

## 1 Edward I Monument

Burgh Marsh



King Edward I of England, who was known as 'the Hammer of the Scots' for his repeated attempts to conquer that country, died at Burgh Marsh, Solway Moss on 7 July 1307. Parliament was held in Carlisle from late January until March 1307 but being in poor health the King remained at Lanercost Priory until

12 March. He arrived in Carlisle for the Parliament and remained there for 15 weeks. Edward left the city on horseback on 26 June reaching Kirkcandrews-on-Eden on 2 July but struggled on until three days later he arrived at Burgh by Sands, where he finally breathed his last. Erected in 1803, the present red sandstone monument which rises from Burgh Marsh marks the spot where Edward I died.

## 2 St Michael's

Burgh by Sands CA5 6AW



Image of St Michael's Burgh by Sands © Don Fram

The church dates from the late C12 and was built on the site of the Roman Fort Aballava, almost entirely of stones taken from Hadrian's Wall. It occupies the site of one of the central buildings of the fort, probably either the headquarters or the granary.

When Edward I died nearby, on Burgh Marsh, his body was brought into St Michael's church to lie in state and for ten days events at the heart of the life of the nation were centred on Burgh church. Many members of the Court came to pay their respects, including the King's heir. Indeed his son was proclaimed King Edward II in Carlisle the day following his visit to Burgh.

The area then became increasingly lawless. The church's C14 Pele tower was built as a fortress and place of refuge for villagers, whose animals were driven into the church for safety during the raids of the Border Reivers. The church is probably the earliest of the surviving fortified churches in Cumbria, with the others being St John the Evangelist (Newton Arlosh) and St Cuthbert's (Great Salkeld). The heavy gate at the tower entrance is called a yett which is a Norse word dating from the Viking invasion and is still used today for the word 'gate' in Cumbrian dialect.

**Special Features:** Grade I listed. The carved Celtic head on the east wall is likely to have come from the Roman civil settlement, adjacent to the Fort. Saxon carvings of animals in the tower are from the early C12 church, which preceded the present church building. Stained glass windows in the north aisle depict King Edward I and those Celtic Saints who nurtured Christianity in Northern England – St Cuthbert, St Ninian, St Kentigern and St Aidan.

## 3 St Mary's

Beaumont CA5 6EF



Beaumont means 'beautiful hill', which may refer to the Norman motte and bailey castle that was erected here in the C12 on the site of an earlier Roman milecastle – both built to guard the ford over the River Eden. The castle consisted of a man-made mound, the 'motte' which had the fort on

top, and an enclosed surrounding area, the 'baillie', where the community lived. Later the three waths (crossing places) over the river also made for centuries of border raids and wars between the Scots and the English.

The church of St Mary was built on top of the mound using stones from the Wall – the line of which runs directly under the church. Little remains of the original church although the single chamber interior is still mostly of the earlier period, notably the south doorway and three east windows. The windows, the porch and the vestry are C19 restorations but with original window-arches having been built into the stonework in the vestry wall. The roof dates from the C15.

**Special Features:** Grade II\* listed. Two early medieval grave slabs were discovered during a series of Victorian restorations and are now built into the west wall behind the font. The earliest recorded Rector was Sir Elias de Thirwall in 1296 and in 1996, to celebrate the church's 700th anniversary a set of kneelers was made commemorating Rectors from each century.

## 4 St Giles'

Great Orton CA5 6NB



St. Giles' Church was founded in 1098 and is thought to be the first church built in Cumberland following the Norman Conquest. The builders used sandstone from Hadrian's Wall and traces of the masons' marks are still evident on the exterior walls. The dedication is to St. Giles, a French saint and martyr, and the Patron Saint of cripples and the lame. It has been suggested that wounded soldiers from Carlisle Castle were brought to Great Orton to recuperate.

Due to the frequent destructive raids by Border Reivers throughout the Middle Ages, it is not surprising that the church was partially destroyed by fire. Two of the beams above the Chancel may be original, having survived these frequent incursions, as have the two Norman windows on each side of the Sanctuary. The original village, clustered around the church, was at one time surrounded by a ditch. The northern approach known as Barras Gate had chains across the entrance to protect the inhabitants, buildings and livestock from marauders.

**Special Features:** Grade II\* listed. Ornatly carved font cover. Looking down the aisle, the walls appear to lean out in a 'navis' design representing 'the Ark'

## 5 St Andrew's

Aikton CA7 0HP



The church of St Andrew stands high in a lovely rural setting commanding fine views of Skiddaw and the Northern Fells. It is approached through a novel kissing gate made from two large slabs of stone, supported by a stone post. A fine example of Norman architecture, this light, airy and uncluttered church has a nave and chancel from the original C12 building. The south aisle was added in 1869. The original roof timbers, exposed only in 1869, are a feature of the church. In the porch is a C13 coffin lid, with a sword carved into it, known as the de Morville grave slab. The square bowl of the font is late C12, and each of the four sides of the font has a different design.

In Victorian times the graveyard was visited by the 'Resurrection Men' – a term applied to those who engaged in the practice of body-snatching and then selling the corpses to medical schools for dissection and research.

**Special Features:** Grade I listed. The church is built of stone from Hadrian's Wall.

## 6 Holme Cultram Abbey (St Mary's)

Abbeytown CA7 4SD



Holme Cultram Abbey was founded in 1150 by Cistercian monks from Melrose Abbey in the Scottish Borders. Prince Henry, son of King David of Scotland, granted the foundation charter as at this time the Solway area belonged to Scotland. The Abbey is the daughter of Melrose Abbey and the grand daughter of Rievaulx Abbey.

The new Abbey flourished. After draining the nearby marsh it amassed vast amounts of land, used for the farming of sheep and pigs and the planting of orchards. The monks also had their own salt pans and fishing. By the time this area was part of England, and because of its proximity to 'the borders' it was in constant danger from the Border Reivers. In 1538 with the Dissolution of the Monasteries the land passed to the Crown, and the monks were dispersed.

The centre of the Abbey has survived as the Parish Church, with the rest of the Abbey falling into disrepair. In the church you see today, six of the nine bays of the nave of the original Abbey are the result of restoration begun in 1703, with further work being done in 1883 and 1913. Following an arson attack in 2006, the Abbey has undergone a major re-building programme which still continues.

**Special Features:** Entrance to the Abbey is through a superb Norman Archway; Robert the Bruce's father, Robert de Bruce Earl of Carrick, is buried here. The 'innards' of Edward I are also buried in the Abbey.

## 7 St John The Evangelist

Newton Arlosh CA7 5ET



Skinburness (or Grune as it was then known) was a growing town and port which serviced the ships of King Edward I in his campaign against the Scots. In gratitude and

recognition, Edward granted Grune 'Free Borough' status prompting the Bishop of Carlisle to grant a charter to the Abbot of Holme Cultram in 1301 to build a church.

However, violent storms and high seas breached the sea dyke and swept away the town. The survivors moved further inland to the region of Arlosh and built a new town there – Newton Arlosh, meaning "New Town on the Marsh". In 1304 the Bishop again granted a charter for the building of a church here and by 1305 the original liberties and privileges of Grune were transferred as well.

The church was fortified during the time of the border raids and a Pele tower was built in the C14. A narrow entrance of only 31" with inner and outer doors is designed to make forced entry very difficult. The walls of both nave and tower are massive with the windows placed high up – too small to climb through yet large enough for an archer to use. The tower has a narrow stairway and was guarded by a heavy iron strap and oak door. With restless livestock in the nave, and well armed and desperate defenders in the tower, attacking a building like St John's would have been a daunting prospect.

As a result of this lawlessness and the Dissolution of the Monasteries the area became depopulated and the church eventually became a ruin. By 1580 it was reported as "in decay, the door stood open and sheep lay in it". In 1843 a benefactor, Miss Sarah Losh and others restored and extended the church in the original Anglo-Norman style.

**Special Features:** The font is early C13 and came from Holme Cultram Abbey.

## 8 St Bride's

Kirkbride CA7 5HY



Standing on a hill at the northern end of the village, the church occupies an important place in the locality, on the site of a Roman fort at the west end of the Stanegate, linked by road to Hadrian's Wall itself. This site has yielded many artefacts including a Roman Altar, coins and pottery. The church is dedicated to St Bride, an Irish Missionary, who died in 523.

The earliest record of a church on the site is in 1189, but the existing Norman building, fashioned from stones largely recycled from the Roman fort, probably replaced an earlier structure. The square font is carved in the early English style, and behind this are traces of the north door or "Devil's Door" and the outlines of two Norman windows. The chancel arch is typical early Norman, although there have been suggestions that it is of an even earlier, Saxon date. In common with some other churches in the area, it was in a ruinous condition by the early 1700s. In 1703 Bishop Nicholson of Carlisle remarked that "it looks more like a pigsty than the house of God". This neglect evidently continued, as by 1880 the villagers were wondering whether the walls would fall inwards or outwards! The present church was substantially rebuilt in 1899, when the porch was added.

**Special Features:** Grade II\* listed. Medieval carved coffin lids let into the walls. The bell is said to come from Melrose Abbey and bears the date 1512.

## 9 St Michael's

Bowness on Solway CA7 5AF



St Michael's Church is not an ancient church building. Little remains of the original Norman church, but there are visible clues showing the likelihood of a church on this site since Roman times. Walkers of the Hadrian's

Wall Trail may be disappointed that there are very few signs of the wall left in Bowness but they will be rewarded by a visit to the church where, although it was extensively restored in the late C19, they will see that many stones used in the building were recycled from the Roman Wall.

The font is Norman and is a wonderful piece of carving that symbolically illustrates the nature and effect of Baptism. The old bells have a story attached relating to a Scottish raid and the subsequent retaliation of local men dating back to 1626. The stained glass windows are all very different and individually each is a fine example of its time. All reflect the changing face of the parish of Bowness but also the constancy of faith in the lives of the parishioners.

**Special Features:** The churchyard includes a smuggler's grave, an ancient sundial and a Hearse House.

And even after Scotland gained its independence, from the 14th to the 16th century, Border Reivers from both sides of the estuary terrorised these 'debatable' lands. Riders, raiders, guerrilla fighters, gangsters (the word 'reive' means to steal) – the Border Reivers were all this and more. That they gave the words 'bereaved' and 'blackmail' to the English language says it all.

Nobody could sleep safely in their bed and no cattle could be left unguarded – centuries of warfare between the two countries had created a lawless society where simply to survive was considered an achievement. The wealthy built bell tower as the rest of the population, living in themselves fortified Pele towers, but some were built onto churches to act as both Pele tower and bell tower as the rest of the population, living in

huts with thatched roofs, had to rely on the thickness of their church walls for sanctuary. Exploring the fascinating cluster of churches on this

journey of 2,000 years of peace and conflict, circular trail allows you to experience for yourself a

And even after Scotland gained its independence, from the 14th to the 16th century, Border Reivers from both sides of the estuary terrorised these 'debatable' lands. Riders, raiders, guerrilla fighters, gangsters (the word 'reive' means to steal) – the Border Reivers were all this and more. That they gave the words 'bereaved' and 'blackmail' to the English language says it all.



**10** St Peter's  
Kirkbampton CA5 6JB

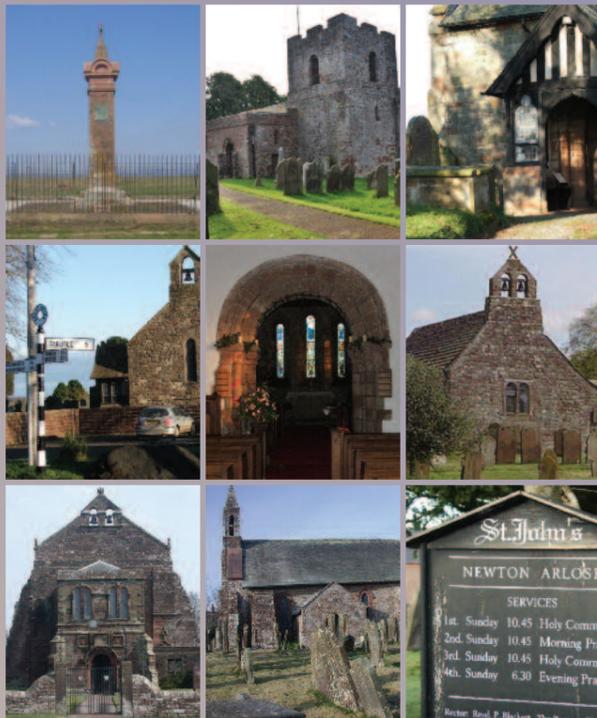


The church was founded in 1174 and is still very much as it was built but with the Victorian additions of porch and vestry. A carved Norman doorway leads into the church and the Norman chancel archway has wonderful carving with the face of a green

man on the left. During restoration work in the 1870s the plaster was removed from the chancel stonework and a Roman carved stone was revealed (probably taken from Hadrian's wall a mile away). To the left in the sanctuary there are two features, one a 'lepers squint' or dole window where people could see the priest celebrating communion, and also an aumbry – a wall safe for locking away the valuable church plate. On the right of the altar there is a restored piscina for washing out the communion vessels.

Two bells that were cast in 1705 are still in use. The organ was a gift from a former Rector in the late 1800s and the windows are also late Victorian given as memorials to local people. It is a witness of local people that the church has seen continuous worship for over 800 years, and it is still a very important part of the community.

**Special Features:** Grade II\* listed. The Roman stone in the south wall - no doubt brought from Hadrian's Wall, has an inscription that reads VEX, LEG P.F.FEC meaning 'The troops of the 6th Legion, the victorious, pious & faithful did this work'.



**Church Information:**

All churches are open daily throughout the year and each provides information on local facilities and on footpaths and cycle-ways linking each church. For enquiries telephone 01228 576324 or 016973 61246. **Links to each church can be found from the church directory page of [www.ctfc.org.uk](http://www.ctfc.org.uk)**

**Tourist Information:**

For more detailed information about the area, and to help you plan your trip, contact **Carlisle Tourist Information Centre** Old Town Hall, Green Market, Carlisle, CA3 8JE. **Tel: 01228 625 600** or visit **[www.visitcumbria.com](http://www.visitcumbria.com)**



# Sacred Solway

## ROYALTY, REIVERS, RELIGION AND RURAL LIFE

- ✚ Discover a cluster of unique churches, built from the stones of Hadrian's Wall in the years following the Norman Conquest (1098 – 1190). Places of peace and spirituality fashioned from the building blocks of conflict.
- ✚ Understand the role of these churches during the time of the Border Reivers – 300 years of conflict between the 13th and 17th centuries – and their importance as fortifications bringing a whole new meaning to the term 'sanctuary'.
- ✚ Find out why Burgh by Sands was briefly the centre of government thanks to its links with Edward I during his conflict with Robert Bruce and the Scots.