

The image shows the top portion of a press release. It features a blue header with the text 'Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd' in white. Below the header is a photograph of Hadrian's Wall, a stone wall built by the Romans, stretching across a green landscape under a clear sky. The text 'PRESS RELEASE' is written in blue below the photograph.

Hadrian's Wall
Heritage Ltd

PRESS RELEASE

Secrets of important Roman site set to be unveiled

Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd today announced the purchase of one of the most significant but least researched sites along the Roman frontier in the north of England.

The acquisition of 150 acres of land at Camp Farm in Maryport, Cumbria is the first step in a major development to excavate the Roman fort and adjacent vicus – the civilian settlement that spread outside of the fort walls – and create a major new museum.

Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd is the company that was set up in 2006 to help look after, protect and conserve the World Heritage Site and to increase its contribution to the local and regional economy through sustainable tourism.

The Chief Executive of Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd, Linda Tuttiett, said: "This important site has the potential to be developed as a world class museum throwing more light on the story of Roman life in Britain and the role of Maryport in the frontier system. The purchase of the site is the first step in a £11.5 million scheme that will bring an additional 50,000 visitors to Maryport every year,

spending between £3 and £4 million and supporting up to 120 new jobs in the area.”

The Roman fort at Maryport, the focus of the Roman’s coastal defences in Cumbria, was surrounded by walls 2 metres wide and more than half a kilometre long, enclosing an area of 2.6 hectares.

The Maryport *vicus* is the biggest and also one of the most complete and best-preserved civil settlements surveyed along the northern Roman frontier. A geophysical survey has confirmed the outline of more than 170 buildings, suggesting that over 500 *vicani* lived within the settlement.

Eric Robson, who is a board member of Hadrian’s Wall Heritage Ltd and lives in West Cumbria, said: “This is an exciting site which will keep archaeologists busy for many years to come and provide visitors with a fascinating insight both into the way the Roman’s operated in Britain and to the social and cultural life outside the forts.

“It will also show people that there was more to Rome’s northern frontier than just the Wall. As we can see from this site, the defences that stretched down the coast from the end of the Wall at Bowness-on-Solway to Ravenglass were a vitally important part of the Roman military infrastructure in the north of England.”

Hadrian’s Wall Heritage Ltd hopes that the site will be open to visitors by 2012. The plans for the new museum include galleries examining the purpose of the northern frontier, Maryport’s role in the western sea defences, life at the fort and vicus, and themes such as religion, ethnic diversity, migration and career paths. There will also be viewing galleries to enable people to view the parts of the dig that are underway and a Roman farm attraction.

The new museum will be home to the collection of Roman military altar stones and Romano-British religious sculpture that can currently be seen at Senhouse Roman Museum, which is next to Camp Farm.

David Breeze from Historic Scotland, who is an internationally renowned expert on Rome's northern frontier, says: "The fort and settlement at Maryport provided most of the contents of Senhouse Roman Museum, one of the most important collections of Roman altars and sculptures from Britain, and indeed the Roman Empire.

"The excavation of the site will enable this collection to be better understood. The purchase of the site also offers a wonderful opportunity to present the fort, the settlement and the collection to the public."

Linda Tuttiett said: "We are grateful to the trustees and staff of the Senhouse Museum and collection who have inspired us to take this project forward to create a new world-class home for the collection. I would also like to thank Harold and Dorothy Messenger, who have owned Camp Farm for the last 60 years. Their interest in seeing this project come to fruition has been very encouraging."

Mrs & Mrs Messenger added: "We are very pleased that this project will now bring jobs and money to the people of Maryport where we have lived for so long."

Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd also expressed its thanks to both West Lakes Renaissance and the West Cumbria Development Fund who made the investment in Camp Farm possible.

For more information on the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site visit www.hadrians-wall.org.

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Notes to Editors

1. Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd is a not for profit company with responsibility for the coordination, protection, development and marketing of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and the areas it passes through.
2. The organisation was set up in May 2006 in partnership with One NorthEast (One), the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), Natural England and English Heritage.
3. Hadrian's Wall Heritage works in partnership with a number of organisations. It brings together business and conservation, visitors and local communities in a uniquely focused way, with the overall aim of:
 - Creating jobs and enhancing the local economy
 - Attracting more visitors who will stay longer and spend more in the area
 - Creating a vibrant and sustainable visitor economy
 - Finding better ways to interpret and protect an internationally recognised monument
 - Making Hadrian's Wall a truly world-class destination