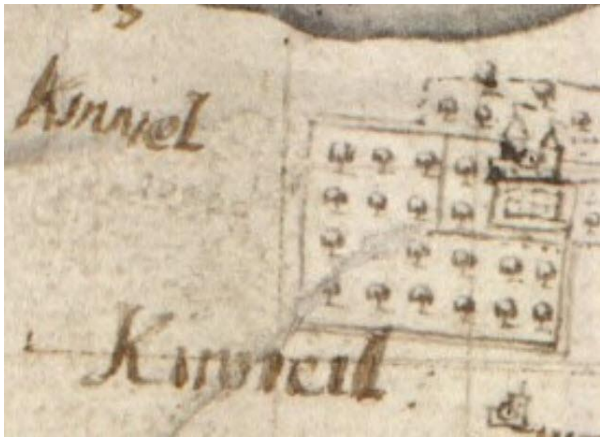
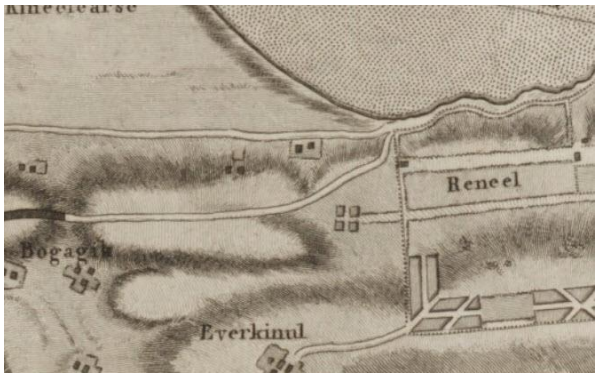
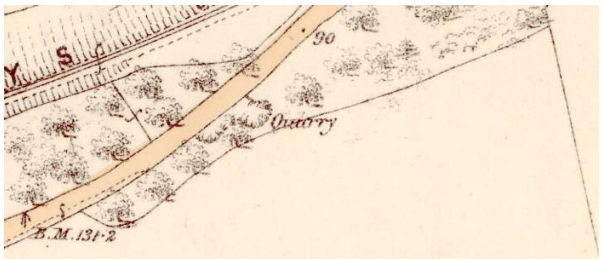
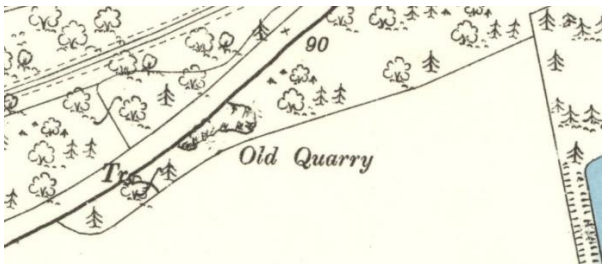
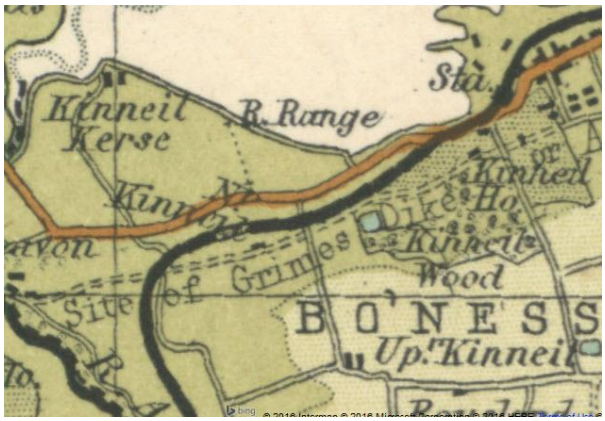
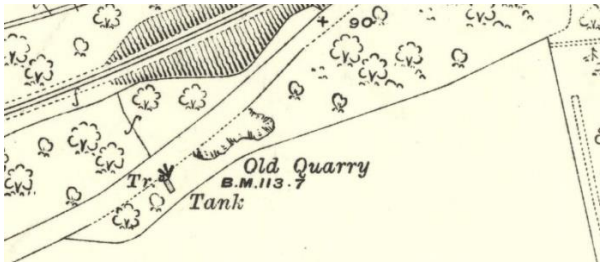
Synopsis

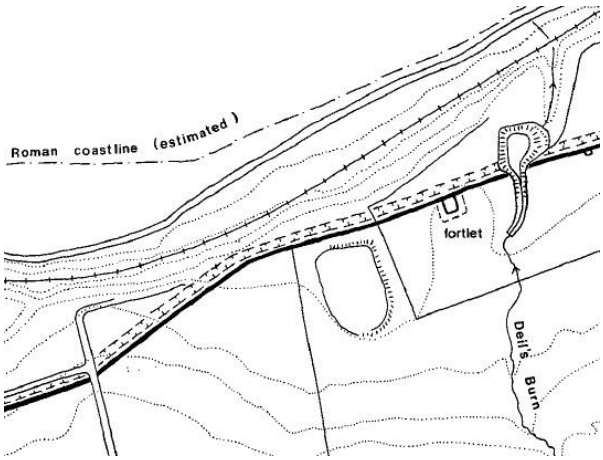
1. The line of ditch and wall crossing Summerhouse Park field (to the SW of the access improvements, running to the Stey Step) has been tested by trenching in 1915 and 1961, with the extrapolated line used on modern OS mapping. Antiquarian accounts and 1915 trenching have the ditch abruptly ending at the Cow Bank, a 30m escarpment falling to the historic shoreline.
2. The wall base was identified to the E, set 40ft back from the Cow Bank, in 1915 and it was inferred that it had run along the crest between this known point and where the ditch ended at the slope. Further, there has been a consistent proposal since the 1920s that there may be a ditch section mid-slope on the Cow Bank. This has not been tested.
3. The section of the Antonine Wall within Kinneil Woods subject to proposed access improvement does not appear to have been subject to archaeological or antiquarian testing (though covered by survey).
4. The development of the designed landscape around Kinneil House, in particular the 16th century deer park, may have re-used and remodelled the Cow Bank crest alignment of the wall base as an enclosure dyke. A sensitive element of the designed landscape, the 17th century summerhouse, is also noted at the E end of the current access improvement.

Timeline

1684	Adair *Mappe of Wast Lothian* – deer park formed to W of Kinneil house.	
1752 *Map*	Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland*, 1752 – 1755 showing the line of the Antonine Wall marked but carried on as a designed landscape avenue running towards Kinneil House.	
1757 Description	Maitland, W notes (1757 'History and Antiquities of Scotland') that the Graham's Dike was clearly visible *'… for divers miles, running to and ending at the brow of the high and very steep hill, denominated the Cow-bank*'. This was described as being near the pavilion at the NW corner of Kinneil-park	

1793 Map	Roy's *Military Antiquities of the Romans in North Britain* – showing the line of the Antonine Wall on the Kinneil ridge (solid line). Note the road running down the ridge on the common line before veering NE towards the Cowbank. Kenneil (Reneel) park is shown, including the Summerhouse standing at the crest of Cowbank. Note historic shoreline at base of Cow Bank.	
1818	Forrest's *Linlithgow Shire* – showing Stey Step climbing Cow Bank and running S. Structure shown on crest of Cow Bank, possibly summer house. Note dashed line to S the then inferred line of the Antonine Wall (aka Graham's Dike)	
1856 Map	*Ordnance Survey,* showing the area with the Kinneil designed landscape depicted as stopping to the immediate E. Summerhouse Park field to the SW has some relict trees running NE/SW across its middle. The woodland on the Cow Bank is clearly established and an 'Old Quarry' is marked cutting into the slope.	 
1897 Map	*Ordnance Survey,* showing broadly unaltered landscape since the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 1856 excepting the drain marked at the W end of the woodland and the construction of the Reservoir, to the SE.	

1912	*Bartholomew Atlas* showing a proposed line of 'Grimes Dike'.	
1915	Macdonald, G undertook excavations in Summerhouse Park field confirming the line of the ditch to an abrupt stop at Cowbank overhanging the road (reported in 'Discoveries on the Line of the Antonine Wall', PSAS 59 1925, 270-95). This contrasted an earlier scheme he proposed in 1911 of the ditch doubling S within the field. Macdonald links this to the Maitland description of Graham's Dike. He then identifies the wall base to the immediate N of the reservoir (to our E) where fragmentary wall base was identified set 40 ft S of the modern wall at the head of the Cow Bank. In retrospect he proposes that '*for the next couple of hundred yards it must have run along the face of the Cowbank, with the Wall on the high ground immediately above it*'. Accurate locations for these excavations are generally lacking.	
1915 Map	*Ordnance Survey,* showing a slightly different depiction of the 'Old Quarry' and the construction of a 'Tank' but otherwise unaltered.	
1934	Macdonald, G ('The Roman Wall in Scotland') proposed fortlet near Kinneil and noted the ditch in the Kinneil sector (see 1757 description) had been filled by the farmer on whose land it lay.	
1961 Event	Hendry, TA ('Antonine Wall Excavations Kinneil Sector', GAJ 1971 Vol 2, 107-110) excavated wall and ditch at 2 locations. To the E Kinneil House, MacDonald's line was confirmed (base 12-14ft broad, berm 24ft, ditch 28ft. At Nether Kinneil (NS972801) in Summerhouse Park field, ditch was characterised as infilled with clay of a natural appearance – note MacDonald's 1934 description of filling (base 14ft broad, berm 23ft, ditch 35ft). Slightly different alignment suggested at Nether Kinneil.	
1968 Description	In Robertson, AS 1969 'The Antonine Wall', '*After passing through the Meadows and a plantation to the west of it the Roman line reached the top of a slope descending steeply to the Firth and now known as the Cowbank. It may be conveniently reached from a minor road connecting Bo'ness and Polmont via Inveravon. A path leads upwards from this road near on old quarry on to the top of the Cowbank. Here the Ditch is no longer visible, but the stone base of the Wall was discovered to the south of it in 1915*.'	
1970s Event	Cumbernauld Historical Society recovered Roman pottery from field to W of Kinneil House centred on small knoll.	

1978-80 Event	Trial excavation identified Kinneil fortlet (Keppie, LJF & Walker, JJ 1981 'Fortlets on the Antonine Wall at Seabegs Wood, Kinneil and Cleddans', Britannia 13, 143-62).	
1980 Event	Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division Antonine Wall 1980 resurvey formalises modern inferred line of ditch and wall.	
1981 Event	Excavation at Kinneil explored the newly identified fortlet, 1980-1. (Bailey, GB & Cannel, J 1996 'Excavation at Kinneil fortlet on the Antonine Wall, 1980-1', PSAS Vol 126, 303-346).	
2010 Event	Scheduled under AMAA 1979.	
2013	Bailey, G identified that fragmentary sections of the enclosure bank for a curving deer park formed around the laird's residence (depicted in C16th by Pont), with its western edge on the Stey Step. One proposed section is at the crest of Cow Bank that may have augmented the wall base ('Kinneil Park', Falkirk Local History Society).	

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