

10. HISTORICAL SYNTHESIS: PREHISTORY TO THE PRESENT

10.1 The placenames

The information relating to place-names – their earliest attested form, any subsequent significant change, meaning and linguistic roots – is now conveniently and authoritatively summarised in *A Dictionary of County Durham Place-Names* by Victor Watts (2002).

Easington. Earliest attestation: *Esingtun* c.1040 (*HSC* – surviving in a 12th-century copy). Derivation: Old English personal name *Ēsa* or *Ēsi* + *ing* + *tūn* = ‘farm, village, estate called after *Ēsa* or *Ēsi*’ (Watts 2002, 37).

Little Thorpe. Earliest attestation: *Thorep* c.1040 (*HSC* – 12th-century copy). Later forms: *Thorp*’ [c. 1183] 14th-century copy (*Boldon Book*); *Thorp iuxta Easington* 1397 (*IPM*), *Littlethorpe*, *Thorpe also Littlethroppe* 1647 (*Parliamentary Surveys*). ‘Derivation: Old Norse **thorp** = ‘outlying hamlet, secondary settlement’, i.e. it was the outlying settlement of Easington (Watts 2002, 72).

Horden. Earliest attestation: *Horetun*, *Horeden* c.1040 (*HSC* – 12th-century copy). Later forms: *Horden* pre-1280 (*Ravensworth Deeds*). Derivation: Old English **hour** + **denu** = ‘dirty valley’ with a second possible derivation from c.1040 ‘dirty village, farm or estate’ (Watts 2002, 61).

Hawthorn. Earliest attestation: (*Hagathorne* c. 1115 (*DEC*). Later forms: *Hagethorn* 1180 (*DCD.Finc.*), *Hauthorn* c.1200, *Hawthorn* 1315 (*DCD.Spec.*). Derivation: Old English **haguthorn** = ‘the hawthorn tree’ (Watts 2002, 56).

10.2 Prehistory – Introduction

By comparison with other parts of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau the coastal districts around Easington have produced relatively abundant evidence of human activity in the form of finds of worked flint tools from the Stone Ages and remains of later prehistoric settlements. Thus we can begin to say something about life in this part of County Durham before the advent of written documents though the picture is far from complete.

10.3 Early prehistory

10.3.1 After the ice

The Magnesian Limestone Plateau was doubtless occupied by small groups of Stone Age hunter-gatherers on numerous occasions in the intervals between the successive Ice Ages. There is evidence that early humans were present in parts of the British Isles from as long as 700,000 years ago. In North-east England, however, virtually all traces left by these Neanderthal and earlier populations of the Palaeolithic era, or Old Stone Age, were obliterated by the vast ice sheets and glaciers which covered the region and scoured away landscape features during successive Ice Ages. Nevertheless a small quartzite tool was found beneath the glacial till or boulder clay in Warren House Gill by Charles Trechmann (1928), who pioneered the study of the region’s prehistoric archaeology, a hint that Palaeolithic material might be preserved beneath the Ice Age deposits. Occasional finds of the bones of extinct species have been found within or near to the Magnesian Limestone Plateau, notably Giant deer at Mainsforth, near Ferryhill, though significantly more finds have been made a little further south at various places in Teeside, from Darlington to Redcar (Archaeo-Environment 2009, 33; Howes 1861). Thus it is possible that the sand and gravel beds underlying the glacial boulder clay of the Limestone Plateau, which outcrop in the

deeply incised denes leading down to the sea, may preserve similar material so that future investigation of these deposits may begin to give a clearer picture of the earliest human occupation of the area.

10.3.2 Mesolithic hunters and gatherers (c. 10,000-4000 BC)

When the glaciers and ice sheets finally retreated at the end of the last Ice Age (around 10,000-8,000 BC), allowing communities of Middle Stone Age (or *Mesolithic*) hunter-gatherers to recolonise northern Britain, taking advantage of the abundant resources provided by the regenerating forest environment. The small communities probably formed extended family groupings, with wider kinship-based, tribal identities perhaps only occasionally activated, and may have ranged widely over large territories, following the movement of deer and exploiting seasonal resources such as autumn berries and migrating salmon.

Mesolithic flint tools and working material have been recovered at various places along the coast including Beacon Hill and Hawthorn. A particularly notable assemblage, comprising cores, scrapers, microliths, unretouched blades and flakes and other material, was collected by Raistrick and Gibbs during 1932-4 in fields and cliff sections around Loom Point (material now in Craven Museum, Skipton). This distribution is heavily concentrated along the present-day coastline.

Key to explaining this coastal concentration of material is the very different character of the landscape then prevailing on the Magnesian Limestone Plateau with widespread forest in the place of today's very open arable farmland and grassland pasture. Moreover the landscape of this period differed from the present-day in an even more crucial respect, namely the position of the coastline, which lay well beyond its current position, miles out to the east or north-east. This was because much water was still locked up in the retreating ice sheets so that much of the land now submerged by the North Sea was not fully inundated until 5800-3800 BC. Instead of looking directly out to sea someone standing the clifftops or on the hills of the Permian reefs, such as Beacon Hill, would have gazed over a low-lying plain, forming the northern edge of the now submerged Doggerland, whilst the sheltered denes gave convenient access from plateau and the reefland hilltops down to the plain.

Thus the present coastline and adjoining elevations may have provided favourable vantage points which could explain the distribution of flint and stone tools. However this distribution may perhaps also partly be a result of the coastal focus of previous archaeological fieldwork, such as that of Raistrick, although the Durham Archaeological Survey undertaken in the 1980s, which systematically investigated transects extending across the East and Central Durham, confirmed that a much higher density of worked flint per hectare was recovered by fieldwalking at the coast than elsewhere with the highest concentrations not usually extending more than 1km inland. Much lower concentrations were found on the Magnesian Limestone Plateau itself, which would have been heavily wooded at the time (Archaeo-Environment 2009, 36-37; Haselgrove *et al.* 1988; Haselgrove and Healey 1992).

EARLY PREHISTORIC (MESOLITHIC) INVENTORY

Low Grounds Farm, (Site: 45, HER: 8269, NZ 43939 44364)

Material including a Lithic Scatter and a Possible Burial were found in the piggery to the south west of the Low Grounds Farm. They were registered in 1998 by ASUD.

White Lea Farm, (Site: 46, HER: 8268, NZ 44003 44654)

A Lithic scatter was found at White Lea Farm in 1998. This included flakes, scraper and chips of flint. They were recorded by ASUD in 1998.

Easington Colliery, Loom Flint Find Spot, (Site: 44, HER: 80, NZ 44500 44400)

2 x unretouched blades and flakes and 2 x graters found by Raistrick in Skipton Museum.

Easington Colliery, Loom, Flint Find Spot (Site: 42, HER: 81, NZ 44500 44400)

1 x core, 1 x microlith and 58 x retouched blades and flakes, found by Raistrick and now in Skipton Museum.

Easington Colliery, Loom Flint Find Spot (Site: 39, HER: 82, NZ 44500 44400)

2 x unretouched blades found by Raistrick and now in Skipton Museum.

Easington Colliery, Loom Banks, Flint Find Spot (Site: 43, HER: 83, NZ 44500 44400)

1 x unretouched blade now in Skipton Museum.

Easington Colliery, Loom Point, Flint Find Spot (Site: 40, HER: 84, NZ 44500 44400)

2 x unretouched blades, found by Raistrick now in Skipton Museum.

Easington Colliery, 'Loom Area' Findspot (Site: 41, HER: 85, NZ 44500 44400)

Cores, scrapers, microliths, unretouched blades and flakes and other material collected by Raistrick and Gibbs in 1832 -4. It was found along the coast in fields and cliff sections.

Easington Colliery, Flint Find Spot, (Site: 62, HER: 72, NZ 44100 45900)

Flint flakes and "points", with limpet shells, found in mole hills to the north and south of the railway viaduct on the east side of Hawthorne Dene, and on the south where the line cuts through the gravel which overlies the limestone.

Easington Colliery, Fox Holes, Flint Find Spot, (Site: 34, HER: 92, NZ 44500 43700)

"At sea end of Horden Dene, in red soil at both sides, 9 x unretouched blades and flakes, 1 x microlith." Found by Raistrick and Gibbs, 1932, now in Skipton Museum.

Easington Colliery, Beacon, Flint Find Spot, (Site: 55, HER: 94, NZ 44400 45500)

Unspecified prehistoric flint material collected by Raistrick in 1933.

Hawthorn Dene, Flint Find Spot, (Site: 24, HER: 71, NZ 42300 45100)

Flint flakes found on the south bank of Hawthorn Dene in a gravel path above the trees c. 1 mile from the shore.

Beacon Hill, Flint Find Spot, (Site: 51, HER: 74, NZ 44070 45390)

A flint flake and chips found on the footpath to the east side of the beacon which stands on a lofty hill on the south side of Hawthorn Dene.

Hawthorn Tower, Flint Find Spot, (Site: 59, HER: 91, NZ 43800 45900)

1 x core and 2 x unretouched blades, now in Sunderland Museum, were found in a ploughed field on the coast.

10.3.3 The first farmers and herders (The Neolithic period 4000-2300 BC)

The abundance of finds from the Mesolithic period is not matched with respect to the subsequent period, known as the New Stone Age, or Neolithic era, dating from around 4000 BC onwards, when the first identifiable farming and pastoral communities emerged in northern Britain. Indeed no finds or sites have been identified in the environs of Easington that can be firmly attributed to this era.

Neolithic communities practised 'slash and burn' agriculture in what would still have been an extensively forested landscape, clearing small areas with stone axes and fire, and then cultivating for a number of years until crop yields began to decline through soil exhaustion whereupon the group would move on to clear another parcel of woodland. However it is now considered that the herding of newly domesticated livestock – small, hardy cattle and agile sheep – is likely to have been more important to these communities than the cultivation of

crops, with only limited evidence for arable agriculture across northern England as a whole until the Early Bronze Age.

However communities in the Neolithic period were capable of constructing sizeable monuments, indicating considerable social complexity. In some cases these structures may have continued in use into the Early Bronze Age. Substantial burial mounds have also been found to the north-west, most notably at Copt Hill and Warden Law, near Houghton-le-Spring, containing multiple burials and mortuary structure. Closer still is the now destroyed burial cairn, the Fairies Cradle, at Hetton-le-Hole (though this could belong to the Early Bronze Age). Further north at Hasting Hill, on the eastern edge of Sunderland, an even larger complex has been traced including a rectangular cursus, or ceremonial pathway, defined by two parallel ditches at least 200m in length, and an irregular oval or 'D-shaped' enclosure, measuring roughly 92m by 65m, surrounded by a single interrupted ditch (also known as a 'causewayed enclosure').

Although nothing of this sort has been found in the study area, this complete absence of evidence for Neolithic occupation here may owe as much to the lack of prolonged intensive archaeological investigation in the area as any genuine absence of activity. An extensive programme of field-walking across the study area, for example, would surely yield many finds of stone tools and thereby reveal a much clearer picture of both the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, including occupation sites and differing intensities of land use.

10.4 The Bronze Age (2300 BC – 800 BC) – The introduction of metal tools and weapons

There is little secure evidence for Bronze Age occupation in the area of Easington, though some of the cropmarks noted on aerial photography could conceivably represent the ring ditches of round barrows of late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date. One certain Bronze Age burial monument of this kind is known at Round Hill, in Low Hills (HER 62), just to the south of the Study Area, where a barrow containing three small, stone-lined graves, or cists, one of which held a cremation burial, was excavated in the early 20th century. Finds included a flint scraper, many flint flakes and a single fragment of pottery thought to be prehistoric. The barrow was destroyed by road construction in 1966 and is now covered by an industrial estate forming part of Peterlee (Trechmann 1914, 167-9; Brooks 1969, 183; Young 1980). Other round barrows have been identified near Hawthorn village (HER 61) and at Batter Law, Hawthorn (HER 2), whilst circular cropmarks revealed by aerial photography at White Lea (Site 47; HER 8280 – two rings) and on the north side of Easington village (8; HER 8592) could similarly represent the enclosing ring ditches of round barrows which have been levelled by later ploughing. None of these sites have been excavated to confirm their date and interpretation, however.

BRONZE AGE INVENTORY

White Lea Cropmark, (Site: 47, HER: 8280, NZ 43750 44949)

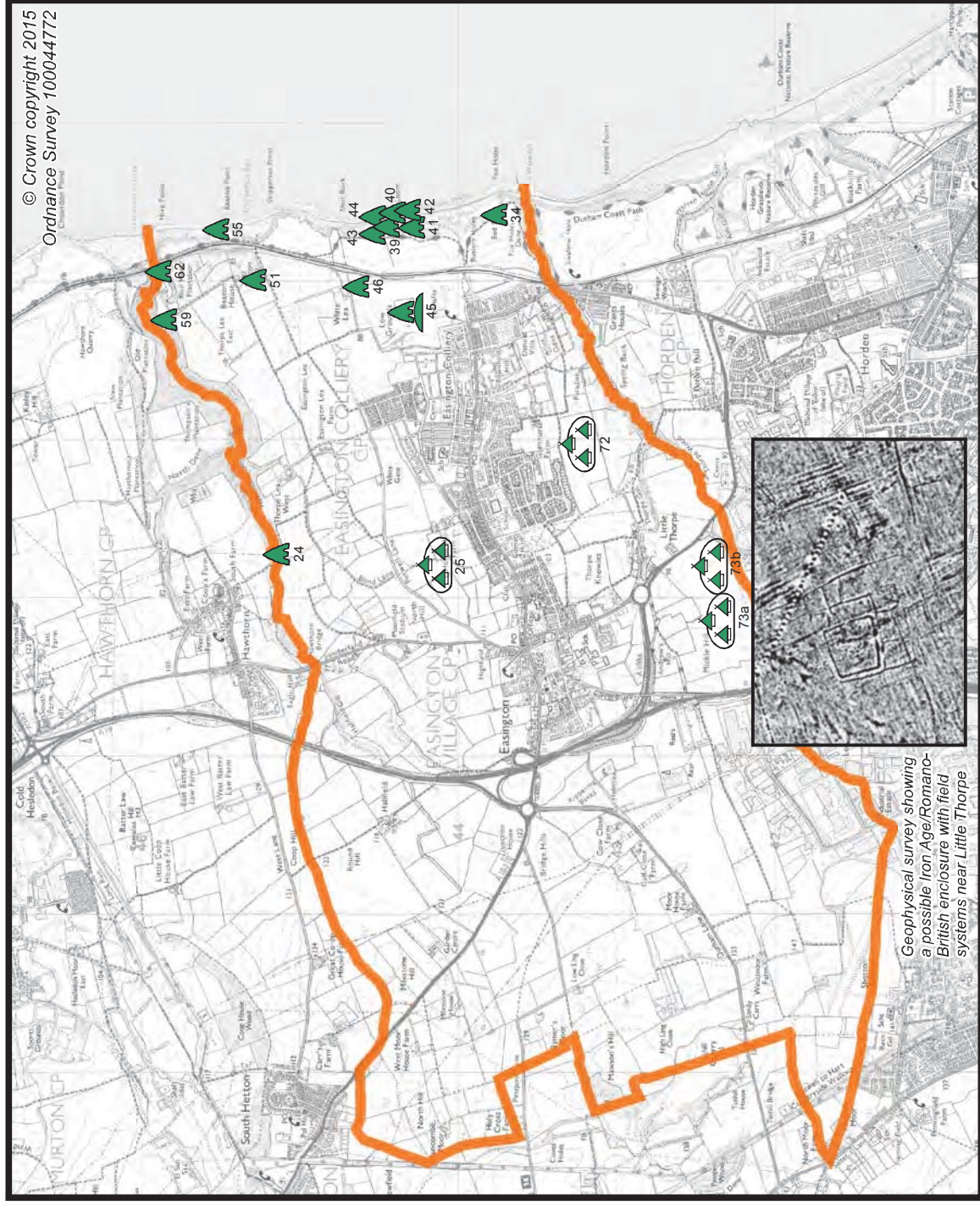
Cropmark of two rings observed in aerial photography of a field in pasture, mention in the 1998 ASUD Turning the Tide assessment (1: site number 145). Assigned a broad prehistoric date - but unclassified.

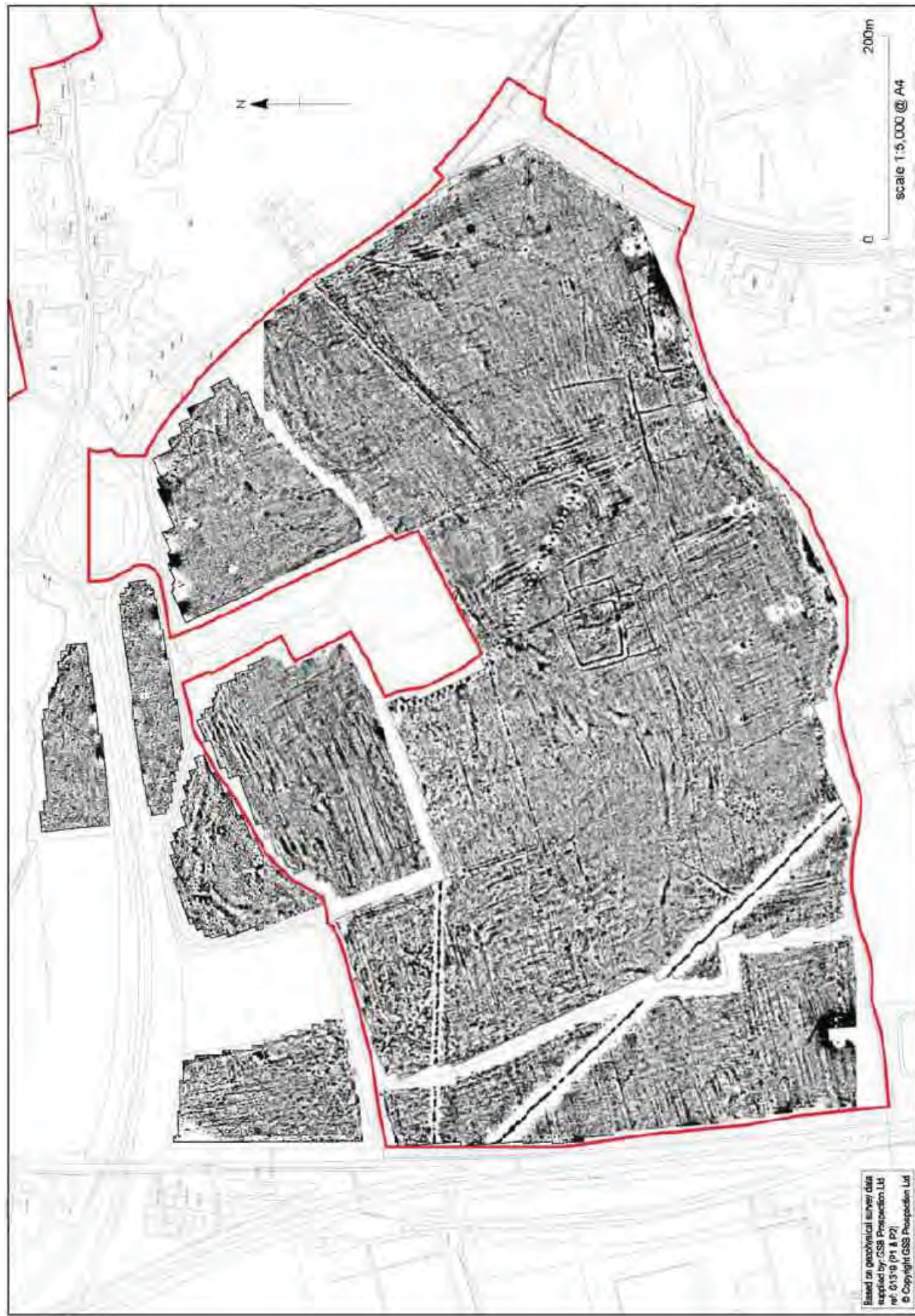
Easington Village, Crop Marks (Site: 8, HER: 8592, NZ 41531 43698)

Series of circular features noted on DCC 2003 aerial photo coverage. These all appear to be spread across an area of rough pasture to the north of Cadwell Lane, Easington Village (north of Fairwinds house and others). There may also be some ridge & furrow aligned east-west, roughly in parallel to the current southern field boundary. Appears to be prehistoric in nature, but further investigation required.

EASINGTON ATLAS

- PREHISTORIC SITES AND FINDS -





Geophysical survey of possible Iron Age/Romano-British settlement and field systems near Little Thorpe.

10.5 The Iron Age

With the advent of the Iron Age the archeological record of past activity in Ferryhill becomes much fuller and more informative. In particular, for the first time we have clear evidence regarding settlement, the kinds of places people were living in.

The most characteristic type of Iron Age settlement in Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Northumberland is the **rectilinear enclosed settlement** or farmstead (see Jobey 1960; Higham 1986; Haselgrove 1982, 2002; Procter 2009). These were much more common in the region than hillforts, with numerous examples being identified on the East Durham Plateau, predominantly through aerial photography. Moreover they continued to be established throughout the later Iron Age, after the construction of hillforts had largely ceased, and in some cases may have continued to be occupied during the Roman period.

These farmsteads typically comprise a ditched enclosure, roughly square, rectangular or slightly trapezoidal in plan, pierced by a single causewayed entrance in the middle of one side. There may have been bank, perhaps topped with a thorn hedge, along the inner edge of the ditch, removed by later ploughing and in some cases the ditch may have been preceded by a timber palisade. One or more timber round houses, were present in the interior, often a single large one in the centre with smaller examples nearer the perimeter, whilst stockyards or pens, intended to hold livestock, can also be found. More complex forms and structural sequences can also be encountered, featuring multiple enclosures, stockyards, paddocks, droveways and other field system components, plus numerous round houses, sometimes positioned outside the enclosures.

10.5.1 Cropmark enclosures near Easington

Several rectilinear enclosures possibly representing settlements of the Iron Age and Romano-British period have been identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs. These include a rectangular ditched enclosure north of Easington village near Holme Hill Farm (Site 25; HER 3061) and just south of Hawthorn village (23; HER 8088) and a possible double ditched, square enclosure located in one of the fields south of Easington Colliery (Glenhurst Farm) and 0.5km ENE of Little Thorpe (Site 72).

Low Hills enclosed settlement

The clearest evidence has been identified by the geophysical survey – 'geophysics' as seen on Time Team – and trial excavation trenching undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) across a proposed housing development site at Low Hills, between Little Thorpe and the A19, during April 2013 (Northern Archaeological Associates 2013, 16-17). A large, roughly square or trapezoidal, double-ditched enclosure, some 60m across, was revealed which is likely to represent a settlement of the Iron Age and/or Roman period. This is located south-east of Little Thorpe and 350m due south of Andrew's Hill (Site 73a), and contained possible internal structures and features. Traces of further small, ditched enclosures were noted immediately to the south and east of the main settlement enclosure – perhaps a mixture of settlement and agriculture – whilst further to the southeast a series of east-west aligned enclosures and a possible trackway may represent the remains of an associated, co-axial field system typical of the period (Site 73b). Possible pits and traces of round-house ring ditches were hinted at by the survey data. Linear anomalies to the north, north-west and west of the settlement enclosure were less distinct, but it is possible that the field system extended over this area too but had been subjected to greater damage from medieval and modern ploughing. There were also traces of a more fragmentary pattern of NE-SW aligned linear anomalies, perhaps representing another field system, underlying the east-west aligned plots and enclosures, which may have been associated with an even

earlier phase of settlement.

Some of these rectilinear enclosed sites noted above may begin their life in the late Bronze Age and in some cases occupation probably continues into the Roman period, but without detailed excavation it is impossible to be certain in any specific case. Certainly pottery of both Iron Age and Roman date was recovered during the evaluation excavations on the Low Hills site in 2013.

IRON AGE/ROMANO-BRITISH INVENTORY

Easington, Crop Marks (Site: 25, HER: 3061, NZ 422 442)

Half (?) of a rectangular enclosure, north of Easington.

Hawthorn, rectangular enclosure (Site: 23, HER: 8088, NZ 420 452)

Rectangular enclosure noted with a sub-circular enclosure within. This has been shown by parched grass. No other information is given by the source of information; however, it would seem likely to be a prehistoric homestead of the Iron Age or Romano-British forms widespread in the area.

Glenhurst Farm, square enclosure (Site: 72, NZ 4295 4315)

Possible double ditched, square enclosure identified by aerial photography (see above).

Low Hills, rectangular enclosure(s) and field system (Sites: 73a & b, NZ 4195 4235 & NZ 422 423)

Extensive complex of remains, including a rectilinear settlement enclosure with additional enclosures representing possible further settlement and field systems, probably of multiple phases, covering a wide area (see above).

UNDATED

Cropmarks near Beacon Hill, Easington, (Site: 52, HER: 34485, NZ 43941 45241)

Unclear cropmarks, possibly archaeological in origin? Date uncertain.

10.6 The Roman Period (AD 44 – 400)

With the defeat of the Brigantian tribal confederation, during the later part of the 1st century AD, the Magnesian Limestone Plateau fell under the control of an expanding Roman empire, along with the rest of what is now northern England. No sites which can definitely be dated to the Roman period have been identified in the Easington Study Area, although a late Roman belt buckle of 4th-century form is recorded as having been found by a metal detectorist in a field close to Thorpe Beck at the bottom of Andrew's Hill. However this probably just reflects the present state of our knowledge and the lack of intensive research in this part of East Durham. Even if there were no traces of Roman officialdom in the area, such as forts and roads with inscribed milestones, it is likely that the local population was still farming the area, just as it had been in the Iron Age. Initially, however this may have had relatively little impact on the rural settlement pattern with existing rectilinear settlements probably continuing in use.

10.6.1 Forts and Roads: The Roman military presence

The principal bases of Roman power in the wider area were the forts housing garrisons of auxiliary troops, all connected together by the metalled highways for which the Romans are famous. The nearest of these forts to Easington is located at Chester-le-Street 11 miles (18km) to the north-west. This was situated on the north-south road, known as Cade's Road, at the point where another route, known as the Wrekendyke, branched off to reach the fort at South Shields at the mouth of the Tyne. These forts were garrisoned from the early 2nd century right up to the late 4th century. The possible presence of another fort at Wearmouth,

forming part of the late Roman coastal defences has also been suggested, principally on documentary evidence, though definitive proof is lacking.

Cade's Road

Cade's Road takes its name from the 18th-century Durham antiquary who first traced its probable course (Bidwell and Hodgson 2009, 177; Margary 1973, 431-3, 441: roads 80a, 80b). It crossed the Tees somewhere near Middleton St George, between Darlington and Yarm, and after crossing the lower Tees plain, cut across the southern part of the East Durham Limestone Plateau and escarpment, its course northward being followed today by the A177 and B6291 from Sedgefield through the centre of Coxhoe and Bowburn, before it descended into the valley of the Wear and thence continued northwards to Newcastle. It thus passed some 8 miles (c.13km) to the west of Easington. It is less well understood than its more famous counterpart, Dere Street, further west, which was lined by forts at Piercebridge, Binchester, Lanchester and Ebchester. Chester-le-Street is the only fort known along Cade's Road, but recently evidence of a large civil settlement has been identified further south, beside Sedgefield (see below). This is equivalent in size to the substantial Romanised villages or small towns, known as *vici* (singular: *vicus*), which grew up outside the walls of each fort, and suggests there was a significant amount of commercial traffic along the road, which led directly south to the legionary and provincial headquarters at York.

A coastal plateau road?

Two other possible roads have been postulated as crossing the Magnesian Limestone Plateau (see Archaeo-Environment 2009, 51). One of these would have run east-west, perhaps connecting to a harbour at the mouth of the Tees or at Hartlepool with Cades Road near Coxhoe, and continuing westward along the limestone escarpment ridge through Ferryhill and Kirk Merrington to reach the fort at Binchester. Such a route might even have originated in the Iron Age to facilitate the inland distribution of salt panned at the mouth of the Tees.

Much more relevant to the present study, however, it has been argued that another route may have led southward from South Shields along the Limestone Plateau, running parallel with the coast. Such a highway could have passed through or close to the site of Easington like Sunderland Road (now the B1432), which is shown on maps from the early 18th century, though almost certainly much older, and was turnpiked in 1789, forming the precursor to the modern A19.

This road has been associated with a possible crossing of the River Wear at Hylton, where massive blocks of dressed stone, fixed with iron cramps and set in the river bed on a foundation of oak piles were found just downstream of the 18th/19th-century Hylton ferry crossing (see TWHER 286; Bidwell and Holbrook 1989, 112-13; Meikle and Newman 2007, 15). Known as the **Brigg stones** ('Brigstuns', 'Brigstanes') these are mentioned from the early 18th century onwards and shown on early maps of the river (e.g. Burleigh and Thompson 1737; Rennie 1819-20), but were largely removed in 1865 to allow easier passage of keelboats carrying coal to the port. The stones thus formed a continuous level structure above the river bed, submerged at high tide but forming a cascade at low tide, and it is suggested they formed a causeway or ford carrying a road across the river, or perhaps the foundation for a bridge.

The Brigg Stones generated considerable academic interest in the late 19th and early 20th century, but even then several local antiquarians expressed doubts and more recently scholars have tended to be sceptical of interpreting them as a Roman bridge or causeway (see for example Bidwell and Holbrook 1989, 113). The stonework could just as well be medieval, whether associated with a causeway, bridge or a weir for a mill, perhaps. Moreover the milestone of the 3rd-century emperor Gordian (238-44), supposedly found nearby at Ford, which could have represented strong supporting evidence, was in fact found

near Lanchester fort on Dere Street, far to the west. By the time Surtees saw it (1820, 306-7) it had been moved to Greenwell Ford, Lanchester. Others later misunderstood Surtees' description and assumed Ford in Sunderland was meant (see RIB 2295, *contra* Meikle and Newman 2007, 15; and Archaeo-Environment 2009, 51). Unfortunately, in the final analysis, the destruction of the Brigg Stones in 1865 means that it may never be possible to determine for certain what the date and function of this important structure was.

Nevertheless a Limestone Plateau route might have come into prominence in the late Roman period if the Durham coast was furnished with defences comparable to the well-known system of watchtowers present along the North Yorkshire coast. Often misleadingly termed signal stations, the Yorkshire sites have a particularly distinctive form comprising massive square towers enclosed within small fortlets, and all date to the late 4th century. Finds made by a local metal detectorist on Kinley Hill in Hawthorn Civil Parish, 2.5km north of Easington Colliery which include in excess of 120 Roman coins, almost exclusively of relatively late date (260–400 AD) might hint that it represented one such site. Beacon Hill within the atlas study area is another possible candidate based on its prominence, wide aspect and documented later use as a beacon site. There are also local traditions that the medieval church tower at Seaham was built with stone from a Roman tower. As yet however decisive confirmation that the system of late defences extended northwards from the Tees to the mouth of the Tyne is lacking. (The cancellation of the proposed community dig on Kinley Hill is particularly unfortunate in this respect.). Moreover the very different characteristics of the North Yorkshire coast on the one hand, with its many harbours, large and small, associated today with seaside towns and former fishing villages, and the Durham coast on the other, which represents something of a natural fortress, with its high cliffs and rocky foreshore and lack of a safe natural harbour between Hartlepool and the mouth of the Wear, all mean that there is no guarantee that these two stretches of coastline were treated the same way by the late Roman military authorities.

There must of course have been many other tracks and minor roads in use during the Roman period, indeed every farmstead would have required a track of some sort to move the farmer's produce to market for sale or to pay taxes. However the Roman state did not concern itself with such routes which would have been left to the local farming communities to maintain as best they might. The highways we typically think of as 'Roman Roads', deliberately surveyed and engineered with stone surfacing, which slice through the landscape rather like modern motorways or railways, were built to serve the military, logistics and communications needs of the imperial state. Constructed and maintained by the army or the local civic authorities (*civitates*), furnished with stations of the imperial postal service (*cursus publicus*), protected in the frontier zone of northern Britain by garrisoned forts and marked by milestones, which were often erected as much as symbols of propaganda and pledges of loyalty to the current emperor's regime as functional waymarkers to serve the traveller, these roads always represented a small minority of the routes in use by the provincial population at any given time.

10.6.2 Rural settlement in East Durham

Away from the forts and their Romanised civil settlements the rural settlement pattern in this period is poorly understood at the very localized level throughout much of County Durham, though although significant advances have been made recently, particularly further south in the Tees basin (cf. Proctor 2012, 11-13; Hewitt 2011, 68-70).

As noted above, occupation of some of the rectilinear enclosed settlements identified through aerial photography might conceivably continue from the Iron Age into the Roman period. Further south, in the Tees Basin some of the settlements appear to have evolved into Romanised estate centres, or **villas** as they are generally known, with examples being recognized in recent years at Quarry Farm near Ingleby Barwick, Chapel House Farm at

Dalton-on-Tees, Holme House near Piercebridge, Preston-on-Tees and Faverdale, north of Darlington (cf. Hewitt 2011, 68-70; Proctor 2012). Other sites, such as Catcote, seem to have remained lower status farmsteads but nevertheless acquired some Romanised trappings such as rectangular buildings with tiled roofs. Only one possible villa has as yet been recognized further north, however, namely at Old Durham, on the south-eastern outskirts of Durham city, close to the presumed course of Cade's Road, where a small bathhouse was discovered and excavated in the 1940s and 1950s (Richmond *et al.* 1944; Wright and Gillam 1951). None have so far been identified in the area around Easington. Nevertheless, although it remains the northernmost of these high status rural estate centres yet known in the Roman empire, the recent northward extension of broader villa distribution into the Tees valley has made Old Durham appear altogether less isolated than it did 20 or 30 years ago and it is possible that equivalent sites will eventually be recognized in the environs of Easington.

In addition, archaeologists have also begun to identify nucleated roadside villages, with the discovery, geophysical survey and partial excavation of a 2nd-3rd century site covering at least 30 ha at East Park, Sedgfield (Carne & Mason 2006; Mason 2007; Carne 2009; Petts & Gerrard 2006, 54). This settlement straddled Cade's Road, with a series of plots, enclosed by fences or ditches and sometimes containing timber buildings, lining the road and extending eastward of it along an irregular network of minor roads or tracks. The enclosed plots were used for a variety of purposes including small-scale industrial activity such as pottery manufacture and stockpens. It is likely that future developed-funded archaeological work will bring to light further examples of this type of site, sometimes termed a ladder settlement, along with more villas and also provide a clearer understanding of the lower status farmsteads of the period.

10.7 The Early Middle Ages – The Foundation of Easington

10.7.1 Introduction: problems of evidence

Easington is quite unusual in preserving a range of compelling archaeological evidence from the early medieval period. This takes the form of an important cemetery of 6th- to 7th-century date, several pieces of carved stonework found reused in the fabric of St Mary's Church and traces of a timber building beneath the east range of Seaton Holme, which could conceivably be of late Anglo-Saxon date.

This era is generally regarded as the most problematic in terms uncovering the settlement history in local communities like Easington. Much progress has undoubtedly been made in recent decades in illuminating the early medieval period in the North, with important excavations at key sites such as the monasteries of Jarrow, Monkwearmouth and Hartlepool, the royal seats of Bamburgh and Yeavering and lesser estate centres like Thirlings in the Millfield Basin. Evidence has also emerged (and is continuing to do so) of the fate of the Roman forts lining the Roman Roads of Dere Street and Cade's Road, notably Binchester, Piercebridge and South Shields, in the centuries immediately following the collapse of imperial authority (Ferris 2010; Cool and Mason, 2008, 308-10; Bidwell and Speak 1994). There is clear evidence that occupation continued at those sites well into the 5th century, echoing the findings from excavations at forts along Hadrian's Wall.

Recognising and then dating archaeological sites of the period are the key problems. There is the lack of common chronologically diagnostic finds, particularly pottery, associated with sites of this period, that is to say that even when archaeologists do find early medieval settlement sites they don't necessarily know they've found them because there are no early medieval finds to reveal the date of the settlement. Coins are very rare. There is little locally manufactured pottery in the North-East until very late in the period, so contemporary pottery

types are ones imported from continental Europe or the Mediterranean, which were consequently valuable, rarely circulating outside the elite centres. Diagnostic metalwork, such as brooches, is occasionally found but is likewise too scarce to provide sufficient evidence to reveal an entire settlement pattern. Indeed it can be argued that it is the absence of finds which betrays an early medieval settlement, or the early medieval phases within a longer-lived site.

Another issue is the difficulty of spotting known early medieval site types on aerial photographs. Thus groups of rectangular timber halls constructed using individual ground-fast posts set in post holes are practically invisible other than to the most determined scrutiny and perfect conditions. Even the sunken-floored buildings, also known by the German term *grubenhäuser* (or 'grub-huts' in archaeological slang), which often accompanied groups of rectangular timber halls, might be mistaken for geological features.

10.7.2 Early medieval cemeteries

One of the most distinctive types of evidence associated with this period is the practice of burying people in cemeteries. Though cremation burials still occur, sometimes reusing prehistoric barrows as funerary monuments, the signature form in this period comprises the burial of the intact body (inhumation) with grave goods, often weaponry such as spear and shield in the case of men whilst women were frequently interred with dress accoutrements such as brooches, which probably attached to the clothing they were dressed in at burial. Numerous examples of such sites have been found in East Yorkshire and further south, but they are rarer further north, with single burials being more common (perhaps representing the remains of local warlords or members of leading families). The most informative site of this type within the historic county of Durham is the large 6th-century cemetery containing 120 burials excavated at Norton, near Billingham in Cleveland (Sherlock and Welch 1992). Much smaller, but still important for our understanding of the period, is the cemetery found on Andrew's Hill (Site 17; HER 51; cf. Hamerow and Pickin 1995; Pickin 1991; 1993), south-west of Easington Village. Apart from the later (7th- and 8th-century) monastic cemeteries at Hartlepool and Monkwearmouth, this represents the one of only two cemeteries of this period known as yet in the Magnesian Limestone Plateau (the other being the eight or nine skeletons found in stone cists at Cornforth¹¹ in 1892 – Surtees 1823, 397; Mackenzie and Ross 1834, 321; Fordyce 1857, 400; Miket 1980, 292; Lucy 1999, 33). Other burials of similar date found in this area take the form of single burials, for example the burial found in 1775 beneath a cairn at Castle Eden (HER 162; cf. Austin 1987, 57-60; Miket 1980, 292; Lucy 1999, 33), 4km to the south-east, which was accompanied by an exceptionally fine, claw beaker, made of green-blue glass in the Rhineland in the late 5th or 6th century (and now in the British Museum), or the remains of a child interred with a single bead in a stone-lined grave, or cist, at Blackhall, 8km to the south-east (HER 526; Lucy 1999, 33). Sherlock and Welch (1992, 5) note, however, that the Castle Eden burial, for instance, could easily prove to be the only recognised part of a substantial cemetery.

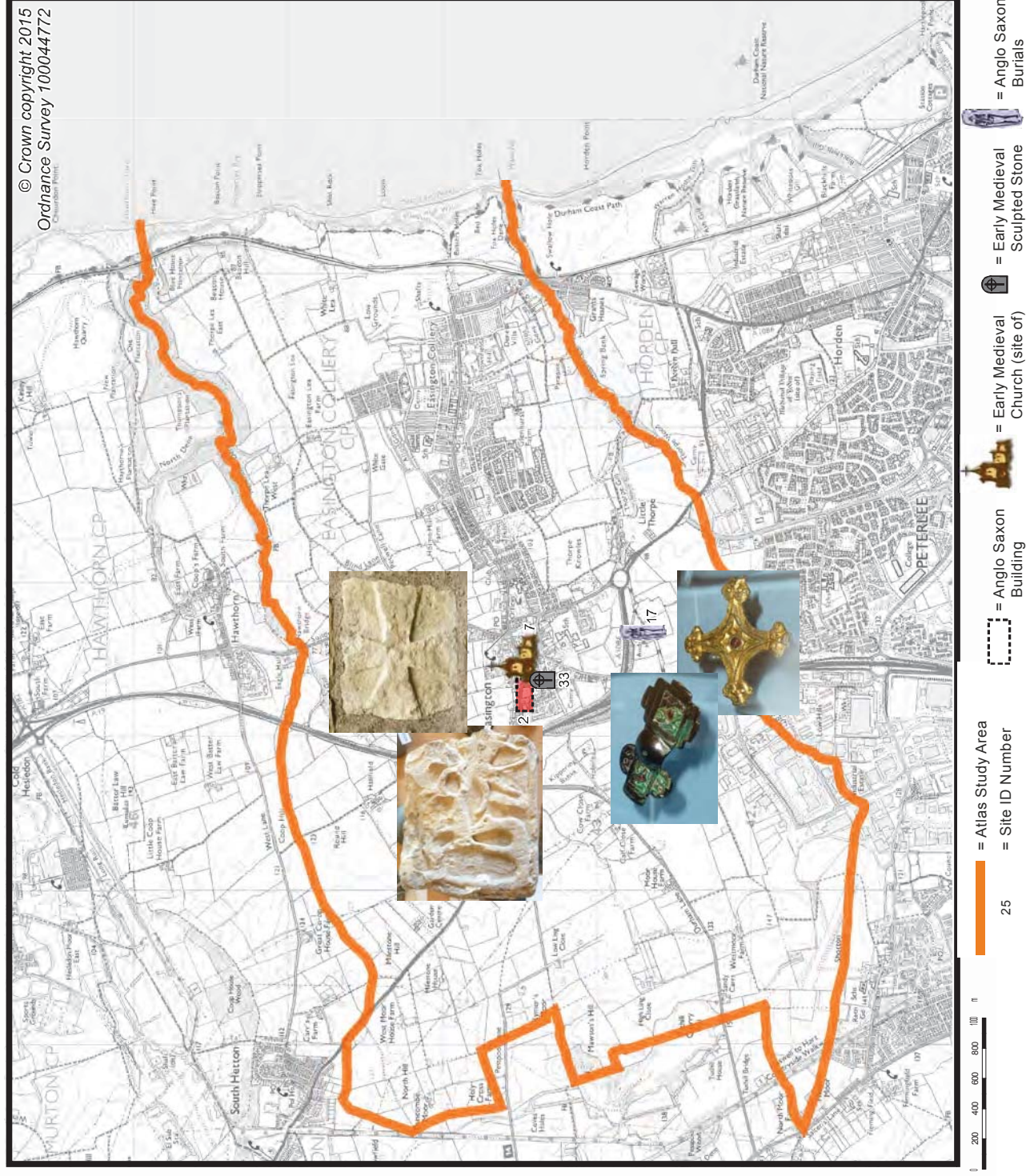
Andrew's Hill cemetery

The cemetery on Andrew's Hill was discovered by metal-detectorists between 1988 and 1991 and subsequently excavated by archaeologists in 1991 and 1992. As was the case at Norton, the bulk of material recovered was of 6th-century date, though there were a few finds belonging to the 7th century and others which were just possibly made in the late 5th century, implying that use of the burial ground continued into the 7th century whilst some of the items deposited in the graves may have been regarded as ancient/precious family heirlooms.

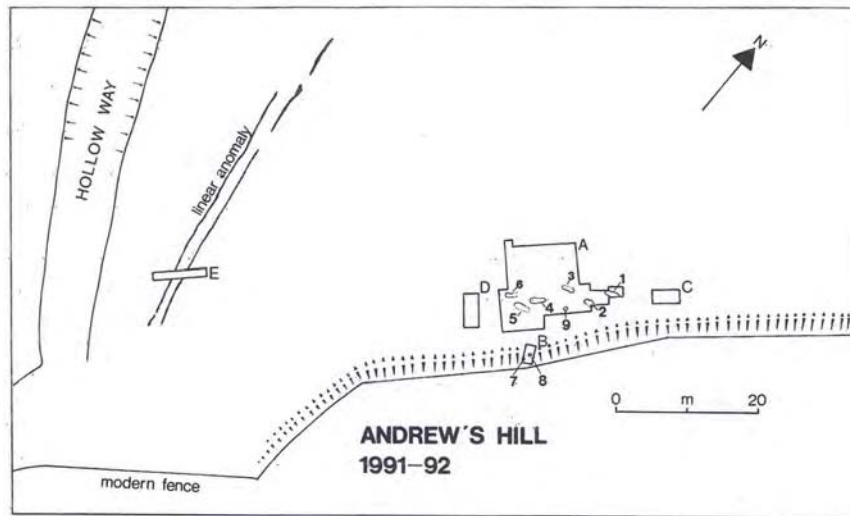
¹¹ Two of the Cornforth burials were found with iron spearheads, whilst the bones of a horse and probably a dog were found in one (Lucy 1999, 33).

EASINGTON ATLAS

- EARLY MEDIEVAL SITES AND FINDS -



Andrew's Hill - An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery



Plan of excavations at Andrew's Hill, Easington (DAJ 11 1995 p38)



Iron annular brooch with mineralised textile adhering from Grave 1.



A selection of glass & amber beads from Grave 1.



Copper alloy sheet bracelet from Grave 2.



Copper alloy cruciform mount with human face masks at terminals.



Copper alloy cruciform decorative brooch from Grave 2.



Copper alloy mount from Grave 2, originally gilded & silvered.



Cast copper alloy small-long brooch, unstratified.



Cast copper alloy cruciform brooch from Grave 7.

Only nine burials have been identified, of which six produced actual skeletal remains, the other three being revealed merely by discrete clusters of artefacts. All the burials were inhumations, i.e. they were originally deposited as intact bodies in discrete grave cuts rather than being cremated with the resultant remains being gathered up and deposited in the ground in a pottery urn. In this respect it resembles Norton, where there were only three urned cremations as compared to 117 inhumations. The bodies were laid out in variety of positions – extended (in one case with slightly flexed legs), crouched and prone with face down. It would appear to have been much smaller than cemeteries like Norton, but many other finds recovered by metal-detecting, which would represent a potentially substantial number of additional burials. The surviving graves thus represent an unknown but probably small percentage of the original burials in the cemetery. None of the surviving burials was necessarily complete, owing to plough damage, though three (1, 2 and 7) were clearly well-equipped and one of these (2, a possible child burial) was particularly richly furnished.

Four of the burials were clearly female (1, 2, 7 and 8) and one male (6), based on the character of grave goods deposited with each and, in some cases, skeletal remains, and overall it is likely that six were female and three male with one of the female burials possibly being that of a child (there were virtually no skeletal remains but this richly furnished burial included a child's bracelet). In general the preservation of skeletal evidence was poor in large part due to the damage inflicted by ploughing. Four of the burials were orientated east-west, which would be compatible with Christian rites, though it does not prove such an association, whilst two others were aligned NE-SW.

Finds include dress fittings and other ornaments, such as brooches, buckles and other belt fittings, rings, beads, wrist clasps and a child's bracelet, personal equipment, knives and a couple of sherds of locally made pottery. The brooches were of various forms – cruciform, annular, penannular, a single disc brooch and the oddly termed small-long brooches (which represent cheap imitations of other types such as cruciform brooches). Only one weapon was found, the ferrule from the bottom end of a spear (though the accompanying spearhead was not found), associated with a rare type of prone male burial (Grave 6). Particularly interesting is the iron chatelaine set from Grave 1, an assemblage typically associated with female burials, symbolising Anglo-Saxon women's role as guardians of the family valuables (Hamerow and Pickin 1995, 43, 47 fig. 4; Sherlock and Welch 1992, 53). This comprised a five latch-lifters hung on a double ring, an iron knife, a pair of copper alloy tweezers, all contained in a cloth pouch, which has rotted away, attached to an ivory bag ring. Other notable finds include two cruciform brooches (Graves 2 and 7) and two, almost identical, gilded and chip-carved, cruciform mounts found by a metal detectorists. These latter would have decorated a prized possession such as a wooden box or chest, each mount being furnished with a central garnet and four arms adorned with human face-mask terminals. Finds not typical of the area included a wire inlaid buckle, which is likely to be of Kentish origin (Grave 7) and probably of 7th-century date (Hamerow and Pickin 1995, 42, 51, 53 fig. 9), plus the disc brooch, more common of southern and eastern England and the penannular brooch characteristic of the western parts of Britain, but simple annular brooches seem to have been the most common in the Easington cemetery.

The excavators (*ibid.*, 45), citing Sherlock and Welch (1992, 105), suggested that the rather mixed grave assemblages characteristic of the earliest Anglian cemeteries in Bernicia (Northumbria north of the Tees) reflects communities or second or even third generation settlers from regions further south in Anglian England, and intermarriage with the indigenous population. They considered that the Andrew's Hill burials represent one of the small groups of 'free farmers' which are thought to have comprised the Anglian settlement of the Tyne Tees region in the 6th century. At any rate the existence of the Andrew's Hill cemetery certainly confirms that there was a community in the area of Easington by the 6th century. This must have been associated with settlement somewhere in the vicinity, though its precise location and form is unknown.

As most of the finds fit comfortably in the 6th century with only a few which could belong to the following century, it is likely that usage of the burial ground did not extend beyond the early 7th century, and it would certainly have been abandoned by the time the Church of St Mary the Virgin was founded on the site of the later village. The advent of Christianity brought with it new burial rites with grave goods no longer being placed in the burial with the corpse.

Ēsa's people?

When the vill of Easington first appears in the documented historical record, in a passage of the mid to late 11th-century *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* relating to events at the beginning of the 10th century, it is designated 'Esingtun'. The placename specialist, Victor Watts, has interpreted this name as the signifying, in Old English, 'the farm, village or estate called after Ēsa or Ēsi' (2002, 37). This might signify that the vill originated as a farming community dependent on a lord called Esa or Esi. Were the people buried on Andrew's Hill in the 6th century perhaps the followers or tenants of this lord or did the Easington only acquire its name at a later stage, perhaps after the foundation of a church and/or the establishment of the nucleated village settlement on its present site?

Immigrant Angles or local Britons?

In the past the existence of such inhumation burials, was seen as reflecting the arrival of a new population, Anglo-Saxons, from the Dutch, German and Danish coastal districts. The existence of such population movement is difficult to deny, given the linguistic change from Latin and Brittonic to English as the spoken language during these centuries, but the extent of that movement is now the subject of much debate. That is to say it is uncertain what proportion of the people Bede calls Anglians or Saxons in the late 7th- and early 8th century were direct descendents of men and women who had crossed the North Sea at some stage to settle in Britain and how many were just members of the local population who had adopted Anglo-Saxon customs, culture and language as they were absorbed into the following of successful immigrant warriors.

10.7.3 Carved stonework

The next archaeological window on the origins of Easington is provided by two pieces of Pre-Conquest sculpture found built into the walls of the parish church of St Mary the Virgin. The two stones had evidently been recycled as building material in the later Norman church (see Chapter 7 for more detail). They comprise:

- 1) A small slab of Magnesian Limestone with a relief-carved design of an expanded-arm cross with a circular raised boss at its centre (Ryder 1985, plate 26), built into the external face of the west wall of the tower, just above the ground. It is thought either to be a gravestone or perhaps a dedication cross, possibly of 10th- or 11th-century date (Cramp 1984, 75).
- 2) A block of white Magnesian limestone carved with relief motifs including a line of quite delicate plaitwork, first noted during an Archaeological Assessment of St Mary's Church made in 1994, having previously perhaps concealed by mortar. The architectural fragment was built into the external face of the south wall of the south aisle, 1.6 m above ground level and more or less directly above the base of the jamb of the former south door. On removal from the wall, in 2001, to prevent erosion of the carving, another carved face was revealed which preserved relief carving of animals and a looped and branching motif, perhaps intended as a tree. The animals comprised on the right, probably a dog, facing right; its head missing; and to the left, a serpentine form descending the left edge of the stone then twisting back upwards to a well-shaped snake-like head biting at a motif continuous with its fore-leg.

Initially identified as being of 8th-century date, it would now seem more likely, on stylistic grounds, that the second stone, like the first, should be attributed to the 10th or early 11th-century when good-quality carving was revived in the region, the appearance of a serpent- or dragon-like beast also hinting at Scandinavian influence. This would imply that there was already a church at this location by the 10th or early 11th century, whereas the oldest part of present church, namely the tower at the west end, appears to date no earlier than the mid-12th century. Moreover the possible traces of an earlier gable lines have been discerned in the west wall of the tower (see Chapter 7). If correctly identified this could signify that the lower part of the tower originally formed a gabled western porch or *porticus*, a characteristic Saxon, and indeed relatively early Saxon, structure. However the evidence is too limited to be certain. The usual diagnostic features of Pre-Conquest stonework are fabric and in particular angle quoins. At Easington the fabric offers no real clue as to date; it is of roughly-coursed local limestone, virtually identical above and below the apparent gable lines, and the angle quoins of the tower and west end of the nave are all concealed by substantial later buttresses.

Discussion – minsters and parish churches

How would such a church have come to be established at Easington by the 10th or early 11th century? Eric Cambridge (1984, 79;) has suggested that Easington may have been the site of a pre-Viking, secular minster church responsible for the pastoral care of a large area which evolved into Easington parish when the parochial system began to crystallise into its definitive form in the 11th century. It is thought that monasteries provided much of the pastoral care associated with the Anglo-Saxon church, certainly covering the population of their own very extensive estates. However the finds of pre-Viking, carved stonework and references to monasteries by contemporary historians like Bede, which together form the most widespread indicators of such sites are not sufficiently broadly and uniformly distributed throughout the region as to suggest that all pastoral care could have been provided that way. Instead it is thought that the large gaps between the monastic territories were covered by churches staffed by secular clergy – priests rather than monks (cf. Cambridge 1984, 78-82; Cambridge and Rollason 1995, 96; Blair 2005, 313). This type of church, probably also termed a *monasterium* in Latin – *mynster* in Old English – would have covered larger areas than the typical later parish church, districts which may have been based on royal shire estates in some cases. Though many of the minster districts were later subdivided when the parish system developed, some of the larger later parishes, such as Chester-le-Street, Houghton, Brancepeth and Elvet, as well as Easington itself, may have retained the boundaries of earlier minster territories essentially intact. The lack of any carved stonework from such sites pre-dating the end of the 9th century implies these churches were built of timber and not reconstructed in stone until after the Viking invasions (and in many cases not before the Norman Conquest). In the case of Easington, the finds of carved stonework indicate that rebuilding in stone occurred by the 10th or early 11th century. This may be a consequence of the acquisition of ‘Easingtonshire’ – as we may term the surrounding district – by the Community of St Cuthbert at the beginning of the 10th century.

10.7.4 The Community of St Cuthbert and the bishopric of Durham

To gain a clearer understanding of the early history of Easington church and the district it served we need to look at the history of the dominant religious institution in the region in this period, known as the Community of St Cuthbert (*congregatio sancti Cuthberti*). This ecclesiastical community was originally based on Lindisfarne (Holy Island), and comprised both a monastery and the seat of the northernmost bishopric of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria. As a result it was especially closely associated with the cult of St Cuthbert, the most celebrated of the northern saints, who was the monastery’s prior and then bishop of Lindisfarne in the late 7th century¹². During in the late 9th century, however, the community left its island home and, carrying the famously undecayed body of their saint with them in its coffin, eventually re-

¹² Cuthbert was Bishop of Lindisfarne in 685-7.

established the seat of the bishopric at Chester-le-Street, in 883, before finally moving even further south, to the naturally defended site of Durham, at the end of the 10th century, just over a 100 years later.

The most important source for these events, amongst the various documents preserved by the Durham Cuthbertine community, is the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, which was probably in the mid- to late 11th century, at the very end of the Anglo-Saxon period or even immediately following the Norman Conquest (though some scholars have suggested a date around the mid-10th century, as much as a hundred years earlier). It is clear that the Lindisfarne community originally held relatively little land between the Tyne and the Tees, but from the mid-9th century onwards various entries in the *Historia* documents a string of land grants which the community received in that area to the point where it became the dominant landowner there. The earliest of these occurred during the incumbency of Bishop Ecgrid (c. 830-845) and took the form of a substantial grant, comprising the area between the Wear and Tees to the west of Dere Street (*HSC*, 9). This might reflect the acquisition of control by Lindisfarne over pre-existing monasteries in that area notably Gainford. This grant seems to roughly coincide with the disappearance c. 830 of the Bishopric of Hexham, which had previously overseen religious life in that part of the kingdom. It has been suggested that the two bishops supported different candidates in the vicious struggle for royal succession to the Northumbrian throne with Lindisfarne backing the winner and Hexham the loser and that as a result the Hexham bishopric may have been suppressed, whilst Lindisfarne was correspondingly enlarged (Cambridge pers. comm.; Rollason 2003, 247; and in general Higham 1986, 290-92). It may have been County Durham's increasing importance to them which caused the bishop and monks relocate there from north Northumberland in the late 9th century, rather than the threat of Viking raiding for instance. By moving to Chester-le-Street, the community was shifting closer to the new centre of political power in Viking York, ensuring it could better exert its influence to protect its recent acquisitions in County Durham, and was well-placed to expand its possessions there. This policy appears to have been successful and the Community was subsequently the beneficiary of further grants during the period from the late 9th to the 11th century, bestowed not only by the Viking rulers of York but also by the kings of newly emergent realm of England – notably Athelstan and Canute – plus prominent local lords (Roberts 2008a, 154-7, 226-36), all recorded by the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*.

10.7.5 Easington in the 10th-12th centuries

Two entries in particular, in the *Historia*, relating to events at the very end of the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th, are relevant to the emergence of Easington as a parish and estate centre (*HSC* 19b, 22; cf. commentary, pp. 95, 104-5; appendix II, pp. 124-9):

HSC 19b. So then, before God called this faithful king [Alfred of Wessex] to himself from this life [[in 899], certain estates were added to the church of the holy confessor [St Cuthbert]. For Eadred the above mentioned abbot [of Carlisle] bought from the aforesaid King Guthred [probably Viking king at York]¹³, and from the Danish host which under him had divided the land among themselves, these villas: Monk Hesleden (*Seletun*), Horden (*Horetun*), the two Yodens (*duas Geodene*, i.e. Little Eden and Castle Eden), Hulam (*Holum*), Hutton Henry (*Hotun*), *Twilingatun* (location unknown)¹⁴, and conferred them on St Cuthbert.

¹³ Guthred also figures as Guthfrith in the sources. A West Saxon chronicler, Æthelweard, relates that a King Guthfrith was buried in York Minster in 895 (Rollason, 2003, 216).

¹⁴ In *HSC* 21, however, it is stated that Tilred, Abbot of Heversham, bought Castle Eden (*Iodene Australem*) from the West Saxon King Edward (899-924), giving half to St Cuthbert and half to the monastery of Norham, whilst Bernard the priest gave the vill of *Twilingatun* to St Cuthbert as a condition for being allowed to join the Community. This is dated to the reign King Edward (899-924) and seems incompatible with *HSC* 19. The unlocated *Twilingatun* may be the vill somewhere to the south of Easington referred to in the Boldon Book as

HSC 22. In these days Elfred son of Brihtwulf, fleeing pirates, came over the mountains in the west and sought the mercy of St Cuthbert and Bishop Cutheard so that they might present him with some lands. Then Bishop Cutheard [901-15] out of devotion to God and out of love for St Cuthbert presented to him these townships (*villas*): Easington (*Esington*), Monk Hesleden (*Seletun*), Little Thorpe (*Thorep*), Horden (*Horedene*), Yoden (*Iodene*, i.e. Little Eden), the two Shottons (*duas Sceottun*), South Eden (*Iodene Australem*, i.e. Castle Eden), Hulam (*Holum*), Hutton Henry (*Hotun*), *Twilingatun*, Billingham with its dependencies (*Billingham cum suis appendiciis* – probably another, separate composite estate), Sheraton (*Scurufatun*). All these townships, as I said, the bishop presented to Elfred, provided that he be faithful to him and the congregation and render full service for them.

These two entries relate to a group of villas which together form the bulk of the later parishes of Easington and Monk Hesleden (including Castle Eden parish which was probably carved out of Monk Hesleden parish during the 12th century). Only Hawthorn and the Haswells (Great and Little), which later formed northern and north-western districts of Easington parish, are omitted entirely. What we are perhaps seeing here in the listing of these places is the Community's acquisition of a *shire* or composite estate, or perhaps two conjoined shires, centred on Monk Hesleden and Easington (see Chapter 8 for discussion of shire estates). The Community then granted the combined estate to a refugee noble, Elfred, along with another composite estate centred on Billingham, thereby incorporating him and any armed following he might have into the its network of dependents and supporters. The religious community probably did not relinquish full control, but conceded to Elfred the use of the revenue from these estates.

It is unclear whether the Easington/Hesleden estate already existed by the end of the 9th century or was formed in the course of these events. Certainly several places mentioned in the second entry were omitted from the first, including Easington itself as well as Little Thorpe, the two Shottons and Sheraton, which might imply the components of the estate were in the process of being assembled at this time. However this might place too heavy a burden on this particular historical record. As noted above (10.7.3) It has been argued that Easington is a good candidate to be the site of a pre-Viking, secular minster church which would have served a large district perhaps equivalent to the later parish (Cambridge 1984, 79) and Cambridge has further suggested that Easington and Monk Hesleden may originally have represented a juxtaposed pairing of monastic and secular centres of a kind familiar in Northumbria (cf. for example royal Bamburgh and monastic Lindisfarne or likewise Corbridge and Hexham), with Monk Hesleden representing the monastic site and Easington the secular one. In that case these estates may have originated earlier, in the heyday of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria in the 8th and 9th centuries perhaps. Unfortunately Monk Hesleden church was scandalously demolished, virtually overnight, around 1966 and it is therefore impossible to say whether, like Easington, its medieval fabric too might have contained fragments of carved stonework of Anglo-Saxon date.

At any rate, all this implies that Easington, and Little Thorpe too for that matter, was distinct a place with a designated territory, certainly by the mid- to late 11th century AD when the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* was compiled, and probably already by the early 900s, the date of the particular events referred to.

The *Historia* relates that Elfred Brihtwulfing, the Cuthbertine client, was subsequently expelled following a new Viking invasion led by King Rægnald, c. 918, who divided the

Twizell (*Tuisela*) and is perhaps identical to the vill and estate later known as Nesbitt located on the south side of Monk Hesleden in the angle between Hesleden Dene and Bellows Burn.

Community of St Cuthbert's Magnesian Limestone Plateau lands between two of his followers (*HSC* 22-23). The lands from the vill called Iodene (Castle Eden or Little Eden) as far as Billingham (*a villa quae vocatur Iodene usque ad Billingham*) were given to a powerful warrior call Scula, whilst those for Iodene as far as the River Wear were granted to one Onlafbald (*HSC* 23). It is likely that the spectacular gorge of Castle Eden Dene, formed the boundary between these two grants, providing as it did an abundantly clear demarcation. The Community must, however, have regained control of these estates at some point, probably later in the 10th century, as Easington, Little Thorpe, Shotton and other of the named villas were held by the Bishop of Durham when the Boldon Book was compiled in the late 12th century (see below: *10.8.1 Lordship and land tenure 1100-1500*). Likewise Monk Hesleden was granted to Durham Priory by Bishop William de St Calais in the late 11th century according to the Durham *Liber Vitae* (*LVD* 49v), the bishop and priory being the two heirs to the patrimony of St Cuthbert's Community.

The archaeological evidence

Some evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation around the church may have been found during an archaeological watching brief associated with the refurbishment of the medieval rectory and manor house, Seaton Holme. A post hole, foundations and earth bank were all observed during archaeological monitoring works on the east side of the 13th-century hall, which the excavator interpreted these as being parts of a late Anglo-Saxon building and enclosure (Site 2; HER 3866).

EARLY MEDIEVAL INVENTORY

Andrew's Hill, Easington, (Site: 17, HER: 51, NZ 41700 42700)

An Anglo-Saxon cemetery identified by a chance metal detector find and confirmed by trial excavation. A trackway and bank was revealed and graves located. There is a plough damaged linear cemetery. Dated to the C6 or early C7 by the grave goods which included cruciform small-long and annular brooches, glass and amber beads and an iron chatelaine set. Bone survival was very poor due to the ground conditions and modern deep ploughing techniques. It was located on the brow of a steep Hill facing eastwards. It is especially notable for being one of the few pagan Anglian cemeteries located North of the Tees.

St. Mary's Sculpture 1, Easington, (Site: 33, HER: 747, NZ 4141 4345)

A cross-slab in the west wall of the church tower (outside), c.1ft. above the ground. Height 39.5cm. It is worn, but a type B6 cross may be discerned, suggesting that this was a site of earlier Christian worship.

Date: C10 or C11.

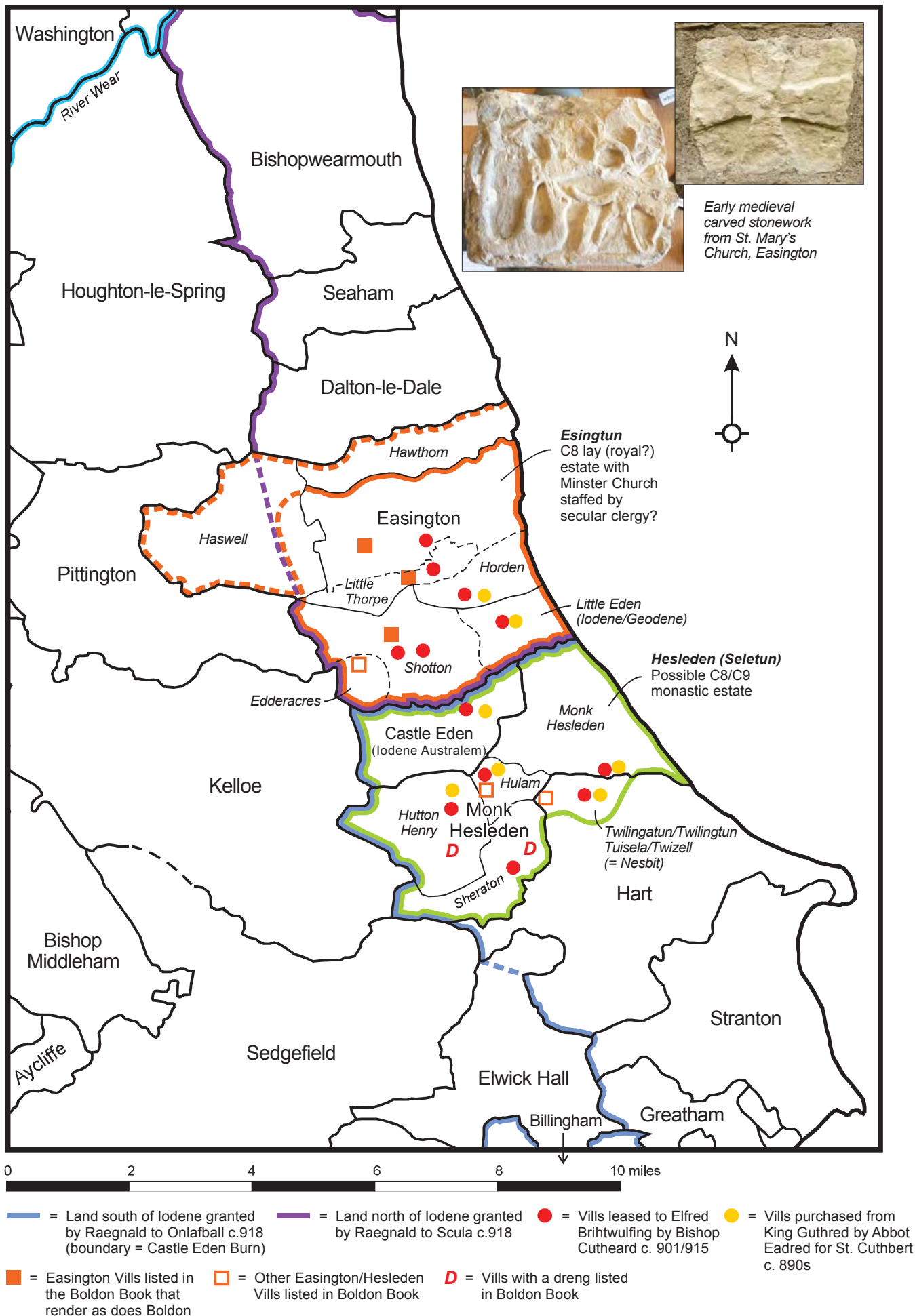
St. Mary's Sculpture 2, Easington, (Site: 74, NZ 4142 4344)

Block of white Magnesian limestone with relief carving on two sides – delicate plaitwork on one and carving of animals (dog and serpent) and a looped and branching motif, perhaps a tree, on the other. Initially identified in 1994 in S wall of S aisle (external face). Removed from wall in 2001 at which stage the face with figured carving was revealed.

Date: Probably C10 or early C11, but could perhaps be C8.

Seaton Holme, (Site: 2, HER: 3866, NZ 413 435)

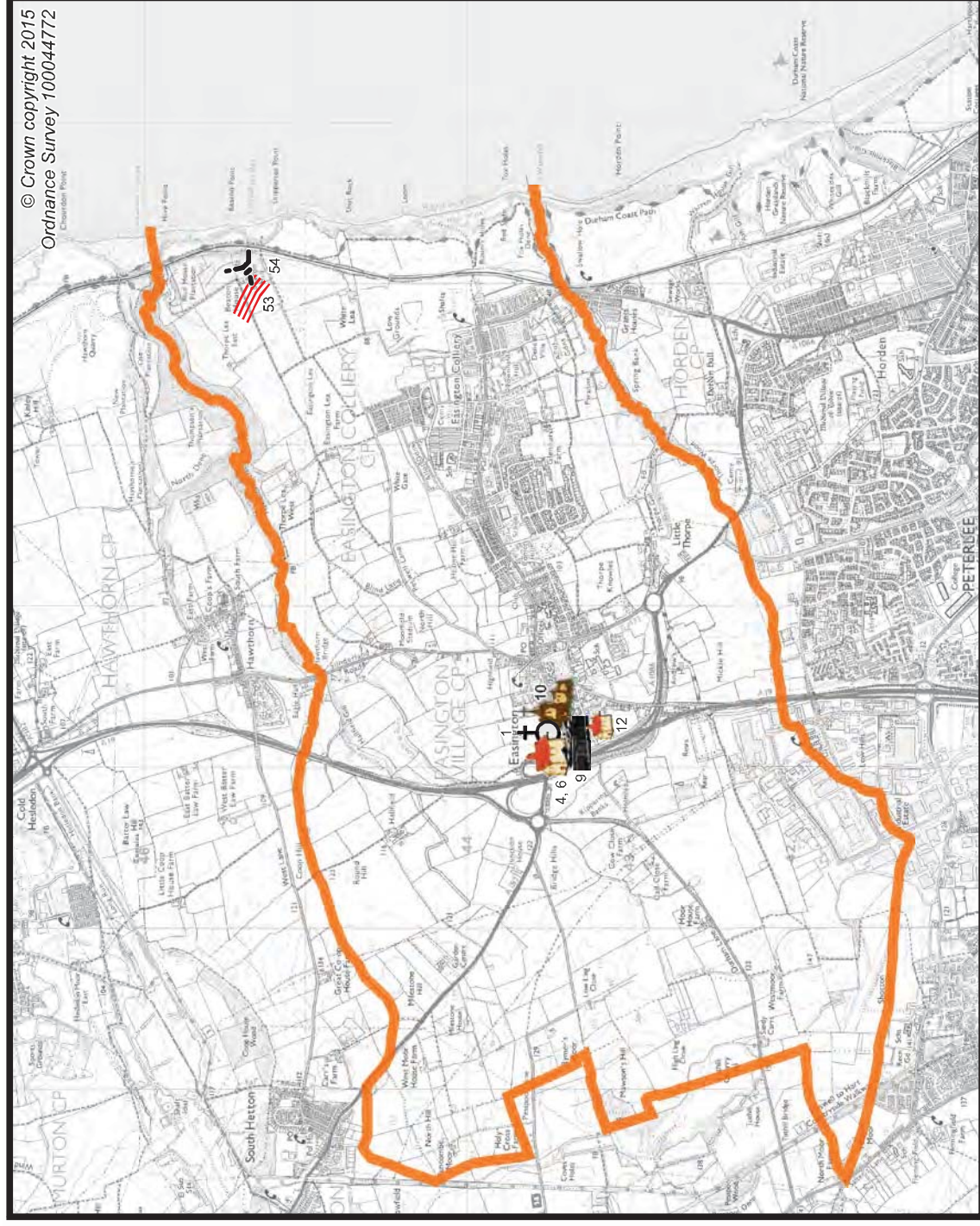
Post hole, foundations and earth bank all observed during archaeological monitoring works on the 13th century Rectory building at Seaton Holme, Easington. The excavator interpreted these as being parts of a late Anglo-Saxon building and enclosure.



Documentary evidence relating to late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Easington (based on entries in the Historia de Sancto Cuthberto and the Boldon Book).

EASINGTON ATLAS

- MEDIEVAL SITES AND FINDS -



- 25 = Atlas Study Area
- 1 = Site Gazetteer ID Number
- ♂ = Chapel
- 🏰 = Manor House
- 🏰 = Farm
- 🏰 = Church
- 🏰 = Tomb Effigy
- 🏰 = Beacon
- 🏰 = Ridge & Furrow

10.8 The High Middle Ages (1066 – c. 1540)

10.8.1 Lordship and land tenure 1100-1500

The lords of the *Haliwerfolc* - Bishop, Prior and knight

Following the Norman Conquest, the hereditary priests, who had comprised the Community of St Cuthbert since the departure from Holy Island in the late 9th century, were replaced by a fully monastic convent of Benedictine monks, established by Bishop William de St-Calais in 1083 and attached to the rebuilt cathedral (Aird 1998, 100-141). The great landholdings of the Church of St Cuthbert were then divided between the Benedictine priory and the bishop (Aird 1998, 145-7, 155-66). In addition, during the period up to 1150, the bishop granted some of his estates to a number of barons and knights – the *barones et fideles sancti Cuthberti*. (In some cases this may have done no more than confirm local families in the possession of estates they already held.) As a consequence of these two processes the bishop came to be recognised as the universal, superior landlord between the Tees and Tyne – the area known as the *Haliwerfolc* (literally ‘the people of the saint’, i.e. St Cuthbert) or simply the Bishopric. That is to say he was not only a major landowner in his own right, but also the ‘sole landlord’, subordinate only to the king (Liddy 2008, 25). Even those estates which the bishop did not hold directly and which were held instead either by the priory or by his barons and knights were all notionally held of the bishop as ‘tenant in chief’ in a feudal relationship.

Thus landed estates in medieval County Durham, a large proportion of which must previously have been held by the disbanded Cuthbertine community, now fell into three categories of lordship:

1. The bishop’s directly managed estates – an extensive collection of lands distributed throughout the region retained under the bishop’s immediate control.
2. The patrimony of the cathedral priory established in 1083 or its subordinate daughter monasteries, or ‘cells’, such as Finchale priory or Jarrow and Monkwearmouth priories – forming another large block dispersed throughout the region¹⁵.
3. A third category held by the subordinate barons and knights who were the bishop’s feudal tenants and formed his military following.

The creation of this last group, sometimes termed the ‘knights of St Cuthbert’, was by a process known as ‘subinfeudation’, whereby the bishop retained nominal possession, as the superior lord, over the land granted to the baron or knight, but in practice the recipient exercised largely unfettered control over their fiefs, extracting rents and labour services from the peasants of the manor. Consequently the actions of these manorial lords would have had a much greater day-to-day impact on the life of village communities which fell under their control than would those of the nominal overlord, the bishop.

In return for their feudal holdings – known as ‘feoffs’ or ‘fees’ – the inferior lords were supposed to provide a specified number of knights to perform military service in support of the bishop, the tenant in chief, who was himself bound to provide the king with military assistance when so requested. Some of these subordinate lords, those holding the largest number of knight’s fees, as they were termed, and most numerous estates, would in turn have enfeoffed followers of their own to enable them to fulfil their military obligation to the bishop. The bishop’s feudal tenants were also supposed to attend his court and generally act as faithful, supportive vassals, forming what is known as an honorial community, honour

¹⁵ In practice the estates held by the cells like Finchale were often conflated with those of Durham in medieval records, with those held by Finchale for example often being referred to casually as estates of the main priory.

being another term for barony (for the composition of this group of barons and knights in the 12th century see Aird 1998, 184-226; Scammell 1956, 222-9).

How did these processes affect to Easington and surrounding settlements?

Lordship in Easington and its environs

Easington itself, including the bulk of Little Thorpe, was held directly by the bishop, as was Shotton to the south. Some other vill in this part of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau, such as Twizzell, Hutton Henry, Hulam and Sheraton were granted in their entirety to tenants of a peculiar type known as drengs, who combined some of the characteristics of free tenants with specific labour services of specialised type such as carrying messages which would be more typical of servile tenants.

The Priory's estates

The Priory, by contrast held the vill of Dalton-le-Dale to the north and Monk Hesleden to the south. These formed part of the Benedictine Priory's estate in the 12th century, when abundant records first become available, implying that they had probably formed part of the holdings of the pre-Norman Community of St Cuthbert.¹⁶ Elsewhere in this part of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau the monks also held some land in Castle Eden to the south, though this amounted to only a proportion of the township, the larger part being held by Guisborough Priory, plus, at various times, the farm of Hardwick, north of Monk Hesleden, and smaller properties in Hawthorn, Hulam and Hutton Henry. Very late in the Middle Ages (1489) the Priory even acquired a freehold tenement in Little Thorpe (see Lomas and Piper, *Bursars Rentals*, 207; DCD 2.10.Spec.29). The Priory's dependent cell, Finchale Priory, also held considerable land in the western part of Haswell centred on its farm (*manerium*) of Haswell Grange, near present-day Elemore Hall.

The knights' estates

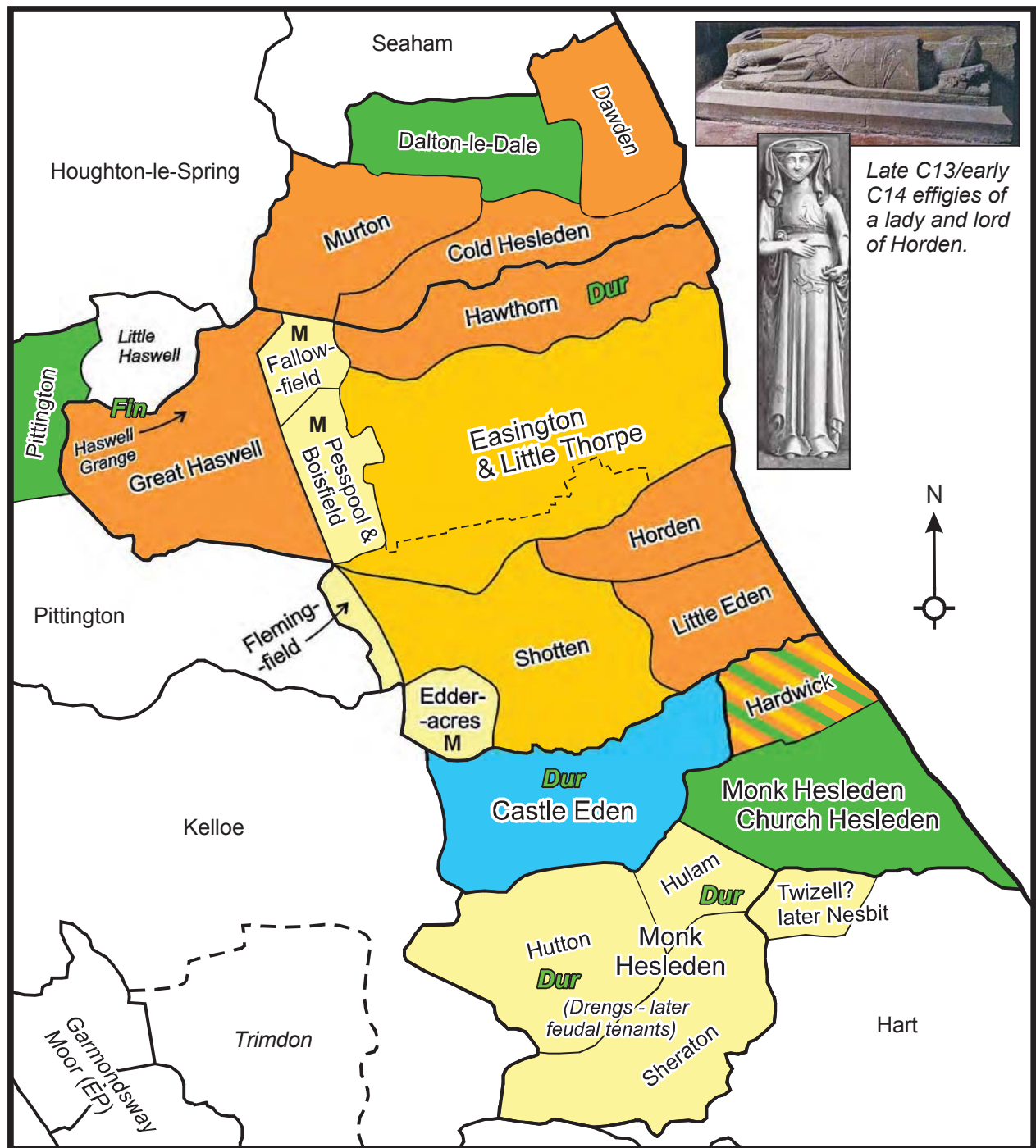
Other neighbouring townships, notably Hawthorn, Horden, Little Eden (Yoden), and Great Haswell, were held by various secular lords, as feudal tenants of the bishop, as was part of Little Thorpe. It is difficult to trace the tenure of these vill continuously through the entire period from the Norman Conquest to the end of the Middle Ages. The sequence becomes much clearer from the 14th century onwards when the surviving abstracts of the Inquisitions Post Mortem (IPM) relating to the barons and knights of the Bishopric commence (see below). Thus in 1385, for example, the IPM for John Thorpe records that he had held lands in Thorpe by knight's service, suit of court and 3d rent for every acre (cited by Surtees 1816, 11; cf. *Cursitors Records II*, 268). Because it was a feudal holding (fief), rather than free tenancies for instance, there is no mention of this in the roughly contemporary Hatfield Survey, nor in the Boldon Book some 200 years earlier, and there is no means of knowing when the original grant occurred.

Some early Anglo-Norman lords are known however. In particular, in the 12th century, Horden and Hawthorn were both recorded in the possession of relatives of Rannulf Flambard (1099 x 1128), the bishop who seems to have been responsible for establishing many of the Bishopric's baronial families (Scammell 1956, 219-20; Aird 1998, 204). Thus Flambard's son, William fitz Rannulf, held Hawthorn for the service of one knight as well as Houghall, Harraton and the two Herringtons (East and West), also for the service of one knight (*DEC*, no. 11, dated 1114-1116; nos 12-13 are slightly later copies), whilst Geoffrey fitz Richard – probably the bishop's great nephew – held Horden and Silksworth for the

¹⁶ Both vill figure in earliest full list of Durham priory's estates, a diploma purportedly issued by Bishop William of St Calais in 1083 (*Daltun* and *Hæseldene*: *DEC*, no. 3, p. 8; *FPD*, xxxviii-xliii; cf. Aird 1998, 159-62), but actually a forgery compiled by the Durham monks in the early 12th century (certainly post-1107 and probably c. 1123).

Easington Atlas

Medieval Lordship in the Easington Area



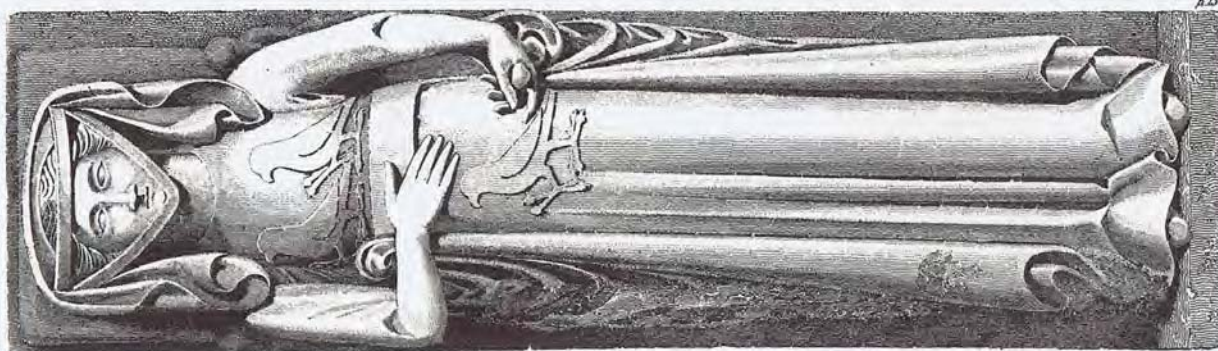
- = Bishop's Estates
 = Bishop's Demesne Manors
 = Durham & Finchale Priory Estates
 = Guisborough Priory Estates
- Dur** = Location of Durham Priory Land
 = Estate's of Bishop's Barons & Knights (feudal tenants)
 = Labour service performed by tenants of outlying villis on bishop's demesne farms
- Fin** = Location of Finchale Priory Land
 = Manorial farms carved out of Easington Moor

Effigies from St. Mary's Church, Easington



Effigy of a Lady in St. Mary's Church, Easington

Female Effigy in the South wall of Easington Church.



Effigy of a Lady in St. Mary's Church, Easington by E. Blore 1816 (Surtees History of Durham)



Effigy of a Lord in St. Mary's Church, Easington

service of 1½ knights (cf. *DEC*, no. 23, p. 103). William's son, Thomas, was confirmed in possession of his father's lands by Bishop Hugh du Puiset between 1154 and 1158 (*Episcopal Acta*, no. 153), and both Geoffrey and Thomas were listed amongst the knights of the honour of St Cuthbert in the return made by the bishop of Durham in response to the nationwide feudal survey initiated by Henry II in 1166 (Aird 1998, 186, 204-5). As well as Horden and Silksworth, Geoffrey also held Ravensworth, Eighton and Lamesley in the Team valley of NW Durham, plus Homildon south of Pallion, in present-day Sunderland, and Blakiston in SE Durham (held from the monks of Durham), but Horden seems to have been established as the principal seat by the 1170s.

Surtees (1816, 24-5) provides a pedigree and brief account of the **Fitz-Marmaduke** lords of Horden, as the descendants of Geoffrey fitz Richard were later known, but a more detailed account is provided by Offler (1988, 194-201). The lineage had a distinguished history. Its members ranked amongst most important barons of the bishopric throughout the 13th century and John Fitz-Marmaduke, served with distinction during the wars of Edward I and II in Wales and Scotland between 1282 and his death whilst governor of Perth in 1311. However the lineage came to an abrupt end with the murder of John's son Sir Richard Marmaduke, who was slain by Robert Neville on Framwellgate Bridge, Durham, in 1318, the reasons for which remain obscure (but see Offler 1988 for full analysis).

It is members of this Fitz-Marmaduke lineage who are commemorated by two fine stone effigies one of a knight in chainmail with shield and sword and the other a finely dressed lady. Whilst the knight's effigy is carved out of sandstone, the superb female effigy is made of Frosterley marble and is considered the finest to survive from a workshop, probably located in Durham, which used that material in the late 13th century,. The individuals are not identified by inscriptions but they are marked out as members of the Fitz-Marmaduke family by the three popinjays (parrots) which are embroidered on the woman's gown and decorate the knight's shield. As regards their identity it has been suggested that the female figure represents Lady Isabella de Bruce, first wife of John Fitz-Marmaduke, who died before 1285. She was daughter of Robert Bruce the Competitor, the candidate for the Scottish throne who lost out to John Balliol during the course of 'the Great Cause' arbitrated by Edward I in 1292, and aunt of King Robert I. This in turn meant Sir Richard Marmaduke was the Scottish king's cousin, a useful attribute during his many missions on behalf of the Durham bishopric to negotiate blackmail payments to ward off the Scottish raids, but one which may have caused others to suspect his loyalty or at least pretend to do so, which may have been a factor in his murder.

Sir Richard Marmaduke had no children and as a result the Fitz-Marmaduke landholding was broken up following his death. Horden eventually came into possession of Sir Ralph Neville, in 1340, who granted it to a member of the local gentry, John Menville, who was in the Neville *affinity*, that circle of clients, dependants, advisers and supporters who benefited from the patronage of great lords like the Nevilles. Menville had already obtained the manor of Great Haswell in the 1330s, augmenting it with successive smaller acquisitions over the course of the next two decades, and his son and heir, William, was to purchase Pespool Hall, just west of Easington, in the later 1350s (Liddy 2008, 80, 88-9). The Menvilles also seem to have come into possession of Hawthorn at some stage (Surtees 1816, 16). By the mid-13th century the descendants of William fitz Rannulf had evidently granted that manor to a lesser lord by the process of subinfeudation, as a certain Peter Willewand de Hawthorn is recorded making several grants of land in the vill, and exchanging his demesne lands there for land held in Cornforth by Ranulf de Cornforth (*ibid.*, 15). The Menvilles' substantial collection of manors was to pass to another gentry family closely associated with the Nevilles, namely the Claxtons, following the marriage of Sir William Claxton to Isabel, daughter and sole heir of William Claxton, in 1374 (Liddy 2008, 87-9). The Claxtons were then to hold these estates until the late 15th century, when, following the death of Sir Robert Claxton in 1483, they were partitioned between his four daughters and heiresses.

Little Eden (now covered by Peterlee) was in the hands of the Hawick family, first encountered in the third quarter of the 14th century and represented their sole manor, held for an eighth of a knight's fee and was regularly assessed at less than £10 per annum in leasehold value in late medieval Inquisitions Post Mortem (Surtees 1816, 36; Liddy 2008, 85, 88-9). When the Hawick family was extinguished in the male line with the death of Walter Hawick before 1436, the manor passed first to Walter's daughter, Joan, and eventually, following the death in 1473 of her husband Robert Rhodes, who survived her, to the John Trollop of Thornley, whose father had acted as trustee for the estate. Thereafter the Trollops continued to hold the estate until that family fell on hard times in late 16th and early 17th centuries, following participation in the 1569 Rising of the North, unswerving adherence to the Catholic faith and '*that species of luckless ill-management which generally helps a family of ancient gentry downwards*' (Surtees 1816, 37). Finally, in 1617, John Trollop was obliged to sell the estate to cover his debts, with bulk of it passing to Nicholas Heath of East Greenwich.

It should be noted that other lords held smaller portions of land in these townships. The case of Little Thorpe has been noted already. IPMs held in 1397 and 1398 record that John de Burdon and William Guy, respectively, were both in possession of land and tenements in Thorpe at the time of their deaths, though it is unclear whether either holding was related to that of William Thorpe in 1385 (*Cursitors Records II*, 165, 204, cf. Surtees 1816, 11). By the early 15th century these properties may have changed hands again, with John Dalton and William Claxton being documented as having holdings in Thorpe (IPMs 1422, 1431: *Cursitors Records II*, 178, 180, 185). Robert Dalton, Gent., still held a messuage and four acres of land valued at 2s, by a 20th part of a knight's service and 12d per annum in Thorpe-nigh-Easington in 1560 (IPM 25 September 1560, cited by Surtees 1816, 11). This may be the same holding earlier which was in the hands of John Thorpe in 1385 (see above).

Sources

The particular type of lordship to which any community was subject is significant because it has profound implications for the type and quantity of documentation pertaining to the estate. Because so much documentation relating to the Benedictine convent was preserved after the Middle Ages in the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral (now held in Durham University Archives and Special Collections), there are abundant documentary sources relating to the estates held by Durham Priory and its daughter cells. These include manor court records, account rolls, charters and surveys of one type or another.

Whilst not as well served as the priory's lands, the estates belonging to the bishop, such as Easington, are fairly well documented. In particular they are covered by two surveys of the bishopric's entire estate, namely the celebrated document known as the Boldon Book, initially compiled around 1183, and the later survey initiated by Bishop Hatfield c. 1381. These list the tenants who held land from the bishop in Easington and Little Thorpe, the terms by which they held that land, i.e. the various labour services they had to perform as well as the money rent paid, and the different categories of tenancy – land held as villeins or customary tenants and exchequer and leasehold tenements.

The third category, the lands of the bishop's barons and knights, are the least well recorded. There are however a number of charters and deeds relating to such estates, many preserved because they were deposited in Durham Priory for safe-keeping. Haswell in the western part of Easington Parish is a case in point. There are more extant charters (166) relating to Haswell than any other township in County Durham. In part this is because Finchale Priory, one of the Durham monks subordinate 'cells' held a manorial grange farm there – Haswell Grange near present-day Elemore Hall – having acquired the vill of Little Haswell in the late 12th century. This accounts for 62 of the charters, but the other 104 relate to the Menville-Claxton estate and its predecessors in Great Haswell. These were probably

deposited in Durham Priory on the death of Sir Robert Claxton in 1483 (Britnell 2004, 21-2). In addition there is another important class of material known as *Inquisitions Post Mortem* or IPMs, which relate to secular estates. These were surveys undertaken by the bishop's officers on the death of one of the bishop's tenants-in-chief, that is a baron or knight holding land directly from the bishop in return for military service, in theory at least. The purpose of the IPMs was to determine the extent and value of the feudal tenant's estates, whether his heir was of age (if not the land reverted to bishop as universal landlord in the palatinate until the heir attained majority), and to make provision for the widow, if surviving (who was normally entitled to a third of the estate during her lifetime). Abstracts of these inquisitions were made subsequently by the bishop's officers, and these have survived, beginning in Bishop Beaumont's tenure (1318-33) and providing full coverage for the period from 1333 onwards (Liddy 2008, 28-9).

10.8 Landlord and tenants

We tend to think of medieval peasants as a single group, an undifferentiated mass of downtrodden subsistence farmers at the mercy of their lord's whim. However, just like any modern community, the true picture is more complex. A village like Easington would have contained well-to-do peasant farmers with more substantial landholdings, who might well control the affairs of the village, as well as poor ones, with little or no land, who were dependent on finding paid work and were always on the breadline, at risk of hunger, particularly at slackier times of the year. The majority lay somewhere in between, generally growing enough to feed their families, pay their rent and perform the required labour for the lord, but vulnerable to a series of bad harvests or a prolonged recession.

Moreover circumstances changed over time. In particular, conditions for the rural population in the aftermath of the Black Death were very different from those which had prevailed before. Instead of an expanding peasant population hungry for land and obliged to accept the terms their lords imposed, the calamitous mortality meant there was a shortage of agricultural labour. Lords like the Bishop of Durham found it impossible to maintain their income at the previous levels and their relations with their tenant farmers were an increasing source of anxiety.

10.8.1 Categories of tenant

This complexity is reflected in several different categories of tenant farmer found on the prior's estates, Easington included. Each village and township tended to include a mixture of these categories though that mix could vary quite markedly. To some degree every village was unique:

- ❖ **Free tenants** were generally of higher status and had less onerous conditions imposed upon them. They could pass their tenements on to their heirs without hinderance from their lord or otherwise dispose of it by sale or gift as they saw fit.
- ❖ **Customary tenants** or **villeins**, so called because they held their tenements according to the custom of the manor, regulated through the lord's manorial court. They comprised **bondmen**, whose rent took the form of compulsory work on the prior's home farm, but did not include money rent, and **husbandmen** who just owed money rent. The customary tenants at Easington all held 30 acre plots.
- ❖ **Cottage holdings** which comprised a cottage and a few acres of land or sometimes just a garden. None are listed at Easington in the Boldon Book.
- ❖ **Leaseholders**. From the end of the 14th century onwards an increasing number of tenants came to hold their tenement on a **short-term lease**, between 3, 6, 9, 12 or 15 years being typical, the great majority being for 9 years or less (Lomas 1977, 37-8; 1992, 178-9). These paid a money rent and were not liable for an entry fee (*gressum*) when they took over the holding, of the kind which was imposed on husbandmen who held their tenements for life. It has been suggested that the multiple of three years may have been to accommodate a crop rotation system.

A detailed breakdown of the tenant makeup in Easington and Little Thorpe towards the end of the 12th century (c. 1183) is provided by the Boldon Book. These details may be compared with a second survey of the bishop's holdings, completed almost exactly 200 years later, on the orders of Bishop Hatfield, c. 1381-2, which shows how the tenurial structure of the townships had evolved over the course of the High Middle Ages (see Appendix).

10.8.2 Easington in the Boldon Book

The Boldon Book entries for Easington and Little Thorpe are set out below. Shotton, Edderacres and the unlocated Twizzel are also included for comparison. The Latin versions of technical terms are shown italicised within brackets.

EASINGTON:

- ❖ In Easington and Thorp are 31 villeins (*villani*), and each one holds, renders, and works as the villeins of Boldon.
- ❖ Simon holds half a ploughland (carucate) and renders 10s, and goes on the Bishop's errands.
- ❖ Geoffrey Cokesmith (*Galfridus Cokesmath*) holds half a ploughland, and renders 10s, and goes on the Bishop's errands.
- ❖ The plough carpenter holds 8 acres for his service.
- ❖ The smith (*faber*) holds 8 acres for his service.
- ❖ The pounder¹⁷ holds 8 acres, and renders 80 hens and 500 eggs.
- ❖ The two towns render 30s of cornage and 2 cows for metreth.
- ❖ The mills of Easington and of Shotton render 8 marks (£5 6s 8d)¹⁸.
- ❖ The lord's farm ('demesne' – *dominium*) is leased out ('at farm' – *ad firmam*), with a stock of 4 ploughteams and 2 beasts for harrowing, and renders 24 marks (£16).
- ❖ The sheep with the pasture are in the hand of the Bishop.

SHOTTON:

- ❖ In Shotton are 17 villeins, and each one holds, renders, and works as the villeins of Boldon.
- ❖ Robert Chet holds 2 oxgangs (bovates), and renders 5s, and makes 4 boon days (precations - *precaciones*) in autumn, and ploughs and harrows one acre, and goes on the Bishop's errands.
- ❖ William, the lorimer¹⁹, holds one oxgang, and renders 3s, and goes on errands.
- ❖ Saddoc holds one oxgang for 3s, and goes on errands.
- ❖ The smith (*faber*) holds one oxgang of 15 acres for his service.
- ❖ The whole town renders 11s of cornage and one cow for metreth.
- ❖ Thomas, the pounder, holds 8 acres, and renders 40 hens and 300 eggs, and 4s.
- ❖ The demesne is leased out, with a stock of 3 ploughteams and 200 sheep, and renders 24 chalders²⁰ of wheat, and as many of oats, and 12 of barley, and for the sheep 4 marks (£2 13s 4d).

¹⁷ The pounder (*punderus*) was the officer in charge of the pound, or pinfold, where stray livestock was impounded until their owners paid compensation for any damage caused.

¹⁸ The mark was a unit of monetary value rather than an actual coin. 1 mark equated to two thirds of a pound, i.e. 13s 4d.

¹⁹ A lorimer was a specialised smith who made bits, spurs and the metal accoutrements associated with horse trappings.

TWIZZEL:

- ❖ Walter Buggethorp holds the town of Twizzell in exchange for the moiety of Claxton, and renders 30s, and goes on the Great Chase with one greyhound, and when a common aid (*commune auxilium*) shall arise, he ought to give 2s at the most.

EDDERACRES:

- ❖ Adam, son of John, held Edderacres in exchange for the land which his father held in Great Haughton, afterwards he sold a moiety of the said town to Nigel, brother of John the clerk, to hold of the Bishop in chief, and he renders for the said moiety, ½ mark (6s 8d); and Droto de Middleham, for the other moiety which he has in pledge from the above named Adam, renders in like manner ½ mark.

The holdings of the villeins of Easington, Thorpe and Shotton, the rents they paid and compulsory works they performed by are not itemized in detail above as they were identical to the services performed by the villeins of Boldon which were listed near the beginning of the survey and were used as a standard reference throughout. These works comprised the following:

In Boldon are 22 villeins, of whom ...

- ❖ each one holds 2 oxgangs of 30 acres
- ❖ and renders 2s 6d of scot-penny/scatpennys, and half a scotch-chalder/scatchalder of oats, and 16d of carriage-penny (*averpenys*)²¹, and 5 cartloads of wood (*wodlade*), and 2 hens and 10 eggs
- ❖ and each works 3 days in the week through the whole year, except the weeks of Easter and Whitsun, and the 13 days of Christmas (*in Nativitate Domini*), and during his work he makes 4 boon days (precations) in autumn to reap with all his house, except the housewife; moreover he reaps 3 roods of ripe oats, and he ploughs and harrows 3 roods of oat stubble, and moreover each ploughteam of the villeins ploughs and harrows 2 acres, and at that time they have the subsistence (*corrodium*) from the Bishop, and then they are quit of the work of that week; but always when they make the great boon days they have subsistence; and in their works they harrow when needed; and carry loads, and when carry them each man has one loaf; and they mow one day at Houghton till the evening, and then they have subsistence; and at St. Cuthbert's Fair every 2 villeins construct one booth; and when they are building the lodges and carrying wood then they are quit of other works.

The villeins

Together the settlements of Easington and Little Thorpe mustered a relatively large number of villeins (31), by comparison with the bishop's other communities in East Durham. Thus there were 17 villeins in Shotton, a combined total of 51 in the three villages of North Sherburn, Shadforth and Cassop, 28 in Cleadon and Whitburn, 22 in Boldon, 22 in Wearmouth and Tunstall and 27 in Ryhope and Burdon together. There is no indication how the number of villeins was divided between Easington and Thorpe, but, as its name signifies, the latter was never more than a secondary hamlet so it is likely that the great majority resided in Easington village, two thirds to three quarters of the total being a reasonable

²⁰ A chalder (*celdra*) is a measure of grain, generally consisting of 36 bushels (a standard bushel was equivalent to 4 pecks or 8 gallons), but there were many variant types noted in the Boldon Book. For example scatchalder (*scatceldra*) was the bishopric exchequer's chalder measure.

²¹ Averpenny or carriage-penny was money paid by the tenant in commutation of the service (*avera*) of performing any work for his lord with his horse or oxen or by carriage with either.

estimate. These tenants held 30 acre tenements – essentially a standard allocation of two 15-acre oxgangs or bovates²² – a reasonable sized holding for a medieval peasant. In addition they may have some meadowland and pasture within the townfield as well as access to the huge expanse of common moor extending to the west of the two settlements.

The villeins did pay some money rent, essentially an old customary payment labeled *scatpenny* or *scot-penny* (derived from Old English *sceat*, signifying money, tax or contribution), plus a fee known as *averpenny* to commute the service of their beasts of burden. The township as a whole paid another ancient render known as *cornage*, a payment made in commutation of a levy of cattle²³. They might also have to pay an emergency levy known as *tallage*, not mentioned in the Boldon Book, which could be a very substantial burden. However their main contribution to the lord came in the form of onerous labour services on the lord's demesne, his manorial farm, which might be directly in hand or leased out ('at farm') to a 'farmer'. They had to perform three days work there a week for some 47 weeks of the year plus an additional four days of boon-work in autumn, harvesting the crops and ploughing and harrowing the fields.

The villeins of the Easington and the bishop's other Magnesian Limestone Plateau vills were the equivalent of those customary tenants labeled bondmen on Durham Priory's estates and were essentially bound or tied to the manor.

Craftsmen and drengs

In addition there were two other classes of tenant listed in the Boldon Book at Easington and Shotton. Several craftsmen and other individuals held small tenements comprising 8 acres or a single, 15-acre oxgang, which they held in return for performing their specialized craft services for the lord or in return for going on errands. More significant are three other individuals, Geoffrey Cokesmith and one Simon in Easington/Thorpe and Robert Chet in Shotton who held larger tenements in return for a cash rent and going on errands, and in the case of Robert Chet performing a very limited labour service comprising four autumn boon-days and ploughing and harrowing one acre. Whilst Chet just held two oxgangs (30 acres), like the villeins, Simon and Cokesmith each held half a carucate or ploughland, perhaps 60 acres²⁴. These men were not feudal tenants, holding their land for homage, military service and attendance at the lord's court. They resembled free tenants, paying a relatively modest cash rent, but were also liable for limited labour services normally imposed only on customary villeins or bondmen. This combination of free and servile liabilities is characteristic of a type of archaic Northumbrian service tenancy known as ***drengage***. Drengs figure elsewhere in the Boldon Book, sometimes being specifically identified as such, though not in this case. They seem to have formed an intermediate layer of supervisorial tenants interposed between lords and villeins in the region's shire estates. Roberts (2008a, 208) suggests they may have played a role in establishing and laying out new villages, acting as land agents and supervising the plantation of the new village on behalf of a superior lord, such as the Community of St Cuthbert or the Bishop of Durham. Following the Norman takeover drengage tenancies seem to have been gradually transformed over time to become more conventional free or even feudal tenancies.

²² The size of an oxgang could vary. In some townships it was only 12 acres.

²³ The name derives from the *cornu* – horn in Latin. It was also known as 'noutgeld' or 'horngeld'.

²⁴ A ploughland was, notionally, the amount of land which a single ploughteam could cultivate in a year. The acreage of the Easington ploughland is not specified, and, like the oxgang, a ploughland could vary in size from place to place, even within the Bishopric. The Boldon Book only actually specifies the size of a carucate in one instance, which relates to land at Farnacres where it amounts 120 acres (Greenwell *Boldon Buke*, 34, 68, xlv; Austin *Boldon Book*, 50-51). However on Durham Priory's estates a carucate could be as little as 60 acres, as at Ferryhill for example.

10.9 The medieval layout of Easington village and township

10.9.1 Village and hamlet – Easington and Little Thorpe

During the Middle Ages settlement at Easington consisted of two nucleated settlements – the village of Easington itself and the hamlet of Thorp (now called Little Thorpe) only 500m to the south-east. This arrangement seems to have been a longstanding one since both Easington and Thorpe are listed as villas in the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* in relation to events c. 901-18 (HSC, 22), as we have seen. It is however somewhat puzzling since the settlements are so close together. The latter settlement's name, derived from the Old Norse *thorp*, has traditionally been thought to signify a secondary settlement or hamlet (Watts 1992, 72, 124-5; Cullen *et al.* 2011, 29, 165). Had Thorp been located near the coast, or in Easington/Thorpe Lea in the north-east corner of the study area, the existence of the hamlet could be explained as a secondary implantation, intended to colonise an area of common waste or better manage the exploitation of arable fields which lay a great distance from the main settlement. Clearly however this is not the case in this instance and in any case Thorp figures in the sources as early as Easington does. Although Easington and Little Thorpe are categorized as separate villas in the *Historia* and the 1st edition Ordnance Survey still maps two distinct township territories in the mid-19th century, the actual relationship seems to have been much more intimate than that. Neither the Boldon Book nor the Hatfield Survey differentiate between the tenants of Easington and Little Thorpe, with the consequence that it is impossible to determine which tenants were living where. In effect the surveys appear to treat Easington and Little Thorpe as two settlements belonging to a single vill.

One possible explanation for the close positioning of the two settlements is that Little Thorpe was actually the earlier settlement. It is slightly closer to the 6th-century cemetery on Andrew's Hill than Easington village is (c. 400m as opposed 500m) and had the advantage of being located right beside Thorpe Burn, providing it with a convenient water supply. Perhaps it was first occupied at the same time as the cemetery was in use. Easington village might then have originated at a later stage, following the establishment of a minster church on the site of the present parish church. This would have developed further as the centre of a large shire estate, which was probably coterminous with the medieval parish, drawing in the surrounding farming population so that eventually the bulk was concentrated next to the church, but never quite resulting in the complete abandonment of the original settlement beside Thorpe Burn.

Thorps and the origin of Little Thorpe

More recently, however, a wide ranging study of *thorps* across the entirety of England – *Thorps in a Changing Landscape* (Cullen *et al.* 2011) has proposed a new explanation for their origin (*ibid.*, 138-56), which has clear implications for Little Thorpe itself. The study demonstrates that *thorps* tend not to occupy marginal locations, but are found amidst good arable land and have a strong correlation with areas of medieval open-fields. This is in itself curious, open-field farming is generally characterised as a landscape of nucleated settlement. Dispersed settlements were, it is generally thought, swept away and the community relocated into nucleated centres – typically a single village for each township community. As hamlets which, it would appear, typically occur in areas of nucleated villages, *thorps* are a settlement type which should not be there at all (*ibid.*, 148).

The apparent chronology of *thorp* formation is also significant. Although *thorp* or *thorp* was in use as a descriptive term equivalent to *tun* in the early Anglo-Saxon period it appears to have become much more into 'fashion' in the middle to late Anglo-Saxon period. Documentary and archaeological evidence that any of the places later called *thorp* were occupied before 850 is almost entirely lacking. The majority of the settlements which bear the place-name today seem to have originated during the later Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Scandinavian period, some *thorps* being established in the second half of the 9th century, with numbers increasing throughout the 10th and into the first half of the 11th century,

though *thorps* continued to be formed throughout the Middle Ages and well into the early modern era.

On the basis of this combination of chronology and preferred distribution *thorps* are interpreted as settlements associated with the intensification of cereal cultivation and the development of open-field agriculture in the period between 850 and 1100. They may have been designed to house groups of ploughmen who were initially landless workers, often slaves, placing them within the fields they were obliged to plough (*ibid.*, 149-51, fig 7.3). It is possible that some nucleated village communities (*tuns*) may have been surrounded by a number of such satellite hamlets spread around their open fields, with many of these minor *thorps* being abandoned during the Middle Ages, surviving as field names, if at all.

What implications does this model have for Easington and Little Thorpe? Easington village may be seen as the administrative centre of a large shire estate encompassing many vill (see above 8.4.4 and 10.7.5) and for an emerging ecclesiastical parish associated with the estate established by the Community of St Cuthbert. As such it would accommodate the lord's hall with attendant complex for storing and processing the renders from the dependent vill, plus the church and the dwellings and farms of any ministerial tenants, or *drengs*, who performed important administrative and other services for the Community. Thorp would have been the place of habitation of the dependent, possibly servile labourers who cultivated the surrounding open fields belonging to Easington vill. Over time the workforce were given their own holdings and became dependent tenants and, perhaps as the area under cultivation increased, more tenants were established at Easington village itself blurring the functional distinction between the two settlements

Village plans

The earliest detailed plans of Easington belong to the first half of the 19th century or, in the case of Little Thorpe, the very end of the 18th century, though the latter are rather sketchy and incomplete. They include the tithe map and a number of estate maps. Essentially these show much the same layout, both in Easington and Little Thorpe, as is apparent in more detail in the 1st edition Ordnance Survey plan which was surveyed in 1856-7. These are the best guides regarding the layout of the earlier village, but obviously around 300-350 years had elapsed after the end of the Middle Ages before these maps were compiled, leaving a lot of scope for alteration to the settlement plans.

Easington

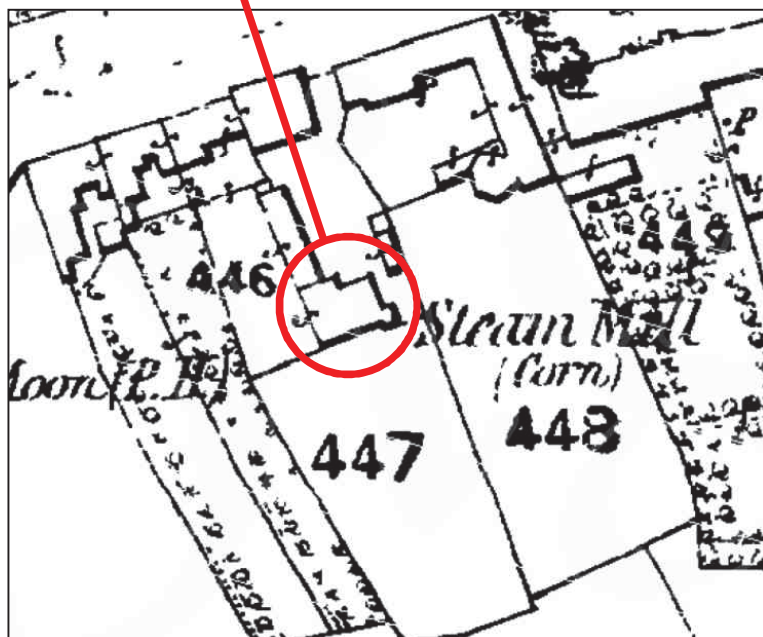
As discussed in Chapter 9, Easington village is centred around a large rectangular green, which is relatively broad in relation to its length, surrounded by well-defined rows of tenements on all four sides. Routes approach all four corners of the green and criss-cross its open space. In addition, the main east west route leading from Hetton, Houghton and Chester-le-Street to Easington (the present A182 = Hall Walks and Rosemary Lane) runs behind (north of) the north row, continuing towards the coast (becoming Seaside Lane). This effectively makes the north row a substantial island within all the public thoroughfares and commonspace, with a further row moreover being situated along the north side of Rosemary Lane, extending eastward from Seaton Holme. St Mary's Church stands in a dominating position in the north-west corner of village, forming a landmark visible over a great distance, whilst the medieval rectory, Seaton Holme, lies directly to the north of the church, on the opposite side of Hall Walks.

The only elements we can definitely say were in place at Easington village were St Mary's Church and the rectory opposite, Seaton Holme. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suppose that the basic elements were already present in the Middle Ages. Indeed the recent discovery of the gable end of an earlier building encased in the 19th-century steam mill in Southside hints that the southern edge of the green was built up at some stage before the end of the Middle Ages. Another piece of evidence hinting at the antiquity of the village

Steam Mill- Discovery of possible medieval building



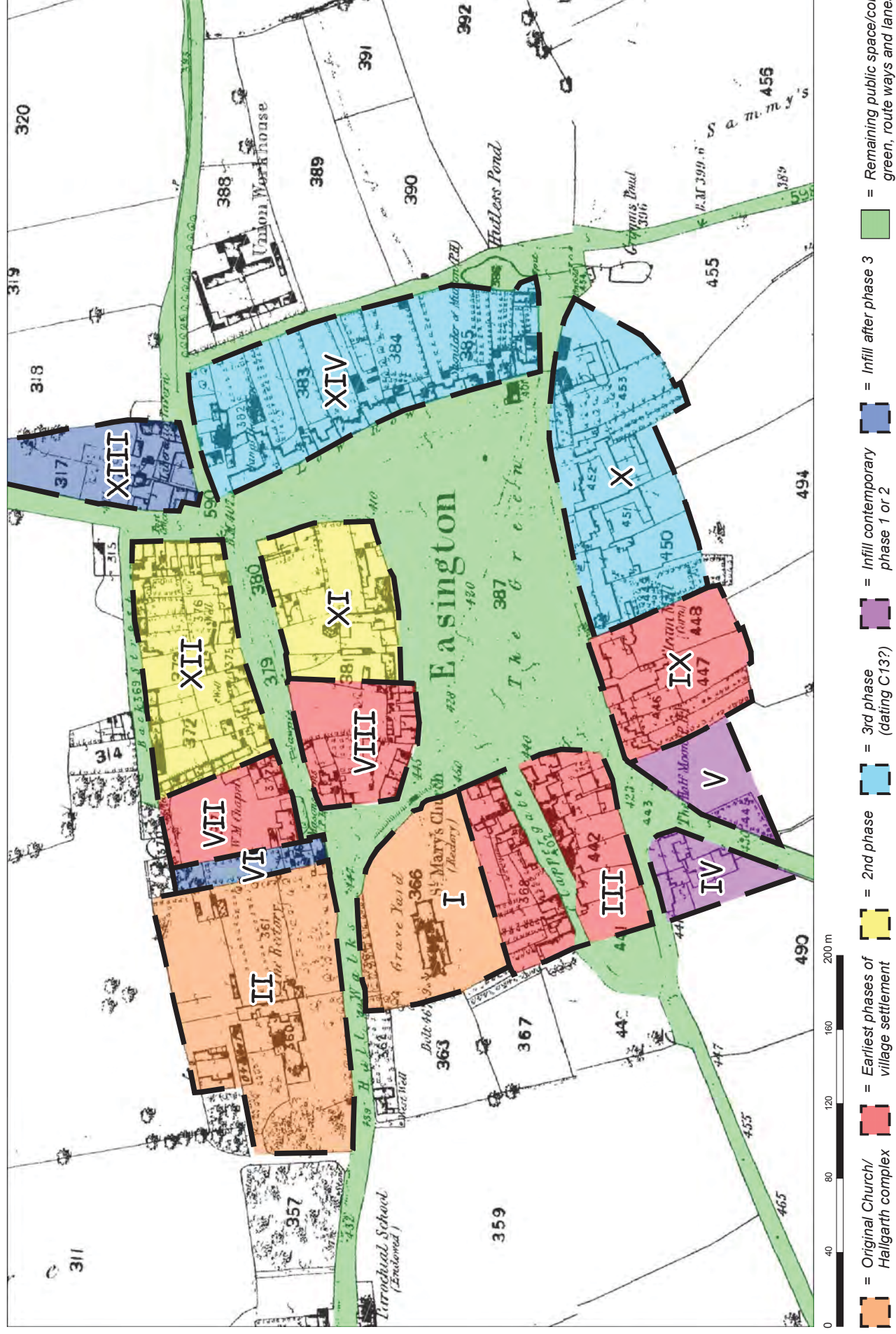
Note traces of steep gable ridge of an earlier building preserved in the lower part of the Steam Mill's wall.



The Steam Mill near the west end of Southside in the SW corner of the village, shown on the 1:2500 OS plan 1857.

One possible scheme for the medieval development of Easington Village

Based on AUNEE 1982 26-27 Fig.13, shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1857 (1:2500)



layout is the mention of the street known as Clappersgate in the proceedings of the Bishop's Halmote Court at Easington in 1602 (cited by Hopper 1996, 9). This side street to the south of the church leads from Durham Lane and interrupts the east row roughly midway along the latter's length. It was thus clearly in place by the early modern period and may be much older, and implies that other associated elements such as the east row itself also existed.

The individual toft enclosures making up the rows would originally have contained the farmsteads of the village peasants. There is considerable scope for alteration in the position individual plot boundaries over the centuries and there is no guarantee that any surviving example occupies the same site as a medieval predecessor, though some may do so.

An attempt to investigate the development of the village plan was made in 1977 when the Archaeological Unit for North-East England (AUNEE) excavated near the south end of Low Row. Unfortunately the results there were largely inconclusive as the main feature found, the foundations of an early 18th-century cottage had largely removed any earlier remains in the area, though 15th to 16th-century occupation debris was reportedly found (Site 14; HER 249; Clack 1980). In a subsequent project design designed to secure funding for a larger programme of investigation AUNEE set out a suggested sequence of development for the village (AUNEE 1982, 23-7), attempting to define the chronological order of the village's rows, which is illustrated here. It is not clear that there was much empirical, evidential basis for the proposed sequence, though the suggestion that the earliest component was a combined hall-church complex represented by St Mary's Church and Seaton Holme and the structures which preceded those buildings, is reasonable enough. The hypothetical sequence makes a useful starting point for discussion prior to any future examination, however it should be acknowledged that other developmental sequences are equally feasible. For example it is conceivable that the settlement was originally just a simple two row street/green village laid out on either side of Hall Walks and Rosemary Lane. The large green to the south and the surrounding rows could have been created at a later stage as the village population expanded. Only archaeological investigation is likely to help reveal the chronological sequence of the village's development. A programme of test-pitting in the gardens of the houses in the village core would be a useful first step.

Little Thorpe

In contrast Little Thorpe takes the form of a two-row irregular street settlement, with rows of toft enclosures extending along the north and south sides of the street. This type of settlement comprising one or two rows of tofts lining a street or green was perhaps the most common village form in north-east England. Moreover it is characteristic of *thorp* hamlets in general, which typically adopt simple, compact linear plans, with a small number (rarely more than a dozen) of building plots arranged along a single village street (Cullen *et al.* 2011, 138). At Little Thorpe the tofts on the north side of the street were mostly devoid of farmsteads or other buildings by the time the earliest detailed maps were drawn up, but more of them may conceivably have been occupied by farmsteads in the Middle Ages, at any rate before the Black Death which everywhere precipitated a dramatic fall in the size of the population. The course of Thorpe Burn bounds the southern edge of the south row.

10.9.2 The principal buildings – St Mary's Church and Seaton Holme

The two principal medieval buildings surviving in Easington are the parish church of St Mary's and the associated rectory, Seaton Holme, located at the north-west corner of the village. Both buildings may have Anglo-Saxon origins (see above). The bulk of the visible medieval fabric of St Mary's probably dates to the middle and end of the 12th century. Seaton Holme was probably built a little later in the 13th century. Easington was one of the three manors assigned to Bishop Nicholas Farnham (1241-49) when he retired and the hall may have been built at that stage. Subsequently Seaton Holme was one of the principal residences of the Archdeacon of Durham who was granted the rectorship of Easington Parish. The hall house sat within a much larger walled complex, the *hallgarth* which not only

accommodated the rector and all that pertained the rectory such as the storage of tithes and the farming of the glebe land, but also provided a base for the demesne farming operations of the bishop's manor. The hall will doubtless have witnessed proceedings of the bishop's manorial court, known as the Halmote Court, the remit of which extended far beyond easington. It was thus a multi-functional building.

Both St Mary's and Seaton Holme have been subject to considerable investigation and structural analysis over the past quarter of a century. In the case of Seaton Holme the restoration and refurbishment of the building in 1989 allowed more detailed examination of the built fabric than would otherwise have been possible, and enable some excavation, though it was unfortunate that one medieval building in the complex was demolished its true age having been masked by later alterations. St Mary's has also been subject to detailed structural analysis which resulted in the discovery of a further piece of Anglo-Saxon sculpture. The results of all this work are summarized in the HER entries below, whilst detailed analysis of the built fabric, monuments and structural history of St Mary's is provided by Peter Ryder in Chapter 7.

ST MARY'S CHURCH & MONUMENTS

St. Mary's Church, Easington (Site: 7/10, HER: 248 & 35467, NZ NZ 41428 43444)

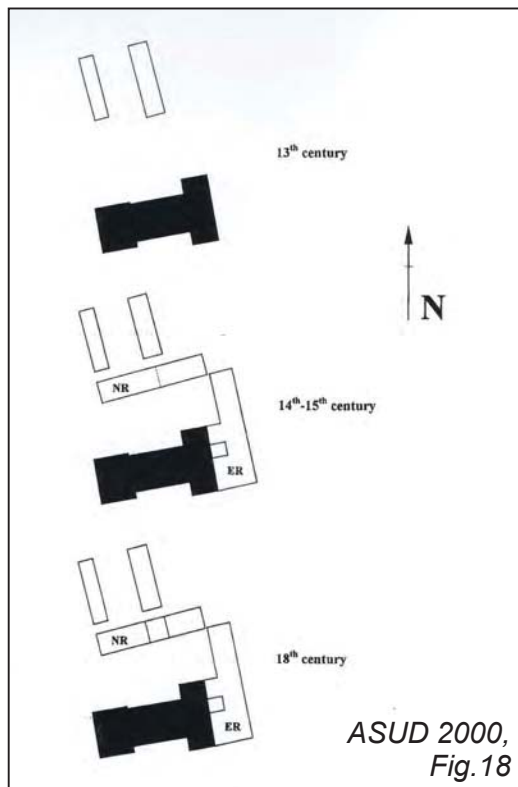
(Main HER entry: HER: 248)

Of probable Anglo-Saxon foundation, the existing building has a Norman west tower with C13 buttresses added. The rest of the church is in Early English style. It was restored in 1894-5. The Norman antecedent was pulled down in the late 12th century. Oak pews, choir stalls and a chancel screen of some splendour were removed and broken up in the early 19th century. A late Saxon, 10th or 11th century relief cross is built into the base of the tower's west wall. There is no firm evidence for the church pre-dating the 12th century fabric of the tower, apart from a small grave slab or dedication cross that have been described as 10th or 11th century. During examination of the church a more significant piece of early sculpture was found built in to the exterior of the south aisle, a small fragment of Magnesian limestone carved with delicate plaitwork; it could be as early as the 8th century, and may be an architectural fragment. The tower may be of mid 12th century date, but the remainder of the church was rebuilt around 1200, with the vestry/organ chamber being added around a century later. In the 14th century the chancel was refenestrated.

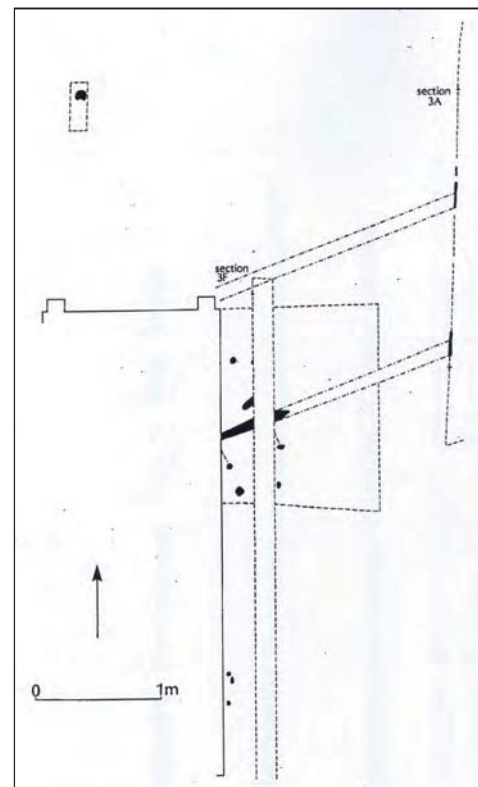
Listed Building entry (Site: 7, HER: 35467)

C13. Extensive restoration in 1853 by P.C. Hardwick. Sandstone and limestone rubble masonry. Steeply-pitched green slate roof. Square west tower, aisled nave, chancel and north chapel. Long, low proportions. 4-stage west tower defined by bands. Fragment of C10-11 grave slab in base of west wall. Romanesque masonry up to and including corbel table. 2 round-arched openings and later battlemented parapet. 2 massive C14 diagonal buttresses. Pointed doorway of 1853 in south wall. West ends of aisles have single lancets and buttresses added to support tower arch. C19 aisle windows, mainly in Perpendicular style but some Geometrical, have original rear-arches; similar C19 windows in chancel and 5 stepped lancets at east end with quatrefoil above. East aisle return has original 2-light window with Geometrical tracery. Nave clerestory has 4 small, irregularly-spaced lancets. North aisle and clerestory similar. Chancel has double-chamfered plinth and, except for north wall, was rebuilt in 1853 using original materials. 3 bays divided by pilaster buttresses; east end has clasping buttresses. South wall has 2-light low-side window with Y-tracery under pointed hoodmould. 2-bay north chapel has 2-light lancets with Y-tracery. Interior: early Romanesque double-chamfered tower arch. Double-chamfered pointed nave arcades with hoodmoulds and carved stops. Keeled east and west responds. 3 columns alternating round and octagonal, order reversed between north and south aisles. Bases and capitals follow plan of columns: octagonal columns have waterholding bases and capitals with nailhead decoration; 2 of the round columns have leafy capitals. Mid C19 arch-braced crown-post roof has embattled tie-beams. 2 steps up to wide double-chamfered chancel arch on semi-octagonal moulded corbels. East end has detached shafts of Frosterly marble between lancets; flanking blank niches. Barrelled chancel roof. Furnishings: 48 mid C17 pew ends with deep relief carving and poppyheads in the style of Bishop

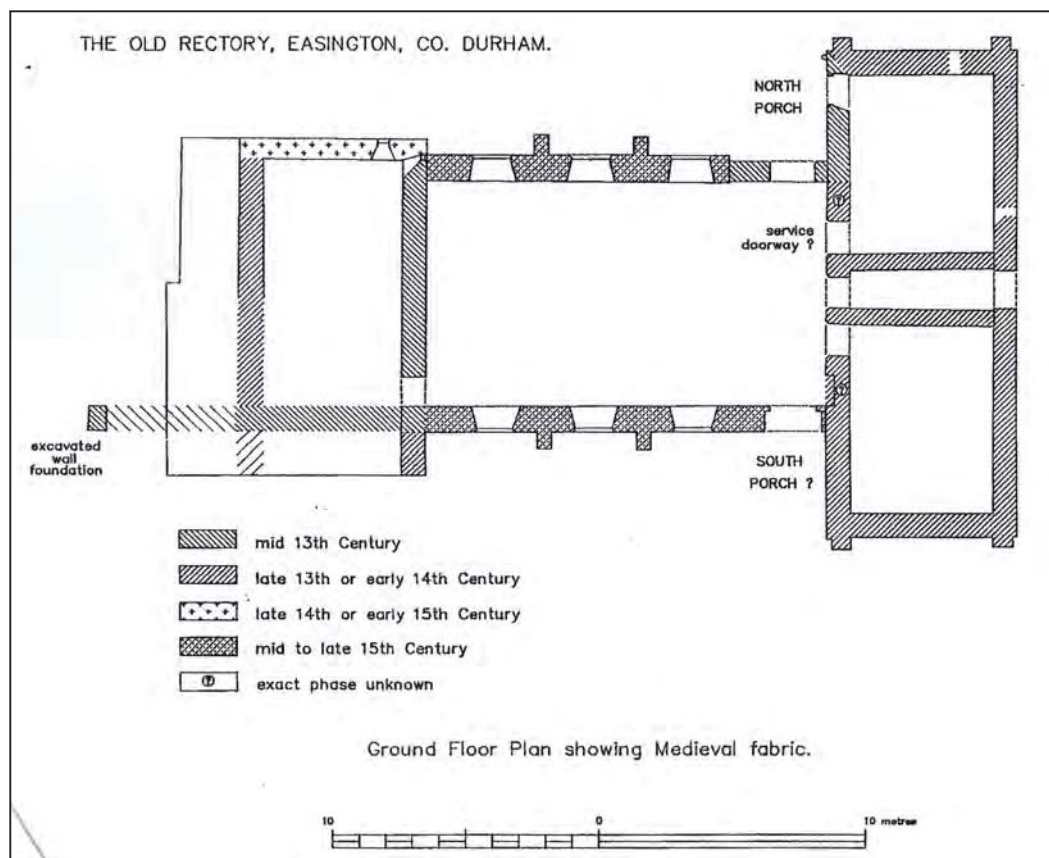
The Development of the Medieval Manor House



Phase-plan showing the Manor House (in black), the North Range (NR), the former East Range (ER) and the two former buildings to the north

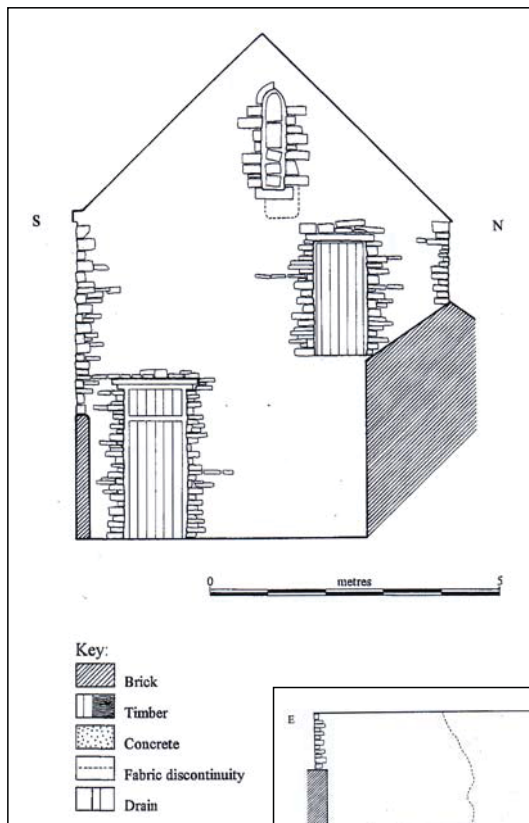


Features of possible early medieval date excavated beneath the East Range (after Daniels et al. 1989-90, Fig.3). Note their different alignment.



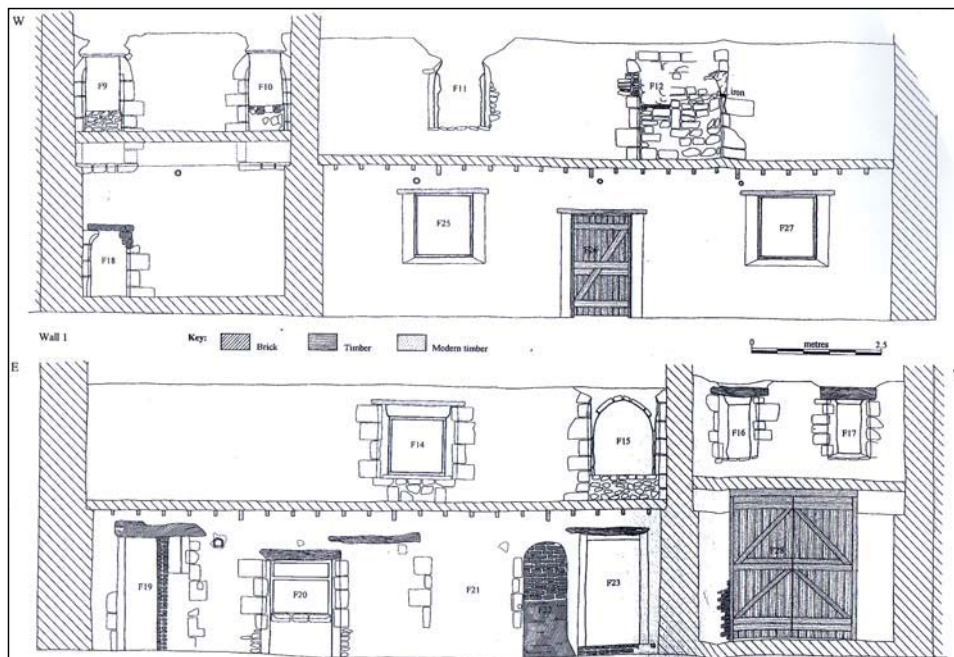
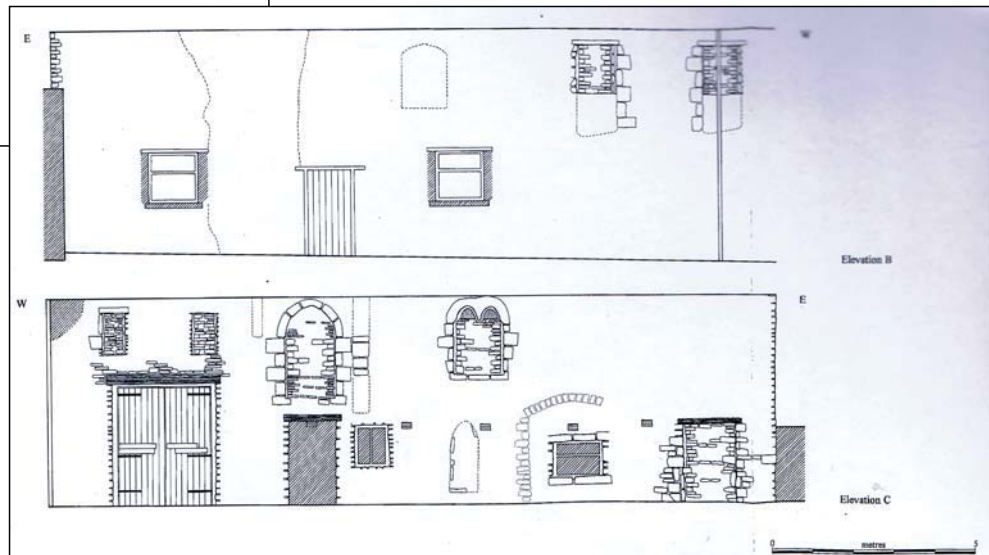
Ground floor plan of Seaton Holme showing the phases of medieval fabric (after Daniels et al. 1989-90, Fig.5).

Seaton Holme North Range or so-called 'Oratory' (Rectory Farm Barn & Garage) - Elevation Drawings -



Elevation A - east gable wall (ASUD 1998, fig.2).

Exterior Elevations of the north (B) and south (C) walls (ASUD 1998, fig.3). The scar on the north wall face marks the position of the early projecting chimney stack, associated with fireplace F12 and later removed.



Internal elevations of the north (upper) and south (lower) walls of the North Range (ASUD 2000, fig 5). Note the mid-late 13th-century windows (e.g. F9, F10, F14, F20, F21) and doorways (F15, F18, F19) at both ground and first floor levels, plus the first floor fireplace (F12). The existence of first floor doorway F15 implies that the guest lodgings on the upper storey were entered via an external staircase. Windows F9 and F10 and doorway F18 originally formed part of the south gable wall of an earlier N-S aligned building to the north.

Cosin's craftsmen. Chancel screen has some mid C17 traceried panelling. Reredos largely mid C17 has carved panels and a crocketed canopy. C19 font on probably medieval moulded base and stepped round plinth. Monuments: Well-preserved C14 recumbent female effigy in Frosterley marble. Late C13 recumbent freestone effigy of a knight in armour with a shield showing 3 popinjays, possibly Marmaduke Fitz Galfrid of Horden. (Rev. H.E. Savage, "Easington Church", *Archaeologia Aeliana*, New Series, Vol XVII 1895)

St. Mary's, C10/11 cross slab, Easington (Site: 33, HER: 747, NZ 4141 4345)

See above: 10.7 – Early Medieval Inventory)

Carved stone, St Mary's, Easington (Site: 74, NZ 4142 4344)

See above: 10.7 – Early Medieval Inventory)

Effigy, St. Mary's, Easington (Site: 9, HER: 2539, NZ 414 435)

In Easington church is the effigy of Isabel, wife of John Fitz Marmaduke, made of Frosterley marble and dated to c.1280.

SEATON HOLME, MEDIEVAL RECTORY (see also Chapter 7)

Seaton Holme, Easington (Site: 4, HER: 66, NZ 4137 4352)

Reputed to have been built around AD 1249 for Bishop Farnham as a dwelling following his resignation. Little is known about the history of the building through the medieval period, but functioned as the Rectory for the Parish and one of the principal residences of the Archdeacon of Durham who held the rectorship. The building contains much of the original Medieval manor house Originating as an aisled hall it was rebuilt in the 15th century as an open hall. The wing to the east is also mid 13th century and most likely contained service rooms with a solar over. The west wing was added no later than the 15th century. Dendrochronological analysis has shown that part of the building was re-roofed in 1479, again in 1572 with the west wing having roof repairs around 1511. The main building is supported by four buttresses on each of the north and south sides. The building has had its original windows removed and replaced with Georgian sash windows, the tracery in the garden is reputedly from the church not removed from Seaton Holme. Immediately to the north stands a second building of medieval origin, most likely the oratory (HER 3865). Both buildings probably belong to the earlier thirteenth century. A stone in the west end of the Manor House appears to refer to substantial rebuilding in 1747 or 1847. The property was sold by the church in 1921 to the Easington Coal Company and shortly after taken over by the poor law union. By 1954 the building was a home for the aged. In 1989 the building was extensively repaired for use as offices and a local interpretation centre. Archaeological recording was carried out during the works revealing much of the interpretation above. In addition earthworks and structural remains of probable Anglo-Saxon date were observed (HER 3866). Appears in a gazetteer of archaeological and historical sites along the coastline by ASUD Turning the Tide summarising the details above (6: site number 172).

Private Chapel, Seaton Holme, (Site: 1, HER: 3865, NZ 413 435)

Range of medieval buildings associated with the former Rectory of Seaton Holme. Built in the later part of the 13th century the structure contains one large west window under a pointed arch together with several other pointed windows which have lost their tracery. On the south side is a window of two trefoil-headed lights. The building was formerly the oratory, or private chapel of the Rectory building (HER 66).

Farm house and adjacent Barn 15m to the North of Seaton Holme, (Site: 12, HER: 36129, NZ 41440 43561).

7/8 Farmhouse and adjacent barn 29.9.80 15 metres to north of Seaton Holme GV 11* (Formerly listed as Farmhouse at rear of Seaton Holme, with adjacent Barn). Farmhouse and barn which may originally have been an oratory connected with Seaton Holme. Possibly C13 with extensive alterations, especially in the C19. Mainly limestone Farmhouse: 4 windows; openings mainly C19 sashes except for pointed-arched first floor window to right which has large chamfered jambs. Moderate-pitch C20 Welsh slate roof and brick gable stacks. Left return has a large pointed-arched window with double-chamfered jambs under a pointed hoodmould with worn stops. Below this

window evidence of a blocked ground floor opening. Barn: 4 irregular bays. Left bay has a large C20 vehicle entrance and 2 square blocked openings above. This bay is divided internally from the remainder of the barn by a C20 brick wall which projects slightly above the roof line. To the right at first floor level is a blocked pointed-arched window with large alternating jambs. Further right a blocked 2-light window with alternating jambs and trefoil-headed lights in a monolithic arch. Right return has a small blocked lancet set high in gable. C20 asbestos roof and brick gable coping. Eaves line of farmhouse and barn probably lowered in C19 as it now cuts through the heads of several first floor windows. Rear of buildings extensively renewed with mainly C20 casements. Interior: apart from window splays no original internal features remain. Both farmhouse and barn roofs have been renewed.

Walls, 10m E of barn to N of Seaton Holme (Site: 5, HER: 35454, NZ 41347 43546)

Remnants of walled garden to Seaton Holme. Mid-late C18. North wall of random rubble faced with hand-made narrow red brick. East wall of unfaced random rubble. Both walls have stone coping and are about 6 metres high and 70 metres long. Brick-faced wall without recognisable bond has single cambered openings at either end. Rubble wall continues at right angle to the brick range.

10.9.3 The mills

The existence of a mill at Easington is recorded in the Boldon Book along with one at Shotton. Whereas Shotton Mill, located on Castle Eden Burn, just below the confluence of Gore Burn and Edderacres Burn, was clearly a watermill²⁵, the mill at Easington is specifically described in the 1381 Hatfield Survey as a windmill (*molendinum ventricum*; cf. *Hatfield Survey*, 131). The site of this medieval mill is uncertain.

The windmill

Of the three windmills are shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, the most promising candidate is **Easington Mill** (Site 18; HER 5940; now site of Holmlea), situated on the south side of Durham Lane just to the east of the village. Its name might signify that it was *the* Easington Mill. It was certainly in existence by 1820 when it was depicted on Greenwood's county map by means of a windmill symbol or pictogram. By contrast, Jackson's Mill is known to date no earlier than 1832, when it was constructed for John Henry Jackson, and Thorpe Moor Windmill, west of Mickle Hill, is probably a fairly late creation as well. There was also a watermill near Little Thorpe, recorded on Greenwood's county map of 1820, apparently replaced by a windmill – Thorpe Mill – at the east end of the village by the time of the tithe award and 1st edition Ordnance Survey, however no watermill mentioned in the medieval or early modern surveys of the Bishopric's manor so is likely to have been a relatively recent creation – 18th- or early 19th-century – rather than a medieval watermill like Shotton or Hawthorn Mills.²⁶

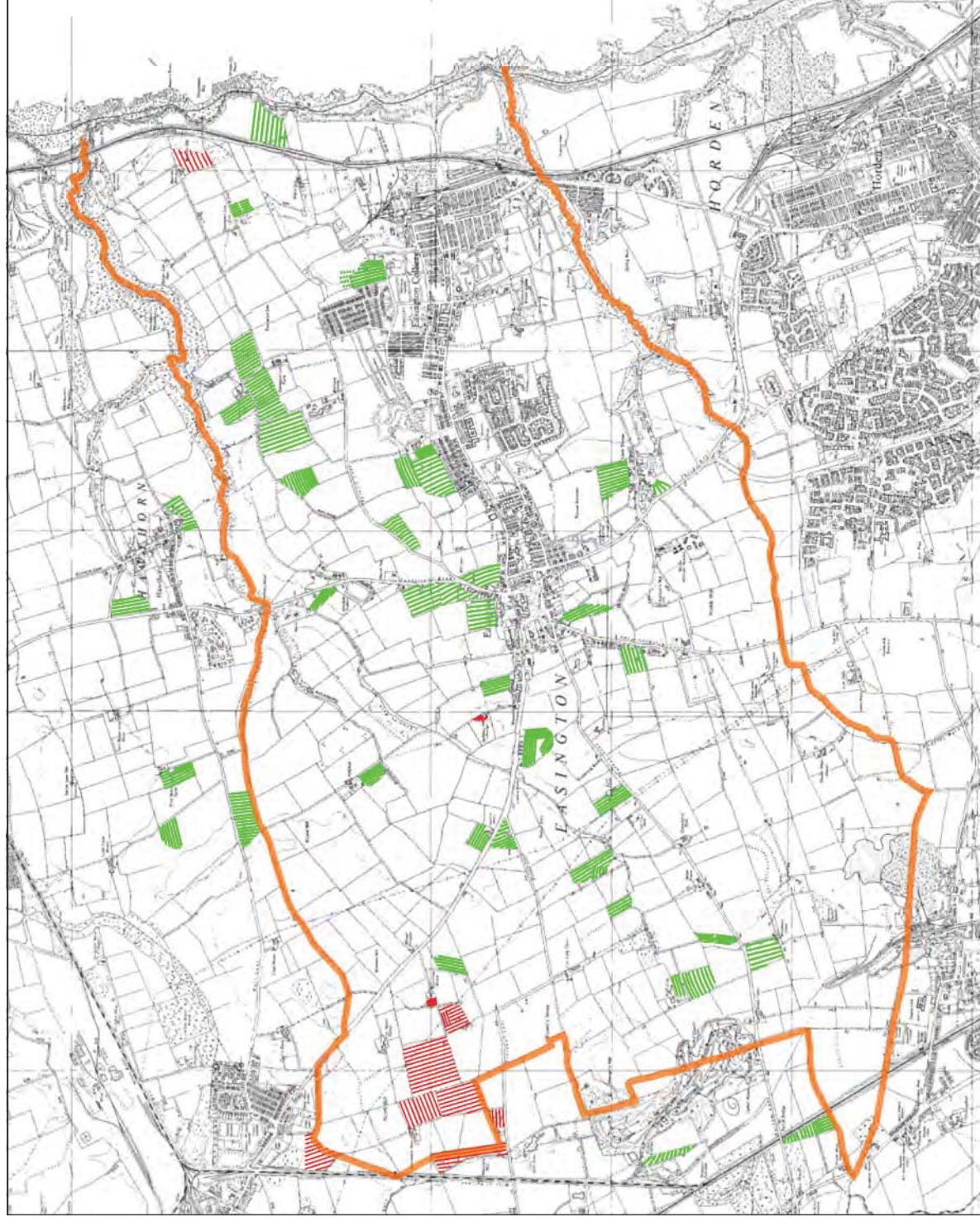
Mill Hill




However another candidate should be noted namely **Mill Hill** (Site 75) to the west of Andrew's Hill. The name Mill Hill might have originated because it was the site of the earliest windmill in the township, later abandoned in favour of other sites. A building labeled Mill Hill is shown at this location on Armstrong's county map (1768), though this probably represents a farmstead rather than a mill, since Armstrong uses specific symbols (a waterwheel and windmill) to designate mills. It does however demonstrate that the toponym was well-established by the mid-18th century. Note also Mill Close and Miller Town Close on the west side of the Easington to Shotton and Stockton road which itself is labeled Mill Way Loaning on the tithe map (DDR/EA/TTH/1/77) and the contemporary estate map (DRO D/Bo G/16

²⁵ Hawthorn Mill (No. 22; HER 67), situated in Hawthorn Dean just south of Hawthorn village, represents another watermill which originated in the Middle Ages.

²⁶ There were a few other lords who held land in Little Thorpe during the Middle Ages, either by feudal tenure or as free tenants (see 10.8.1 above), but these all seem to have been fairly small holdings – 1 messuage and 4 acres for example – and could scarcely have supported a mill.

Ridge & Furrow in the Easington Study Area

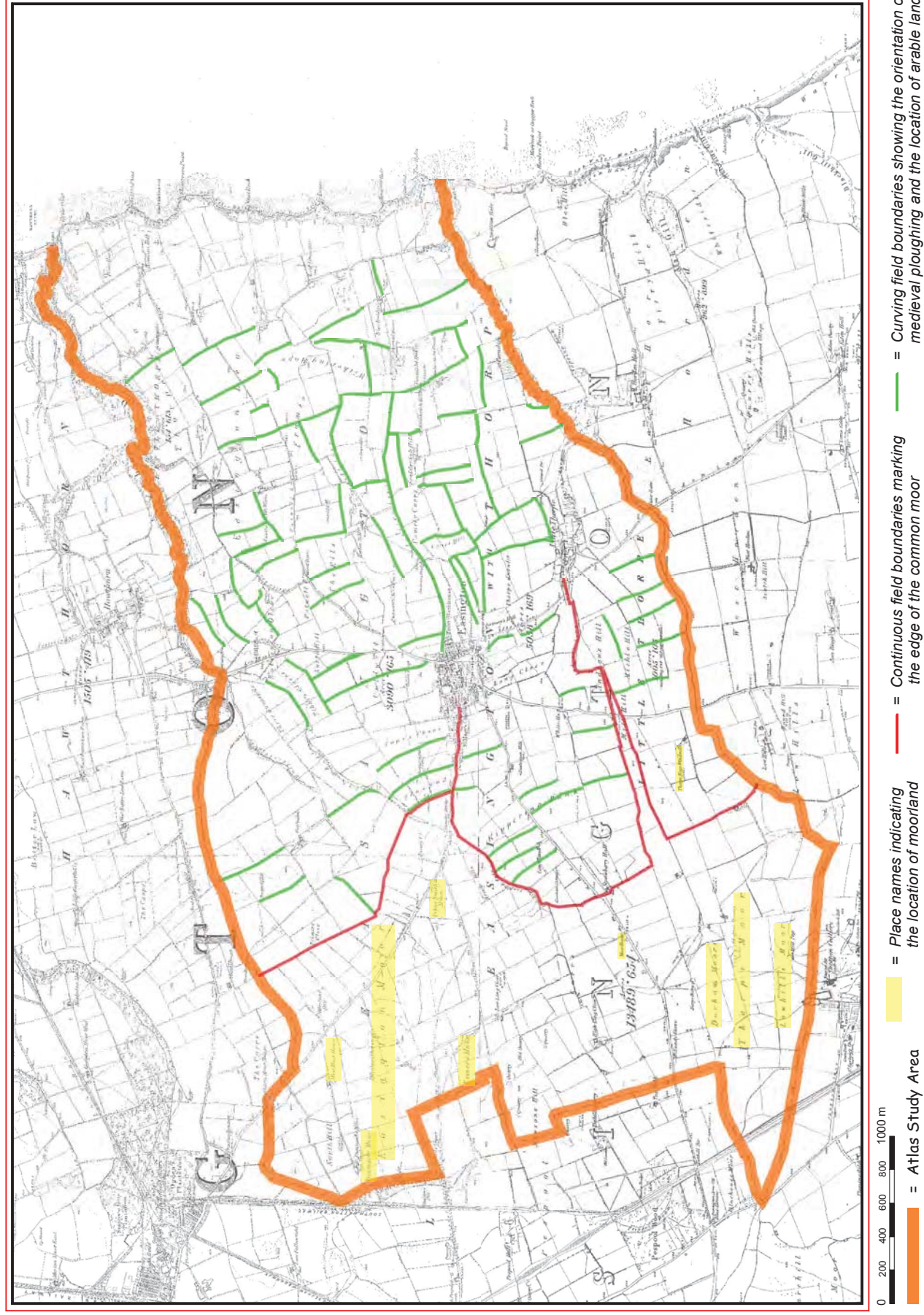


 = Easington Atlas Study Area
 = Ridge and Furrow present in mid-20th century
 = Ridge and Furrow present in 2015

Extract from a 1960s Edition of the Ordnance Survey Series showing rig & furrow earthwork features as parallel lines in green (earthworks surviving until at least the mid-20th century) and red (earthworks surviving in 2015).

UNCOVERING THE MEDIEVAL LANDSCAPE

- Shown on the 6in 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1857 -



(ii)).

10.9.4 The wider township

The wider landscape of the vill outside Easington village and Thorpe hamlet was largely devoid of settlement. There were none of the isolated farmsteads dispersed throughout the territory which still characterize settlement in the area today, such farms being a consequence of the 17th-century enclosure of the common moors and open townfields. There would also have been far fewer hedges since arable fields were undivided, different parts being separated only by grass and weed-covered baulks. Areas of woodland were probably mainly restricted to the deep deans which led down to the sea, much as today. These characteristics held true throughout the Magnesian Limestone Plateau and indeed the cereal growing zone of north-east England in general. It would have given the landscape of the study area an even more open aspect than today with the nucleated settlements nestling like islands amidst a sea of arable crops and moorland pasture. The only exception to this pattern were a number of manorial farms established in the middle of Easington Moor during the 12th and 13th centuries and the township mills, which were positioned outside the main settlements, either on prominent hilltops (if windmills) or beside perennial watercourses (in the case of watermills such as Shotton Mill or Hawthorn Mill), as noted above.

The arable fields

The open fields of the vill lay in the centre, immediately surrounding the two settlements and also extending eastwards towards the coast. The **townfields** were subdivided into furlongs or flatts each named, but demarcated not by hedges, only by uncultivated strips known as baulks. Further subdivisions within the flatts, termed sellions, comprised strips of ridge and furrow grouped together. The individual tenants did not hold entire sellions let alone flatts, however. Rather their holdings were scattered throughout the vill's arable fields with only a few strips in any one place.

To modern eyes this system appears impossibly complicated, with each tenant farmer, whether villein or dreng and freeholder, obliged to cultivate strips potentially scattered across all parts of the township. Even the lord's demesne land, attached to the manorial farm, might be treated this way, intermixed with his tenants' land. What seems to underlie the system is a deep-seated notion of fairness with all tenants having equal access to all the same types of land in the various different parts of the township's arable land, to ensure no one is disadvantaged.

The Hall Field

One of these fields, *Le Hallefeld* (**Hall Field**), is mentioned by name in 1501 when Archdeacon Roger Leyburn was granted permission by Bishop Fox to enclose 40 acres of Easington Church glebe land near the field, with free passage to and from a pond on Easington Moor (cited in Surtees 1816, 12). Hall Field lies to the north of the village and presumably derived its name because it was closely associated with the manorial hall and rector's residence, Seaton Holme. It was not included amongst Easington's townfields when these were enclosed and divided up in the second half of the 17th century and appears to have been glebe land, still attached to the rectory of the parish church in the 19th century (certainly that is how it is recorded on 19th century maps such as Bell's 1843 Coalfield map and the tithe map and award). It probably originated in grants by Bishops Richard Marsh (in 1222) and Nicolas Farnham (1241/1249) of the lands and services of *Suthe-Twysle* and *North-Twysill* respectively (Surtees 1816, 12). Twisel denotes a triangular piece of land between two streams and this would fit well with Hall Field which was roughly triangular on plan, and was bounded on the north side by the township boundary represented by Hawthorn Burn, on the south-east by Loaning Burn, which flowed north-east to Hawthorn Dene, and to the west by Easington Moor. Moreover it was divided into northern and southern portions by Hallfield Burn and Gill which would explain the separate reference to North and South Twisel. The boundary with Easington Moor marking the western edge of the

Hallfield can still be traced with ease today, and here the field contained a close, originally called Fillymoor Close (Pilmire Close by the time of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey), worth £7 per annum, which the Rector held on condition of defraying the expenses of the bishop's seneschal and his attendants (Surtees 1816, 11). By the early 19th century this had been converted into an annual payment of 5s to the bishop (*ibid.*, 13).

Other chantry and glebe lands

Surtees lists other grants of land and property which the rector received (1816, 11-12). However these are more difficult to locate precisely. In 1222, as well as *Suthe-Twysle*, Richard Marsh granted lands called *Renynghmolmer*, plus pasture for ten oxen in the bishop's demesne land, whilst Nicholas Farnham added a meadow called the *Fletes* lying to the east of the road from Easington to Hawthorn, plus a toft in Easington which Robert the Carpenter and Hugh Bont held. The *Fletes* may be the same parcel of land labelled Parson's Meadow at the time of enclosure in the mid- to late 17th century. This was still glebe land in the 19th century, as can be seen clearly on Bell's coalfield map of 1843. Some of these lands were specifically allocated to support the Chantry of the Blessed Virgin established in the church.

All this would imply that, by the end of the Middle Ages, at least, much of the glebe farmland was separate from the ordinary tenants' lands and from the other demesne land and not intermixed. At enclosure, if not earlier, the rector was granted the contiguous belt of land along the south side of Loaning Burn (Parson's North Burns) and a long narrow field (known locally as a chaire or chare) extending from there directly south to the village (Glebe North Field). This was presumably a deliberate measure to create corridor of land connecting the glebe farm beside Seaton Holme with its main block of land to the north.

The Lea

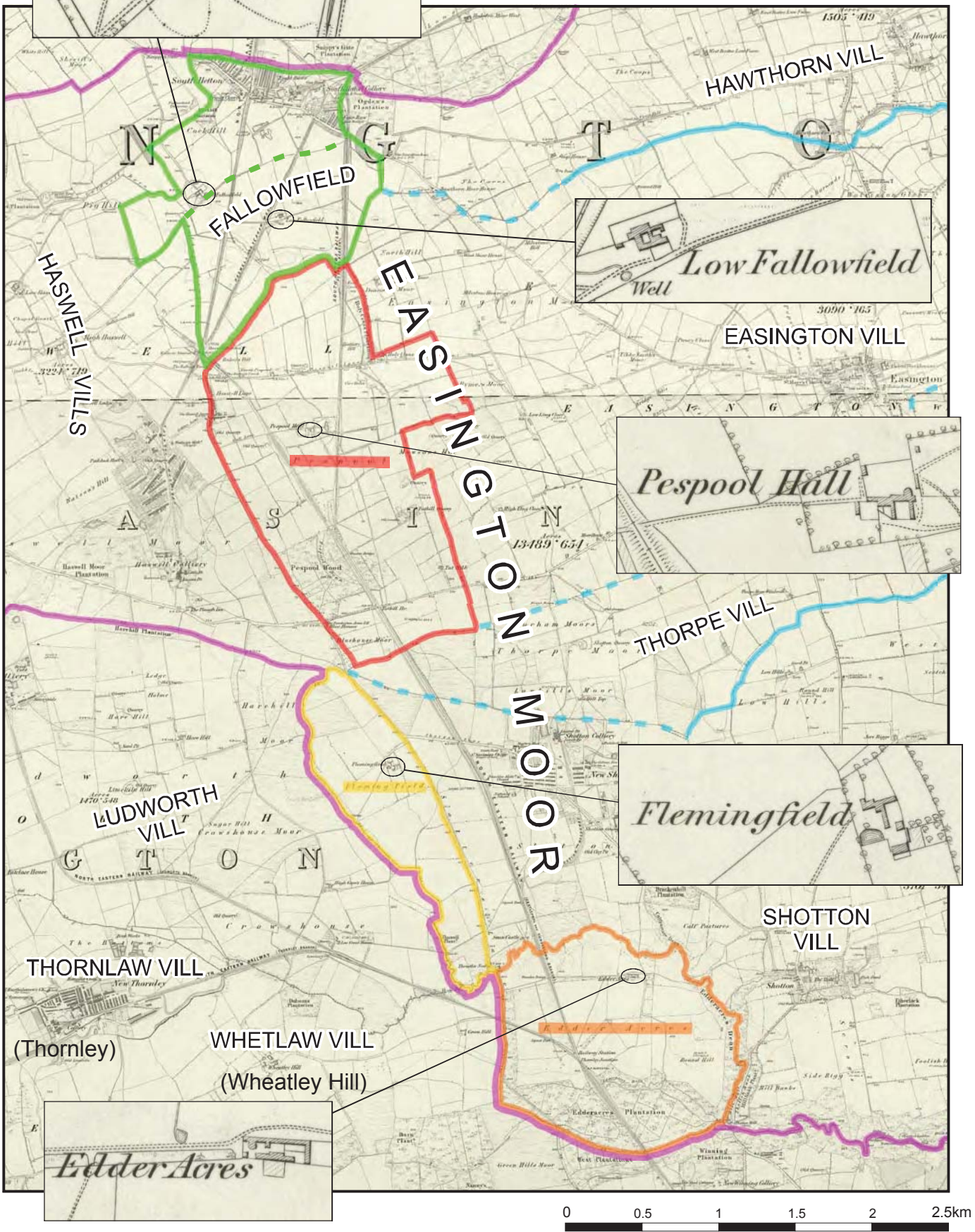
Another area which was distinguished from the main townfields at the time of enclosure is that known as **the Lea**, making up the north-east quarter/corner of the township. This included the north facing slopes extending down to Hawthorn Dean and the northern half of the coastal zone. It is likely that this was an area where the villeins of both Easington proper and Little Thorpe had rights. As a consequence the area was divided between the two township communities, creating Easington Lea and Thorpe Lea, the latter being a detached portion of Little Thorpe township. Along the southern edge of this area there was a block of glebe land, perhaps implying that the rector, as manorial lord, also obtained a share of this area. Perhaps this area had originally been common waste like the western moors, but was brought into cultivation by the two communities during the Middle Ages, with the tenants and lord all receiving intermixed strips of land scattered throughout. Enclosure in the later 17th century provided an opportunity to rationalise these arrangements and eventually to create coherent farmholdings, bearing the names Easington Lea and Thorpe Lea.

Easington Moor – the common waste

The common moor of Easington, where the tenants could graze their livestock throughout the year, lay to the west of the principal settlements. Its extent is indicated approximately by all the various moors denoted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, Easington Moor to the north-west (including Duncombe Moor and Rymer's Moor along the western margins of the township and Tibby Smith's Moor nearer to the village) and Thorpe Moor to the south west (which included Durham Moor and Lowhills Moor). In the centre of the western zone, between the two main areas of labeled former moorland, such names are absent, however. This corresponds to the area which was known as the Ling Closes (North and South) by the time of the enclosure awards and decrees. This presumably represents former moorland which had been enclosed though not divided up between the tenants at some point before the mid-17th century, probably in the late Middle Ages or early modern era. The moor thus comprised between a quarter and a third of the combined territory of Easington and Little Thorpe.

Medieval Farms carved out of Easington Moor

(shown on 1st Edition OS 6in Map, 1857, with plans of the 19th-century farms inset)



0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5km

= Easington Parish Boundary



A 1764 Plan of John Nesham's estate of Pespool, west of Easington (Durham County Record Office NCB/1/216), aligned with north at the top. Inset are enlargements of Pespool and Pespool Hall. The estate incorporated the medieval manorial farms of Pespool and Boisfield. Reproduced by permission of Durham County Record Office.

Corridors of common land known as outgangs led out from Easington village and Little Thorpe hamlet, giving the villagers unrestricted access to the moor through the communities' arable lands.

Manorial farms

Along the western edge of the township a number of enclosures or *assarts* were made in the common moor during the 12th and 13th centuries, as the Bishop permitted various of his followers to take bites out of the waste (Lomas 1992, 157; Britnell 2004, 33-5). This did not result in the creation of new villages, but instead a series of independent farms resembling the lord's demesne farm in the village (but without recourse to the compulsory labour services provided the dependent tenants). Eventually a string of these were established, extending from north to south – respectively Fallowfield, Pespool and Boisfield, Flemingfield and Edderacres – which came to define the western edge of Hawthorn, Easington/Thorpe and Shotton vills and separate the moorland belonging to those communities from that attached to Haswell, Ludworth and Wheatley Hill beyond.

Edder Acres, meaning 'Ethelred's cultivated land' (Watts 2002, 37), is probably the earliest of these farms, figuring as it does in the Boldon Book c. 1183, where it is termed a vill, i.e. a township community, though there are no other details concerning its size or character. By the time of the earliest detailed mapping in the mid-19th century there was certainly just a single farmstead and there is no archaeological evidence for an abandoned village settlement there. Most likely it was a single farm or at most a small hamlet. The fact that Ethelred was an Anglo-Saxon name might imply that the settlement had pre-Conquest origins (Roberts 2008a, 34), though Lomas (1992, 151) argues that it was probably created by the Bishop not long before the Boldon Book's compilation deliberately to induce Adam's father, John, to surrender property he held in Haughton le Skerne in exchange. To the north-west of Easington, a farm at Fallowfield, divided at some stage into High Fallowfield and Low Fallowfield, was also in existence by the 12th century, as it figures in a charter of 1162 x 1189 (DCD, Haswell Ch.1).

The other three farms were created in the 13th century. Directly west of Easington the manor of Pespool ('long grass pool', 'reed pool' or 'rush pool') was founded when Bishop Walter Kirkham (1249-60) granted 156 acres of Easington Moor to his servant John Haldan (DCD, Misc. Ch. 5150). Immediately to the south, where Pespool Wood is now located, the farm of Boisfield was established at some point between 1261 and 1273 when Bishop Robert Stichill granted a carucate or ploughland from his moor of Easington to his servant (*valetus*) John du Bois (Britnell 2004, 34; DCD, Misc. Ch. 6155). Lastly, to the south-west, Flemingfield Farm was formed by Bishop Robert of Holy Island with the grant to John the Fleming of Newcastle and Isabel his wife of a portion of the bishop's moor of Shotton and Easington in 1283 (Britnell 2004, 34-5; DCD, Misc. Ch. 6158, 7083).

MEDIEVAL INVENTORY

Beacon House Farm, Ridge and Furrow, (Site: 53, HER: 5743, NZ 44011 45321)
Ridge and Furrow, Broad Period: Medieval (1066 to 1540)

Beacon Hill, (Site: 54, HER: 3846, NZ 44100 45370)
Site of fire beacon believed to date from Medieval times. Broad Period: Medieval (1066 to 1540).

10.10 The 16th and 17th centuries

The 16th and 17th centuries were a time of great political, social, economic and religious upheaval. New dynasties ascended the throne – the Tudors then the Stuarts. There was an increasing emphasis on coal mining and other industries as a source of wealth in the

Durham Bishopric, and a shift from a society focused on feudal lineages as the ultimate arbiters of local power to a civil society dominated by the county gentry. Perhaps most dramatic, the religious reformation saw Catholicism replaced by Protestantism as the national religion, the Pope supplanted by the monarch as head of church as well as state, and the destruction of the monasteries.

And yet the impact of these changes was perhaps more muted amongst the communities of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau, like Easington, than it was elsewhere in the region. Thus coal mining techniques were not sufficiently advanced to sink shafts through the Magnesian Limestone to reach the underlying coal seams and so Easington remained a predominantly agricultural area. It was the gentry with estates further north and west in the Wear Valley and Tyneside, where the Coal Measures formed the bedrock immediately underlying the glacial till, who were to benefit from the increased coal mining. Elsewhere there was a great shift from ecclesiastical to lay landownership when monastic lands were annexed by the Crown then sold off to ambitious local men. However, in County Durham the Bishop remained a great landowner, though his Palatine vice-regal authority and feudal prerogatives as 'Prince-Bishop' were gradually whittled away until finally abolished under Charles II (James 1974, 41, 149-50). Even more unusually, the dissolution of Durham Priory on the 31st December 1539 resulted not in wholesale asset-stripping, but in the seamless replacement of the Prior and Convent by the Cathedral Dean and Chapter, which retained the bulk of the Priory's great landholdings (Moorhouse 2008) – Henry VIII wished to maintain England's bishops and their great cathedrals, with suitable endowments, as part of his reformed church. Only the land of the Priory's cells – Finchale, Jarrow and Monkwearmouth for example – was sequestered and sold off.

Easington did not completely escape the political and religious upheavals however. Men from Easington participated in the 1569 Rising of the North, in part a reaction to the restoration of under Elizabeth I, and two local men were reportedly hanged on the village green in the retribution of the aftermath, though local involvement in Easington was much lower than in many other districts. Perhaps the men of Easington stood anxiously on Beacon Hill, ready to light the beacon if any landing should be attempted, as the Spanish Armada was blown northward by a fortunate wind (the beacon is still depicted on Armstrong's county map of 1768).

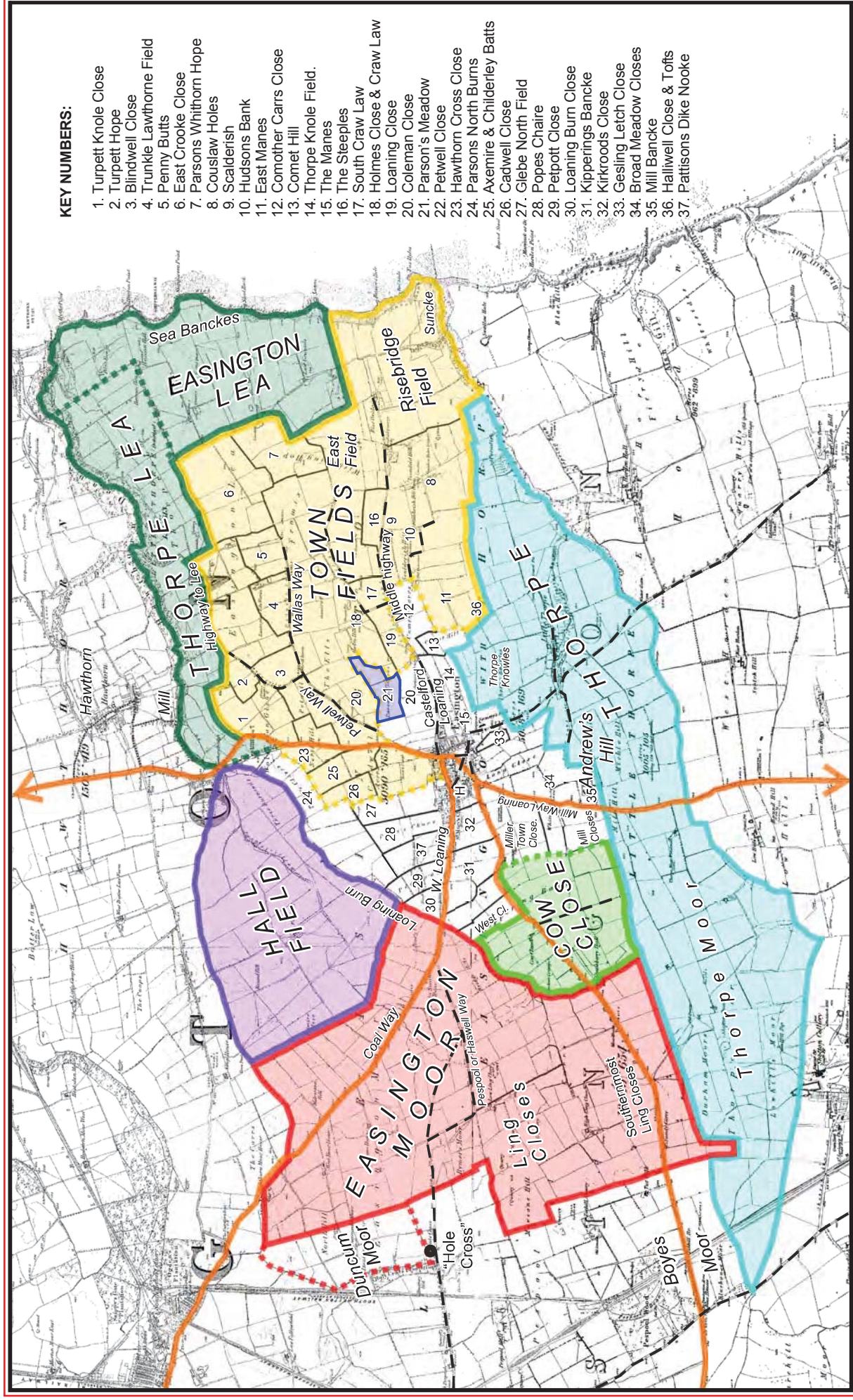
During the next century, as civil war engulfed the kingdoms in the 1640s, local Easington men were amongst those signing the Solemn League and Covenant – recorded in the parish registers – which forged an alliance between the forces of the English Parliament and those of the Scottish Presbyterian Covenanters in 1643 (Hopper [1996], 20). This brought Scottish armies into action in the North-East in aid of Parliament during the following year, seizing the port of Sunderland to counter the Royalist stronghold of Newcastle. At the end of March 1644 both the armies decamped to join the larger armies massing in Yorkshire, before the decisive encounter at Marston Moor. They marched southwards on roughly parallel courses, with the Scots, under the command of the Earl of Leven, who were following a route closer to the coast (probably the Sunderland-Easington highway), arriving in Easington on the 31st March.

And now the Marquess of Newcastle marching towards his Quarters at Durham, the Scots disposed of themselves to Easington, being the middle-way betwixt Hartlepool and Durham, where finding pretty good Quarter for their Horse, they continued till the 8th of April, and then marched to Quarendon-Hill, within two Miles of Durham. (cited at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/> on the Civil War)

Later on, in July of the same year, Easington was to experience the passage of a second Scottish army, under the command of the Earl of Callendar, which proceeded southward to seize Hartlepool and Stockton before commencing the siege of Royalist Newcastle (Durham

EASINGTON ATLAS

- Pre-Enclosure Boundaries (1656-1672) shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1861, Scale: 6" per mile -



0 200 400 600 800 1000 m

- = Coal Way
- = Easington Moor
- = Thorpe
- = Cow Close
- = Town Fields
- = Hall Field
- = Parsons Meadow
- = Thorpe & Easington Lea

County Local history Society 1992, 34-5).

10.10.1 Landlord and tenants

By the 16th century a majority the bishop's tenants held their land by what was known as copyhold tenure, their rent and entry fine (the fee payable when the tenant inherited the tenement) being fixed by the custom of the manor and specified by the 'copy' of the manor court roll, which represented each of these customary tenants' title to their holdings. Moreover, under Elizabeth I, the royal courts protected such tenant right in order to ensure that the northern tenants still had the wherewithal to perform military service on the Border. As a consequence landowners were unable to increase such rents in line with the rampant inflation which characterised this period and resulted in a fivefold price rise between 1500 and 1630 (in part because of the huge quantities of silver entering the European economy from the Spanish possessions in the New World). Landowners sought to pressure their tenants into convert their copyholders into leasehold tenants though even leaseholders might have protection of custom, the leases being renewed at the ancient rent. However by the 19th century the bulk of the Bishop's land in Easington was leasehold, as contemporary maps and surveys make clear (cf. CCB MP/135 – copy of an 1830 survey). A total of 18 leasehold tenants in Easington and 5 in Little Thorpe were listed in a survey of the Manor of Easington instigated by Parliament in 1647, after the end of the Civil War. Easington Windmill and bakehouse were also held on separate leases (*Parliamentary Surveys* II, 175-7, 179-81).

The manor court or halmote court, held Seaton Holme, continued to operate, regulating the lives of the bishop's tenants not only in Easington, Little Thorpe and Shotton, but also Shadforth, Sherburn, Cassop and Quarrington to the west, all townships held in demesne by the Bishop since the Middle Ages and members of the manor of Easington.

10.10.2 Population and social structure

A good snapshot of Easington and neighbouring townships is provided by the hearth tax returns of the later 17th century which provide an indication of population size and, in particular, the number and relative wealth of households, as reflected in the number of hearths their dwellings were furnished with. The data presented below is taken from the 1666 Lady Day Durham Hearth Tax Assessment.

The great majority in Easington township (which for hearth tax collection purposes included Little Thorpe and Horden) lived in houses with only a single hearth – 86 out of 101 recorded households – whilst more than half of the 101 households were too poor to pay the hearth tax at all ('non-solvants'). The dozen householders with two hearths may represent a class of slightly more prosperous farmer (though one of these, Richard Wilkinson, was a non-payer and had perhaps fallen on hard times). Abraham Paxton's three-hearth dwelling would probably have represented a substantial two-storey farmhouse, to judge by analogy with surviving buildings of the period elsewhere in the Magnesian Limestone Plateau, such as Great Chilton Farm, near Ferryhill, which had three hearths serving the hall and parlour on the ground floor and a first-floor chamber over the parlour. Two properties really stand out, however, namely the Archdeacon's six-hearth residence of Seaton Holme and Sir Christopher Conyers 14 hearths which must represent, in part at least, Horden Hall, the fine gentry manor house the Conyers erected for themselves in the early 17th century, complete with Tuscan columns framing the central porch, mullioned-and-transomed windows and an a projecting stair turret to the rear (Pevsner and Williamson 1985, 327-8; James 1974, 15-16).

The same picture can be seen in the other townships of Easington Parish. There too one individual within each township stood out as possessing a dwelling with a greater number of hearths – Robert Sharpe in Hawthorn (5 hearths), George Jurdison in Shotton and Little Eden (6 hearths) and William Midford, Gent., in Haswell (7 hearths). In addition there were a

small number of middling farmers in Shotton and Hawthorn with two- or three-hearth houses, all greatly outnumbered by the single hearth households.

Totals of households and hearths in Easington Parish, Lady Day (25 March) 1666 (*Durham Hearth Tax, Lady Day 1666*, Green *et al.* 2006, cv-cvi)

EASINGTON, Easington South Division		No. of hearths										Total house holds	Total hearth
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+		
Easington	Paying	32	11	1			1				1 [14]	46	77
	Non-paying	54	1									55	56
	Total	86	12	1			1				1	101	133
Haswell	Paying	14						1				15	21
	Non-paying	16										16	16
	Total	30						1				31	37
Hawthorn	Paying	20	5			1						26	35
	Non-paying	17										17	17
	Total	37	5			1						43	52
Shotton	Paying	14	8	1			1					24	39
	Non-paying	28										28	28
	Total	42	8	1			1					52	67
Easington Parish		195	25	2		1	2	1			1	227	289

Certain families stand out as especially numerous, the Paxtons and Jurdisons in particular, as can be seen from the schedules. These families also figured prominently amongst the leasehold tenants listed in the 1647 Parliamentary survey of Easington Manor (*Parliamentary Surveys II*, 175-7, 179-81). These single date snapshots of population may be compared with the longer term record provided by the surviving parish registers of births, marriages and deaths which commence in 1571.

Easington Township ('Lady Day Assessment 1666') Schedules of householders paying and non-solvants unable to pay and exempted through poverty (*Durham Hearth Tax, Lady Day 1666*, Green *et al.* 2006, 50, 141-2). (N.B. Easington includes Little Thorpe and Horden Townships.)

Easington Ward South Division

Easington:

Householders paying	No of hearths	Non-solvants	No of hearths
Sir Christopher Conyers	14	Eliz Walker	1
Robt Smith	1	Geo Paxton	1
Robt Paxton	1	Simon Fletcher	1
Abraham Paxton	3	Tho Goat	1
Will Jurdison	1	Chr Smith	1
Jno Jurdison	1	Robt Walker	1
Antho Wild	1	Luke Taylor	1
Chist Paxton	1	Robt Richdson	1
Rich Rawling	2	Richd Bee	1

Mr Archdeacon	6	Edm Paxton	1
Jno Iley	1	Widd(ow) Graham	1
Dorothy Pattison	1	Ricd Wolfe	1
James Paxton	1	Mich Hickson	1
Wid(ow) Beere	1	John Lambert	1
Will Harrison	1	John Walker	1
Cuth Henry	1	John Hickson	1
Tho Dawson	1	Mich Hickson	1
Geo Paxton	2	Chr Dotchson	1
Geo Robison	2	Widd(ow) Foster	1
Geo Wardall	1	Rich Wildon	1
Tho Robison	2	Willm Stodart	1
Elinor Watson	2	Widd(ow) Gains	1
Ralph Smith	1	Mary Wheatlam	1
Jno Cocke	1	Robt Smith	1
Rich Rennison	1	Chr Kendall	1
Will Calvert	1	Wm Bee	1
Robt Paxton	1	Robt Bacon	1
Henry Smith	2	Willm Bee	1
Jno Harrison	1	Widd(ow) Ellison	1
Tho Paxton	1	Widd(ow) Paxton	1
Tho Nicholson	1	Widd(ow) Clarke	1
Geo Burdon	2	Widd(ow) Harryson	1
GeoTrewhatt	1	Widd(ow) Wilden	1
Wid(ow) Watson	1	John Lawes	1
Geo Jackson	2	Widd(ow) Burdon	1
Geo Hatherington	1	Wm Snawden	1
Mr Drover	1	Tho Eggleston	1
Will Paxton	2	Geo Paxton	1
Tho Lowes	1	Antho Story	1
Mich Watson	1	John Paxton	1
Richard Jurdison	2	John Wilkinson	1
Christ Moody	1	Phillip Blench	1
Robert Paxton	1	Antho Thompson	1
Thomas Paxton	2	Mary Gibson	1
Tho Watson	1	Robt Foster	1
Robert Appleby	1	Peter Wildon	1
		Geo Martin	1
		Gilbert Paxton	1
		Rich Wilkinson	2
		Robt Pescod	1
		Geo Foster	1
		Antho Middleton	1
		Tho Foster	1
		Chr Chapman	1
		Widd(ow) Harryson	1
Totals	77		56

10.10.3 Enclosure

If there was tension between the bishopric as landowner and its tenants over the level of rents and the terms by which tenants held their tenements, there was more consensus between the two by the mid-17th century over the means of improving the productivity of the estate by reorganizing the way it was farmed. This was achieved by enclosing and dividing up the townfields – the township's arable lands – and the common moorland, converting the open arable fields, with their innumerable separate strips of ploughland, and the wide expanses of moorland waste all into compact fields or 'closes' bounded by hedges. The process was effected during the third quarter of the 17th century by a series of enclosure awards made by agreement of the affected parties, confirmed by decrees in the Bishopric's

Chancery Court, extending over the period between 1655 and 1672.

Table: List of recorded enclosures in Easington and Little Thorpe (from DUL-ASC catalogue and Tate 1946)

Date: Award	Date: Decree/ confirmation	DUL-ASC ref:	Description	Area; acres
1655	9 April 1656	DHC6/IV/14	Easington Moor (part)	102
1658	23 March 1659	-	Townfields in Little Thorpe & Easington	610
1660	30 April 1661	DHC6/IV/15	Easington Moor (part)	599
1664	23 March 1665	DHC6/IV/16	Easington & Thorpe Lea, Easington Cow Close, Townfields in Little Thorpe	1555
1669	22 August 1672	DHC6/IV/17	Northmost Ling Close Easington Moore, Thorpe Lea & Easington Cow Close	40

Although no map was produced to accompany the awards at the time, one was drawn up during the 19th century (DHC6/III/16), a reconstruction of the original arrangements perhaps prepared during the same period as the transcriptions of the 1656 and 1661 Easington Moor awards, which were made in 1885 (CCB B/187/3) and 1880 (CCB B/187/4) respectively.

The arrangements set out in the awards suggest that some portions of Easington Moor had already been enclosed in a limited fashion, since certain large closes are named in the area directly to the west of the village – Cow Close, and North and South Ling Close. On the 1st edition Ordnance Survey the two Ling Closes can be seen occupying a central position on the western margin of the Easington Township and thus separating Easington Moor from Thorpe Moor. They may have been a relatively recent creation. Cow Close lies directly to the east of the Ling Closes, adjoining the townfields just south-west of the village, and may therefore represent a considerably older enclosure. There is no indication, however, that these closes were internally subdivided into numerous fields as occurred in the 1650s-70s, so their function may therefore have been somewhat different. They perhaps provided more tightly controlled grazing than was possible on the moors where any tenant might graze an unlimited number of livestock. The name Cow Close might hint at that. Tenants might have been restricted in the number of stock they could graze there or in the length of time that they could exploit this pasture, to avoid over-grazing it.

10.11 The 18th and 19th centuries

10.11.1 The farming landscape transformed

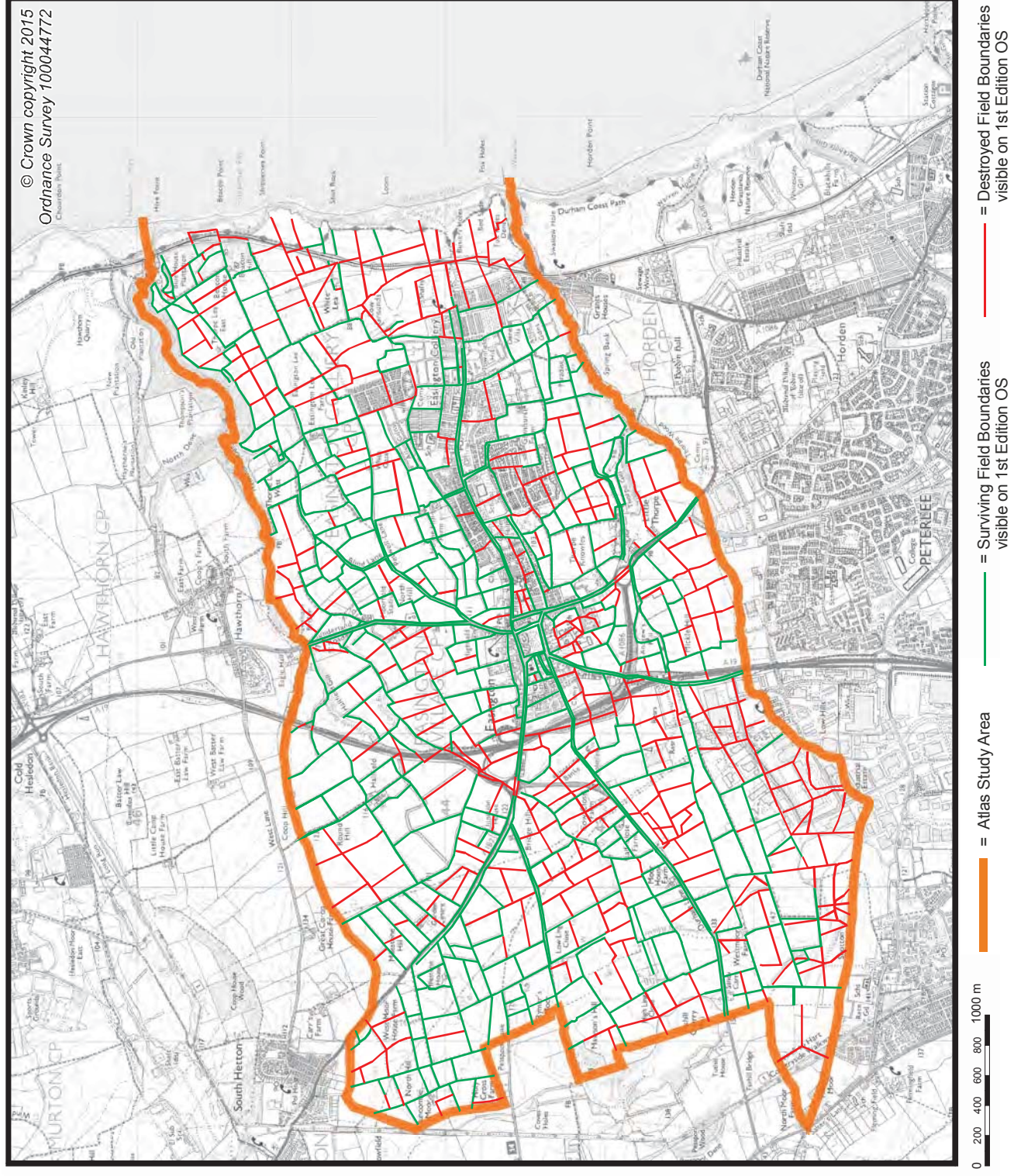
Fields and hedges

Enclosure had dramatic consequences both for the appearance of the landscape and the settlement pattern. In place of the broad open fields of ridge-and-furrow, a landscape of smaller fields enclosed by edges was created throughout the township. The hedgelines which survive today are largely a product of this period. The field pattern is clearest on the detailed mid-19th century maps – estate (D/Bo/G 16/(ii)), tithe (DDR/EA/TTH/1/77) and 1st edition Ordnance Survey. There may have been some further subdivision of fields between the execution of the enclosure awards and the compilation of those maps some 170 or more years later, but the basic pattern was surely very similar. However, the progressive intensification of agricultural production, particularly in arable farming, since World War II, has resulted in the removal of many of these hedges, so that the surviving layout only represents around half of those in use 150 years ago (see illustration opposite: *Historic Field Boundaries*). Arable cultivation involving the creation of ridge-and furrow earthworks may have continued for some time after enclosure, perhaps extending into former moorland areas where it had formerly been mostly absent, but over time stock rearing probably



Plan of land in the Townships of Easington and Little Thorne as awarded by Decree of Chancery (DHC6/III/16) - late C19 (c.1880?) reconstruction of the 1655-72 enclosure awards. Reproduced by permission of the Church Commissioners for England and Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections.

HISTORIC FIELD BOUNDARIES



became more important as the 18th and 19th centuries progressed, with the result that former ploughland was turned over to pasture and meadow, resulting in the preservation of the earlier patterns of ridge-and-furrow, until the intensive deep-ploughing of recent decades.

The new farms

Enclosure also precipitated a major change in the settlement pattern with the establishment of individual farmsteads dispersed evenly throughout the township. In the Middle Ages and Early Modern era there were few farmsteads outside the nucleated village and hamlet settlements, the only exceptions being the manorial farms carved out of the common waste in the 12th and 13th centuries, such as Pespool, Flemingfield and perhaps Edderacres. Thus, although the county maps produced by Saxton (1576) and Speed (1611) and subsequent 17th-century cartographers are symbolic in their depiction of settlement in the bishopric they are nevertheless broadly accurate in portraying a settlement pattern overwhelmingly made up of nucleated villages and hamlets. Enclosure was to change all that. By providing them with holdings comprising contiguous groups of fields instead of numerous strips of ploughland scattered widely throughout the townfields, enclosure facilitated and encouraged the bishop's tenants to move out of the village and establish farmsteads in the centre of their holdings which they could then farm more conveniently. Both Easington village and Little Thorpe hamlet remained the most significant centres of population in the locality (though Little Thorpe may show signs of shrinkage which perhaps first began in the aftermath of the Black Death), but they were now joined by more than 20 isolated farmsteads, fairly evenly dispersed throughout the study area. These now represented the majority of the local farm tenancies, though a few remained ensconced in the village and hamlet.

It is difficult to chart the development of this new pattern of dispersed settlement as we do not have sufficiently detailed map evidence for much of the period. The county maps of the late 17th and much of the 18th centuries provide little more than the names of the villages. It is not until the publication of Armstrong's county map in 1768 that further detail is provided, with the appearance of Hallfield, Holm House, Cow Close and a building called Mill Hill, which may be the same house labeled White House on later maps, perhaps just a dwelling rather than a farm, situated beside the main road south towards Shotton and Stockton. However Armstrong's map is not sufficiently detailed to provide negative evidence, that is to say the absence of a farm from the map does not prove that it had not yet been established. Thorpe Lea West (also called North Thorpe Lea on estate map D/Bo/G 16/(ii) c. 1840) is depicted on a sketch plan of tenements belonging to Ralph Ferry in 1790 (CCB MP/138a). More farms are shown Greenwood's map in 1820, though many are not named. It would appear that the pattern was essentially complete by then and, again, the possibility that farms not shown were simply omitted in error cannot be excluded. Of the farmsteads shown on the tithe map (DDR/EA/TTH/1/77 – 1839) and contemporary estate map (D/Bo/G 16/(ii)), which provide the first comprehensive, detailed record, White Lea, Rise Bridge (also called Low Grounds) and either Thorpe Lea or North Thorpe Lea, all in the east or north-east, were definitely absent from only Greenwood's map. Scaldershill Barn is the only further addition by the time of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey – probably a subsidiary working complex, like Petwell Barn, rather than a full farm complex complete with farmhouse.

This settlement shift with the attendant changes to methods of agricultural exploitation and land use is one of the most important developments in the history of Easington's landscape and that of the East Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau more generally. There is ample scope to establish much more precisely when each of the farms was first erected through analysis of parish registers and wills, work which would be relatively straightforward for local history groups to accomplish.

Mills

Servicing this agricultural economy were several corn mills, comprising three windmills, one

watermill and two steam mills, all apparently operating at some stage in the 19th century.

The windmills

Three windmills are shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, all categorised as corn mills and located on the rising ground to the west of the villages. These comprise respectively, from north to south, Jackson's Mill (Site 15/16; HER 5939/35455), a little to the north-west of the village, Easington Mill (Site 18; HER 5940; now site of Holmlea) on the south side of Durham Lane just to the east of the village, and Thorpe Moor Windmill west of Mickie Hill and south of Mill Hill. The last named was located within Little Thorpe township as defined on the Ordnance Survey map.

Two of these were definitely 19th-century creations. **Jackson's Mill**, which also operated as a steam mill, dates no earlier than 1832 when it was constructed by John Lamb of Hawthorn for John Henry Jackson. It figures in the 1840 tithe apportionment (no 61 – *mill and land*). The George Jackson ceased milling in 1884 and the building was converted to become an isolation hospital. **Thorpe Moor Windmill** is not even listed in the apportionment (its site – fields no 70 – is recorded simply as *Thorpe Moor*) which could imply that it was established between 1840 and 1856. However one George Harding was listed as miller at an unnamed mill in Easington in Pigot's Directory for 1834 and this may represent Thorpe Moor Mill as Jonathan Harding, presumably a relation, was listed as the miller at Thorpe Moor Mill in Whelan's 1856 Directory, so it may simply have been omitted from the tithe map.

Easington Mill might represent a much older site possibly even that of the medieval windmill, though other locations are possible, on or close to Mill Hill for example (see above 10.9.3). It is depicted by a windmill symbol on Greenwood's county map (1820) and figures in the 1840 tithe apportionment (under no. 66 – *mill and sand near Easington Village*), the miller being named as William Ferry, though the mill building is not depicted on the 1839 map itself. William Ferry is also named in Pigot's Directory for 1834 and in Whelan's 1856 Directory.

William Waller was still operating as a miller at Thorp Moor in 1879 according to Kelly's Directory, as was Thomas Jackson, presumably at Jackson's Mill, and William Ferry (perhaps a son of the William named in 1834-1856?) at Easington Mill, but all three windmills were disused by the time of the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey at the end of the 19th century.

Steam Mills

Two steam mills are shown on successive Ordnance Survey maps in Easington Village itself. The 1st edition (surveyed in 1857) clearly depicts and labels a 'Steam Mill (Corn)' towards the western end of **Southside**, the building being tucked behind the frontage of that south row. This presumably corresponds to the Easington Steam Mill in Whelan's Directory of 1856, which lists Nelson Walls as the corn miller there.

The same building is still shown standing on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey (1897), but it is no longer labeled as a mill and it is not clear whether it was still functioning as such. However a corn mill is identified at the south-east corner of the village, again tucked in a back yard plot behind the frontage of Low Row, which lined the east side of the green,. Its position indicates it could only have functioned as a steam mill. Neither steam mill is shown as operational on the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey (1919), however.

Thorpe mills (Sites 76 & 77 – watermill and windmill)

Several 19th-century maps provide evidence for a mill at Little Thorpe. The earliest record is provided by Greenwood's county map of 1820, where a waterwheel symbol, denoting a watermill, is shown on Thorpe Burn, some 300m to the east of Little Thorpe hamlet. By correlating Greenwood's map with the later 1st edition Ordnance Survey this site can be seen to be located at the burn's confluence with another, unnamed stream flowing from the

north-west. No buildings are shown or labelled at this point on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey or the tithe or estate map of 1839/40. Instead the fields/plots situated just to the east of Little Thorpe village, numbered 45 on the tithe map, are itemized in the accompanying apportionment as *Thorpe Mill and sand*. They were owned by Mrs Coverdale and occupied by Teasdale Walker. No mill buildings are depicted, but the position of the relevant fields beside Thorpe Burn, just downstream of the hamlet would be consistent with this mill being a watermill.

More detail, though not necessarily much clarification, is provided by the 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey plan. This features the label 'Thorpe Mill (Ruins)' in one of the plots at the east end of the village which were numbered 45 on the tithe map. It is not clear however whether this applies to a roughly circular structure immediately to the left of the label or to a substantial square building in the north-east corner of the field. The circular structure could represent a ruined windmill, whereas the square building is both the wrong form for a windmill and is positioned too high above the burn to convincingly represent a watermill. Whilst it is evident that the channel of Thorpe Burn could be diverted into a series of elongated ponds just upstream of the hamlet and a channel can be traced running down the middle of the street a little further to the east which could conceivably represent part of a leet channel there is no indication that such a channel continued as far east as the square building. Moreover that building continues to feature on successive Ordnance Survey editions right up until 1957, when it is finally labelled as a ruin, so it is less likely to be the ruined structure referred to in the 1850s. The logical conclusion to this data is that there were two successive mills at Little Thorpe. The earlier, in use by c. 1820, was a watermill sited some 300m downstream from the village, where the confluence of two burns created a greater head of water. At some point after c. 1820, but before 1839, this was presumably replaced by a windmill, located at the east end of the village. However by the late 1850s this in turn was disused and had fallen into ruins, implying a relatively short life. Given the number of documented mills in Easington with Thorpe township it is likely that there was simply too much competition for the available grain supply from local farmers and the Little Thorpe mill had proved unprofitable.

It is uncertain when the mill was first established. Watermills were often very ancient sites with direct continuity from the manorial mills of the Middle Ages. Once the substantial investment of creating mill dams, ponds and leets had been made they tended to stay in the same place over long periods, as is evident in the cases of Shotton Mill and Hawthorn Mill for instance. However a mill at Little Thorpe is not mentioned in any of the medieval or early modern surveys of the bishop's estates, such as the Boldon Book, Hatfield Survey or 1647 Parliamentary Survey, and no other land holding at Little Thorpe would appear to have been large enough to sustain the full apparatus of medieval manor. It is likely, therefore, that the mill at Little Thorpe was created at a later stage, during the period of agricultural improvement of the 18th and early 19th centuries, like the windmills discussed above.

MILLS INVENTORY

Hawthorn Mill (Site: 22, HER: 67, NZ 41843 45174)

Mill race, mill pool and ruins of the former Mill now only visible as turf covered ruins. Hawthorn Mill, reportedly a corn mill, was extant on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1857, where a number of buildings, sluice, mill dam and well are all depicted. The mill in a slightly different form, possibly after some rebuilding is still marked as a standing building on the 1898 Ordnance Survey map. Probably on the site of the medieval mill of Hawthorn Vill.

Jackson's Mill (Site: 15-16, HER: 5939 & 35455, NZ 40978 43712)

Windmill. 1832 by John Lamb of Hawthorn for John Henry Jackson. Shown on 1st edition OS. Disused by the time of 2nd edition. Extensively restored in 1980 when top storey was removed and a single-storey house added to east. Random limestone rubble. Circular plan and tapering elevation. 4 storeys. Door has monolithic cambered arch. Renewed windows retain original stone lintels. C20

house attached not of special interest.

Easington Mill (Site: 18, HER: 5940, NZ 40986 43102)

Windmill present on 1st edition OS but not on later editions.

Thorpe Moor Windmill (Site: 20, HER: 5941, NZ 41153 42168)

Windmill present on 1st edition OS and described as 'Corn Mill'. Disused by 2nd edition and demolished by 1975.

Thorpe Watermill (Site 76, NZ 4280 4287)

Watermill marked on Greenwood's county map (1820). Probably replaced by a windmill (Thorpe Mill) at the east end of the settlement. The site lies 300m east of the hamlet at the confluence of Thorpe Burn with another stream flowing from the NW. No traces of buildings are marked on later maps and no remains of structures or water management features can be seen on the ground today.

Thorpe Mill (Site 77, NZ 4248 4284)

Probable windmill located at the east end of the hamlet. A mill is referred to in the tithe apportionment (1840), associated with a parcel of land comprising two field and two narrow 'toft' strips (one containing a building – the miller's house?) at the south-east corner of the settlement. On the 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey (1857) a circular feature is shown next to the rubric 'Thorpe Mill (Ruins)', implying that the mill was already abandoned by this stage.

Easington Southside steam corn mill (Site 78, NZ 4156 4332)

Steam corn mill shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1857) near the west end of Southside (Easington Village).

Easington Low Row steam corn mill (Site 79, NZ 4177 4342)

Steam corn mill shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey (1897) behind the south end of Low Row. (Easington Village).

10.11.2 The village settlement

The development of the village can only be charted in detail from c. 1840 onwards using the tithe and estate maps of that date and the successive editions of the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey plan. Some buildings of 18th-century or slightly earlier date can also be identified from their form or fabric, as can some much earlier structures of definite medieval date. Excavation in 1977 at 1-2 Low Row, next to the Shoulder of Mutton car park, also revealed the foundations of an early 18th-century stone cottage measuring 4.8m by 9.5m in area, associated with sherds of a 17th- to 18th-century slipware plate, plus a small area of 15th- to 16th-century occupation debris (Site 14; HER 249; Clack 1980; Hopper [1996], 7). A plan summarising this information, showing when new buildings appeared is presented opposite.

It is clear that the settlement grew very little in size over the course of these centuries. It still comprised the rows around and adjoining the village green (including the row on the north side of Rosemary Lane). Aside from the expanding workhouse complex beside Seaside Lane, on the east side of the village, the only growth beyond the core of five rows was the straggle of buildings and plots along Hall Walks, to the west of Seaton Holme, including the Parochial School.

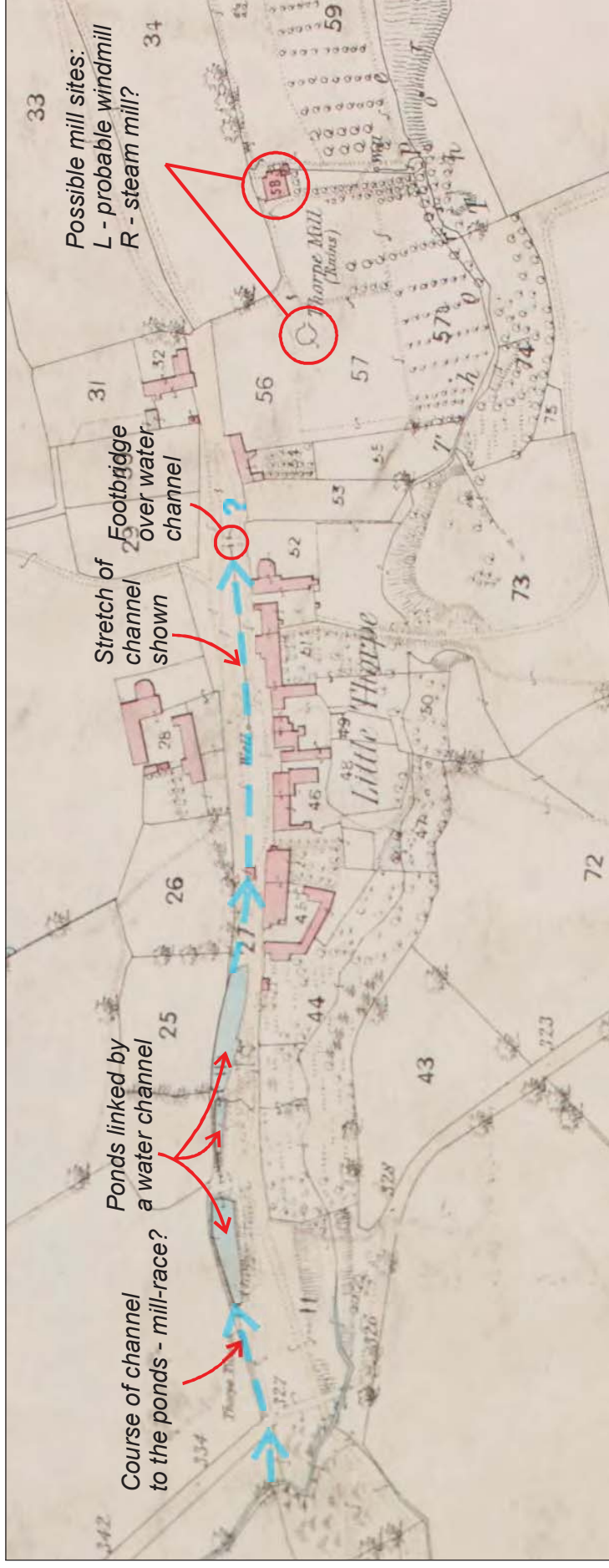
INVENTORY

The Manor House, (Site: 13, HER: 35453, NZ 41614 43346)

House. Early-mid C18 with C19 additions. Rendered rubble. Steeply-pitched Welsh slate roof with brick gable stacks. Double-depth plan with central staircase to rear. 2 storeys, 3 windows; the openings of a 3rd storey now blocked. Lower 2- storey rear elevation. Projecting enclosed porch has C20 door and radial fanlight in rectangular frame. Central, first floor 2-pane sash has wedge lintel. Canted mid C19 2-storey bay windows with ogee-shaped roofs to right and left. Rear elevation has round-arched staircase window. Interior: Early-mid C19 features include panelling,

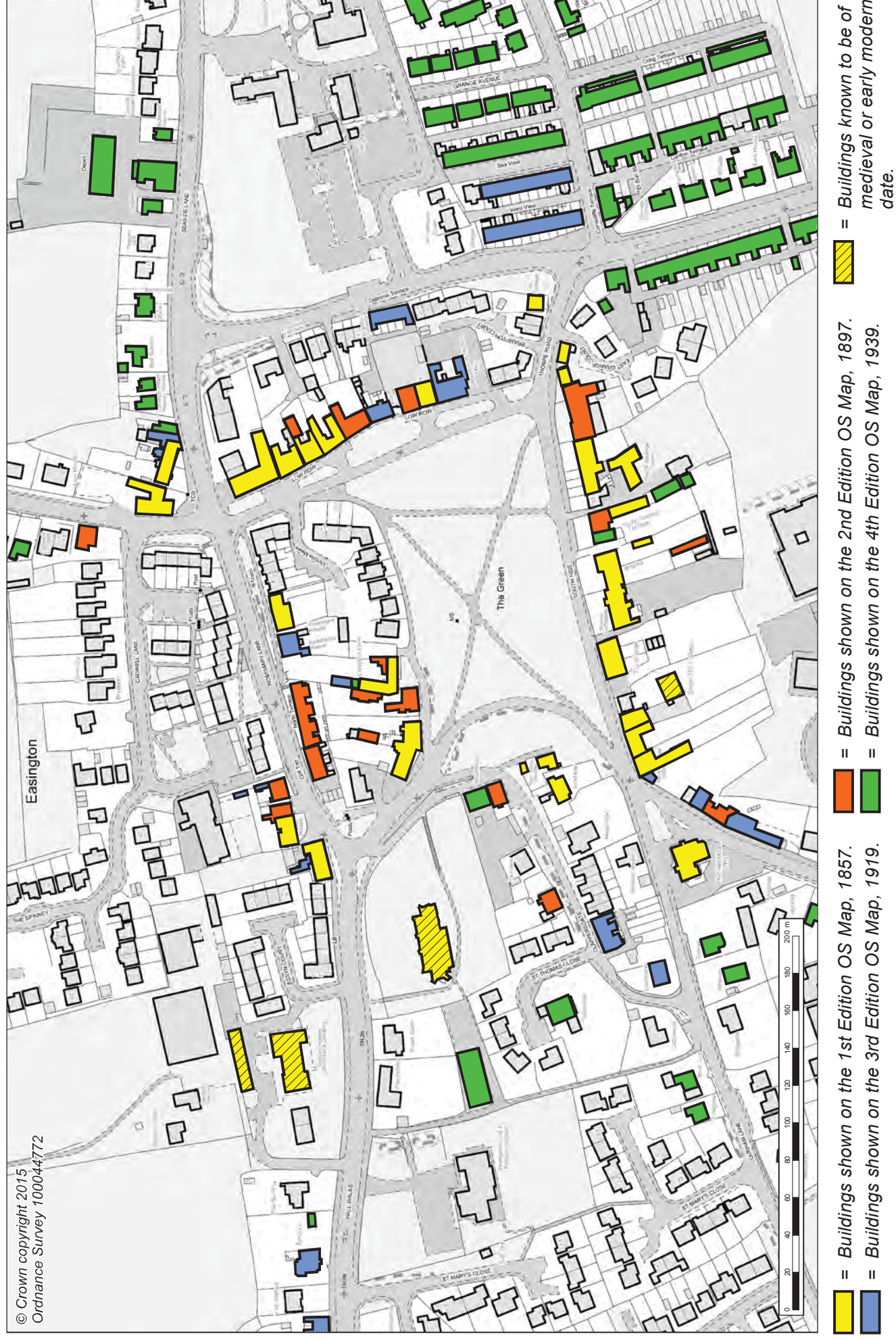
Little Thorpe and its mill - water or wind?

shown on an extract of the 1:2500 1st Edition Ordnance Survey, 1857



Original map held by Durham University Library Archives & Special Collections (DHC11/III/28/3/3). Reproduced by permission of the Church Commissioners for England.

The Development of Historic Buildings in Easington Village



Views of the Village



View over Easington Village Green



The Liberty Tavern



View of the Kings Head situated at the north corner of Low Row c1920

Low Row, Easington Village.



View of the Village Green & Southside with a water pump in the foreground



Extract from Armstrong's Map of County Durham, 1768 (Durham County Record Office D/X 99/39). Reproduced by permission of Durham County Record Office.



Extract from the 1791 revision of Armstrong's Map of County Durham (Durham County Record Office, Londonderry Estate Archives D/Lo 239). Reproduced by permission of Lord Londonderry and Durham County Record Office. Inset, a photograph of the early 19th-century milestone on Easington Green.

fireplace surrounds, several 6-panel doors and a staircase with 2 turned balusters per tread. No 1 and 2 Manor Cottages attached to right not of special interest.

Easington Low Row, (Site: 14, HER: 249, NZ 41800 43400)

Excavation at numbers 1-2 Low Row, Easington. This was carried out to test the hypothesis that the western half of the village is earlier than the eastern half. A small area of 15th to 16th century occupation debris was found, along with the foundations of an early C18 stone cottage 4.8m x 9.5m in size, and associated features; this removed much of the earlier occupation.

10.11.3 Transport and Communications

Easington was probably already a substantial crossroads in the Middle Ages and it is likely that all the main roads which emerged from the green were in use by then. These included Durham Lane leading westward to the county town, Thorpe Lane/Eden Lane to the south-east, which continued onward beyond Little Thorpe and Little Eden to the coast and thence along the shore to Hartlepool, and the road which headed north-westward toward Hetton, Houghton-le-Spring and Chester-le-Street (now the A182). Undoubtedly the most important was Sunderland Road, the north-south road leading from Sunderland to Stockton via Easington, which formed one of the Bishopric's principal highways, the precursor to the modern A19.

The Bishopwearmouth and Norton Turnpike

Although it had doubtless long been in use, the earliest depiction of Sunderland Road is provided by Christopher Maire's county map of 1711-20, the south-easterly coastal route also being shown on this map. Subsequently Armstrong's county map (1768) shows the highway in more detail, and it is interesting to compare the original 1768 edition of the map with its 1791 revision, which reflects the road's promotion in status following the establishment of the Bishopwearmouth and Norton turnpike trust in 1789. This had been energetically promoted by Rowland Burdon of Castle Eden, an important local landowner whose estate included land in Little Thorpe and Horden and who was to be elected as one of the two MPs for County Durham in 1790 (Moyes 1969, 54-5). The trust took on the responsibility for managing, maintaining and improving the road, previously a burden on the parish ratepayers, and had the exclusive right to levy tolls on those using the road to discharge its responsibilities. On the later map the road is highlighted in a deeper tone and bounded by thicker lines to make it stand out, the mileage along the route is noted and the position of turnpike toll-bars occasionally marked. These features are replicated on early 19th-century county maps, notably that published by Greenwood in 1820 which provides a pretty accurate depiction of the local roadwork.

Turnpikes were part of a nationwide improvement in transport infrastructure during the 18th century which also included the construction of canals (though these had little impact in north-east England where a combination of waggonways and river keelboats performed an equivalent role). The steady improvement of roads through the work of turnpike trusts brought down journey times quite dramatically. The increasing traffic along these roads generated considerable income for the inns, hotels, smiths and farriers in places like Easington and many of the inns located around the green at Easington probably had their heyday in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. However the coming of the railways from the 1820s onwards undermined the economics of turnpike trust operations and the trusts were typically wound up in the 1870s, the tollhouse sites of the Bishopwearmouth and Norton Trust being sold during 1873-1877 (DRO Q/D/B 1 (pp. 438-46)).

Milestone 75m north of the Manor House, (Site: 11, HER: 36121, NZ 41601 43432)

Milestone. Early C19. Single stone with segmental top. About .75 metres high. Carved inscriptions on 2 faces: DURHAM (illegible) MILES on south-east face; HOUGHTON- LE-SPRING 7 MILES on north-east face. O.S.B.M. on top. Period: 1800 to 1832.

Easington Milestone, (Site: 21, HER: 818, NZ 41200 42000)

A cast-iron milepost in the form of a sloping-topped triangular block. One side shows 'SD9', the other 'SM14', to Sunderland and to Seaham. The actual location is unclear. In 2006 a member of the public reported the milestone missing.

The age of the Railway

Despite its significance as the social, religious, administrative and, to some extent, economic capital of a broad swathe of the Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau, Easington was ignored by the 19th-century railway builders. A glance at Bell's map of the Great Northern Coalfield's Hartlepool District in 1843 (DRO D/Lo 242/1) or Hall's 1861 map of the Great Northern Coalfield (DRO D/CL 23/73) makes the point abundantly clear. Rather than continuing straight along the coast from Sunderland and Seaham to Hartlepool, the lines of the North Eastern Railway (NER) looped around to the west of Easington via Haswell and Castle Eden. The reason for this is the connection with the other feature which figures prominently on these maps – coal mines. The railways were constructed primarily to serve the freight needs of the region's many collieries rather than provide passenger transport for local communities like Easington. The nearest pits to Easington were Shotton Colliery or Shotton Grange Colliery as it was also termed, just beyond the south-western corner of Easington township and South Hetton Colliery a little to the north-west. The nearest stations were at Thornley Junction, Shotton Bridge, Haswell and South Hetton, many of them distant from the pre-existing rural communities they might have been expected to serve²⁷, though mining communities did grow around most of these stations. The absence of collieries and consequently the lack of attendant railway development were due not the lack of coal deposits beneath Easington. Indeed an attempt was made in 1836 to sink a shaft beside Seaside Lane about a quarter of a mile from the coast (Bell 2014, 8). However the peculiar difficulties posed by the overlying geology, in particular deposits of quicksand in the Magnesian Limestone, which resulted in uncontrollable flooding, thwarted any attempt to sink shafts through the limestone in this area until the early 20th century, when improved techniques, which involving freezing the shaft, were employed, opening a new chapter in the history of Easington.

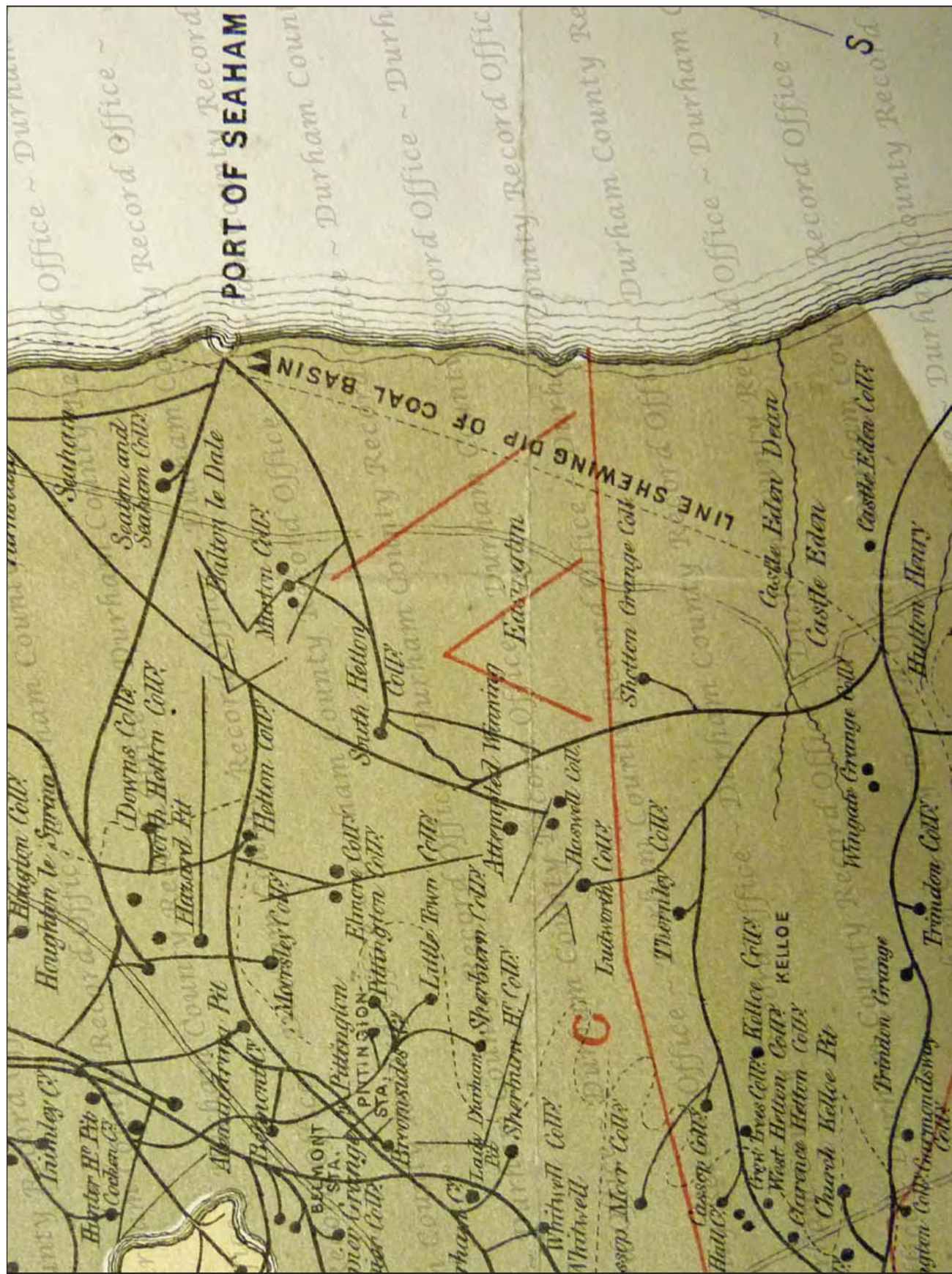
10.11.4 Trades and Industries

Farming was not the only activity in Easington Township during the 1800s, though it was undoubtedly the most important one. The trade directories and Ordnance Survey editions show that there were a number of tradesmen operating in the village. Two saw pits are marked on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey and two smithies on the 2nd edition (1897), which had increased to three by the time of the 3rd edition (1919). The trade directories provide more detail. Pigot's Directory of 1834 lists butchers (4), grocers (4), boot and shoemakers (4), cartwrights (2) and joiners, blacksmiths (3), a draper, a saddler, a tallow chandler, a cabinet maker and joiner, a gardener and seedsman, plus a shopkeeper, with the grocers, in particular tending to have another trade as well. Whelan's 1856 directory adds several tailors and masons and one individual, William Oyston, described as a 'cattle doctor, grocer, draper druggist and general dealer'. Kelly's 1879 Directory adds a steam thrashing machine proprietor, John George Harding, a 'farmer and agent for artificial manures, oil cake and galvanized iron for farm use', and a veterinary surgeon, Charles Hunting, all indications of the changing nature of farming in the later 19th century, following all the improvements introduced over the course of previous decades. Also mentioned is a brick and tile manufacturer (see below), whilst 'J Pratt & Co., saw mills and monumental masons' figure in the corresponding 1902 directory. Letters were received at the Half Moon Inn in 1834, but by the 1850s there was a post office at or next to the Liberality Tavern in the opposite corner of the village. In 1879 John Watson, grocer and draper, also ran the post

²⁷ Thus Thornley Station, for example, was neither close to Old Thornley, the shrunken medieval settlement, nor New Thornley, next to Thornley Colliery, the nearest settlement to the station being Edderacres, south-west of Shotton!



Extract from Bell's Map of the Great Northern Coalfield, Hartlepool District, 1843 (Durham County Record Office, Londonderry Estate Archives D/Lo 242/1). Reproduced by kind permission of Lord Londonderry and Durham County Record Office.



Hall's Map of the Great Northern Coalfield, 1861 (Durham County Record Office D/CL 23/73). Reproduced by permission of Durham County Record Office.

office. Kelly's 1902 Directory even lists a sub-branch of the York City and County Bank, open on Mondays only. This is shown on the 3rd OS edition plan on Low Row, just to the south of the Methodist chapel.

These directory listings provide a compelling picture of the sheer scale of such service activities in an important rural village like Easington, which in some respects functioned like a small market town. Indeed, Pigot (1834) noted that a fair for the sale of cattle etc., had been lately established there, held on the last Tuesday of every month. The contrast with the hamlet of Little Thorpe is striking. There only half a dozen farmers and a market gardener were included in the separate listing provided in Kelly's 1879 Directory, and five farmers, a market gardener and a butcher in the 1902 Kelly Directory.

Inns and Taverns

There were also five inns in the village at this stage. These comprised the *Mason's Arms* in the north-west corner adjoining the Rectory grounds, the *Liberality Tavern* in the north east corner beside the Sunderland-Stockton turnpike, the *King's Arms* at the north end of Low Row, the *Shoulder of Mutton* towards the south end of the same row and the *Half Moon Inn* at the south-west corner of the village, in the angle between Durham Lane and turnpike road. Adjoining the King's Head was a brewery and maltings (cf. Hopper [1996], 6 reproducing a plan of 1879), listed as the Easington Brewery in Whelan's 1856 Directory, run by Bertram Bulmer, doubtless a relative of John Bulmer, victualler at the King's Head.

Industry in the wider township: quarries, limekilns and tileworks

Traces of relatively small scale industrial activity can be traced throughout the wider township. Dotted around the township were numerous quarries, many already termed 'old' on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey plan and therefore clearly disused by the 1850s, plus rather fewer sand and gravel pits. The quarries were concentrated in the eastern part of the township and on its western and south-western margin presumably because the limestone was easier to access there. The sand and gravel pits mostly lay to the east of the village and, although their distribution overlapped with that of the quarries, they did not extend as far eastwards. The stone output of these quarries was probably destined to be used as stone and lime mortar in the buildings of neighbouring farmsteads and in the village itself and also for the field walls in the parts of the township where stone walls rather than hedges were used as boundary fences. The other main function of the quarries was to provide agricultural lime to improve soil and pasture. Four of the quarries shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey plan in the eastern part of the township were each associated with a limekiln, one of the kilns already being termed 'old' and hence presumably disused.

One other enterprise which should be noted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey plan is the Easington Tile Works on the north side of Petwell Lane to the north-east of the village. Nothing is shown on the 1839 tithe map (DDR/EA/TTH/1/77) or the contemporary estate map (DRO D/Bo/G 16 (ii)). This may have manufactured pan tiles for use as a roof covering in local buildings, but by the 1850s such tiles were being rapidly supplanted by Welsh slate brought in by the railways, which was cheaper and much lighter, and therefore required less substantial supporting roof timbers. Most of the works' output was probably drain pipes for use in field drains, another feature of the widespread process of agricultural improvement underway during these years. By the 2nd OS edition (1897) this had become the Easington Brick and Tile Works, implying it was also producing bricks for construction by this stages. Kelly's 1879 Directory lists one John Maclaren as a brick and tile maker, whilst the corresponding 1902 directory includes 'Christopher Stainson, brick and tile manufacturer'. The works was disused by the 3rd OS edition (revised 1914). Also relevant in this regard is a cluster of water-filled pits, similar to those shown next to Easington Tile Works, which are marked on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey plan just to the south-west and west of Milestone House, in the north-western corner of the township. These may represent abandoned clay pits. They are not labeled on the map and may therefore have been disused

for some time.

All of this modest industrial activity was intimately bound up with the needs of farming, whether stone sand and gravel as building material for farm buildings field walls and tracks, or lime and tile drains to improve the fields, a testament to just the dominance of agriculture and associated services in the local economy of Easington throughout the 19th century, despite the frenetic colliery development in neighbouring districts of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau.

10.11.5 Poor Relief and the Poor Law Union

In the Middle Ages care for the poor, sick and infirm had largely been the responsibility of the church which set up hospitals and almshouses, generally run like somewhat on the lines of monasteries, with a resident priest and nursing sisters living according to a simplified monastic rule. Donations of food to the poor were made also made at monastery gates whilst lay individuals might also make charitable bequests in wills and, in the large boroughs, like Newcastle, might also be involved in the establishment and running of almshouses through the town corporation. In its itemisation of Easington's tenements the Hatfield Survey of 1381 mentions, in passing, *le Maysendieu* (i.e. *Maison Dieu* or 'House of God – *Domus Dei* in Latin), a typical name for a hospital or almshouse, which was probably located somewhere near or within the hallgarth of Seaton Holme (*Hatfield Survey*, 130; cf. Orme and Webster 1995, 39). With the dissolution of the monasteries the bulk of this provision was also abolished, though some almshouses survived. To fill the gap, responsibility for supporting the poor aged and infirm was eventually entrusted to the parish authorities by the Poor Law Act of 1601, and devolved further to the townships, in the North of England, in 1662 (see Chapter 8) funded by the local ratepayers. Rapid population growth and upheavals of industrialization in the 19th century resulted in spiraling increases in the burden on ratepayers and led to a new centralised system being introduced by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

The Easington Union and Workhouse

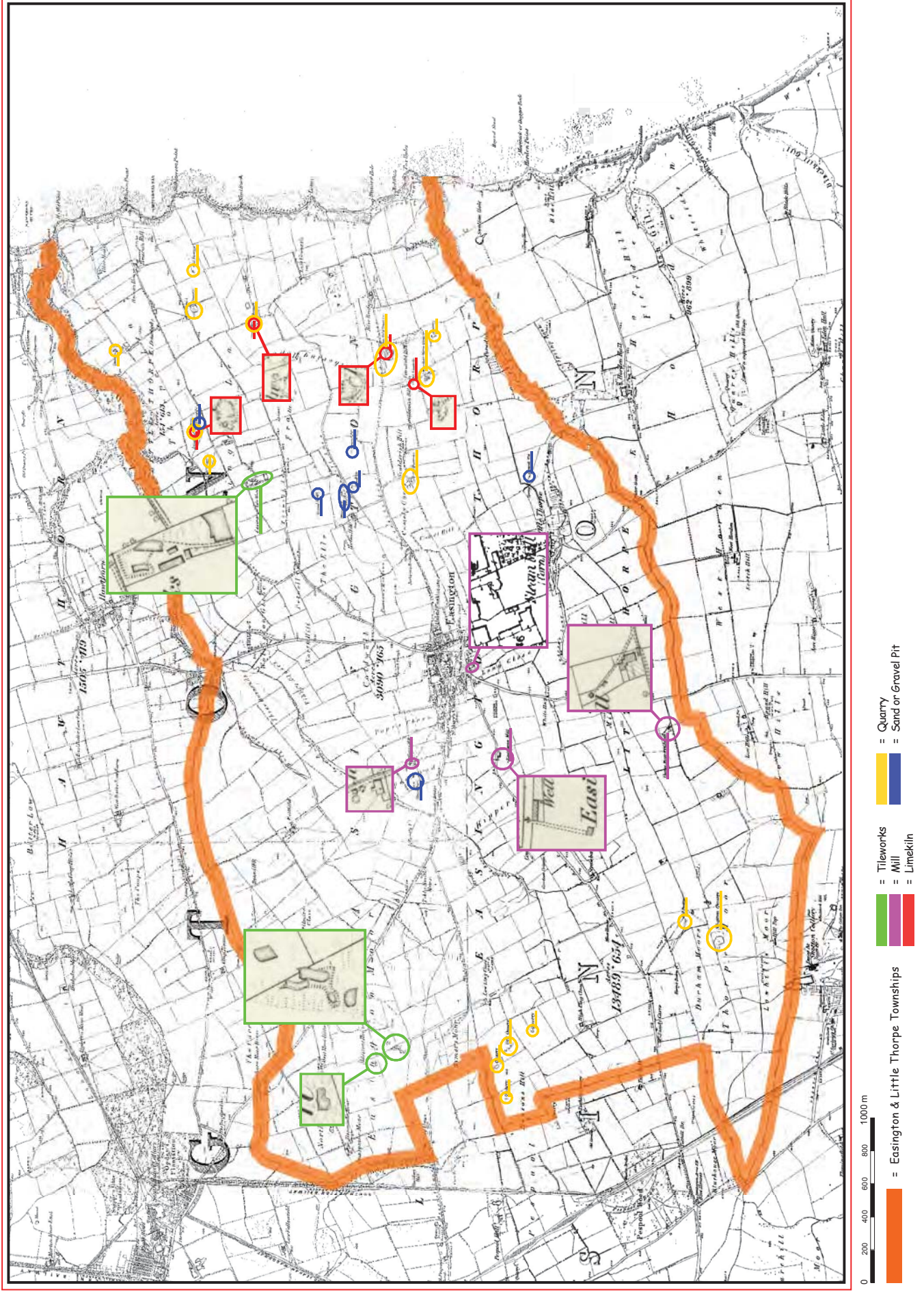
Parishes were grouped into larger Poor Law Unions each of which maintained a workhouse and was supervised by an elected Board of 22 Guardians of the Poor who in turn were monitored by a national Poor Law Commission. The Easington Poor Law Union covered the parishes of Burdon, Dalton-le-Dale, Castle Eden, Monk Hesleden, Thornley, Wingate, Kelloe, Nesbitt and Seaham as well as Easington itself.

The workhouse for the Easington Union was erected in 1850 immediately to the east of the village, on the corner of Seaside Lane and the street running behind Low Row down towards Little Thorpe. There were 25 inmates in 1851 shortly after opening. This steadily increased to 75 by 1855, 130 by 1894 and 240 by 1936 (Hopper [1996], 11; Moyes 1969, 95). The original building shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey was arranged around a courtyard entered through a central archway on the west side. It was repeatedly added to, expanding eastwards along Seaside Lane and southwards to house the increasing numbers of inmates, as can be seen on subsequent editions of the Ordnance Survey. The Board of Guardians originally held their meetings in the King's Head until purpose-built offices were erected in 1901, a fine building with broad eaves in the Arts and Crafts style, only recently demolished, which also accommodated Easington Rural District Council (Hopper [1996], 82). Durham County Council took over responsibility for the workhouse in the 1930s, by which time it was also being used as a hospital with surgical wards. It was converted into a general hospital, Leeholme, and absorbed into the National Health Service in 1948.

The workhouse accommodated the elderly and infirm, widows, unmarried mothers. National policy when the New Poor Law was introduced was for the workhouses to be made as harsh as possible to deter the poor from resorting to them. There was great opposition to the new system's introduction, especially in the North, and some of its provisions were watered down

INDUSTRY IN EASINGTON TOWNSHIP IN THE 19TH CENTURY

- Shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1857, Scale: 6in to the mile -



Easington Poor Law Union Workhouse later Leeholme Hospital



View of the entrance and west range of the workhouse built by the Easington Poor Law Union on the eastern edge of the village in 1850.



The entranceway into the 19th-century workhouse. This later became Leeholme Hospital.

Below: The workhouse courtyard (NE corner).



Easington Village Annual Show



A winning horse at the annual show



A typical view of the annual show with trophy presentations in the foreground and refreshment marquees in the background

Easington Village Church of England School



View of Easington Village Church of England School



Easington Church of England School Group 4, 30th August 1921



Easington Church of England Infant's School, 1919

– for instance outdoor relief outside the workhouse was never abolished, as originally intended. Nevertheless entry into the workhouse was generally feared and hated by the poor, though much might depend on the personality of the master and matron running the establishment.

10.11.6 Education

The first formal educational provision in Easington was introduced in 1814 when the Reverend Richard Prosser established the Easington Parochial Charity School, erecting at his own expense 'two school rooms but in one tenement and under one roof for the education of boys and girls' (see Hopper [1996], 30; 2011, 26). £1000 were invested by Reverend Prosser for the repairs and running of the school with Morris and Ann Craggs the first teachers. By 1828 50 boys and 30 girls were being educated there for 1d per head, and by 1856 the average attendance had reportedly risen to 120. The original building is shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey, labeled 'Parochial School (Endowed)' and located in the north-west corner of the next field but one to the west of St Mary's churchyard, beside Hall Walks. This building is not marked on the tithe map (DDR/EA/TTH/1/77) or the related township survey plan (DRO D/Bo/G 16/(ii)), both c. 1839-40, but it may simply have been omitted.

By the end of the century the school had been enlarged and rebuilt on a different spot a little to the east (but still within the same field just west of the churchyard), as is apparent on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey (1897).

10.11.7 Religion

For centuries St Mary's Church had been the only formal place of worship in Easington. The church was the centre of an extensive parish and its rector, who up until 1832 was also Archdeacon of Durham, was a powerful individual. Other settlements, more distant from this centre of Anglican power, may therefore have seemed more congenial for non-conformist groups wishing to establish places of worship. This Anglican monopoly was finally broken during the course of the 19th century, first by the Methodists and then by the Roman Catholics. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1857) shows a Wesleyan Methodist chapel on the north side of Rosemary Lane, tucked behind the street frontage. In 1885 this was replaced by the chapel in Low Row, which is still in use today, having been extended in 1961 following the acquisition of an adjoining cottage in 1944 (Hopper [1996], 8).

The 19th century also witnessed a revival in Roman Catholicism in due to greater official tolerance and the immigration of Irish workers into Britain to meet the incessant demand for more industrial labour. Initially the Catholic congregation attended 'House Masses' in private houses, such as the front room of the Robinson family. However, in 1870 a house and garden on Clappersgate, just south of St Mary's Church, was purchased, funded by a private benefaction from the Crowe family, and the Church of Our Ladies of Victories and St Thomas was subsequently built on the site, opening in 1875 (Hopper [1996], 26; 2011, 45). This continued in use until 1976, a presbytery being erected next to it in 1914.

10.11.8 Easington c. 1890

As Easington entered the last decade of the 19th century it appeared to have changed relatively little over the course of the previous 100 years. The village itself had only expanded slightly to the east and west, largely to accommodate new buildings which provided education and social welfare for the surrounding district, as noted above (10.11.2), a consequence of Easington's role as the local 'capital' for much of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau. Admittedly the population of the township had grown substantially over the period, more than trebling from 487 in 1801 (when the township included Horden as well as Easington and Little Thorpe) to 1731 in 1901 (by which time Horden had been transferred to the civil parish of Shotton). Nevertheless, the economic function of the village was still predominantly agricultural – farming, plus the crafts, trades and small-scale industries

associated with that – but also included the servicing of the needs of travelers along the main north-south highway of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau, the Sunderland to Stockton road, through its inns and smithy. However this essentially static pattern was to be transformed as the new century opened, fundamentally changing the character of Easington.

10.12 The creation of Easington Colliery

10.12.1 Sinking the shafts

At the very end of the 19th century another attempt was made to sink mine shafts at Easington to gain access to the rich coal seams beneath, with the formation of Easington Coal Company in 1899. This was part of a wider focus on exploiting the reserves of the Limestone Coast, with the Horden Coal Company, which had simultaneously acquired the royalty to the 28 square mile coastal belt immediately to the south of Easington, sinking Horden Colliery (completed 1904) and Blackhall Colliery (1909), and reopening Shotton Colliery (1900), closed since 1876 (Moyes 1969, 130-31, 156 map). A number of pits in the locality had recently closed following exhaustion of reserves or flooding, with production ending at Castle Eden, Haswell and Hutton Henry Collieries in 1893, 1895 and 1897 respectively, so new development was urgently required to maintain output and employment in the coalfield (*ibid.*, 112-14). Erection of the headgear for three shafts at Easington – North, South and West – commenced on 12 March and the first sod was ceremoniously cut on 11 April by Miss Barwick of Thimderley Hall, daughter of the company chairman.

This is clearly one of the major events in Easington's history, the catalyst for a dramatic expansion in settlement and population there, and hence the most radical alteration to the landscape since the enclosure of the open fields and the creation of the dispersed farmsteads.

The sinking of the shafts was to prove far from quick or straightforward, however, because of the difficult geological conditions encountered, with strata of porous friable sand containing large volumes of water underlying the 500 feet of limestone overlying the coal seams. French engineers were initially employed to freeze the shafts, but were unable to cope with the ingress of water when sand was met, as were the Belgian engineers who replaced them.

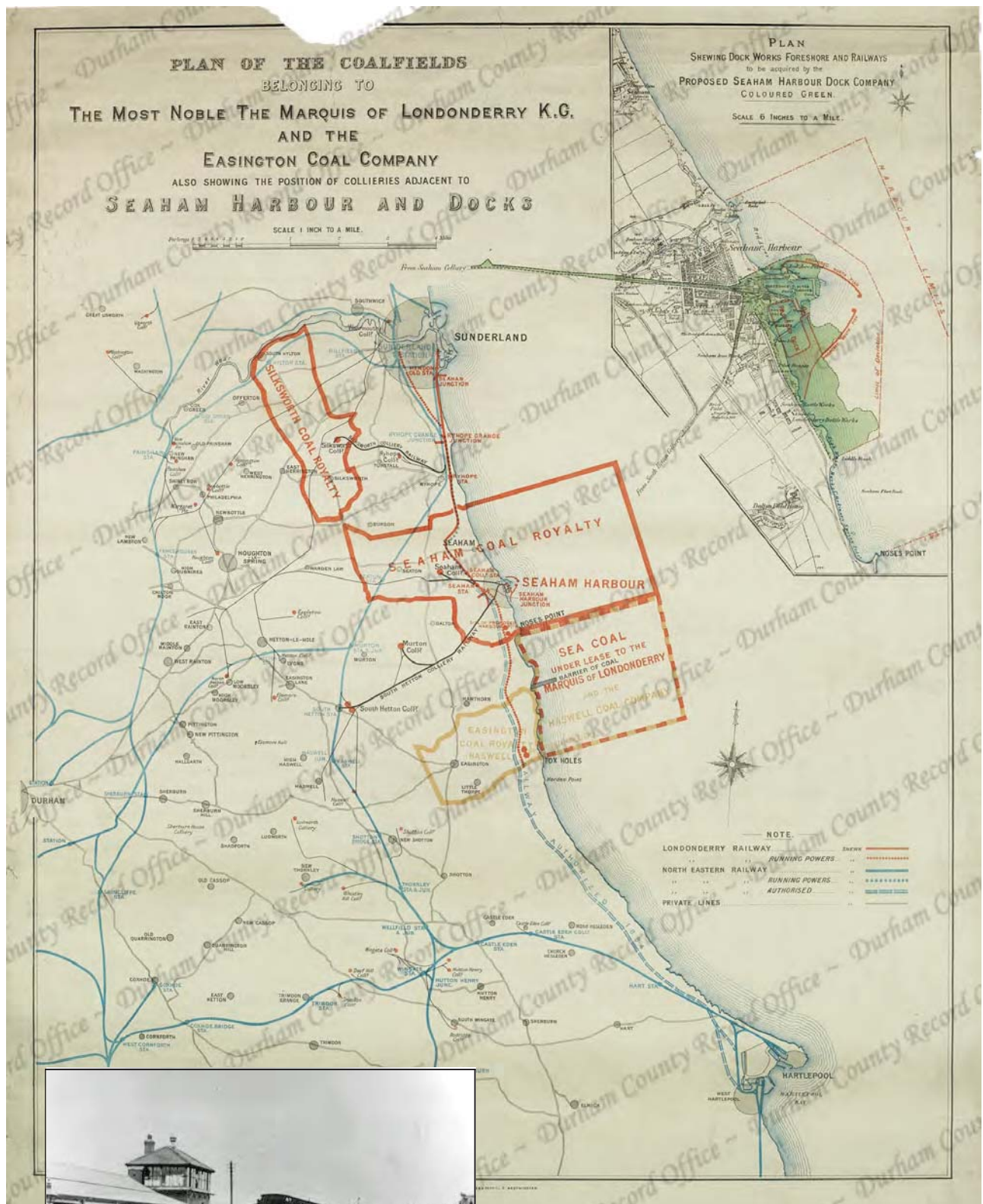
Tragedy in the shaft

Work was brought to a halt by a tragic accident on 29th November 1904 when 19 sinkers were working in No 2 shaft. A sudden inrush of water occurred despite the frozen lining of the shaft and rose rapidly. The men signaled for the engineman to lower the metal bucket, known as the kibble, to rescue them, using the metal wire, or rapper, which connected to the surface. The kibble was lowered and retrieved ten men and then descended again to bring up the remainder. One man, 56 year old Robert Atkinson, could not be rescued however, having slipped off the plank onto which he was clinging just as the kibble was about to reach him. Despite frantic attempts to reach him or at least recover his body, with the kibble being lowered on three separate occasions, manned by master sinker Thomas Roddam, with John Curry and Thomas Hogan, no trace of Atkinson could be found his body being submerged in the water and quicksand. Dragging operations with grappling-irons only succeeded in bringing up one of his boots (Hopper [1996], 16, citing *Echo* 29.11.1904; Bell 2014, 9, citing *Durham Advertiser* 02.12.1904). It was to be more than 4 years before his body was finally recovered.

The shafts completed

The company next turned to German engineers who were ultimately to succeed in sinking the shafts where their predecessors had failed, perhaps a testament to German technical achievements of German science and engineering in decades preceding the First World War. Work on the shafts resumed in 1907 and the north shaft was finished in September

The Arrival of the Colliery and Railway



Easington Colliery Station not long after opening (Courtesy of Eileen Hopper)

Plan of the Coalfields belonging to the Marquis of Londonderry and the Easington Coal Company, 1898 (DRO D/XP 82). Reproduced by permission of Durham County Record Office.

The Railway



Saltburn Express passing Easington signal box in the 1930s



*Easington Colliery Station
not long after opening
(Courtesy of Eileen Hopper)*



LNER Train crossing Hawthorn Viaduct in the 1930s

1909. The body of Robert Atkinson had been recovered earlier that year, perfectly preserved in the ice, and buried in Easington churchyard on 20 February. The first working seam was reached in July 1910 and the first coal drawn from the North pit on the 15 September of that year, going on sale on the 19th. The first coal was drawn from the South shaft on 29th January 1912 (Bell 2014, 9-10).

10.12.2 The Railway

As a precursor to the development of Easington, Horden and Blackhall Collieries, the North Eastern Railway (NER) set about finally closing the gap between Sunderland and Hartlepool, caused by the lack of a direct railway line along the coast.

The pre-existing route, which ran from West Hartlepool and Hartlepool to Sunderland undertook a circuitous detour inland between Hart and Ryhope, running via Castle Eden, Wellfield, Thornley Station, Shotton Bridge, Haswell, South Hetton, Murton and Seaton. This had been assembled by combining a number of early railway lines, in particular the Hartlepool Dock & Railway and the Durham & Sunderland Railway. Not only did this add extra mileage and time to the journey but it also involved tackling two steep banks at Monk Hesledon and Seaton. When descending Seaton Bank northbound trains had to make a compulsory stop at Ryhope. Indeed the express from Newcastle to Liverpool via Sunderland, which the NER ran jointly with the London and North Western Railway (LNWR), avoided Hartlepool altogether as a result of the detour required to call there, proceeding instead from Wellfield directly southwards to Stockton via Hurworth Burn, Wynyard and Thorpe Thewles (Hoole 1965, 141-2, 149-54). Obviously, if the coal reserves of Easington and the other coastal districts were to be exploited, a railway line would be essential to move the output to a port, gasworks or coal merchant, and bring in all the materials needed by the pits.

On 31 July 1893 the NER obtained an Act nine miles long from a junction with the existing Hartlepool-Sunderland line at Hart to join the Marquess of Londonderry's Seaham & Sunderland Railway at Dalton-le-Dale, near Seaham. The Act also sanctioned the conversion of the Londonderry Railway northwards from Seaham to Sunderland for passengers. Eventually the Marquess of Londonderry agreed to sell this stretch of line to the NER, which thereby gained full control of the coastal route between Sunderland and Hartlepool, an agreement ratified in a further Act of 30 July 1900. The Marquess retained control of his colliery lines and coal wagons which together with Seaham Harbour were vested in a new company, the Seaham Harbour Dock Co. The NER commenced working trains between Sunderland and Seaham on 6 October 1900, but the full coastal route between Sunderland and Hartlepool did not open until 1 April 1905 (Hoole 1965, 156-7). Although the route was relatively level substantial viaducts were required to carry it across the many denes, which cut deep incisions in the coastal plateau as they ran down to the sea. The magnificent, Grade II listed Hawthorn Viaduct is a notable example of the scale of engineering needed to complete the line.

Most of the through trains transferred to the new route straight away which enabled Newcastle, Sunderland, Hartlepool and Stockton all to be conveniently connected in a single service. Intermediate stations were built at Ryhope East, Seaham, Easington, Horden, Blackhall Colliery and Blackhall Rocks, opening in 1912. Sidings were laid beside the collieries along the line, enabling the coal to be transported to ports such as Hartlepool or Seaham or further afield to customers such as power stations.

Later history

Construction of the coastal line inevitably downgraded the importance of the interior route via Haswell which henceforth served only local passenger and freight traffic, principally connected with the collieries along its route. This made it more vulnerable as economic conditions for railways changed in the second half of the 20th century with the rise of motor traffic. Most stations on the interior route closed on 9 June 1952 when the passenger

services from Hartlepool to Ferryhill and to Sunderland via Haswell were withdrawn with the remainder at the north end of the route closing seven months later on 5 January 1953 when the Sunderland to Pitlington service was withdrawn (Byrom 2010, 36-43; Hoole 1965, 154). Freight services survived for longer, essentially dependent on the continuing existence of the various collieries along the route.

The coastal line is of course still with us and now sees direct trains to London running on its tracks, run by Grand Central Rail, but most of the local stations were closed in the 1950s and 1960s, despite the growth in the area's population with the creation of Peterlee new town in the same period. Easington, Horden and Blackhall Colliery were the last to go on 4 May 1964, casualties of the Beeching rationalisation programme, Hart having already closed on 31 August 1953 and Blackhall Rocks and Ryhope East in 1960. This has left Seaham as the only intermediate stop now between Sunderland and Hartlepool and means that, at present, the coastal line is largely irrelevant in meeting the local transport needs of the communities of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau.

RAILWAY INVENTORY

Hawthorn Dene Viaduct, (Site: 63, HER: 36107, NZ 444094 545913)

Railway viaduct, 1905 for the North-Eastern Railway Company. Brick with concrete dressings. Giant semicircular central span with 3 round-headed arches to left and 2 round-headed arches and blank end bay to right. Arches in header bond, remainder of brickwork in English garden wall bond. Slightly battered piers flanking central arch have impost band. Spandrels of central arch have 2 blind roundels and flanking flat buttresses. Parapet with chamfered coping and refuges above continuous band which breaks forward over buttresses.

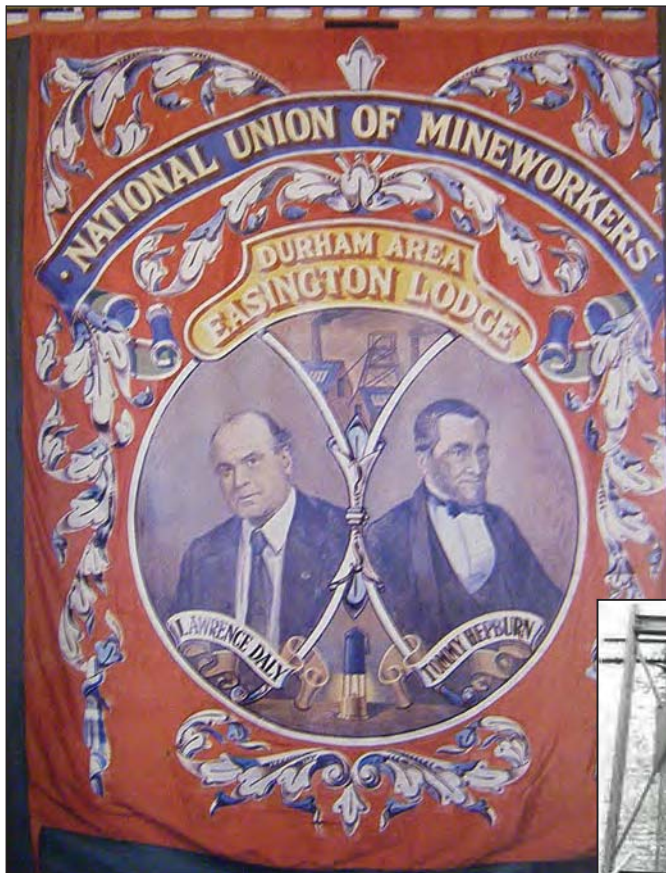
10.12.3 The settlement of Easington Colliery

The establishment of the colliery led to the development of an extensive pit village to house the labour force of several thousand men, their families and all the associated shops and services they required. The very first buildings were the wooden huts of the sinkers, built on the site of Ashton and Ascot Streets on the north side of Seaside Lane. The German sinkers hired to complete the shafts lived in small huts on the cliff tops surrounded by carefully tended gardens. Ironically, however, the very first substantial building – the imposing Thorpe Pumping Station, which was erected in an elevated position on the south side of Seaside Lane in 1900 – was not directly connected the colliery at all (see below: *Health and sanitation*). By 1909 construction of the first terraced housing was underway south of the colliery and by the following year five terraces had been built plus five colliery officials' houses on Station Road West, the manager's house in Horden Dene and the Station Hotel. Further to the west, the first shop was also opened on Seaside Lane in 1910, in the shape of the Haswell Cooperative Society's store, with the Black Diamond public house (now the Derby) following in 1912 (Hopper [1996], 16-17). Seaside Lane became the high street of Easington Colliery, the centre of social and economic exchange with the shops, pubs, clubs and cinemas being concentrated there.

The subsequent growth of settlement can be charted most easily by examining the successive editions of the 6in Ordnance Survey series. The pace of expansion was initially very rapid as the first map to show the colliery settlement, the 3rd edition of 1922 (revision date 1914), makes clear. Not surprisingly the initial development took place right next to the colliery, with the earliest terraces being laid out in a rigid grid iron pattern of parallel rows immediately to the south and west on either side of the east-west oriented Seaside Lane and the north-south aligned Station Road.

The terraces were packed as tightly as possible, with the minimum of amenities, achieving a

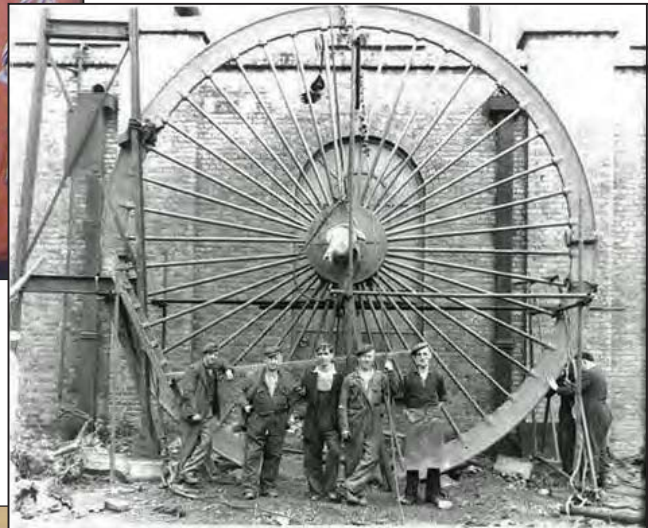
Easington Colliery Pit History



Easington Colliery Lodge Banner



Colliery sinkers and their huts on Seaside Lane c.1900-1910.



View of the mighty pit wheel at Easington Colliery after it had been lowered for repairs

CERTIFIED COPY of an
Pursuant to the Births and

ENTRY OF DEATH
Deaths Registration Act 1953

HC 664784

Registration District Easington
in the Sub-district of Dawdon in the County of Durham

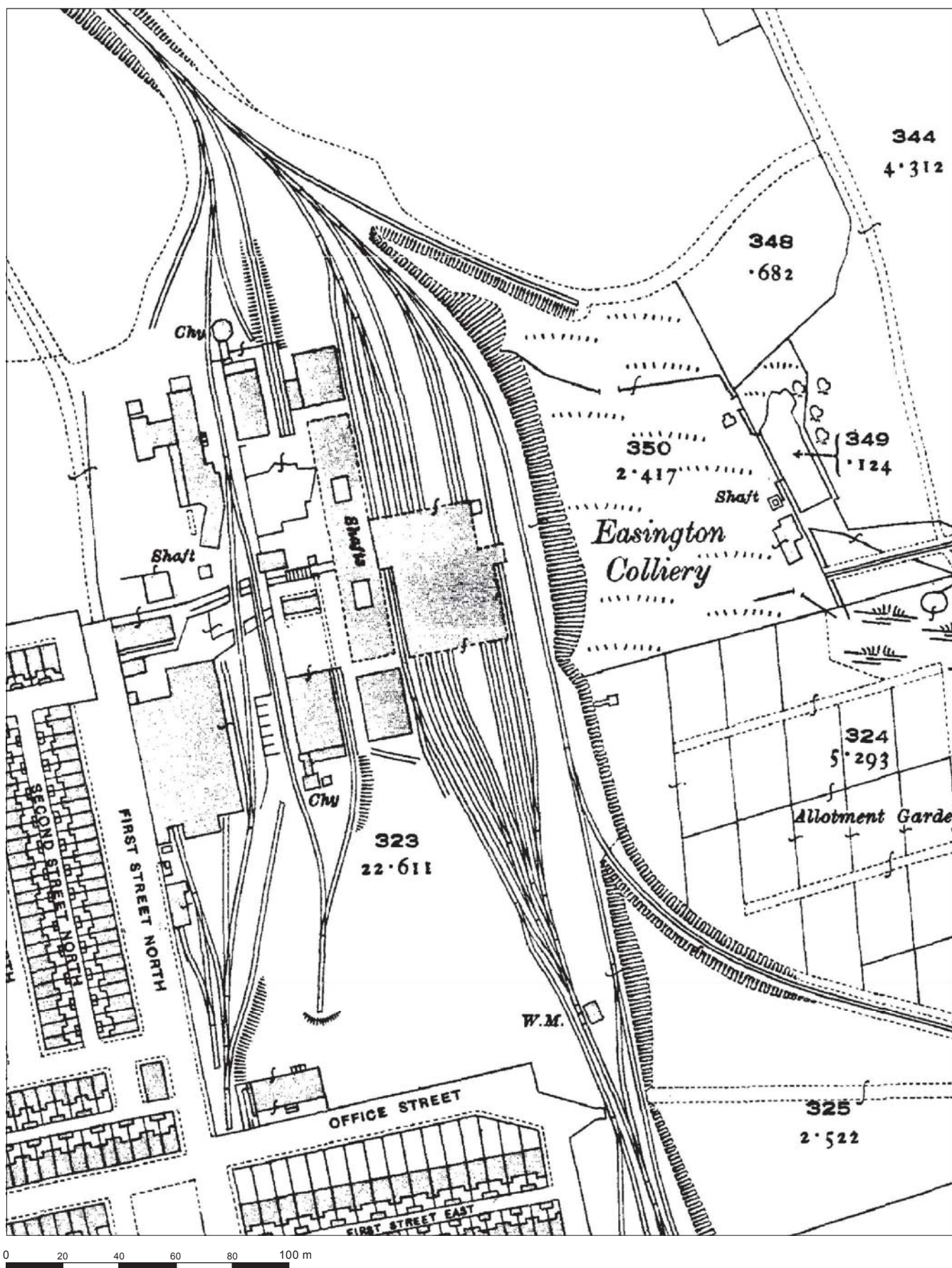
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description, and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
14	Date of death 28th of November 1904 Date of finding of body 14th February 1909 at Easington Colliery RD	Robert Atkinson	male	56 years	Sinker of 16 Wood pits	Accidentally drowned by sudden inrush of water whilst working in Easington Colliery RD	Certificate received from L.E. Second Coroner for Easington Ward. Inquest held 20th February 1909	1909	John M. Pollock Registrar

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

W. G. G. G. G. Deputy Superintendent Registrar
27th June 2000

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. ©CROWN COPYRIGHT
WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

Copy of the 1909 death certificate of Robert Atkinson, who was killed in 1904 during the initial attempts to sink the mine shafts.



Extract from the 1919 Edition Ordnance Survey (1:2500), showing details of the Easington 'Colliery'.

density of 30 dwellings per acre. Erected by speculative, private builders who leased the houses back to the colliery they represented little improvement on the earliest colliery terraces and as Moyes has noted were very much inferior to standards of housing established only a few years later (Moyes 1969, 136). Indeed, Easington Colliery's terraces were specifically highlighted as an example of substandard monotony in housing in the County Development Plan of 1951 (*ibid.*, 133), though the same miserly attitude on the part of builder and colliery employer was evident at Horden and Blackhall. No gardens were provided though the first allotment gardens were provided on the east side of the colliery and much more extensive acreages of these were added as time progressed.

The naming of the streets was initially as spectacularly unimaginative as their layout. Those to the north of Seaside Lane were labeled First Street North, Second Street North etc., culminating in Fourteenth Street North, the twelve streets to the south of Seaside Lane and west of Station Road, similarly First Street South etc., and the dozen to the east of Station Road and south of Office Street inevitably being identified as First Street East etc. In 1926 the streets were relabeled, their names now beginning with A, B and C (Hopper [1996], 14). Several of these densely packed terraces were to be demolished in the early 1990s, following closure of the pit, as the lack of jobs caused people to move away leading to empty, boarded-up houses.

The rows of terraces were also continued westwards along the north side of Seaside Lane. However, by the late 1930s, estates of more attractive, generously proportioned council houses, with attached gardens were being laid out further to the west, between Thorpe Pumping Station, the new senior school playing fields and Glenhurst Farm, for example and west of Comet Hill.

EASINGTON COLLIERY INVENTORY

Easington Colliery, (Site: 31, HER: 3843, NZ 43700 44100)

The construction of Easington Colliery began on the 11th of April 1899 When the first sod was cut by Miss Barwick of Thimberley Hall. The shaft sinking began the same year and continued until 1904 when water burst into the shaft killing one man. The sinking was continued using continental engineers and a freezing process and the South Shaft completed on the 7th of September 1909. The Colliery suffered its worst accident on the 29th of May 1951 when a serious underground explosion in the High Main Seam claimed the lives of 83 men. In 1989 the colliery was working the High Main, Main Yard and Low Main seams. Output was taken by rail to the Selby coalfield where it was used to upgrade local coal for power station use. By 1993 the Pit had ceased production and salvage work was taking place underground. By July 1994 the shafts had been infilled and with the exception of the power house and colliery office all surface structures had been demolished.

Easington Wooden Houses, (Site: 26, HER: 7916, NZ 43000 44000)

Temporary wooden accommodation to house workers of the Easington Mine.

Easington Colliery Pumping Station, (Site: 32, HER: 819, NZ 44000 44000)

Thorpe Pumping Station operated by the Sunderland and South Shields Water Company.

Easington Wooden Church, (Site: 27, HER: 7918, NZ 43000 44000)

Church build in wood noted in a general review.

10.13 The Colliery

10.13.1 The colliery from 1913 to 1950

The colliery had three shafts, the North and South Shafts being the main ones, both circular and 20 feet in diameter, giving access to five workable coal seams, the Five Quarter, Seven Quarter, Main, Low Main and Hutton. The North Shaft, the downcast, was sunk to the Hutton

Seam at a depth of 1432 feet, whilst the South Shaft, the upcast, was 1500 feet deep to the Hutton Seam. The West shaft was a subsidiary shaft only 470 feet deep connected by a drift to the South shaft at 164 feet level.

The 1920s was a difficult period for industrial relations. A strike in 1921 brought work to a halt for 13 weeks but this was outdone by the 30 weeks shutdown during the General Strike of 1926. This was an exceptionally difficult time for the miners' families as the men were not eligible for unemployment benefit when involved in an industrial dispute. Easington District Council was receiving numerous reports that children attending school were suffering from hunger. As a result, Canteen Committees were set up, manned by volunteer labour to fire boilers and cook and serve the food. Schools and chapels were made available as feeding centres and even the colliery owners assisted, providing boilers, often erecting them free of charge and arranging for a supply of fuel. The committees considered applications from parents for admission of their children to this free meal service (Hopper [1996], 53).

Production recovered in the aftermath of the strike and in 1929 exceeded a million tons. In 1933 the Main Seam was closed, however, and although it reopened in 1935 it clearly did not have an indefinite future. It was permanently closed in 1950 (Bell, 2014, 12-13). A feature of the 1930s was the gradual provision of baths at the pithead so miners could get clean before they went home, the baths at Easington Colliery opening in 1937.

The pit typically employed well over 2000 workers in this period. In 1941, some 1800 men were employed underground, nearly a third of them hewers, plus a further 650 workers on the surface. Nor was the workforce only human. Hundreds of pit ponies lived their lives underground, hauling the tubs of coal. There 280 of these in the mine in 1923.

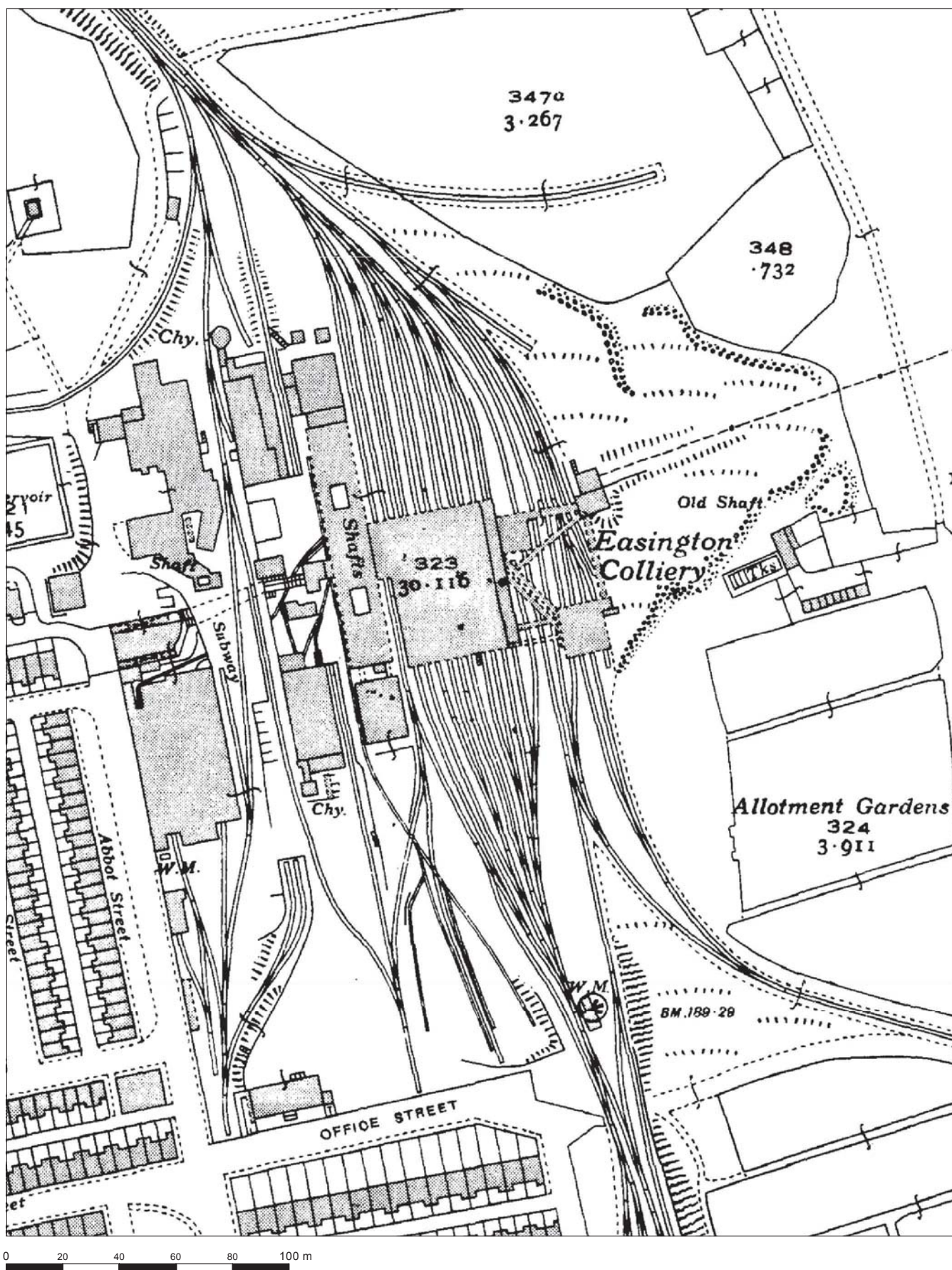
A summary of working operations at the beginning of the 1950s is provided by the Report on the Easington Colliery Disaster in 1951. At that stage there were 14 coal producing districts in the North Pit, of which 5 were in the Five Quarter, 2 in the Seven Quarter and 7 in the Low Main Seam. The colliery's average daily output was 3600 tons. A total of 2235 men were employed underground and 652 on the surface. There were three production shifts, the foreshift which lasted from 3.30 am – 11.07am, the backshift, from 9.45am – 5.22pm and the night shift from 4.00pm – 11.37pm. In addition there was a repair shift known as the stoneshift, between 10.00pm and 5.37am.

The 1951 Easington Colliery Disaster

The Colliery suffered its worst accident on 29 May 1951 when an explosion occurred in an area of the Five Quarter Seam known as the Duckbill, just as the stoneshift and foreshift were changing over. The subsequent inquiry established that sparks caused by the coal cutter striking pyrites ignited firedamp which had accumulated in large cavities, the initial explosion being continued by coal dust derived from the conveyor belt and structures. The explosion killed 38 men of the stoneshift and 43 of the foreshift. Two men from the rescue team were also killed during recovery operations, J.Y. Wallace, captain of the team and H. Burdess, bringing the total number of lives lost to 83 (Hopper [1996], 111). Only one man, Matthew Williams, was brought out alive and he died of his injuries a few hours later. The valiant rescue efforts, which involved 350 trained rescue workers over a period of 257 hours, plus many more volunteer colliery works in supporting operations, were highly praised by the official inquiry.

A vivid and moving account of the conditions faced by the rescue workers is provided by the personal report written and illustrated with drawings by Steve Cummings, Captain of the Murton Colliery, Mines Fire and Rescue Team, who took part in the rescue operations.²⁸ It

²⁸ A copy of Steve Cummings report is included in the Mary Bell Archive.

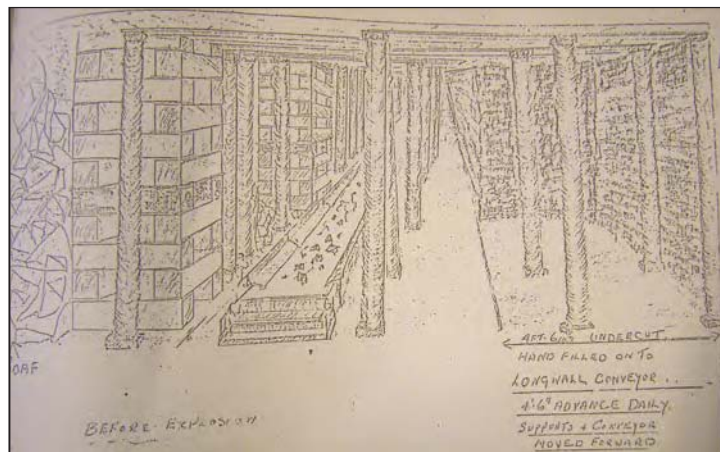


Extract from the 1939 Edition Ordnance Survey (1:2500), showing details of the Easington 'Colliery'.

Easington Colliery Disaster 1951



Families of the lost miners gathered at the pit awaiting news of their loved ones



View of the coalface before the explosion



View of the same area devastated by the explosion

Sketches of the disaster included in the report of Mine Rescue Captain, Steve Cummings (Mary Bell Archive)

soon became clear that there was no hope of recovering anyone alive. The main task of the rescue teams was to open ventilation airways through the devastated area to clear out the foul air so that the colliery workers could then remove the bodies of the dead men and horses clear the areas of collapses and rebuild passages. Despite working with breathing apparatus the rescue teams faced the ever-present threat of carbon-monoxide poisoning and it was this which killed two of the rescuers. Steve Cummings describes coming upon and extracting to safety a rescue team that was getting into trouble. Setting out with his team on Operation 72 he was instructed:

Also if the No 71 Team who had gone in 30 minutes before us needed assistance we had to help them as they had to deal with a dismembered body trapped by a roof girder.

We had only travelled 20 yards into No 20 Stenton when we heard frantic distress hooter signals, I signalled 5 on my hooter for attention and quickened the pace. We found 30 yards up Belt Line one rescue worker lying face down on the floor and two sitting on the conveyor belt, they had a sort of grin on their faces, two others with an appealing look and a body tipped off the stretcher. George (Davison) dragged one off the belt, I shook another roughly and indicated in no uncertain manner to get out to fresh air. We felt urgency as one Rescue Worker collapsed and died only 6 hours ago.

I took the right thigh of the casualty on the floor and George took his left side and the other three members of our team took the arms and apparatus, thus we made our way 100 yards back to Fresh Air Base, sometimes on one knee as the road through No 20 Stenton was only 5 feet high. Our own apparatus weighed 45 lbs and we were carrying a 6ft tall person who also was wearing apparatus.

Dropping our casualty at the Base we just about collapsed ourselves. George looked as though a bucket of water had been poured over him, we were soaked in sweat.

Later he describes Operation 117:

At the time of the explosion 28 men were awaiting instruction to go to their place of work on the Longwall Conveyor Face.

At the Kist was a man's shirt partly burned, and a Timbering Rule Notice twisted and burnt. We proceeded forward, stepping over 13 victims, lying heads inbye, evidence the blast here had travelled inbye. Approximately 60 yards in a heap of bodies piled one on another, there was evidence of the blast meeting at this point as more bodies further in were lying with their heads pointing outbye. Also personal equipment, tins of explosives, detonators etc., were all strewn around and there was soot on the supports.

The object was to get this area ventilated by clearing fallen ground over Belt Line on No 26 Heading. At our place of work I did the first 10 minute stint, loosening stones and handing some back to be packed at the side of roads. With each member of the team taking a turn at the face we had cleared a narrow road 2 yards in and set two sets of wooden supports in 40 minutes when I noticed J. Gibson, new on the job today, was sawing a wooden prop to the required length too quickly, also another member was hurrying through his task. I rubbed my tongue over the roof of my false teeth – it sounded to me like a file over steel and was dry. I immediately signalled 3 (retire) on my hooter and brought my team out.

The government report was critical of mining methods and the organisation of management at Easington and made many recommendations to prevent similar occurrences in other mines (Moyes 1969, 159-61).

A disaster fund, combining various local newspaper appeals for the bereaved families, raised over £190,000, a huge sum for that time. Later that year on 6 July, another disaster, this time at Eppleton Colliery, claimed a further 9 miners' lives. Their families were included amongst the beneficiaries of the Easington fund. . A decorated screen and altar was placed in the Church of Ascension as a memorial to the men. A garden of remembrance was also built in Easington Colliery Cemetery and an avenue of trees, Memorial Avenue, one tree for each man, was planted in Welfare Park, stone from the disaster site being set as a monument (Hopper 2011, 22-3).

From record-breaking super-pit to closure

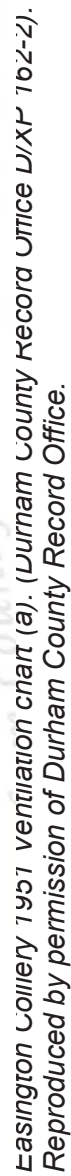
Easington Colliery was one of the most productive pits in the Durham Coalfield and indeed nationally throughout the post-War period, the beneficiary of substantial investment in mechanisation by the National Coal Board which ran the collieries nationalised in 1947. After the disaster of 1951 the pit staged an amazing come-back over the next decade with production regularly exceeding 1 million tons in the early 1960s, having risen from 730,000 tons in 1954. Investment meant the pit was fully mechanised with productivity levels well above the national average and the largest saleable output in the Durham Coalfield. There were regular assurances from NCB management regarding the long term viability of the pit and indeed it survived the Robens closure programme of the 1960s unscathed. By 1975 the Hutton Seam was virtually exhausted and no longer worked. Output derived from three seams, with all working taking place under the North Sea, the furthest coal face being four miles out from the coastline.

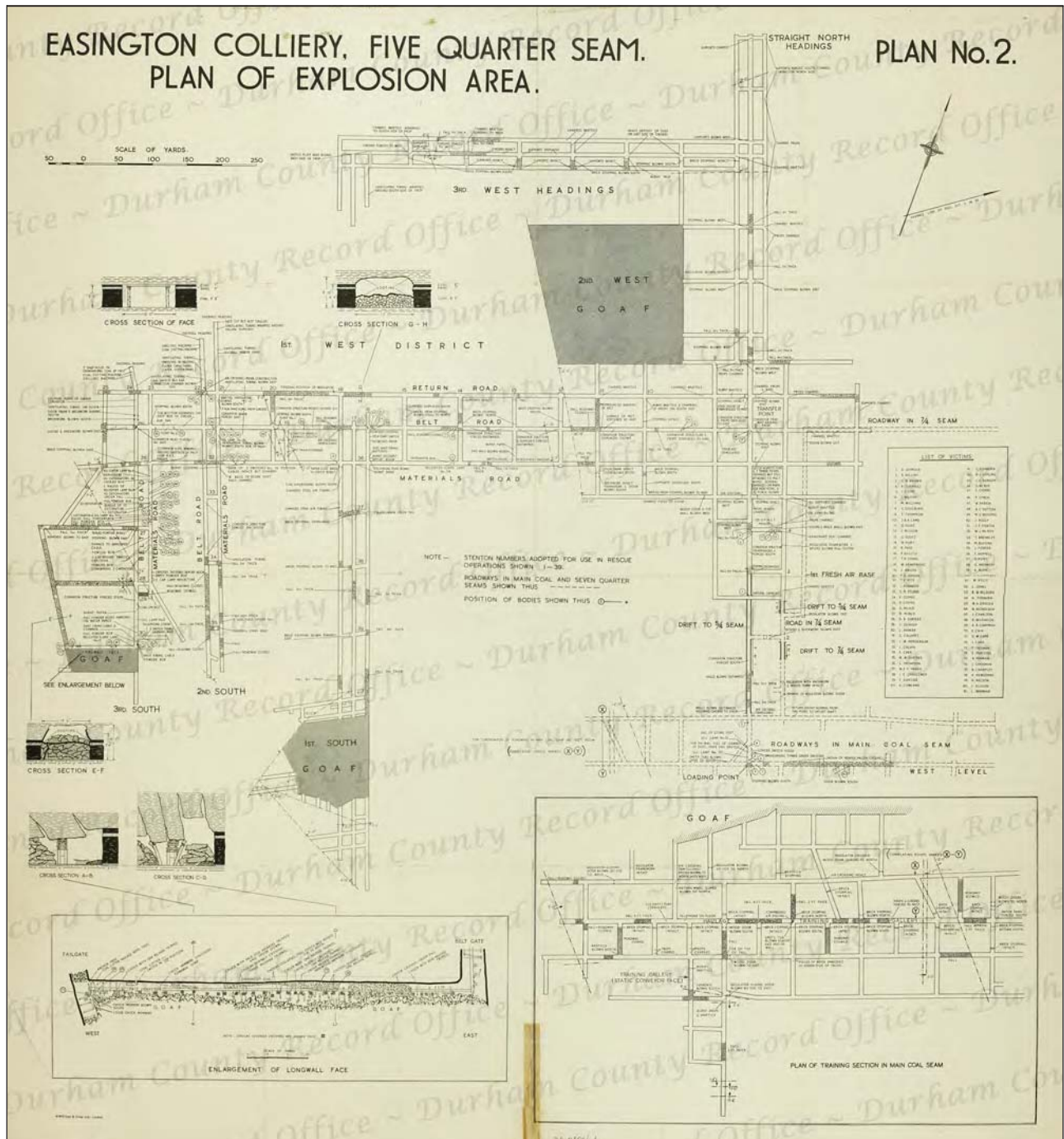
In the early 1980s rumours of another programme of large scale closures were circulating, eventually precipitating the Miners Strike of 1984. Failure to hold an industry wide ballot in the normal NUM fashion meant the miners were fatally split, at a time when power station coal stocks had been built up to record levels and in the face of an implacable opponent. After a year of great hardship with bitter confrontations with police on the picket lines the miners had to accept defeat and return to work. Throughout this period the women of Easington sustained the striking miners and kept the community going by organising collections, rallies and concerts, running relief kitchens and a community café in the Easington Colliery Working Men's Club to provide food for needy families and the men on the picket line, with donations from all over. Once the strike was over the miners and their families had to deal with debt and any lingering bitterness in order to return to normality.

Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the strike it seemed that Easington might survive as one of a much reduced number of 'super-pits', with the highly mechanised colliery continuing to break productivity records. There were ministerial assurances as to its future as late as 1987. In 1989 the colliery was working the High Main, Main Yard and Low Main seams with the faces now some six miles out under the sea. Output was taken by rail to the Selby coalfield where it was used to upgrade local coal for power station use.

By the early 1990s the political and economic environment had changed radically, however, with privatisation not just of the coal mines but of electricity generation. A 'dash for gas' had brought gas-fired power stations into electricity generation mix, with a rash of such plants opening up, potentially supplanting coal-fired power stations which were the collieries principal market and offering a cleaner fuel. It soon became clear that the government of the day saw little future for deep-mined coal at any price. What coal was required could be imported at lower cost from countries where large-scale open-cast mining prevailed. Closure of Easington Colliery was announced in 1992 and the last coal drawn on 30 April 1993, Easington being the last of the pits in the Durham Coalfield to close. This formed part of a

PLAN N^o. 1.





Easington Colliery Ventilation chart, produced after the explosion in 1951.
(Durham County Record Office D/XP 162-2).
Reproduced by permission of Durham County Record Office.

View of Easington Colliery Pit



Demolition of the winding gear after closure



Photograph of the colliery during demolition in 1993



Easington Colliery Pit Yard in 1970

View looking east towards the Colliery with the pithead baths and the A streets to the fore



Documents Courtesy of the Mary Bell Archive and Easington Village Parish Council Archive 'Easington People Past & Present'

Schools in Easington Colliery



Class photograph from Easington Colliery Council School, Seaside Lane, early 20th century.



The senior boys of Easington Colliery Council School assembled in the playground

EASINGTON COLLIERY COUNCIL SCHOOL.
RECORD CARD.

ADM. No. 4347 NAME BIRBECK, JOHN BARRASS. ADDRESS 24, Seaside Lane.
PARENT OR GUARDIAN William Birbeck. OCCUPATION Miner.
ADMITTED 3. 5. 48 DATE OF BIRTH 22-11-06 LEFT 21-12-07
HEALTH (EYES, EARS, HEART, GENERAL)

REMARKS: From J.B. "A" class. 6/39. "Most promising"
Dec. 4. 51 16/8 1/2

(Record of Marks. See over.)

YEARLY RECORD OF MARKS.

Year	48-49	49-50	50-51	51-2		
Class	1A	2A	3A	4A		
English	306	401	304	301	5	
Mathematics	149	135	128	67	7	
Art	68	76	69	25	27	
History	23	74	71	44	12	
Geography	69	51	63	32	9	
Science	49	50	73	37	5	
Miscellaneous						
Total	484	492	718	738		
Percentage	48.4	49.2	71.8	73.8		
Position in Class	5th	5th	5th	5th		
Music						
Physical Training						
Handicraft						
Gardening						

Record Card for Easington Colliery Council School



View of the Senior School (later secondary modern) built on Whickham Street, Easington Colliery, in 1938.

programme which left only a few pits in Yorkshire and the Midlands operating and which was eventually to bring an almost complete end to deep-mine coal industry in Britain. By July 1994 the shafts had been infilled and with the exception of the power house and colliery office all surface structures had been demolished. Virtually all trace has now been removed. A three-tier pit cage stands beside a new coastal path, overlooking the colliery settlement, erected to serve as one of the few visual reminders of the mine's existence, whilst tablets alongside the path record events in the colliery's history, its geology and other features, including the names of the seams and depths of the shafts.

10.14 Easington in the 20th Century

10.14.1 Schools and the growth of education

The rapid increase in population following the colliery's opening necessitated a corresponding expansion in educational provision. Initially a temporary tin school was used in Easington Colliery to cope with the influx of miners' children, but **Easington Colliery Council School** was built on the north side of Seaside Lane as a more permanent solution between 1911 and 1913 at a cost of £21,000. Kelly's Directory for 1914 records it was designed to hold 1296 children with average daily inheritance 320 boys, 310 girls and 325 infants. Girls and boys were educated in separate blocks with the younger children downstairs and the older upstairs in each block. The girls' school opened first with the boys following a year later (Hopper [1996], 34-7).

In 1938 the **Easington Colliery Senior Boys and Girls Schools** were opened on Whickham Street on the south side of Seaside Lane. This took children from both the colliery and the village, the Easington Village C of E School and the Easington Colliery Schools on Seaside Lane now becoming primary schools for their respective communities. The Senior School was built to an attractive modern design which made it a showcase for the Durham Education Department. The school was not fully completed until after the Second World War when it comprised a main, two-storey range along the north side with two single storey quadrangles attached to the south and playing fields beyond, plus a practical block to the west. Girls and boys were initially educated separately, but later on mixed classes were introduced and the school was classed as a secondary modern school, known as Easington Modern (Hopper [1996], 38-40; 2011, 30-35).

The 19th-century Church of England school buildings in the village were demolished in 1967, following construction of a new school building immediately to the south, the site of the old buildings being grassed over.

Senior school provision was reorganized in 1978 with the merger of Easington Secondary Modern School and Murton Secondary Modern School, which entailed the construction of a new school on **Stockton Road** in the village. This operated as a split site **Easington Comprehensive School**, together with the former Easington Modern School in the colliery, the older children attending Stockton Road whilst younger pupils remained at the Whickham Street site. The Stockton Road School was later enlarged and all senior pupils transferred there in September 1993, the old Easington Modern closing at that point. The initial intention was to convert the Whickham Street buildings into a primary school replacing the original Easington Colliery School on Seaside Lane. However the buildings were demolished in 1994 following the decision to construct a new primary school on the site. The old Easington Colliery Primary School closed in 1998 on completion of the new school, but its buildings were then listed Grade II preventing its demolition. Unfortunately no alternative use has been found for the buildings (if one was ever sought), which are now derelict and rather unloved. The Stockton Road school meanwhile has undergone successive rebrandings, from Easington Community School to the Easington Community Science College in 2007 and now as an autonomous Easington Academy, with provision of further new building in 2011.

A special needs school, Glen Hill School, was also built on Crawlaw Road on the north side of Easington Colliery in the late 20th century, and is now Glendene Arts Academy (previously Glendene School and Community Arts College).

SCHOOLS INVENTORY

Master's House, Manual Instruction Block and bicycle sheds, (Site: 28, HER: 35335, NZ 43137 43907)

Master's house, manual instruction block, bicycle sheds and walls, piers, gates and railings. 1911-13 by J Morson of Durham. Red brick and cast-iron with concrete dressings and slate roofs. South side has stepped low brick walls with chamfered concrete coping and iron railings between square brick piers with chamfered caps. Gates have similar piers with domed caps and large iron gates. At south-east corner master's house, 2 storey with single doorway to left with panel door and overlight to right a single sash window, above 2 through eaves dormer windows with sashes and flat roofs. Single tall brick stack. At south-west corner manual instruction room with single blind Diocletian window with double keystone to street front and to east 3 tall through eaves glazing bar windows with flat roofs and to left single doorway with moulded concrete surround glazed door and overlight, west front has 3 tall through eaves windows flanked by single blind windows. West side has stepped brick wall with concrete coping. To north corner single storey bicycle shed with open front with iron columns to playground. North side has stepped low brick wall with concrete coping and iron railings between square piers with chamfered caps. Gates have similar piers with domed caps and large iron gates. These walls attached to another central bicycle shed. These structures are included for group value with the remaining buildings at Easington Colliery School (qv).

Former Boys block at Easington Colliery School, (Site: 29, HER: 35627, NZ 43106 43936)

School classroom block. 1911-13 by J Morson of Durham. Red brick with concrete dressings and slate roofs. Baroque Revival style. EXTERIOR: 2 storey. South entrance front has rusticated surround with double glazed doors in moulded surround topped with plaque inscribed BOYS. Above tall glazing bar stair window with keystone and brick rustication above again moulded band and 3-light attic window. Moulded cornice above topped with octagonal drum and concrete dome with flag poll. Either side 3 glazing bar casement windows one to each floor. North front has similar window arrangement. West elevation 21 windows arranged 3:6:3:6:3. Central projecting block has brick rustication and bracketed concrete cornice, with 3 tall glazing bar windows with double keystones to both floors. Either side 2 sets of 3 glazing bar windows with broader central windows and taller central windows on upper floor. Projecting end pavilions also have 3 tall glazing bar windows with broader central windows and taller central windows on upper floor under segment arched parapet, plus double doors to each pavilion in moulded concrete surrounds. East front has similar window arrangement without entrance doors. INTERIOR: entrance at front facing the street, central cross hall with corridor off on each side leading to four classrooms, with cloakrooms and lavatories beyond, stairs at each end. This pattern is repeated at first floor, with mezzanine floor between each end. Classrooms have wood and glass screens to corridor, and wooden parquet floors. Halls have low stage at east end. Skylights on first floor corridors. This block and the girls block are identical.

Former Girls block at Easington Colliery School, (Site: 30, HER: 35628, NZ 43176 43925)

School classroom block. 1911-13 by J Morson of Durham. Red brick with concrete dressings and slate roofs. Baroque Revival style. EXTERIOR: 2 storey. South entrance front has rusticated surround with double glazed doors in moulded surround topped with plaque inscribed GIRLS. Above tall glazing bar stair window with keystone and brick rustication above again moulded band and 3-light attic window. Moulded cornice above topped with octagonal drum and concrete dome with flag poll. Either side 3 glazing bar casement windows one to each floor. North front has similar window arrangement. East elevation 21 windows arranged 3:6:3:6:3. Central projecting block has brick rustication and bracketed concrete cornice, with 3 tall glazing bar windows with double keystones to both floors. Either side 2 sets of 3 glazing bar windows with broader central windows and taller central windows on upper floor. Projecting end pavilions also have 3 tall glazing bar windows with broader central windows and taller central windows on upper floor under segment arched parapet, plus double doors to each pavilion in moulded concrete surrounds. West front has similar window

Shops & Shopkeepers



JR Siddle butcher's cart



View of the shops next to the Hippodrome Cinema on Seaside Lane, Easington Colliery

<p>John Favells, Ltd., Seaside Lane, Easington Colliery. <i>for Best Quality Goods.</i> Pies, Pork Sausages and Pork Sandwiches a Speciality.</p>	<p>Walter Willson Ltd. Seaside Lane, Easington Colliery. <i>Noted for Best Quality</i> Provisions and Groceries, also Good Service to All.</p>	<p>Constitutional Club, School Street, Easington Colliery. ALL ARE WELCOME <i>For an Enjoyable and</i> <i>Comfortable evening</i> Best Alea and Stouts on sale.</p>	<p>CLINIC OF Physiotherapy and Chiroprody R. MORGAN, Seaside Lane, Easington Colliery.</p>	<p>Provisions W. M. Riddell <i>Satisfying</i> <i>Service</i></p>	<p>THE LEGION CLUB FOR EX-SERVICEMEN ALL FRIENDS WELCOME.</p>	<p><i>For First-Quality Groceries</i> <i>and Provisions, try—</i> A. DONNELLY, <i>also</i> AY. CARTER, <i>for</i> <i>Finest Quality Fish and Chips.</i> 2 BED STREET, EASINGTON COLLIERY.</p>	<p><i>Why not try</i> E. A. JACKSON <i>for High-Class Goods,</i> <i>Provisions and Millinery?</i> <i>Satisfaction Guaranteed.</i> Bede Street, Easington Colliery.</p>
<p><i>For a Grand Selection</i> <i>of Christmas Toys</i> visit ROBINSONS Seaside Lane, Easington Colliery.</p>	<p>LITTLE & LANG, Beef and Pork Butchers, BEDE STREET, EASINGTON COLLIERY. <i>Noted for High-Class Quality</i> Beef and Pork. Pies a Speciality.</p>	<p>Black Diamond Hotel (J. Latcham, Licencees), Seaside Lane, Easington Colliery. <i>For a good drink after the match</i> <i>try the above Hotel, supplied by</i> <i>Nimmo's Breweries, Castle Eden.</i></p>	<p>LEITH'S, Seaside Lane, <i>for</i> <i>Television, Wireless and</i> <i>All Household Furniture.</i> All Orders promptly attended to with Expert Service.</p>	<p>P. B. Cuthbertson, NEWSAGENT, <i>for</i> <i>A Good Selection of</i> <i>Xmas Cards & Calendars.</i></p>	<p>J. D. HART, High-Class Confectionery, ALWAYS OBLIGING.</p>	<p>LOOK HERE..... <i>For Efficient Service and</i> <i>High-Class Groceries</i> R. DOBSON, GENERAL DEALER, Bede Street, Easington Colliery.</p>	<p><i>For the latest selection</i> <i>of Latest Records, try</i> L. McMANNERS, MUSIC SHOP, Bede Street, Easington Colliery.</p>
<p><i>For an enjoyable evening</i> <i>after the match, visit the</i> CENTRAL CLUB SCHOOL STREET, EASINGTON COLLIERY. <i>Finest Alea and Stouts on sale</i> <i>also</i> <i>Good Concert Party in attendance</i> <i>All are welcome.</i></p>	<p><i>After the Match, visit.....</i> THE EASINGTON WORKMEN'S CLUB SEASIDE LANE, <i>and try the finest Alea & Stouts</i> <i>supplied by the Federation</i> <i>Breweries, Newcastle-on-Tyne.</i> <i>Good Concert Party in attendance.</i> ALL ARE WELCOME.</p>	<p><i>For Cooked Meats and</i> <i>Table Delicacies.....</i> HANLEY'S, BUTCHERS, Seaside Lane, Easington Colliery, and Murton.</p>	<p>GEO. H. WEST, The Printer, 8, Haughton Road, Hutton-le-Hole. Phone : Hutton 2102.</p>	<p><i>Before or after the Match,</i> <i>visit</i> J. CALVERT, GENT'S HAIRDRESSER, <i>Win or Lose,</i> <i>try JACK.</i></p>	<p>REFRESHMENTS TEAS COSY CAFE ICES, SWEETS BIMBI</p>	<p><i>For Finest Quality</i> FISH and CHIPS <i>and Efficient Service, try</i> J. J. FAIRS, Bede Street, Easington Colliery.</p>	<p><i> prompt Service at</i> S. Challoner & Co., <i>Print & Provision Dealers.</i> <i>High-Class Goods.</i> Bede Street, Easington Colliery.</p>

Advertisements for shops in Easington Colliery

Photographs Courtesy of the Mary Bell Archive
and Easington Village Parish Council Archive 'Easington People Past & Present'

Water and Sanitation



An early postcard showing Thorpe Pumping Station



A water pump at Hall Walk, Easington Village, around c1900

arrangement without entrance doors. INTERIOR not inspected.

10.14.2 Churches and Chapels

The formation of Easington Colliery resulted in a commensurate increase in the provision of places of worship by the main denominations. The Church of England Mission Church was consecrated by the Bishop of Jarrow in 1913. It had seating for 300. The church hall was composed of two ex army huts. The Mission Church was later replaced by the Church of the Ascension, which opened on Ascension Day 1929 and formed the centre of the new parish of Easington Colliery. A new church hall was built in 1974.

The creation of Easington Colliery Parish was part of a process during the 19th and early 20th century whereby the Church of England broke up historic, but huge and unwieldy, parishes like Easington in order to provide more convenient places of worship with the formation of new parishes in Haswell, Horden, Shotton and South Hetton, as well, in the same period. This in turn had implications for the old rectory. The ancient home of Arcdeacons, Seaton Holme was too large for the rectors of smaller parishes to maintain and it was sold to the Guardians of the Poor in 1921 to become a home for children from the workhouse. A new, more modest rectory was built on Hall Walks to replace Seaton Holme and this remained the rectors' home until 1985 when a modern house on Tudor Grange was bought instead.

The Roman Catholics also responded to the challenge of serving the new community. The Church of Our Lady of Assumption was erected near the Station Hotel, in the south-east corner of Easington Colliery, opening on 11 July 1923. It too seated 300.

Eventually the Roman Catholic congregations of Easington Village and Colliery merged. The Church of Our Lady of Victories and St Thomas in the village closed in September 1976 after just over 100 years service to the Catholic community there, whilst the Church of Our Lady of Assumption heard its last mass two years when a new church opened in Easington Colliery on 1 May 1978. This is located on the north side of Seaside Lane, directly opposite the C of E Church of the Ascension. .

Three Methodist denominations, the Wesleyans, United Methodists and Primitives, also established places of worship in Easington Colliery. Initially services were held in peoples homes. The Wesleyans built a temporary school commencing services there in 1910 until a proper chapel was opened on the south side of Seaside Lane in November 1917 following a fund raising campaign. The United Methodists erected their church on the south side of Seaside Lane just west of Bede Street where open air services had previously been held in the summer. When the Primitive Methodist congregations grew too large to meet in homes they held meetings the temporary 'red tin school' and later in larger halls, before buying two ex-army huts in 1920. In 1932 they changed their name to the Bourne Methodist Church. The Wesleyans and United Methodists combined to form St John's Methodist Church in July 1942 and the Bourne Methodist Church joined with them in December 1956, with services held in the former United Methodist Church. The Wesleyan chapel still stands, however, having been converted into a shop.

10.14.3 Health and sanitation

The first hospital in Easington was the small isolation hospital opened at **Jackson's Mill** in after the mill ceased functioning as a corn mill in 1884. The **Infectious Diseases Hospital** handled numerous cases of smallpox, typhoid, scarlet fever and diphtheria under the charge of Dr Samuel Broadbent (Hopper [1996], 68). It closed in 1897 when a new isolation hospital opened near **Littlethorpe**. Initially this was accommodated in a building with a corrugated brick roof, but a new brick building was erected in 1904 (Hopper [1996], 64; 2011, 61). By 1950 cases of these diseases had become so rare that Littlethorpe Hospital was converted

into a **Maternity Hospital**. Though highly regarded by staff and local residents, the maternity hospital eventually fell victim to reorganization of NHS services closing in September 1986 when maternity services were transferred to hospitals in Sunderland and Hartlepool. The Thorpe site remained in use until 1994 with a small geriatric unit being housed in the main building and antenatal and outpatient clinics in the annexes. Following closure the buildings were demolished in 1995 (Hopper [1996], 64-5).

The other main hospital in Easington was **Leeholme Hospital**. This originated in the Easington Union Workhouse. By the 1930s when Durham County Council took over responsibility for the workhouse (relabelled a Public Assistance Institution) the complex was also being used as a hospital with surgical wards. The site became Leeholme Hospital and from 1948 formed part of the new National Health Service. It had seven wards, X-ray facilities and performed operations and outpatient services, whilst part of the old workhouse became wards for the elderly. The hospital closed in 1971 and services were transferred to Ryhope (Sunderland), part of a steady process of centralising NHS surgical work in larger hospitals.

Reservoir and Pumping station

Perhaps more important than either hospital in delivering immediate dramatic improvements in public health were the improvements to the water supply. In the 19th century water supply in the village was provided by 12 public wells and pumps, some of which are shown on the 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps, plus some domestic wells (Hopper [1996], 41; 2011, 58). These were often contaminated and a potential cause of diseases such as typhoid. There were also two ponds at the south-east corner of the village, Hutless Pond and Grippus Pond. In 1895 a reservoir was constructed on Andrew's Hill and five years later Thorpe Pumping Station was erected overlooking Seaside Lane by the Sunderland and South Shields Water Co. The pumping station drew water from deep underground aquifers. The old pumps and wells could now be filled in and instead water was provided from street taps. The ponds too were deemed unfit for horses and cattle to drink from and were filled in, Grippus Pond having already gone by the time of the 2nd edition (1897) whilst Hutless Pond was infilled in 1901. By the 1920s water was even being supplied directly to houses. This was the major factor in preventing the transmission of water bourn infectious diseases and eventually helped to make the old idea of the isolation hospital redundant. Public toilets were also provided, the most notable example being those situated on the boundary between Easington Village and Colliery.

10.14.4 Entertainment

Cinemas

The development of Easington Colliery village coincided with the emergence of a new form of entertainment which was to dominate the first half of the 20th century, the cinema. Easington Colliery had four separate cinemas over the decades (Hopper [1996], 80). The one which opened upstairs in the **Miners' Hall** in 1925, was destroyed by the fire that engulfed the hall on 14 November 1929. **The Empire**, which opened in 1912, shared a similar ill-fate, burning down in 1942. **The Hippodrome** was opened the year after the Empire, in 1913, but lasted much longer, not closing until 1967 when it was converted into a bingo hall. **The Rialto** was a later arrival, opening in 1935. It still stands, but is now a carpet showroom.

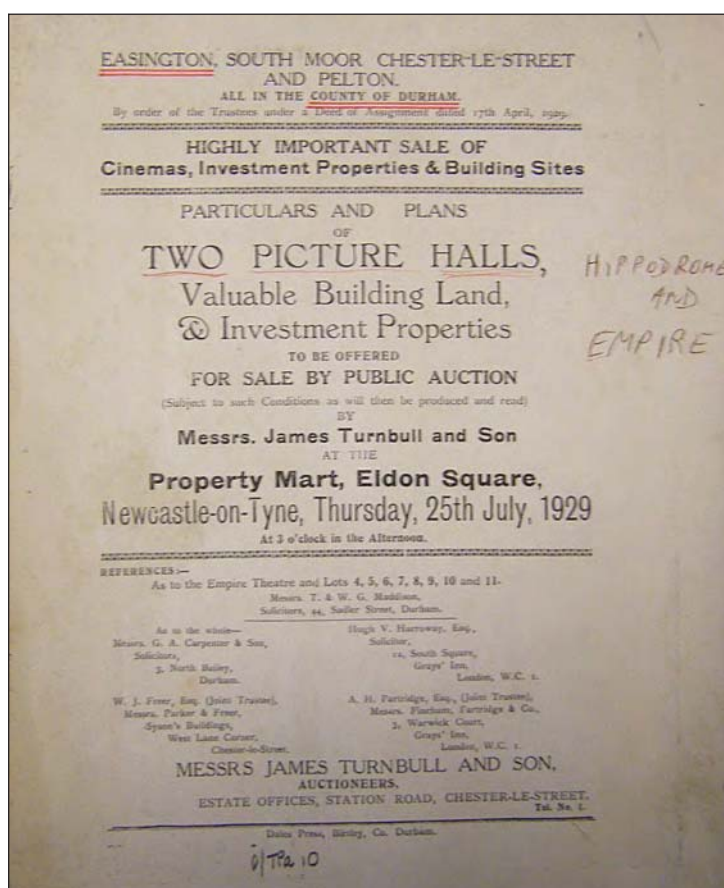
The Welfare Institute and Park

Surely the most important entertainment venue over the years has been the **Easington Colliery Miners' Welfare Institute**, more commonly known as '**the Welly**'. The original Miners Institute or Hall opened at the junction of what is now Memorial Avenue and Seaside Lane on 21 July 1912, but, as noted above, this burned down in 1929. The new building opened on the same site in 1934. It contains the largest sprung dance floor in County

Cinemas



*Easington Colliery Hippodrome Cinema
(Courtesy of Eileen Hopper)*



*Sales advertisement
for the Hippodrome
& Empire Cinemas,
July 1929
(Courtesy of the Mary Bell
Archive)*

On the Beach



During the early 20th century the beaches were a popular place for Easington folk to meet, relax and swim in the sea in summertime. Later, however they became too contaminated with pit waste. These views were take in the 1920s.

Jack Drakesmith, Dolly Richardson and Tom Blackburn with some youngsters in the sea



Tom and Fred Humphries with their mates.



Easington Colliery Swimming Pool



After the beaches became too polluted by colliery waste for sea bathing and swimming, Easington Colliery reservoir was turned into an open-air swimming pool in 1950 and run by the Easington Amateur Swimming Club until it closed in 1960.



Sports and Recreation - Football -



*Easington Colliery Welfare
AFC 1947-8*



*Easington Village Rovers
AFC 1930-31*



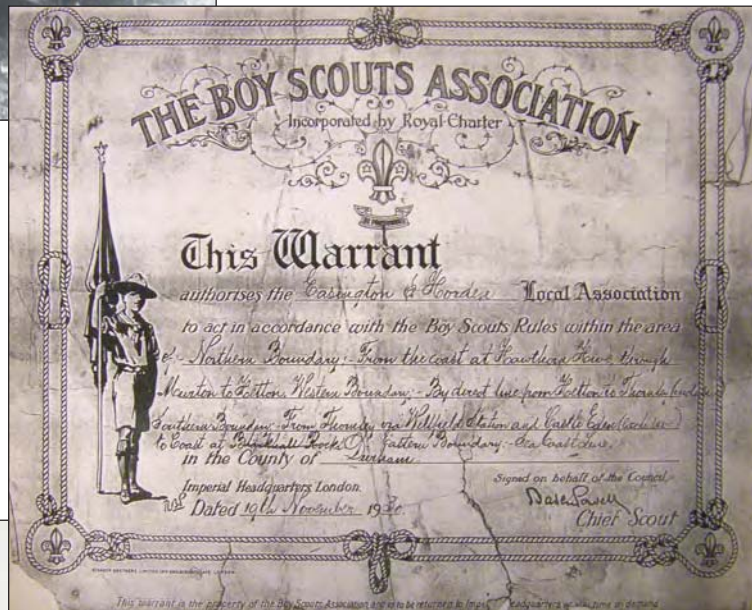
*Easington Colliery
Junior Boys 1921-2*

Sports and Recreation

- Cricket, Scouts, Greyhounds & Pigeons -



Easington Cricket Team 1922



*Easington & Horden
Scouts Warrant 1930*



*Moorfield Greyhound Stadium opened
by local entertainer Frank E. Franks in
1935. It is still operating today.*



Pigeon men in Easington

Durham, one of the best in the country, which is still popular with ballroom dancing groups across a wide area, including student societies from the regional universities.

Further south, along Memorial Avenue, the **Miners Welfare Park** was laid out in the same period, with pavilions, bowling greens, tennis courts football pitches, and a cricket pitch. These facilities were supported by a weekly levy from the miners' wages up until closure of the colliery, although responsibility for the running of the park had been taken over by the Parish Council. Closure of the colliery and an end to the miners' salary contributions drastically cut the funding received by the Welfare Hall and for a while posed serious questions over its future viability. Only the tireless dedication of committee members and supporters ensured that the Welly survived this difficult period. Over £366,000 of funding has been secured in recent years for maintenance and refurbishment, including a £210,000 Big Lottery Grant and £12,000 from a TV *Secret Millionaire*, Carl Hopkins (Hopper 2011, 56). In many respects the Welfare Hall remains the social hub of Easington Colliery, and its continued operation is a testament to the tenacity of local people.

Club, stadium and pool

Easington Colliery Working Men's Club opened in 1913 occupying a fine two storey building on the north side of Seaside Lane opposite Thorpe Pumping Station. It contained a bar, lounge and concert room. Sadly the building caught fire on the night of 26 May 1964 and was totally gutted. A new club building was opened on the site in 1966-7.

Particularly interesting is the story of the short-lived **colliery swimming pool**. Initially miners and their families were able to use local beaches for swimming and days out by the seaside. Photographs from the 1920s show families and groups of friends still enjoying the beaches which appear to be in good condition (see Hopper [1996], 84, 94). However the tipping of colliery waste into the sea gradually caused such environmental degradation, with coal being washed back on the beaches turning them black, that they were no longer attractive for swimming, though some still fished in the sea. To create an alternative it was suggested that the colliery reservoir, which was 35 yards square and 7 foot deep was the ideal size to be converted into a swimming pool. Following a meeting in the Welfare Hall, the **Easington Amateur Swimming Club** was formed in May 1948. The reservoir was emptied, two foot depth of dirt and rubbish removed and the pool scrubbed with brooms and wire brushes by the volunteers. Following opening 500 members enrolled in the club, the pool being open daily except Monday when life-saving classes were held. There were diving boards and a three tier stand for spectators when swimming galas were held. Proper dressing rooms were opened in 1950 and heating was installed in 1953. Sadly the responsibilities of providing permanent adult supervision during the pools opening hours eventually proved too onerous for the small number of committee members running the Swimming Club and the pool closed in 1960, but during this period over 500 people had been taught to swim.

Another facility of note was added in 1935, when local comedian and entertainer, Frank E. Franks, opened the greyhound racing track, now known as **Moorfield Stadium**, on North Hill, beside Sunderland Road. Later owned by the Riddels, this is still staging races today.

10.14.5 Transport improvements

The development of the three Durham coast collieries at Easington, Horden and Blackhall and the extensive settlements attached to them, with a total population of around 90,000 people, meant there was now an urgent need for a modern, properly engineered through road from Easington to Hartlepool. The numerous, steep-sided denes hindered north-south communications in this area to the extent that 18th century county maps, such as those of Maire (1711-20) and Armstrong (1768), suggest that the road from Easington Village to Hartlepool ran along the foreshore for much its length in that period, to avoid traversing the gorges (see *Chapter 3: Sources*). Thus it was only 1½ miles from Easington Colliery to Horden Colliery as the crow flies, but it was nearly 4 miles by the local roads with their steep

gradients. Once the railway was constructed pedestrians used its tracks as a convenient shortcut, but this was hazardous and led to many accidents until footpaths had been trodden out alongside the trackbed and even so risked penalties for trespassing (Hopper [1996], 14).

To solve this problem construction of a new road from Easington Colliery to West Hartlepool, connecting the three settlements, began in 1921. The 9 mile route designed by the County Surveyor, Albert E. Brookes, faced considerable engineering difficulties, with five large and several smaller dunes to be crossed, attracting interest and praise from technical circles nationwide (*ibid.*). The completed route was opened on 7 September 1924 and those traveling along it could connect via Seaside Lane to the main north-south Sunderland to Stockton highway, which passed through Easington Village.

By this stage, in the mid-1920s, motor bus services had now started operating and these were proving more convenient than the railway for many journeys in the Magnesian Limestone Plateau. Indeed, the first charabanc service from Easington to Sunderland, operated by Hirsts, had begun as early as 1913. The buses could pick up passengers right in the centre of villages they were connecting, whereas many of the stations on the railway lines built in the 19th century were quite remote from the communities they purported to serve. Indeed the period between the wars was in many respects the heyday of rural bus services as car ownership was still very low and the roads were relatively empty resulting in little congestion or delay.

As the number of vehicles on the roads increased so did congestion. Turning the ancient Sunderland-Stockton highway and former turnpike, now numbered A19, into a dual carriageway, which bypassed the centres of towns and villages like Easington, was the most substantial infrastructure project designed to deal with this problem and improve transport and communications on the East Durham Plateau in the post WWII decades. However, such has been the continued growth traffic in the late 20th and early 21st century that the A19 is again very congested at rush hour and notorious for delays and holdups.

10.14.6 Easington in two World Wars

Easington sent men to fight in both world wars, one of whom, Dennis Donnini, was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in 1945 for his exceptional courage during an engagement near Maastricht. Many others, who were too old to serve on the frontline during the Second World War or were employed in reserved occupations such as mining or railway work, joined Home Guard or the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) units.

A landing ground for the Royal Flying Corps was constructed in the south-west part of Easington, near Shotton Bridge, during World War I (Site 19; HER 44098). It was ranked a 2nd Class Day & 3rd Class Night Landing Ground and was used by No 36(HD) Squadron. It occupied 39 acres of land measuring 600 x 350 yards and was in operation between October 1916 and June 1919 (Smith 1989, 20). Systems of defensive trenches at Hive Point (Site 71; HER 3837) also date from this conflict. A German submarine surfaced off Hawthorn viaduct in 1917 and shelled the army camp (Bell 2014, 10).

Easington's dead from the Great War are commemorated by large memorial stained glass window in the parish church of St. Mary.

During the Second World War Easington was bombed, the first casualties occurring on 15 August 1940 when the Luftwaffe attempted to saturate Britain's air defences. Around 50 houses were damaged in Easington Colliery, 16 people being killed and 30 injured, with most of the fatalities and damage occurring in Station Road and the east side streets. The first deaths were the result of bombs falling on the colliery sidings and East sidings, killing a surveyor, James Mullany, and a fitter, Thomas Hardman. Little Thorpe hospital was also damaged and 10 were injured there (Hopper [1996], 110; 2011, 55). Tuthill Quarry on the

EASINGTON IN WARTIME

A Message To British Pitmen —



How the Miner can beat Hitler

Will Lawther's Call to YOU

FELLOW MEMBERS,
Dai Grenfell, M.P., one of yourselves, as Secretary for Mines, appeals as a Miner to Miners for two things.

1. Constant attendance at your work.
2. The utmost amount of coal that could be obtained when you are there.

There is no need for me to stress the urgent necessity for this twofold task. We are at War against the menace described by Alexis Nikolenko, President of the Don Bas Miners, U.S.S.R., at the Annual Conference of the Mineworkers' Federation at Whitely Bay on July 12th, 1938.

"Fascism," he told us, "attempts to destroy all democratic liberties and to establish a regime of medieval barbarity and oppression of the toiling masses . . . Before the eyes of the whole world the Fascists are destroying, with impunity, the peaceful people, are inhumanly annihilating hundreds of thousands of defenceless children, women and the aged, are razing to the ground peaceful cities and villages and are destroying priceless values of world culture."

"The working-class of whatever country, including the Miners of Great Britain, must grasp the simple truth that they have no guarantee that to-morrow swarms of Fascist chasers and bombers will not bomb workers' quarters."

What he forecast has come to pass. Put into your language it means that the ideas, the force, the venom behind Hitler have brought tragedy and disaster to your fellow Miners in Germany, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, in Poland, in Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and France. Trade Unions are wiped out, the Co-operative movement destroyed. All that they had built over the years of sacrifice, of striving, went out when these hordes of Nazi murderers entered

Easington C. E. School.
At a meeting held on Wed: Feb: 12th, a number of people volunteered to act as fire-watchers for the above school but more are needed.
Those undertaking this service will not be obliged to do any other form of National Service.
Duty will consist of forming one of a party of three for one night — 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., each week.
Will persons wishing to undertake this form of National Service kindly send their name and address to me, as early as possible.
J.T. Brown

Recruitment letter for Firewatchers

TO *M^r Edward Elliott,
"Weetwood", 50, Nelson Road,
Easington*

**AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS ORGANISATION
OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.**

FOLD HERE

APPLICATION NO. *82*

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF
APPLICATION FOR
ENROLMENT.**

OFFICE STAMP WITH DATE, NAME AND ADDRESS

**Easington Rural District Council
Council Offices,
EASINGTON,
Co. Durham.**

20 APR 1938

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES YOUR APPLICATION FOR ENROLMENT IN THE AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS ORGANISATION. A FURTHER COMMUNICATION WILL BE SENT TO YOU IN DUE COURSE.

J. J. Waring
AUTHORISED OFFICER.

COPYRIGHT FORM A.R.24. SHAW & SON LTD., FETTER LANE, LONDON, E.C.4. 586313

ARP enrollment

Documents Courtesy of Easington Village Parish Council Archive
'Easington People Past & Present'

NOTICE TO HOUSEHOLDERS Please Read Carefully

Water Supply - Air Raids

1. An Air Raid may result in a temporary stoppage of the water supply in the vicinity of the raid.
2. **ACTION NOW**
 - (a) To minimise inconvenience, until the water mains are repaired, householders should keep in store sufficient water for drinking and cooking purposes to last for at least 24 hours. This water should be put in suitable clean receptacles such as buckets, basins, bottles or jars NOW before a raid takes place. If the receptacles are covered, the water will keep clean and pure for some time and need only be renewed about once in three weeks.
 - (b) On no account should baths be filled with water at night and emptied to waste next morning as this would result in a general shortage of water throughout the district with serious consequences in cases of fires and also to the supplies to factories engaged on war work.
 - (c) Householders should make themselves familiar with the stop tap controlling their water supply, whether inside or outside their building, so as to be able to turn it off promptly in case of need to prevent flooding or waste.
3. **DURING A RAID**
Do not draw any water except in case of dire necessity and then as little as possible.
- ACTION AFTER RAID**
 - (a) Efforts will be made to convey water in tanks to districts deprived of their piped supply within 24 hours or consumers will be directed to the nearest points where a supply of water is available.
 - (b) Householders are reminded that water may be drawn from their hot water systems so long as there is water in their tanks, provided they put out the fire heating their boiler and boil such water before drinking.
 - (c) Instructions may be given by loud speaker vans of the Ministry of Information or through Wardens or by other means that it is necessary to sterilise all water in certain districts before using for drinking or cooking purposes. This will happen where there is danger of water becoming contaminated owing to damaged sewers.
Consumers should then comply with the following instructions—
 - (1) Either boil all water or if boiling is not possible
 - (2) First add a heaped teaspoonful of Chloride of Lime to one pint of water, stir, and allow to settle. Then add one teaspoonful of this solution to each pint of water used and after stirring allow it to stand for not less than five minutes and then add one crystal of photographic hypo to remove the taste of chlorine.
As an alternative to Chloride of Lime MILTON may be used—ten drops to a pint or one teaspoonful to a gallon, adding hypo after five minutes.
NOTE—Supplies of Chloride of Lime should be obtained now before an air raid occurs from any chemist.
 - (d) When the risk of contamination is over notice will be given by loud speaker vans or otherwise.

ALFRED B. E. BLACKBURN,
Engineer and General Manager,
SUNDERLAND & SOUTH SHIELDS WATER CO.
March, 1941.

Turning the Tide Coastal Cleanup



Before the Cleanup - A coal picker on the despoiled shore.



Tipping Colliery waste on the beach



*Before closure:
waste dumping
continuing in 1992.*



*Turning the tide:
Removing the
waste in 1999.*

western edge of the old Easington Township became a Munitions Filling Factory during the war, having made explosives for mining and quarrying between 1923 and 1936 when it was taken over by ICI. The factory operated round the clock with 1000 people working there in three shifts.

WWI & WWII INVENTORY

Easington Landing Ground, (Site: 19, HER: 44098, NZ 40500 42500)

Description: Used by 36 Squadron from October 1916 until the end of 1918.

Hive Point, (Site: 71, HER: 3837, NZ 44100 45800)

System of defensive trenches reputed to date from the First World War.

Easington Beach, Pillbox, (Site: 35, HER: 3853, NZ 44500 43700)

World War II pillbox located at the base of the sea cliff to the south side of the cliff side beach track.

Trenches at Hawthorn Dene, (Site: 64, HER: 8320, NZ 44050 45940)

Trenches noted here in the gazetteer by ASUD of archaeological and historical sites along the coastline (1: site number 205); no information is given on the layout or construction of these, though they are thought to derive from World War II.

Hawthorn Hive, (Pillbox) (Site: 70, HER: 3836, NZ 44150 45950)

World War II concrete pillbox on the north side of the mouth of Hawthorn Dene at the base of the cliffs.

10.15 Easington in the 21st century

The closure of the pit and with it the loss of so many well-paid jobs was a devastating blow to the area's economy and was particularly keenly felt in the colliery village itself, where it led to a fall in population as people moved away to find work elsewhere. This in turn meant there was a smaller and less prosperous market for local shops and businesses leading to further closures.

The winding down of the Durham Coalfield had long been anticipated and had been one of the factors driving the creation of Peterlee New Town from the 1950s and 60s onwards. However the new town never succeeded in expanding to the degree hoped nor in providing the number of jobs in manufacturing and service required to cope with the decline of the Durham Coalfield. Moreover the scale and sudden nature of the final closure would have been difficult to cope with in any circumstances.

The two communities of village and colliery still retain their distinct identities, with Easington Colliery very conscious of its mining heritage, perhaps brought to wider attention by the filming of *Billy Elliot* in its streets in 2000.

More recently the abolition of Easington District Council in 2009, as County Durham became a unitary authority, brought an end to over a thousand years of history as an administrative centre for the Magnesian Limestone Plateau, and one of the other longstanding poles of Easington's economy. The Board Offices were closed and the council services are now delivered from offices at Spectrum Park in Seaham. This is part of a wider pattern as many of the services once delivered at places like Easington, such as some forms of hospital care and medical operations, have now been centralised to much larger facilities in the region's main towns and cities. It seems likely that a viable economic future for Easington will involve transformation into dormitory communities, housing people

who work in the region's main economic hubs in Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham and further south in Hartlepool and Teeside.

Nevertheless there have been a number of positive developments in the last two decades which point the way forward.

10.15.1 Easington's environment transformed

Turning the Tide

There was one undoubtedly beneficial consequence of the colliery's closure in 1993. The tipping of colliery waste on to the beach ceased immediately, not only at Easington Colliery, but right along the coast, at Horden, Blackhall and Nose's Point near Dawdon also, as mining in the East Durham Coalfield was brought to an end. At its height 2.5 million tonnes of waste were tipped on the coast each year, and over 40 million tonnes of waste were tipped in total. Thus a major source of coastal pollution was ended.

Moreover, the colliery site itself on the east side of the built-up settlement was landscaped by grading it off and leaving it to develop into a wild-flower meadow. This excellent example of habitat creation may conceivably have been more by accident than design but the lack of top-soil on the site has been of great benefit to the flowering plant communities and has allowed a wide variety of important wildflower species to colonise the site, most notably Bee Orchid, Common Milkwort, Kidney Vetch and Yellow-wort.

Most dramatic of all the cessation of mining was the catalyst for a major cleanup campaign for the 18km of coastline most affected, entitled ***Turning the Tide***. This programme of works was designed to remove the colliery spoil on the coast, improve the beaches, enhance nature conservation and landscape, and increase coastal recreation and access. The project received £10.5 million of which £4.5 million was national lottery funding from the Millennium Commission.

The remaining spoil heaps at Easington and Horden, were removed before the material they contained was washed out by the tides and became a pollution hazard on the nearby beaches. Derelict structures, debris and rubbish were also removed from the beaches to enable their rejuvenation as attractive destinations for visitors.

The success of these works has allowed a new appreciation of the Durham coast, which previously had been a favourite in films requiring an image of utter devastation, such as *Get Carter* and *Alien*. It was designated the Durham Heritage Coast in 2002. Nature conservation and landscape enhancement included tree and shrub planting along the coast, and the creation of new limestone grassland on the cliff-tops and headlands, all with the aim of restoring the area to the conditions prevailing before the coal mines were developed, and the cliff-tops became used for intensive agriculture. New pathways and cycletracks were provided to improve access and encourage greater enjoyment of the coast by local people and visitors. This work is ongoing and now falls under the scope of the Limestone Landscapes Programme designed to enhance the environment of the Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau and Coast as a whole.

Ironically so successful have the coastal improvements been, that a new concern has emerged (or re-emerged) as a consequence, namely the threat of coastal erosion now the base of the Magnesian Limestone cliffs is no longer protected by the continual depositing of colliery waste.

Enhancing the Village Green

More modest in scale but still locally significant were the improvements to Easington Village Green made possible by the construction of the new dual carriageway A19 in the 1970s.

Previously the A19 had crossed the Green, which functioned as a major crossroads traversed by routes coming from several directions with all their associated motor traffic. The new dual carriageway passed to the west of Easington Village, removing most through traffic from 1977. Other routes were redirected behind or along the edges of the Green so that most of it could now be grassed over, the roads across being replaced by footpaths. Overhead wires were laid underground, the mud tracks of Low Row replaced with scoria blocks and the church floodlit. A children's swing park was also placed on the Green in 1990. These improvements helped to enhance the core of Easington Village, providing a better setting for its built environment, following on from its designation as a Conservation Area in 1974 (Hopper [1996], 49; 2011, 8, 10).

10.15.2 The Healthworks

One of the most positive events in Easington in recent years has been the opening of the Healthworks in 2007 in a converted former office block at Thorpe Pumping Station on Paradise Lane. The establishment of this health centre and community hub was a collaborative venture between County Durham Primary Care Trust (PCT), Northumbrian Water – which donated the building – and Easington District Council. It is focused on health, social inclusion and regeneration and is designed to promote healthier living with the aim of tackling the high rates of obesity smoking, binge drinking and heart disease in the locality. As part of its role as a community centre it provides well-equipped meeting rooms for local groups of all kinds (including the activities of the Easington Atlas).

The Healthworks illustrates the kind of joined-up thinking which could take Easington forward and it is to be hoped that more projects of this kind come to fruition – perhaps a park and ride railway station as an alternative to the crowded A19? The improvements to the environment in the last 20 years have undoubtedly made Easington a pleasant place to live and this is likely to grow further as a wider appreciation of the Magnesian Limestone landscapes takes hold. Hopefully this will help to convince people that Easington is a place where they want live and write the next chapter in the history of this fascinating Limestone Landscape community.