

## ROMAN FRONTIERS

Running in a North East line from Stirling to Perth is the **Gask Frontier**. This 23-mile (37Km.) frontier is still visible in the landscape as a very straight communication line. About 2000 years ago this was the northern edge of the Roman frontier and was populated with forts and signal towers evenly spaced along the line, some of which have been marked out and can be visited today. It is believed that this frontier dates from the late first century AD and may have been occupied for ten years, as opposed to the two years suggested by the Roman writer Tacitus. One key to the prolonged occupation is the presence of a fortlet and a tower located very close to each other; one may have replaced the other but in what order we do not know.

Each tower is believed to have been three stories high affording excellent views north and south.

At the head of the Glens the Romans built 'blocking forts', e.g. **Fendoch**, as part of what is believed to be part of a strategy of containment, keeping the Caledonii (natives) pinned down in the Highlands. Fendoch is at the head of the Sma' Glen.

The Roman fort at **Ardoch** (near Braco) is believed to have been a support centre for the Gask Frontier. This is a most inspiring fort with remarkable defences comprising huge earthworks, ditches and about seven ramparts. The size of this fort may have been influenced by the need to send a psychological message of Rome's might and power to the natives who still lived in timber built round houses. For some of the time it is known that Ardoch housed troops recruited from Spain.

The Roman military had good, three dimensional communication systems predicated on fire (night) and smoke (day).

Archaeological investigation together with pollen analysis suggests that the natives may have had a cordial, trade-based relationship with the Roman military. The Roman military presence would have generated a huge demand for food and there is evidence that wheat and barley was grown, with the former usually identified with the Romans.

Contact [Catswhiskerstours](#) for a tour of the Gask Frontier.

