

Stretching¹ 117 kilometres across northern England, from coast to coast, is a continuous line of large stones². The stones represent one of the greatest symbols of power in European history. Hadrian's Wall, built³ on the orders of the Roman emperor Hadrian in 122 AD, marked the western frontier of Rome's European-wide⁴ empire. The

One of the biggest barriers ever built, the wall stretched from Wallsend in the east to Bowness on the Solway Firth. It was originally 4.6 metres high and 2.4 metres wide. It had enormous ditches⁵ on both sides⁶, as well as turrets⁷, outposts⁸, watch-stations⁹ and fourteen forts. Thousands of Roman soldiers and English labourers¹⁰ spent ten years on its construction.

The wall quickly became home to one of the largest and most cosmopolitan concentrations of Roman soldiers in the empire. The thousands of soldiers included men from modern-day Belgium, Spain, Rumania, Syria, France, Croatia, Iraq and North Africa. The lingua franca in this horizontal Tower of Babel was Latin.

The wall acted like a magnet^{1.1} on local English tribes. Settlements^{1.2} started to appear to the south of the forts. These bustling^{1.3} communities, of up to 2,500 people, included traders, merchants, innkeepers^{1.4}, bakers, butchers^{1.5}, tailors^{1.6},

From urban metropolises such as New York, Sydney or Edinburgh to natural or human-made wonders¹ such as the Egyptian pyramids, the Nepalese Himalayas or the Bolivian Amazon a virtual tour can bring a world of information and inspiration to your screen².

While travel and economic restrictions make real-life adventures difficult, thanks to VR³ and 360-degree video technology you can immerse yourself in virtual environments⁴ that give you a real sense of what a place is like, without actually⁵ being there.

Some books are instant classics. *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy is one. Writing in a Southern Gothic tradition, McCarthy explores unforgiving¹, violent lives illuminated by moments of goodness². Haunting³ and profound and written in lyrical pared-down⁴ prose, *The Road* describes the journey that an unnamed⁵ man and his son make after a global catastrophe.

The Road describes all the love and protection a father can offer his son in a post-apocalyptic environment. The reason for the disaster is never explained. Was it a nuclear strike¹? An asteroid? A giant volcanic eruption? Whatever has happened, the world has changed forever:

Central to *The Road* is the question: 'What if...?' What if you found yourself in a world with no fresh food or water, no government or laws, no electricity or shelter¹? Could you survive? What if you met thieves² and murderous gangs? Would you join them or flee³ from them? What if the sky and land were filled with ash⁴ and the old world were reduced to debris⁵? How would you cope⁶?