall, it was flattened in 1750s to construct the Military Way and what is left of it is under the road. To compensate the Vallum is visible for in the fields to the south of the wall and the Hadrian’s Wall path follows it for about 2 miles west from the Errington Arms.

The Vallum appears to be a means of defending the wall from the rear. The decision to build it was taken when the forts were moved to the wall or shortly after (about 125AD). Its construction meant that the gates in many of the milecastle were of little use, only at the forts generally were
roads over the ditch, which guarded by a fortified gate. When the frontier was moved back to Hadrian’s Wall about 160AD from the Antonine Wall, there appears to have fallen into disuse and some of it in filled. Possibly the threat from the rear was no longer there.

The Vallum varies from a few yards behind the wall to over a quarter mile.

**Milecastles**

There are 3 milecastles visibly on this part of the wall.

They are difficult to find. The best way is to take a grid reference from the map and track it with a GPS devise. All are long axis milecastle 50ft wide built by the 6th Legion. All have be excavated at least 3 times.

This reconstruction gives an idea of what they looked like.
Roman Quarry

Just south west of Milecastle 25 is the Roman Quarry at Written Crag.

I have walking by the crag a dozen times, without realising that it was a large sandstone quarry. Caved into the rock was the inscription “the rock of Flavius Carantinus”. This has been cut out and now is at Chester Museum.

Returning to the wall the path is north of the wall and there is a good example of the ditch in front of the wall.
About a mile after Milecastle 25 is Planetrees now south of the road. This is where the decision to reduce the wall from about 10 feet to 7 feet was implemented. Of course the foundations had been already been completed and the board wall foundations continue for over 20 miles to near the river Irthing.