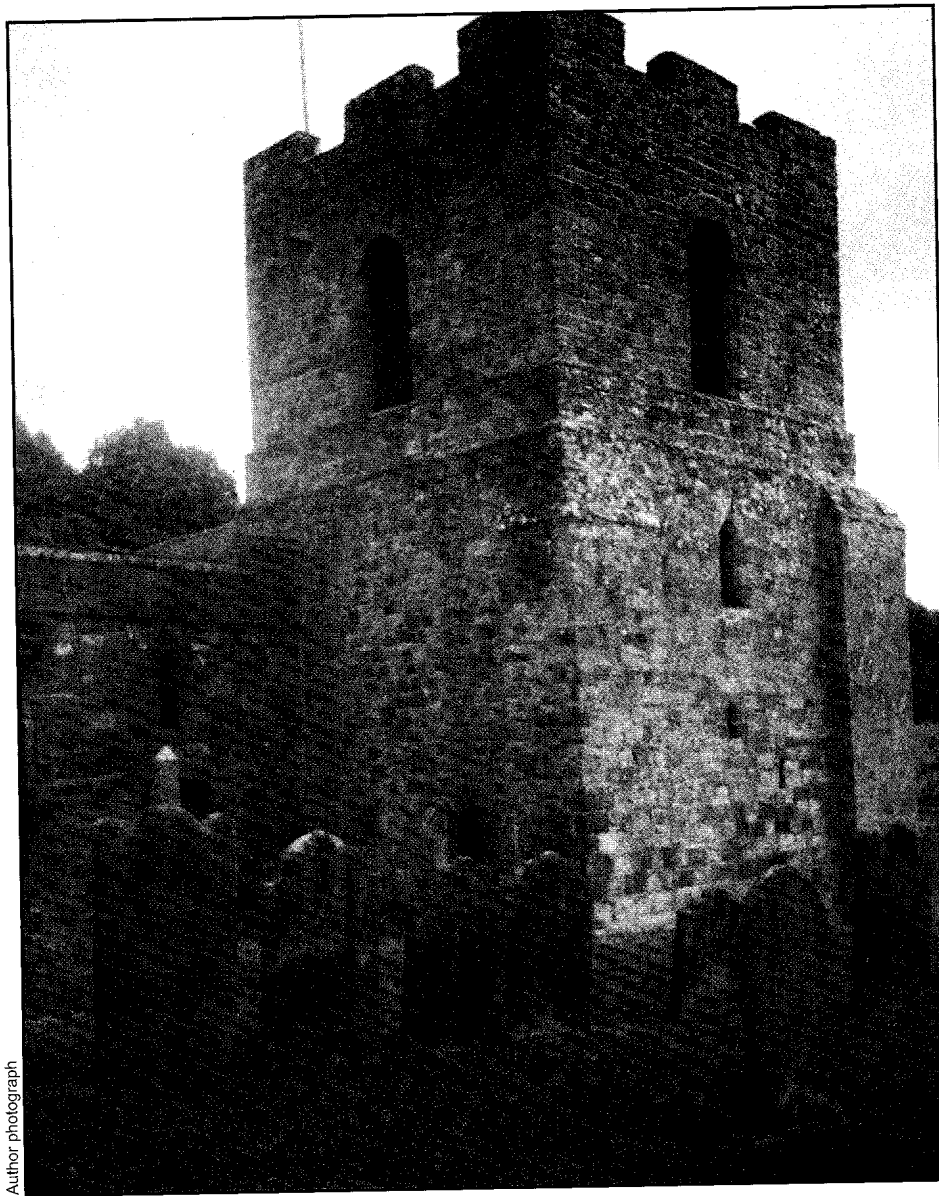


# Burgh by Sands

'Burgh by Sands, just outside Carlisle on the Solway Firth, is not a name which springs immediately to mind when considering the long and bloody story that is English history. Yet its importance can not be underestimated, for it was here in July 1307 that Edward I, 'Hammer of the Scots', died...'

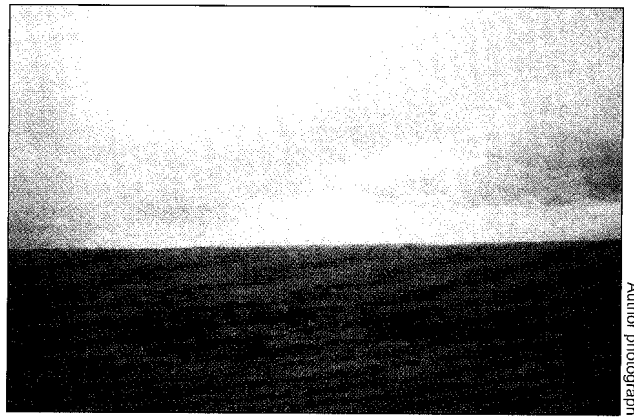


**E**dward I is probably one of the best known, if not most controversial, kings of the medieval era. The son of Henry III, his long reign from 1272 until 1307 saw a number of important constitutional and legal initiatives which were to presage the way for later developments, most notably the calling of the first parliament in 1295, and the issuing of a regular form of currency. As well as his legal codifications which gave rise to him being known as the 'English Justinian', Edward's legacy rests on his reputation as a military commander, and his ruthless crushing of his enemies. What is perhaps less well known is the way in which Edward left his legacy on the Border region of England and Scotland, inadvertently paving the way for the conflicts which were to plague the borders for the next 300 years.

Burgh by Sands, just outside Carlisle on the Solway Firth, is not a name which springs immediately to mind when considering the long and bloody story that is English history. Yet its importance can not be underestimated, for it was here in July 1307 that Edward I, 'Hammer of the Scots', died of dysentery, as his armies prepared to cross the Solway Firth on their way into Scotland. The actual site of what is believed to have been Edward's death is marked by a stone monument which

St Michael's Church, Burgh by Sands. The church is built of stone taken from Hadrian's Wall.

Author photograph



Author photograph

**The desolate panorama of Solway Firth looking towards Scotland.**

was first erected in 1685 and rebuilt in 1803. Although Edward has left many reminders of his reign, notably the great castles of Harlech, Conway and Caernarfon in North Wales, his imprint is all over the Border region. Notably in the site of the former castle at Berwick Upon Tweed, where it is said that he decided in favour of John Balliol for the vacant crown of Scotland.

Often marketed as the gateway to the Solway Coast, Burgh By Sands lies some 6 miles north west of Carlisle on the Solway Estuary. There has been a settlement here since Roman times. At one point the line of Hadrian's Wall ran through the centre of the village, although little

evidence survives today except for the line of the *vallum* or Roman road, which can sometimes be traced to the south. Its location at the lowest crossing point of the Solway Firth ensured that for centuries Burgh By Sands commanded a strategic importance, as a trading route to and from Scotland. The Romans built look out towers, and sited the western most point of Hadrian's Wall here. During the middle ages numerous armies criss-crossed the area in the long running power struggle between England and Scotland.

About a thousand years after the Romans left the area, the Normans built the church of St Michael which

still stands, using the stone of Hadrian's Wall for its construction. It was here that the body of Edward I lay in state before his final journey to London. Lying so close to the border, the church is heavily fortified. A reminder, if one is needed, of the days when the church was a place of sanctuary during the heyday of the Border Reivers. Today it is a largely peaceful corner of England whose rural tranquility belies its turbulent past, but it is nonetheless a fascinating corner of England.

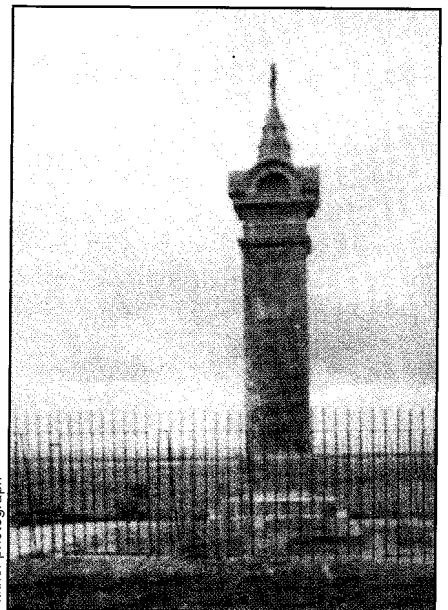
**Robert Turnbull**

**This pillar marks the approximate spot where Edward is said to have died.**

**St Michael's Church, Burgh by Sands. The body of Edward I lay in state here before its journey to London.**



Author photograph



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