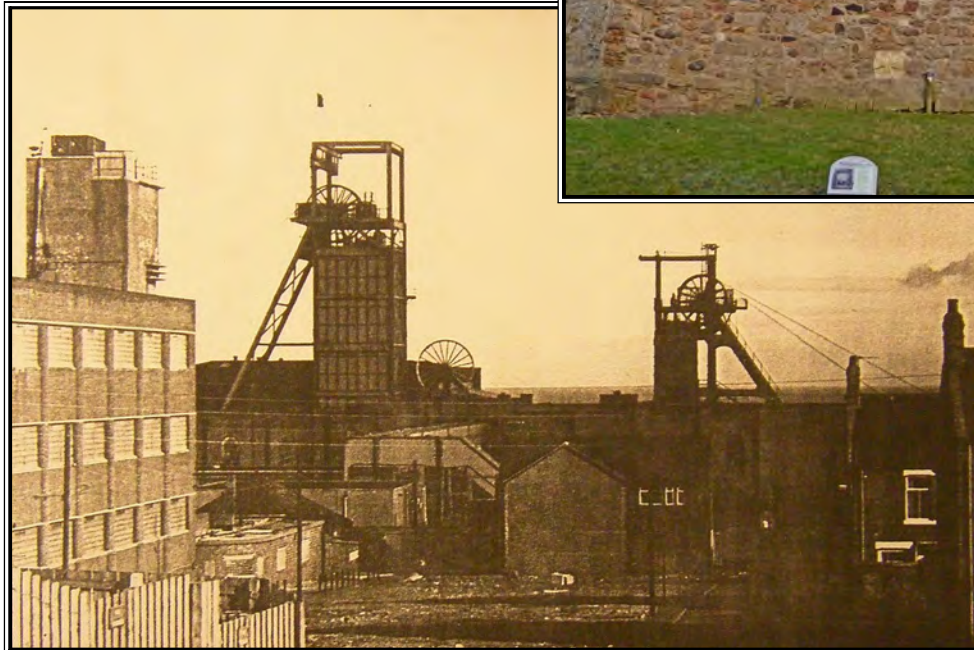


THE EASINGTON ATLAS

'A SUMMARY'

TWO COMMUNITIES OF THE MAGNESIAN LIMESTONE PLATEAU

Edited by Alan Rushworth
with text and illustrations by,
Alan Rushworth & Marc Johnstone
(The Archaeological Practice Ltd),
Ivan Dunn, and Paul Williams



Limestone
Landscapes

THE EASINGTON ATLAS.

A SUMMARY OF THE LANDSCAPE, HISTORY & ENVIRONMENT OF EASINGTON VILLAGE & COLLIERY - COMMUNITIES OF THE MAGNESIAN LIMESTONE PLATEAU



Extract showing Easington 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.

Edited by Alan Rushworth with text and illustrations by, Alan Rushworth & Marc Johnstone (The Archaeological Practice Ltd), Ivan Dunn, and Paul Williams

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1. INTRODUCTION: EASINGTON AND ITS LANDSCAPE

The Easington Atlas

This booklet is designed to provide an accessible summary of the known history, ecology and geology of Easington and its immediate surroundings. It draws on the work of the recently completed Easington Atlas, a wide ranging programme of work undertaken by members of the local community and a team of specialists directed by the Archaeological Practice Ltd. The Atlas was one of many projects focussed on the Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau fostered by the Limestone Landscapes Partnership with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Durham County Council, and this booklet is intended to publish the results of the Atlas programme in a more concise and readily available form than the main Atlas report. Copies of the main report may be consulted at the following locations:

Easington Colliery Library, Seaside Lane; Easington Village Civil Parish Office, Seaton Holme; Easington Colliery Civil Parish Hall, Crawlaw Road; Easington Social Welfare Centre, Seaside Lane; Durham County Record Office, County Hall; Durham CC Archaeology Section (HER), County Hall; Durham University Library Archives & Special Collections, Palace Green, Durham; Durham Local Studies, Durham Clayport Library, Millennium Place, Durham.

Amongst the material contained within are summaries of the area's ecology and geodiversity, a historical timeline, a selection of the known historic sites, and a snap-shot view of the historic buildings, plus treatment of a wide range of topics from Easington's historic past. The maps and illustrations included here provide a comprehensive graphic portrayal of Easington's historical development.

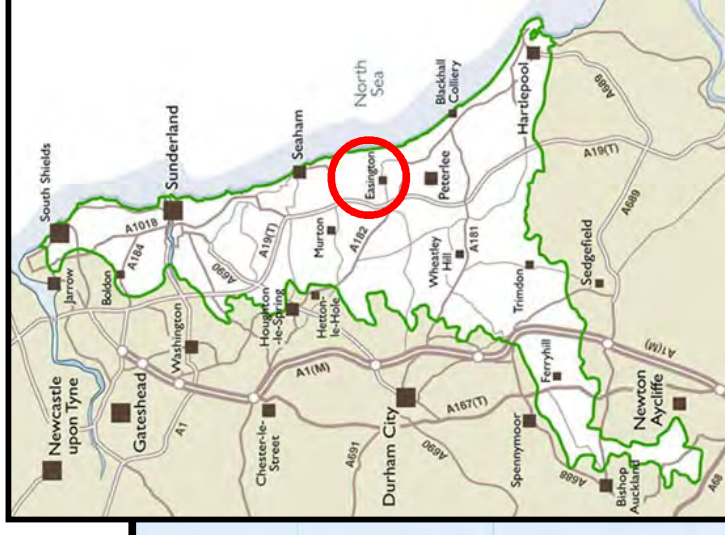
The Atlas covers the ancient settlements of Easington village and Little Thorpe, and the 20th-century pit village of Easington Colliery, treating them within the context of their surrounding landscape. Although now conjoined by the sprawl of modern housing, Easington Village and Colliery retain distinct identities, focussed, on the one hand, on the large rectangular green of the historic village, dominated by the ancient parish church, St Mary's, and, on the other, on the coal-mining heritage associated with the 20th-century pit, which closed in 1993.

Landscape

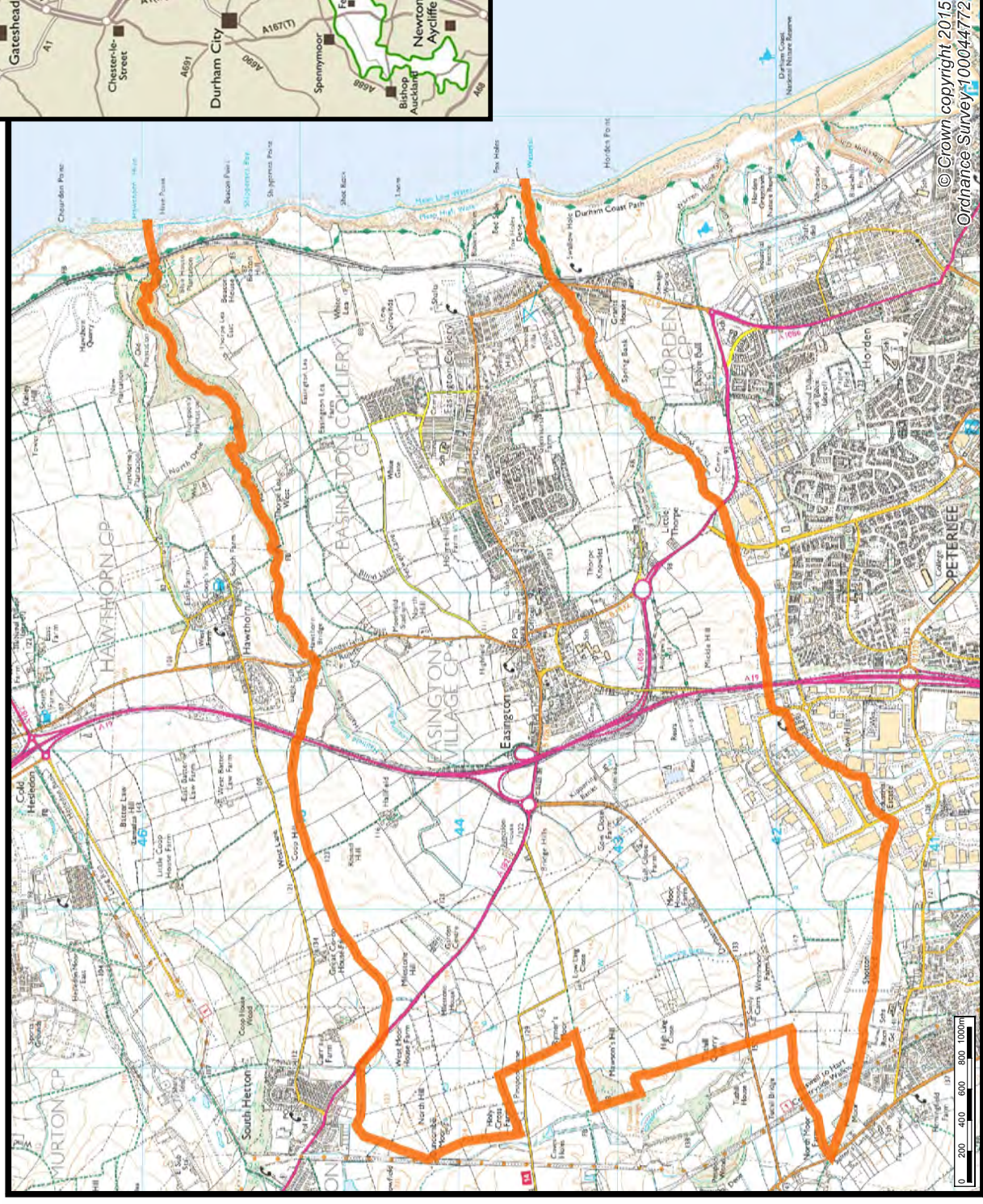
The immediate landscape surrounding these communities was defined as the **Easington Atlas Study Area** and corresponds to the two historic townships of Easington and Little Thorpe (later combined as 'Easington with Thorp'). This encompasses the two present civil parishes of Easington Village and Easington Colliery but also extends a little further westward into what is now Shotton, Haswell and South Hetton civil parishes. A 'township,' represents the demarcated territory traditionally attached to and exploited by ancient village communities, and forms a consistent territorial unit which can be analysed over time,

In broader landscape terms, the Study Area forms part of the **Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau**, a distinctive, low, upland plateau of magnesian limestone, extending from South Shields in the north to Hartlepool Headland in the south. It falls eastwards to the sea and southwards to the Tees plain and is defined in the west by a prominent **Limestone Escarpment** overlooking the Wear-Tyne lowlands. The soft Permian rocks that underlie the plateau are covered in most places by a thick mantle of glacial drift but outcrop on the escarpment and coast. The topography of the plateau is gently undulating and is deeply incised in the east by coastal denes. The **Limestone Coast** too has its own distinctive character, consisting of clay crested limestone cliffs, giving way in the south to low dunes, with a foreshore of sandy beaches and rock outcrops. This coastal landscape is generally demarcated inland by the coastal railway line. It was heavily despoiled in the north by tipping of coal wastes, but now much improved by remediation works.

EASINGTON ATLAS - STUDY AREA -

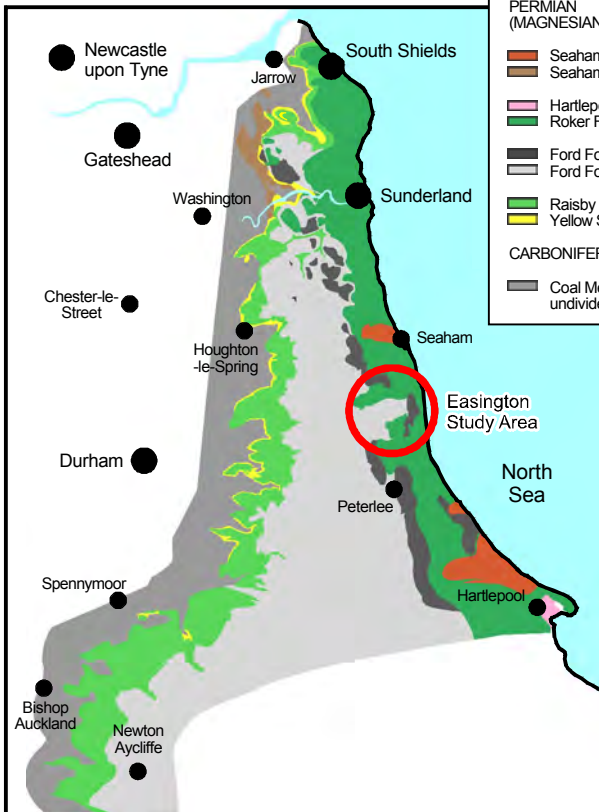


The extent of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau.
Map courtesy of Limestone Landscapes and Durham County Council.



Orange line = Easington Atlas Study Area (Easington and Little Thorpe Townships)

Geology of the Magnesian Limestone area



Bedrock geology	
PERMIAN (MAGNESIAN LIMESTONE)	
	Seaham Formation
	Seaham Residue
	Hartlepool Anhydrite
	Roker Formation
	Ford Formation (Reef)
	Ford Formation
	Raisby Formation
	Yellow Sands Formation
CARBONIFEROUS ROCKS	
	Coal Measures, undivided

Easington and the Magnesian Limestone Plateau - Landscape & Geology



General view of the Easington coastline looking south



Looking south across a meadow towards Easington village



Looking ENE towards Thorpe Lea East



Looking across ridge and furrow towards West Moor Farm, on the clay plateau west of Easington

2. THE GEOLOGY AROUND EASINGTON

The foundations of the solid geology of the area around Easington were laid down over 260 million years ago in a period of geological time known as the Permian Period. The landscape as we know it today, however, has only evolved since the end of the last Ice-Age around 10,000 years ago. These two stages in the ancient history of the area have combined to create the character of the countryside around the Village and Colliery and provide the present rural scenery which today forms an essential element of Easington's natural beauty. With some significant disused quarry sections (e.g. Townfield and Coulslaw Holes Quarries) and magnificent cliff exposures, these aspects of the area's dramatic and internationally renowned local geology are readily accessible for all to enjoy.

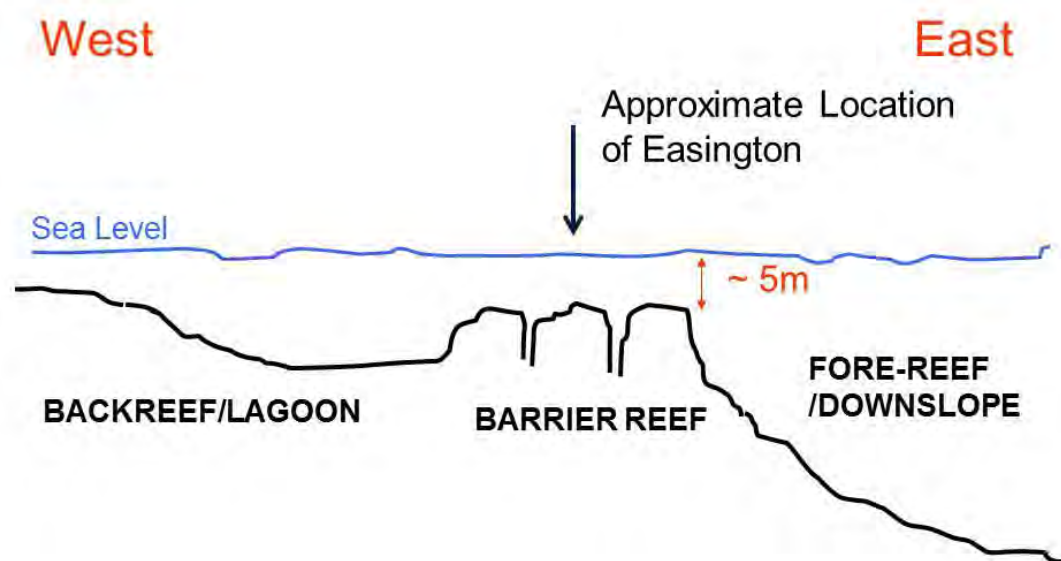
The solid geological bedrock of the area is formed of a rock known as Magnesian Limestone, a rock which was formed in the closing few million years of the Permian period. It is represented by a series of sedimentary rocks deposited around 260 million years ago as layers of limey sediments in a shallow tropical sea, which geologists call the Zechstein Sea. Because of frequent changes in sea level the Zechstein Sea was often cut off from the main Boreal Ocean to the north, so that it resembled the Dead Sea today with intense evaporation in the arid desert climate resulting in high salinity levels. During the formation of limestone in high-salinity, magnesium-rich waters, some of the magnesium becomes incorporated within the calcite forming a new mineral, "dolomite", a carbonate of both calcium and magnesium. And the resultant magnesium-containing limestone is called a dolomitic limestone. This is the origin of the Magnesian Limestone, the underlying bedrock of eastern Co Durham. These Permian deposits overlay the earlier deposits of the Carboniferous Period, the remains of massive coal swamps which had dominated the region for over 30 million years, where the remains of dead trees from the massive tropical forests that covered the area were preserved in the stagnant muds, and were turned to coal. It was of course this Carboniferous era coal which was eventually to be mined by in the 20th century, providing the catalyst for the creation of Easington Colliery.

Perhaps the most notable feature of the subsequent Permian Period was the remarkable **barrier reef**, which developed just off shore in the Zechstein Sea, at some point during the era's last few million years (see diagram below). This reef grew to a significant height in the warm tropical waters, probably breaking the surface in a number of places. Because the reef limestone is much harder than the general magnesian limestone and much more resistant to weathering, it results in the existence of a number of prominent isolated hills in the landscape today, including Beacon Hill in Easington. Unlike the famous Australian barrier reef the Permian reef of north-east England was built of organisms something like sponges, called bryozoans, rather than corals. The bryozoans formed a compact 3D network of branches that gave the reef structure and rigidity. Colonies of mat-forming calcareous algae also grew within, and as part of the reef, adding further structure and rigidity. The bryozoan colonies acted as a refuge for many shelly creatures, which lived in the safety of the reef. Easington Village sits squarely within the reef crest and its environs, and an excellent section through the crest and reef flat can be seen in the disused Townfield quarry.

The next chapter in our story of the geology of the Easington area begins around two and a half million years ago during the Quaternary Period, when the Northern Hemisphere's temperate climate began to cool, heralding the start of a series of Ice Ages. Over a period of more than 500,000 years Britain experienced a climate fluctuating between extreme cold and warmer conditions. The cliffs southwards from Hawthorn Hive are capped by glacial deposits of the most recent of the glacial episodes, the Devensian, but our story for the area around Easington starts at a glacial period around 470,000 to 300,000 years ago. A series of sands and gravels preserved in Warren House Gill and nearby area are thought to represent a marine embayment at the edge of a pre-existing ice sheet. These are the oldest pre-Devensian glacial deposits in NE England and represent the most

northerly sediments of this age anywhere in Britain. These deposits give us a fascinating glimpse into a period of earlier glacial history the evidence for which has been otherwise totally erased from the area. The other spectacular occurrence is on the coast a little to the north, at Shippersea Bay. High up on the cliff is preserved a series of sands and gravels no more than around 2-3 m in thickness, resting on an eroded surface of the Magnesian Limestone. The gravels contain fossils of temperate climate marine molluscs, and the outcrop is interpreted as an ancient beach deposit. It is dated at around 240-200,000 years old, at a warmer-climate interglacial period known as the "Ipswichian Interglacial". At this time relative sea level was higher due to extensive melting of former land-ice, but the effect of ice-unloading and resultant isostatic uplift of the land surface after the last glaciation has also contributed to the present elevation of this 200,000 year-old beach.

Over most of the area around Easington, as in much of Co Durham, the solid Magnesian Limestone bedrock is mantled by a series of soft, unconsolidated sediments of glacially derived drift deposits formed only during the last ice-age, around 15,000 to 10,000 years ago. The last ice-age has also left its mark on the landscape by producing a series of surface features such as isolated hills, low ridges and deep valleys, related to the numerous processes taking place during and after the advance and retreat of the ice. Some of these features are very prominent in the landscape today. Finally the landscape has also been modified by human activity, mainly agriculture and the exploitation of the area's natural resources, particularly leading up to, and contributing to the industrial revolution which heralded the Victorian era.



Diagrammatic West to East Cross Section through the Easington Area showing the relative position of the Barrier Reef and Easington Village

Geological Features of Easington

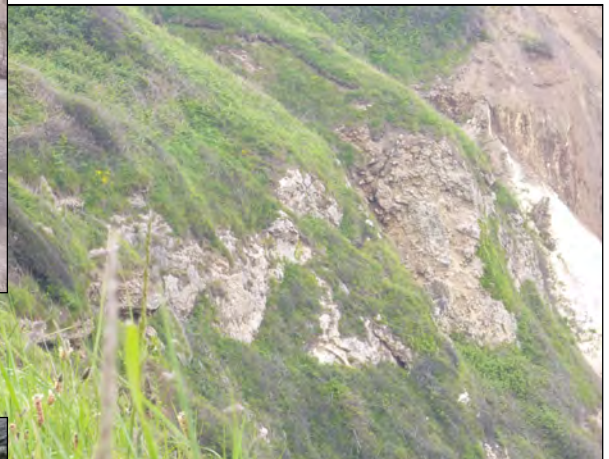


A rock-face at Townfield Quarry showing a section through the remains of the Permian barrier reef

The possible Ice Age meltwater channel in Memorial Park



Cliffs at Shippersea Bay which contain the remains of the 240,000 - 200,000 year old interglacial raised beach



Close up of the cliffs showing the location of the raised beach deposits



Close up of the sand and gravel deposits of the raised beach which contain fossils of temperate climate marine molluscs



The Easington Atlas Group examining the raised beach with geologist Paul Williams (wearing shorts)

3. THE ECOLOGY AND BIO-DIVERSITY OF EASINGTON

Landscape overview: The underlying geology heavily influences the soil and vegetation types of the area. Steeper slopes and exposed cliff faces, including man-made features such as quarries, show the best examples of magnesian limestone flora. The area also has a number of other important habitats, including wetlands, semi-ancient woodlands and unimproved grasslands. It has also been heavily influenced by mining.

Beacon Hill forms the highest point within the Atlas study area and commands an impressive view over the North Sea and the surrounding area. The east-facing area of the site is grazed which has led to the reduction of trees and shrubs. Hedges are often damaged by grazing and any regeneration is prevented unless a secondary fence is used, so those around the farm are fairly sparse. However gorse scrub is present in fairly large blocks as the plant's spines helps reduce grazing.

Once away from the exposed east-facing slopes, the area is primarily used for intensive arable farming. It may be assumed that this is because the more sheltered area will reduce wind damage to standing crops. Satellite imaging shows a few field boundary hedges have been removed although the majority remain. While smaller field sizes and higher hedges would mean a larger percentage of the crop could not be harvested as economically, this would be more than offset the benefits in the reduction of wind damaged areas.

Interspersed among the arable fields are areas of cattle grazing as well as horses and even alpacas, especially near Easington Village and to the north of the parish near Hawthorn. Here the hedges are in much better condition and form an important ecological feature.

There is also a main railway line running North-South through the parish. The cuttings provide an excellent example of local flora and help form a wildlife corridor within the area. This is primarily due to the bedrock and subsoil being exposed during their creation, but due to the steepness of the slopes nutrient-rich soil is unable to develop.



The cliffs: The coastal cliffs are probably the most important ecological habitat in the Atlas study area. The shallow soils and exposed limestone outcroppings are ideal for calcareous plants and a number of regionally and nationally important species can be found there. Steep slopes will

encourage nutrient leaching reducing the chance of certain species becoming dominant. Constant erosion is also providing bare ground for colonising species to take hold. In one area there is a tiny remnant of lowland heath.

Some of the most numerous limestone species found there include Bloody Cranesbill, Sea Plantain, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Yellow-wort and Carline Thistle. The orchids were particularly impressive this year with huge numbers of Early Purple and Northern Marsh Orchids and substantial numbers of Twayblade, Pyramidal and Bee Orchids being seen.

There are also a number of areas of gorse scrub providing ideal habitats for Linnets, Common Whitethroat, Chiffchaff and other smaller birds. Sea birds also use the cliffs to nest as well as Kestrel. Gulls seen included Fulmar, Herring Gull and Common Tern.

The shore: The majority of the beach at Easington comprises of shingle, which includes sea coal and old brick rubble. Shingle beaches are the most hostile habitat to survive in. However the rock pools have a fairly healthy ecosystem. Various sea weeds were noted including Toothed Wrack, Bladder Wrack, Kelp and Sea Lettuce. There was also a number of Molluscs the commonest being Periwinkles, Barnacles and Limpets, but shells of Blue Mussels and Dog Whelks were also found. Common Shrimp, Shore Crab, Sand Eel and various other smaller fish were also spotted as well as worm casts in the sand. Anemones were visible at low tide. In addition the shore does have some extensive sandy areas at low tide. This provides cover for Sand Eels and worms and provides an important food source for birds and larger fish.



School grounds: As part of the ecological evaluation of the area we also looked at species found within the school grounds. With the assistance of the children we found and recorded a number of

species. Possibly the most important ones being the discovery of Snake's Head Fritillary and finding a number of newts in the school grounds.

The agricultural areas: The areas around Easington are typical of the countryside in the area. There are large fields which grow commercial crops such as Oil-seed Rape, Wheat and Barley. Within the fields themselves crop intensity makes it difficult for anything but annual plants to survive, the headlands and field boundaries are much more important. Annual plants recorded included Common and Field Poppy, Knotgrass, Chamomile and Field Speedwell.

The hedgerow trees along the lanes around the villages are also important for wildlife. Here hedgerow trees are fairly diverse, with Ash, Hawthorn, Hazel, Blackthorn, Elder, Alder and Wych Elm all being fairly common. This habitat is also important for birds with a number of Finch and Tit species being recorded. To the west of the village is mainly permanent grazing. Once again the field boundaries become important for wildlife as the heavy grazing reduces the number of plant species which can survive within the fields themselves.

Easington Colliery: The old colliery site, situated to the east of the built-up settlement is an excellent example of habitat creation. It has been graded off and left to develop into a wild-flower meadow and the lack of top-soil on the site has been of great benefit to the flowering plant communities and has allowed a number of important species to establish themselves. In other areas top soil (and subsoil) have been imported which benefits rank grass species to the detriment of other flowering plants, but here the bare slag areas have allowed a wide variety of important wildflower species to colonise the site, most notably Bee Orchid, Common Milkwort, Kidney Vetch and Yellow-wort. An old pit shaft cage has been preserved as a distinctive feature within the site.

The Denes: The steep sided denes are densely wooded and show the typical woodland flora that you would expect with semi-ancient woodland. As they would have no agricultural value, denes in the area have been relatively undamaged through the ages and the trees and ground flora show this. In Spring the woodland floor is carpeted with Ramsons and Dog's Mercury. Wood-ruff, Bluebells, Wild Arum and Dog Violets are all common.



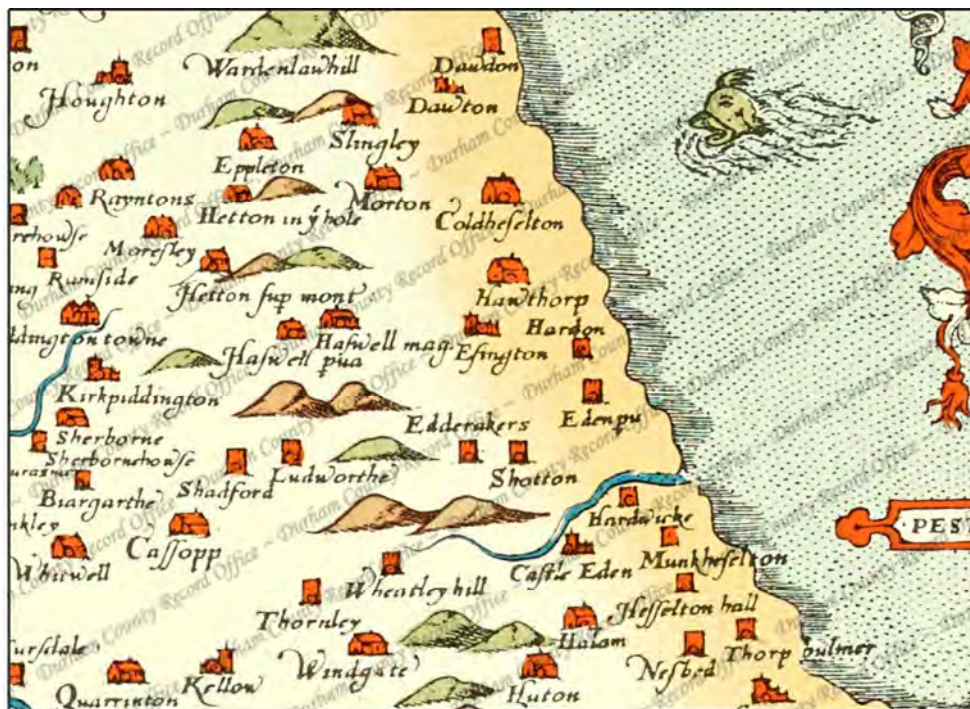
4. SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

How we know what we know? A variety of source material provided the evidence used to compile the Easington Atlas, including:

- Historic maps
- Old photographs, prints and documents
- Archaeology – known sites & monuments
- Aerial Photographs
- Analysis of Historic Buildings

Summary gazetteers were prepared listing all the sites of significant cultural heritage interest in the Easington Atlas Study Area derived from the Durham Heritage Environment Record (HER) held in the Archaeology section at County Hall, Durham. The HER is also searchable online through *Keys to the Past* (www.keystothepast.info). A selection of these sites is set out on the accompanying map here.

Site visits were undertaken to examine and photograph all archaeological or historical features of interest in the settlements and wider township area, including the overall built environment and wider field systems. Landscapes of particular interest, such as Beacon Hill, were subject to detailed analysis. All buildings of note were examined and photographed in the course of site visits.



Extract from Saxton's Map of County Durham, 1576 (Durham County Record Office D/CL 23/2).
Reproduced by permission of Durham County Record Office.

Atlas activities: Walks, Talks and Visits: Guided walks around Easington and Little Thorpe villages and its wider environs were undertaken to examine historic buildings, notable archaeological monuments, geological features and sites of ecological significance. A variety of ecological monitoring activities were undertaken. In addition visits to various regional archives, such as the Durham County Record Office and the Durham Historic Environment Record in County Hall, were also organised. A **schools programme** of classroom-based and outdoor sessions was delivered to the pupils of Easington Colliery and Easington Village Church of England primary schools and Glendene Academy.



H36729 : Farnhouse and adjacent barn
Farnhouse and barn which may originally have been an oratory connected with Seaton Holme. Possibly C13 with extensive alterations, especially in the C19. Built mainly of limestone rubble with sandstone window and door surrounds. Long rectangular plan. 2 storeys.

H3866 : Seaton Holme, Remains of Anglo-Saxon Building
Post hole, foundations and earth bank all observed during archaeological monitoring works on the 13th century Rectory building. Interpreted these as being parts of a late Anglo-Saxon building and enclosure.

H3061 : Easington
Cropmarks show an Iron Age/Romano-British rectilinear enclosure near Holm Hill Farm.

H7916 : Easington wooden houses
Temporary wooden accommodation to house workers of the Easington Mine.

H7918 : Easington wooden church
A 20th century Church built in wood and noted in a general review.

H3865 : Seaton Holme, Private Chapel
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 (SMR66).



H35455 and H6399 : Jackson's Mill
Windmill, 1832 by John Lamb of Hawthorn for John Henry Jackson. Extensively restored in 1980 when the top storey was removed and a single-storey house added to the east. Constructed in random limestone rubble. Circular plan and tapering elevation. 4 storeys. Door has monolithic cambered arch. Renewed windows retain original stone lintels.

H66 and H35466 : Seaton Holme, Manor House/Vicarage
Reputedly built around AD 1249 for Bishop Farnham as a dwelling following his resignation. Little history is known about the building in the medieval period until the reformation when it became the Rectory and a principal residence of the Archdeacon of Durham. 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 13th century and likely had 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. Immediately to the north stands a second building of 13th century medieval origin, most likely the oratory. A store 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 1964 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. -Saxon date were observed.



H44098 : Easington Landing Ground
Used by 36 Squadron from October 1916 until the end of 1918.

H248 : Easington, St. Mary's
Probable Anglo-Saxon foundation, the existing building has a Norman tower & C13 buttresses. The rest of the church is in Early English style. Restored in 1894. The Norman antecedent was pulled down in the late C12. A late Saxon relief cross is built into the base of the tower's west wall. Of historical significance is a fragment of limestone built in to the exterior of the south aisle, carved with delicate plaitwork belonging to the C8.

H51 : Easington, Andrew's Hill
An Anglo-Saxon cemetery identified by metal detecting and confirmed by trial excavation. This revealed a trackway and bank, and located graves in a plough damaged linear cemetery of 6th or early 7th century. Grave goods 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. It is especially notable for being one of the few pagan Anglian cemeteries located North of the Tees.

H4370 : Easington Village
First referred to as *Easington* in around 1050 in Historia de S. Cuthberto and later as *Eston* in the Pipe Rolls of 1196. The ancient parish consisted of Easington, Hawthorn, Haswell and Shotton. In the Boldon Book of 1183 we have a description of village life and the payments made to the Bishop by his tenants. In the 14th the village was destroyed by Scottish raids. Between 1656 and 1665 the moors of the parish were enclosed and divided between the tenants. The church is 12th century and stands on a prominent position. The earliest part of the church is the lower part of the tower and the prominent steps. Easington Colliery was built and in 1910 the first coal was drawn. 1951 saw a disaster when 81 miners and 2 rescue workers perished in the Easington Pit Disaster.

H843 : Easington Colliery
The construction of Easington Colliery began on the 11th of April 1899 when the first sod was cut by Miss Barwick of Thimbleley 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.

H83 : Easington Colliery, Loom Banks 5
1 x unretouched blade found in Skipton Museum
H80 : Easington Colliery, Loom
7 x unretouched blades and flakes and 2 x graters, found by Ralsbrick in Skipton Museum
H82 : Easington Colliery, Loom
2 x unretouched blades found by Ralsbrick and now in Skipton Museum
H84 : Easington Colliery, Loom Point
2 x unretouched blades, found, now in Skipton Museum
H85 : Easington Colliery, Loom Area
Cores, scrapers, microliths, unretouched blades and flakes and other material collected by Ralsbrick and Gibbs in 1932 -4. It was found along the coast in fields and cliff sections.
H81 : Easington Colliery, Loom
1 x core, 1 x microlith and 58 x unretouched blades and flakes, found by Ralsbrick and now in Skipton Museum

H8310 : Maritime rocket point at Shippersea Point
Maritime rocket post noted in early mapping of the area for the ASDJ 1998 gazetteer of archaeological and historical sites along the coastline (1: site number 184).

H3846 : Beacon Hill
Site of fire beacon believed to date from medieval times.

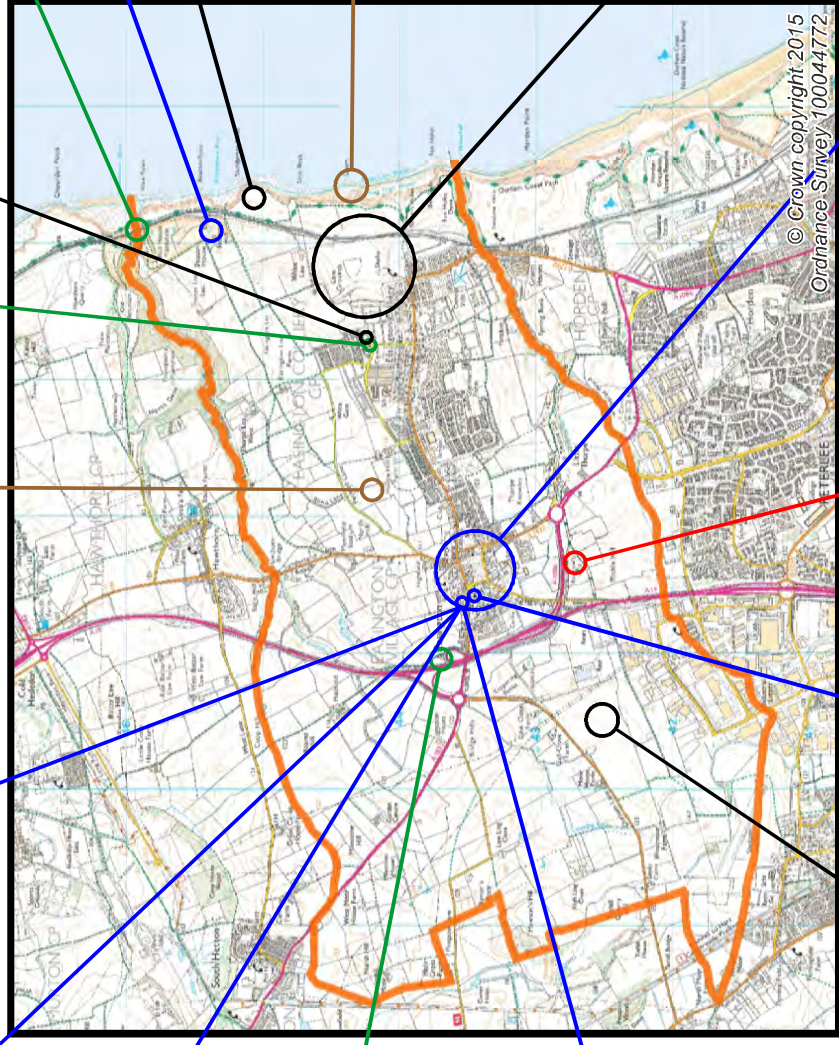
H8385 : Hawthorn Hive
Lime kiln of 18th century date, likely to pre-date the coastal railway. Built partially into the cliff face and constructed of stone with brick arches. One central charge hole with three arches arranged on a curve. One arch has collapsed.

KEY:

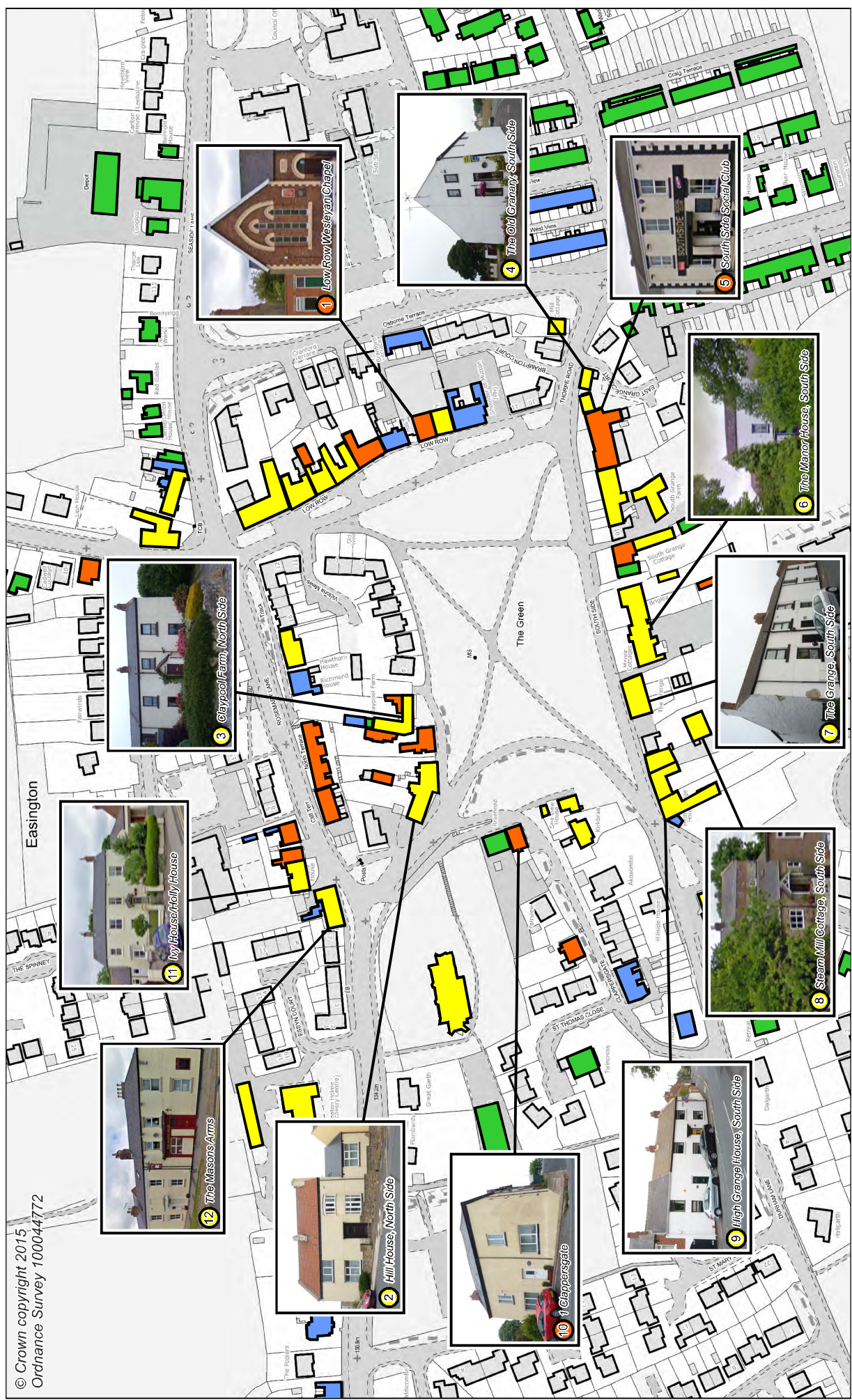
- = Prehistoric
- = Romano-British
- = Early Medieval
- = Medieval
- = Post Medieval
- = Modern
- = Atlas Study Area

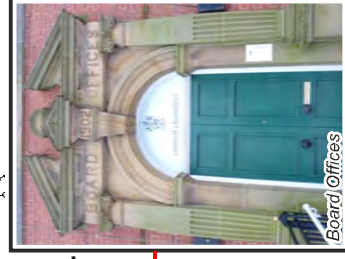
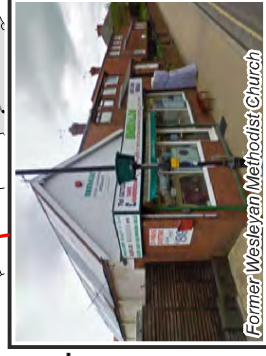
EASINGTON ATLAS

- Selection from the Historic Environment Record -



Key to Historic Buildings around Easington Village Green





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Ordnance Survey 100044772

Easington Atlas - TIMELINE -



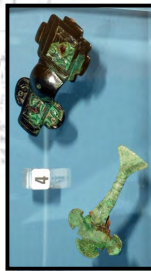
Seaton Holme, medieval vicarage and manor house; site of early medieval buildings.



St. Mary's Church, Easington.



Anglo-Saxon carved stone from St. Mary's Church, Easington.



Beautiful Anglo-Saxon brooches discovered at Andrew's Hill.

Late Anglo-Saxon period
Easington was first recorded around 1050 under the name 'Easington' [Old English for 'village, farm or estate of Esa' called after Esa or Ess].
The remains of a late Anglo-Saxon building have been found at Seaton Holme.

c.700-900 There was undoubtedly an earlier church at Easington - a carved stone cross of 8th/9th or 10th/11th-century date has been found there.

Early Medieval (410-1100)
The remains of a 6th and 7th-century pre-Christian cemetery have been found on Andrew's Hill.

Roman Period (AD44-410)
Native farming continued in the Roman period and a military presence is possible - the old (turnpike) road between Stockton and Sunderland could be on a Roman road.

Late Bronze Age/Iron Age (1000BC-AD 700)
Rectilinear enclosures possibly representing settlements of the Iron Age and Romano-British period identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs north of Easington village, near Holme Hill Farm (HER 3061), and just south of Hawthorn village (HER 8088). Other cropmarks of varying types have been noted on Beacon Hill (HER 34485) at White Lea (HER 8280) and on the north side of Easington village (HER 8592) - none of these sites have been excavated to confirm their date and interpretation.

Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (3000-1500 BC)

Mesolithic Period (8000-4000 BC)

Mesolithic flint tools and working material from various places along the coast including Beacon Hill and Hawthorn and around Loom Point.

Upper Palaeolithic Period (11000-8000 BC)

End of the last Ice Age. Ice sheet and glaciers melt.



Mesolithic flints and (below) how they were used as part of composite tools

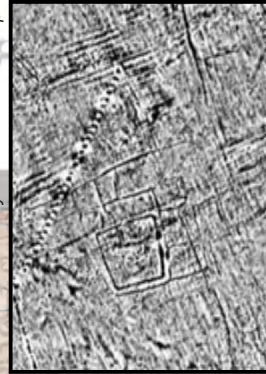


Late 12th century

Easington recorded as *Esirtun* in the Pipe Rolls of 1196; the earliest parts of the parish church date from this time. The ancient parish consisted of Easington, Hawthorn, Horden, Haswell and Shotton. In the Boldon Book of 1183 there is a description of village life and the payments made to the Bishop by his tenants:

In Easington and (Little) Thorpe there are 31 villeins and each holds, pays rent and works in the same manner as the villeins of Boldon. Simon holds 1/2 carucate and pays 10s (and) goes on missions for the Bishop. Geoffrey Cokesmith holds 1/2 carucate and pays 10s and goes on missions for the Bishop. The carpenter of the ploughs holds 8 acres for his services. The smith 8 acres for his services. The pinder holds 8 acres and renders 80 hens and 500 eggs. The two townships yield 30s for cornage and 2 cows for metreth. The mills of Easington and Shotton yield 8 marks. The lordship farm is leased out with a stock of 4 ploughs and 2 harrows and yields 24 marks. The sheep with pasture are in the hands of the Bishop.

14th century
Easington was devastated by Scottish raids.



Geophysical survey showing an Iron Age enclosure with field systems near Little Thorpe

16th to 18th century

the area remained an agricultural area. Between 1656 - 1665 much of the common land, known as moors, was enclosed and shared residents of the villages. The remains of some buildings from this time have been recorded in the village, such as at Low Row



Neolithic Flint Arrowhead

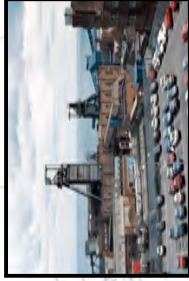


Limekiln at Hawthorn

Even with the arrival of the coal mines farming remained important and several windmills and limekilns are recorded in the area.



1993 Easington Colliery pit closed



1951 Easington Colliery mine disaster - 83 miners killed after an explosion in the pit.

Early 20th century

The success of the colliery led to the expansion of Easington from a rural village to an industrial town. It was long seen as the 'capital' of East Durham until usurped by Seaham Harbour & Peterlee.

Easington Colliery

The construction of Easington Colliery began on the 11th of April 1899 when the first sod was cut by Miss Barwick of Thimderley 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. In 1910 the first coal was drawn. 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 powerstation 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.

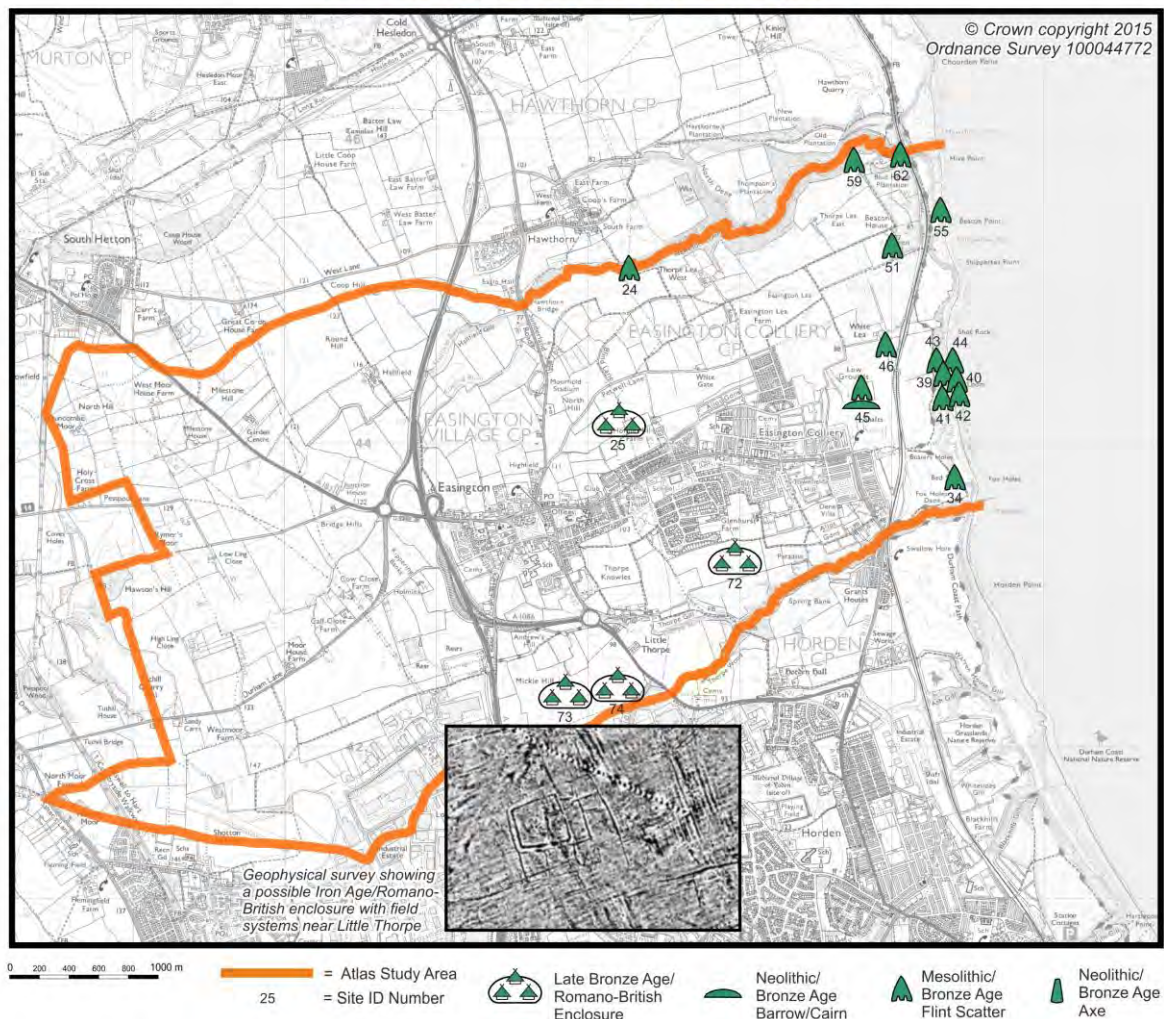
5. ORIGINS: PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT AROUND EASINGTON

The earliest traces of human occupation in the Easington area are the flint tools and working material left by Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) hunter-gatherers at various places along the present-day coastline, including Beacon Hill and Hawthorn, with a particularly notable assemblage, comprising cores, scrapers, microliths, unretouched blades and flakes, being recovered from fields and cliff sections around Loom Point in 1932-4.

More substantial are the remains of rectilinear enclosed settlements or farmsteads of probable Iron Age and perhaps Romano-British date, which have been identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs, for example a rectangular ditched enclosure near Holme Hill Farm (No 25 below; HER 3061), north of Easington village, and a possible double ditched, square enclosure located south of Easington Colliery (near Glenhurst Farm) (No 72). Recent archaeological investigation in advance of proposed developments around Low Hills has yielded evidence of Iron Age/Romano British enclosed settlements there too (Nos 73-74).

As yet, however, the only certain find of the Roman period in the Study Area is a late Roman belt buckle of 4th-century form, reportedly found by a metal detectorist in a field close to Thorpe Beck at the bottom of Andrew's Hill, though 120 Roman coins have been found further north on Kinley Hill.

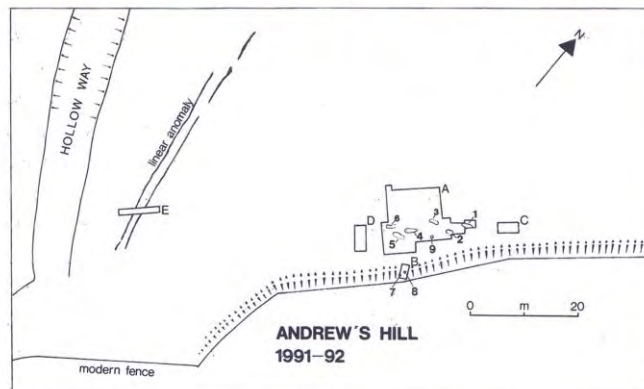
- PREHISTORIC SITES AND FINDS -



6. ANGLO-SAXON EASINGTON

A substantial 6th-century cemetery was discovered on **Andrew's Hill** by metal detectorists and excavated in the early 1990s, a rare discovery north of the Tees. Nine burials were excavated though the cemetery was obviously originally much larger and had been badly damaged by ploughing. This provides evidence for a community of Anglian farmers somewhere nearby, perhaps the first people to use the placename *Esingtun* – 'the settlement called after Esa'. The fine brooches and other metalwork found in the cemetery shows that some of these people were relatively wealthy.

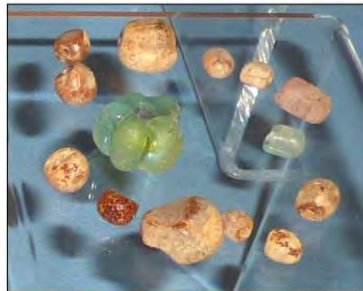
Andrew's Hill - An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery



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.

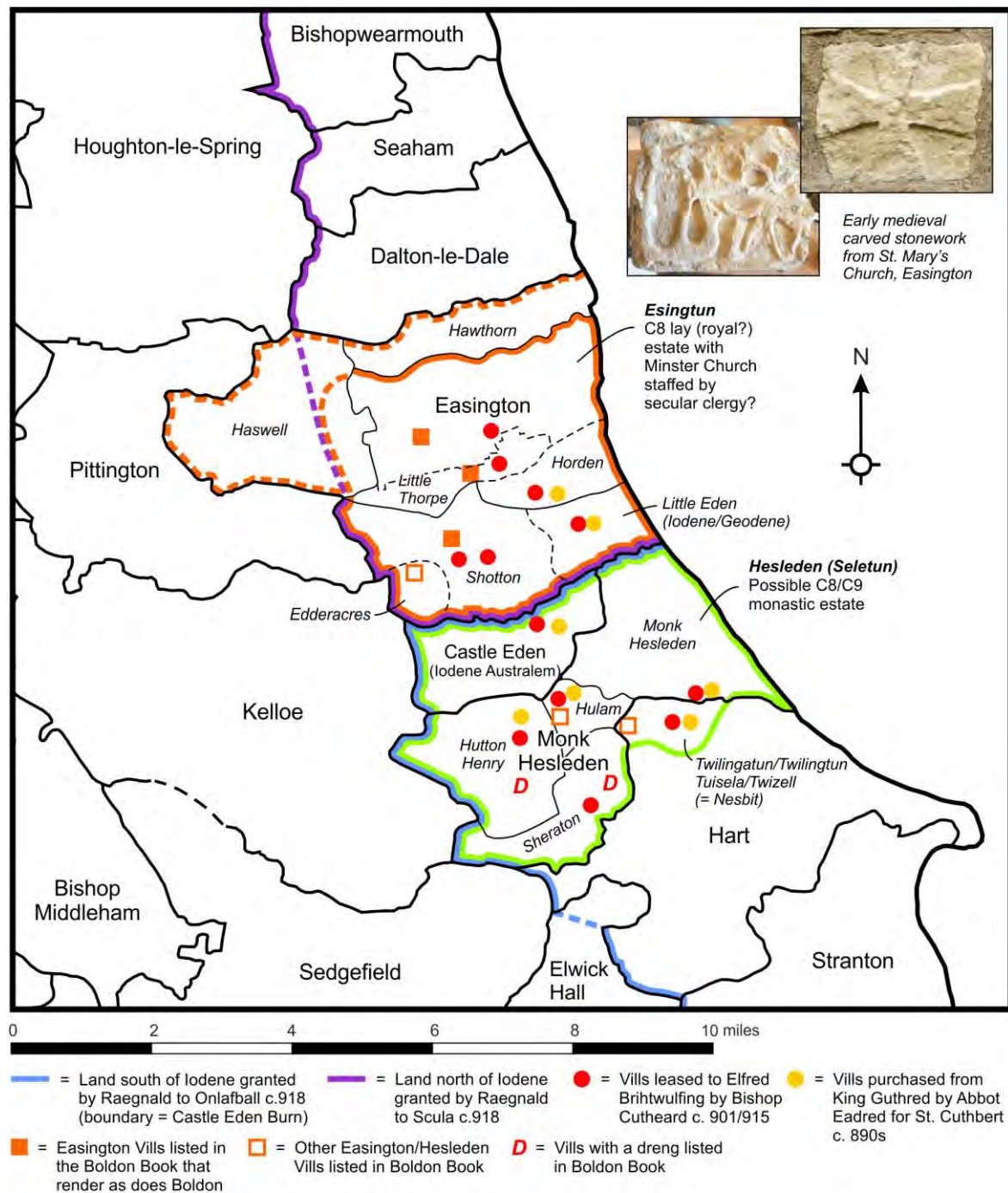


Cast copper alloy small-long brooch.



Cast copper alloy cruciform brooch from Grave 7.

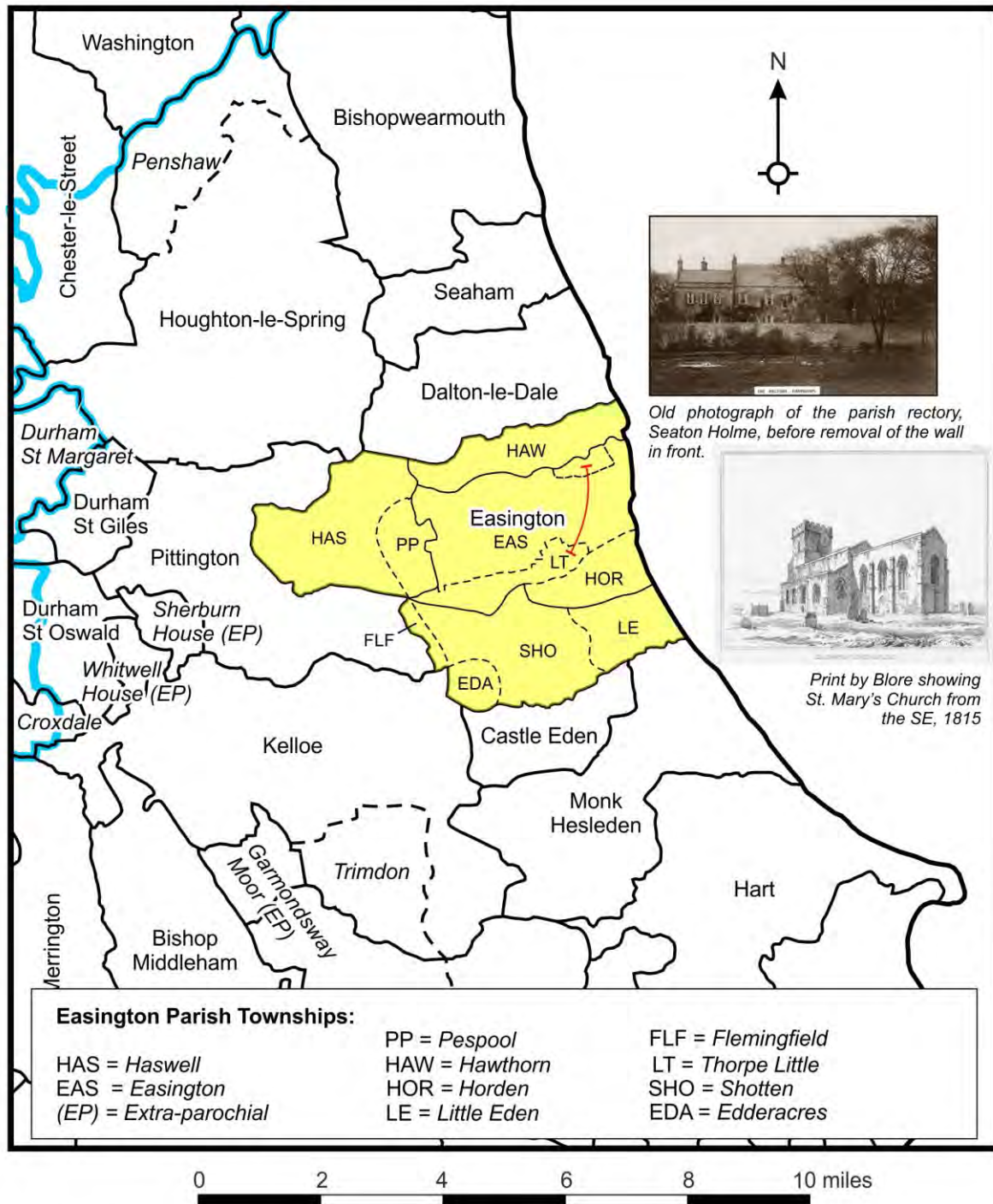
There are several references to late 9th- and early 10th-century grants of land around Easington in the 11th century *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*. One, dating c. 901/915, specifically mentions Easington and implies it formed the centre of a large composite estate, or 'shire' consisting of 6 or more *vills*. The estate centre may also have been the site of a church, known as *minster*, perhaps as early as 8th century. Two pieces of Anglo-Saxon carved stonework have also been found in St Mary's Church and were presumably associated with an early church on the same site. Both were probably of 10th/11th-century date, though one, decorated with delicate plaitwork and animal figures – a dog and a biting serpent – could just possibly be as early as the 8th century. Traces of a timber building, found beneath Seaton Holme in 1989-90, laid out on a very different alignment to that of the medieval rectory, may also relate to Anglo-Saxon activity at Easington.



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

7. PARISHES AND TOWNSHIPS

Each village community was the focus of a defined territory, known as a **township** or **vill**, which the settlement's inhabitants exploited. The townships were grouped into larger ecclesiastical territories, **parishes**, for the purposes of religious worship. In Northern England parishes could often be very large, encompassing many communities, as was the case with **Easington Parish**. Easington was thus both a township in its own right and the centre of a much larger parish.



The ecclesiastical parishes and chapelries (italicised) of East Durham c.1800 with Easington parish highlighted in yellow and its constituent townships abbreviated.

8. EASINGTON IN THE MIDDLE AGES

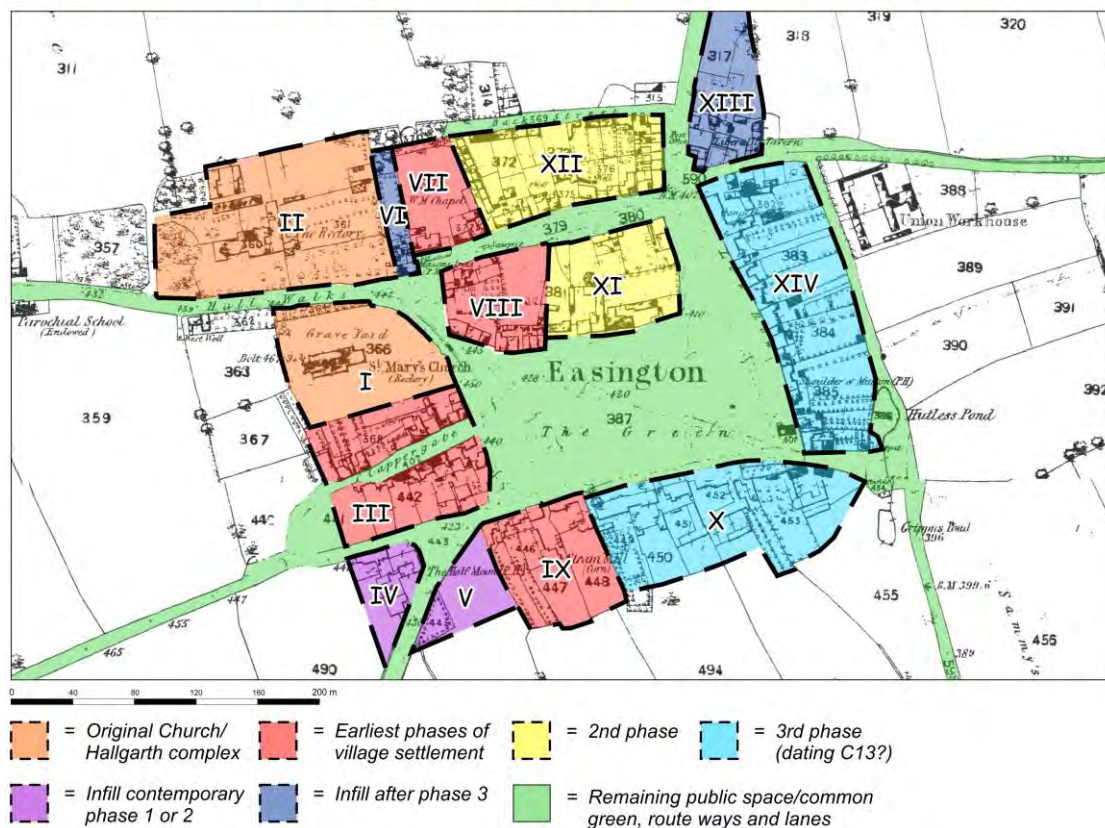
Easington was an important village in the Middle Ages, an administrative centre for much of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau. Listed in the Boldon Book of c. 1183, It was held by the Bishop of Durham, as heir to the great estates of the Anglo-Saxon religious Community of St Cuthbert, which had been based first in Lindisfarne, then Chester-le-Street and finally Durham. Easington's manor court was the centre of the bishop's estate administration extending as far west as Quarrington, whilst the coroner of Easington Ward covered all the area south and east of the Wear and north of the Tees lowlands. The village was focussed on the imposing parish church, St Mary's, a prominent landmark over a wide area, the fine rectory and manorial hall, Seaton Holme, and the large rectangular green. The rectory was held by the Archdeacon of Durham, and Seaton Holme would have provided appropriate accommodation when he visited, but it was probably also the focus the bishop's manorial administration and demesne farming operations.

The complexity of Easington's village plan highlights the importance of the settlement. It is unclear whether it was laid out in one go or developed over an extended period. One possible sequence is set out below.

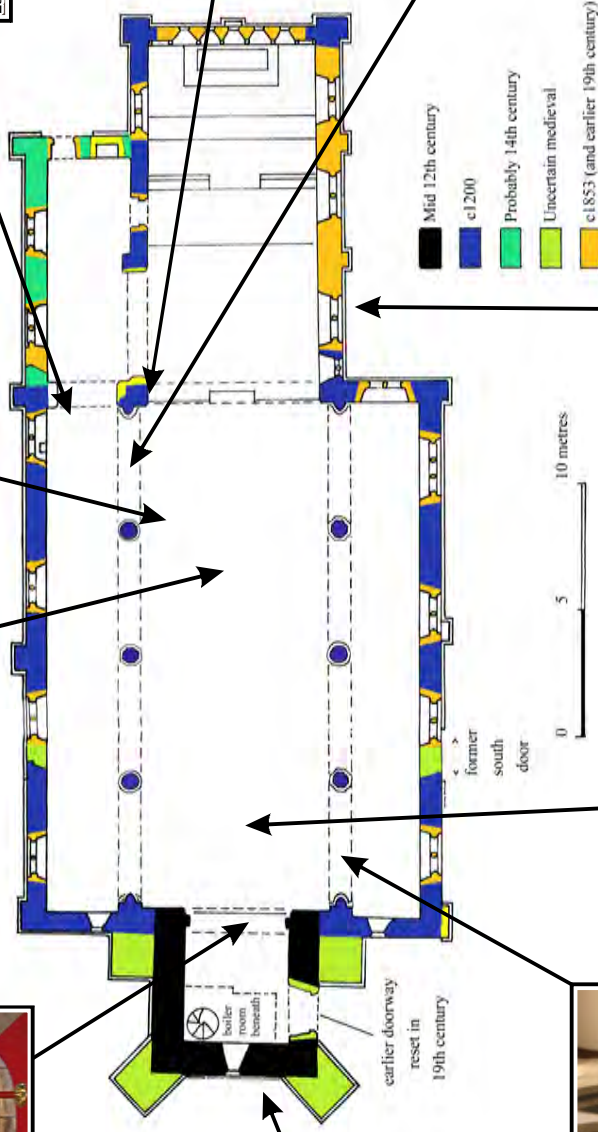
The surrounding township comprised large open fields of arable land, the townfields, around the village extending north-east and east towards the coast to encompass an area known as the Lea which may have been brought into cultivation later than the central area. The curving boundaries of the present fields provide a fossilised record of medieval patterns of ploughing with teams of oxen and thereby betray the location of these arable fields. To the west lay the township's moor, the common waste of the community, primarily used for grazing livestock. Grants made by the bishop carved discrete demesne farms, or 'manors', out of this waste for the benefit of loyal followers.

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)

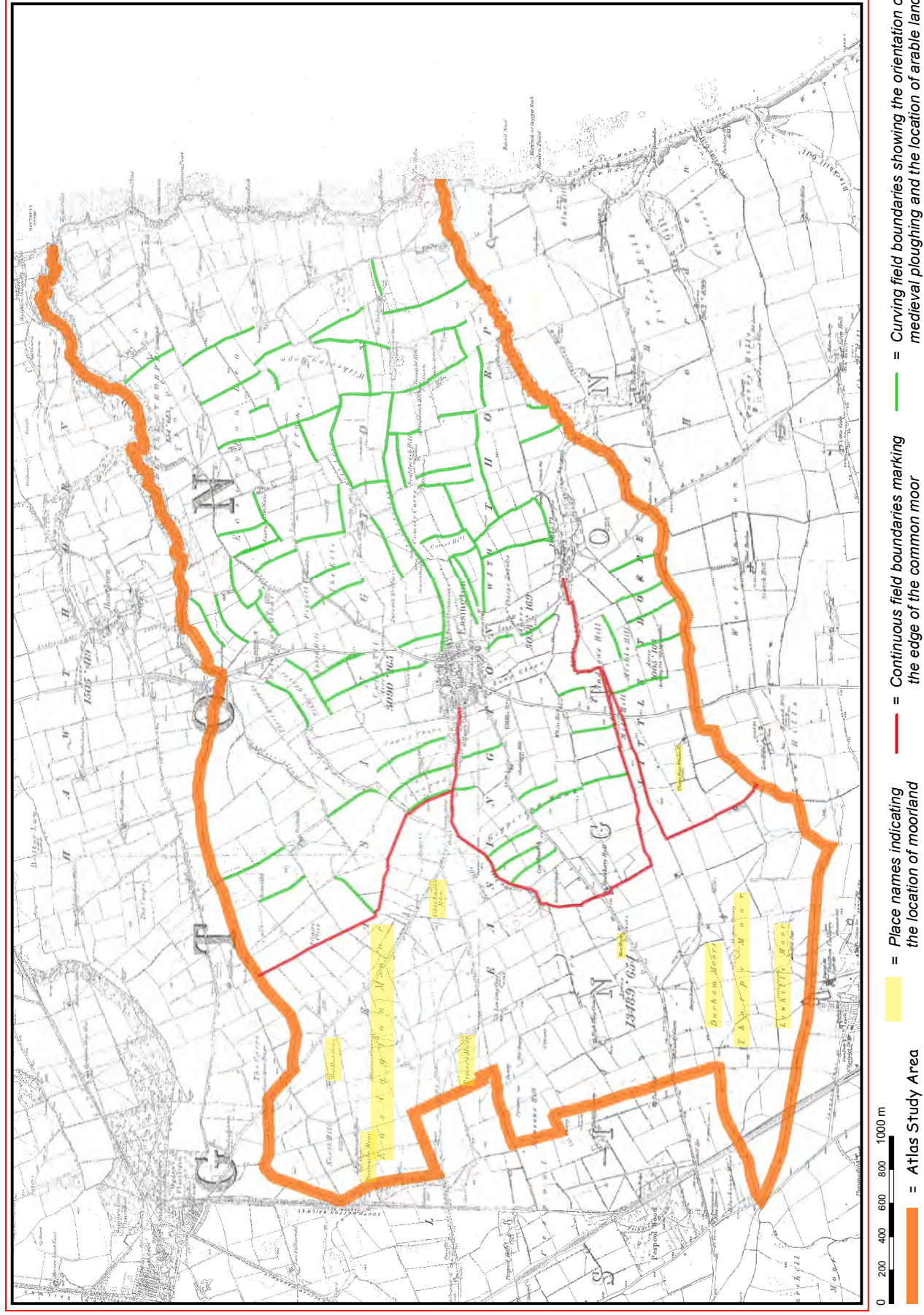


View of St. Mary The Virgin's Church, Easington with Provisional Phased Plan



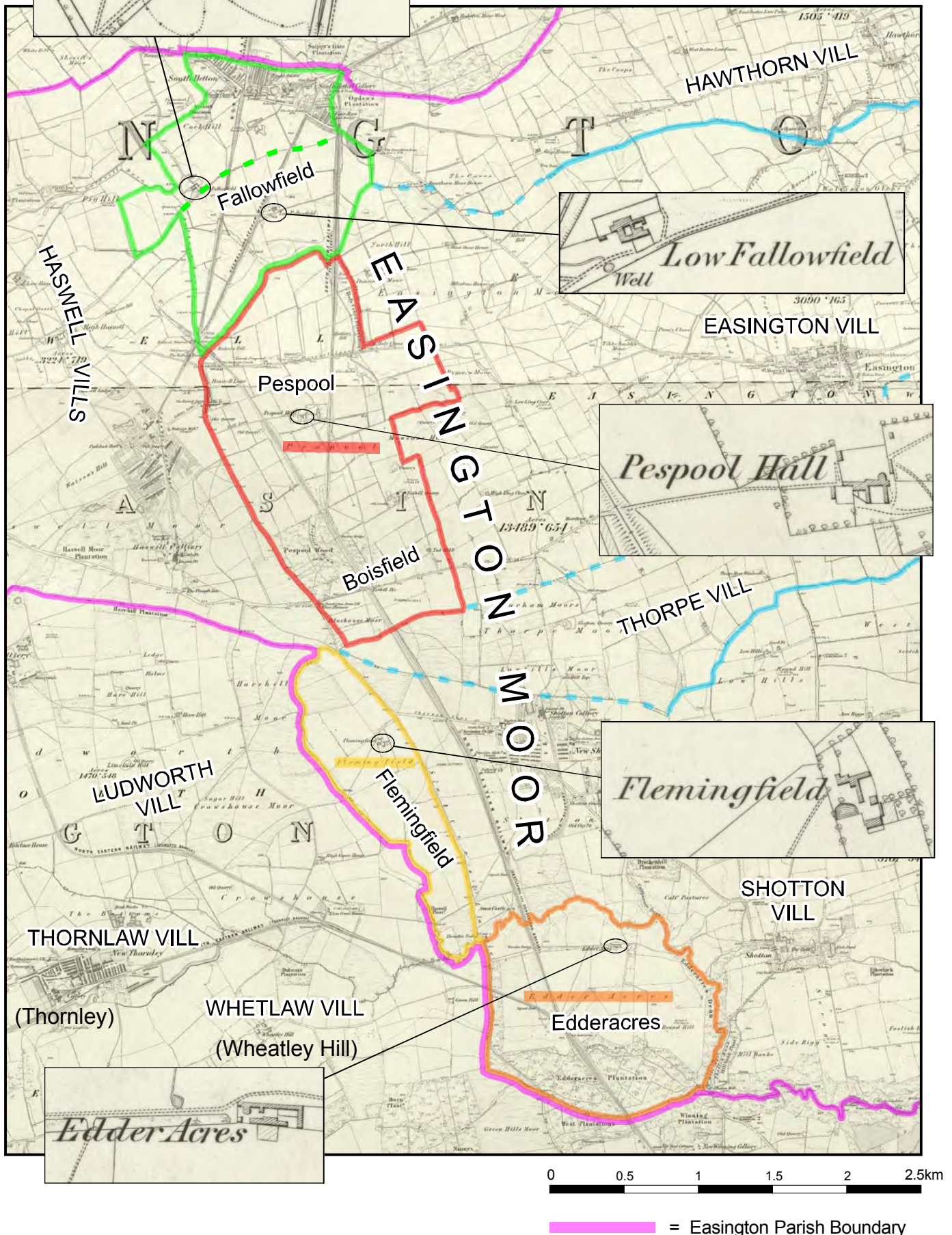
UNCOVERING THE MEDIEVAL LANDSCAPE

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



Medieval Farms carved out of Easington Moor

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



9. THE 16TH TO 19TH CENTURIES

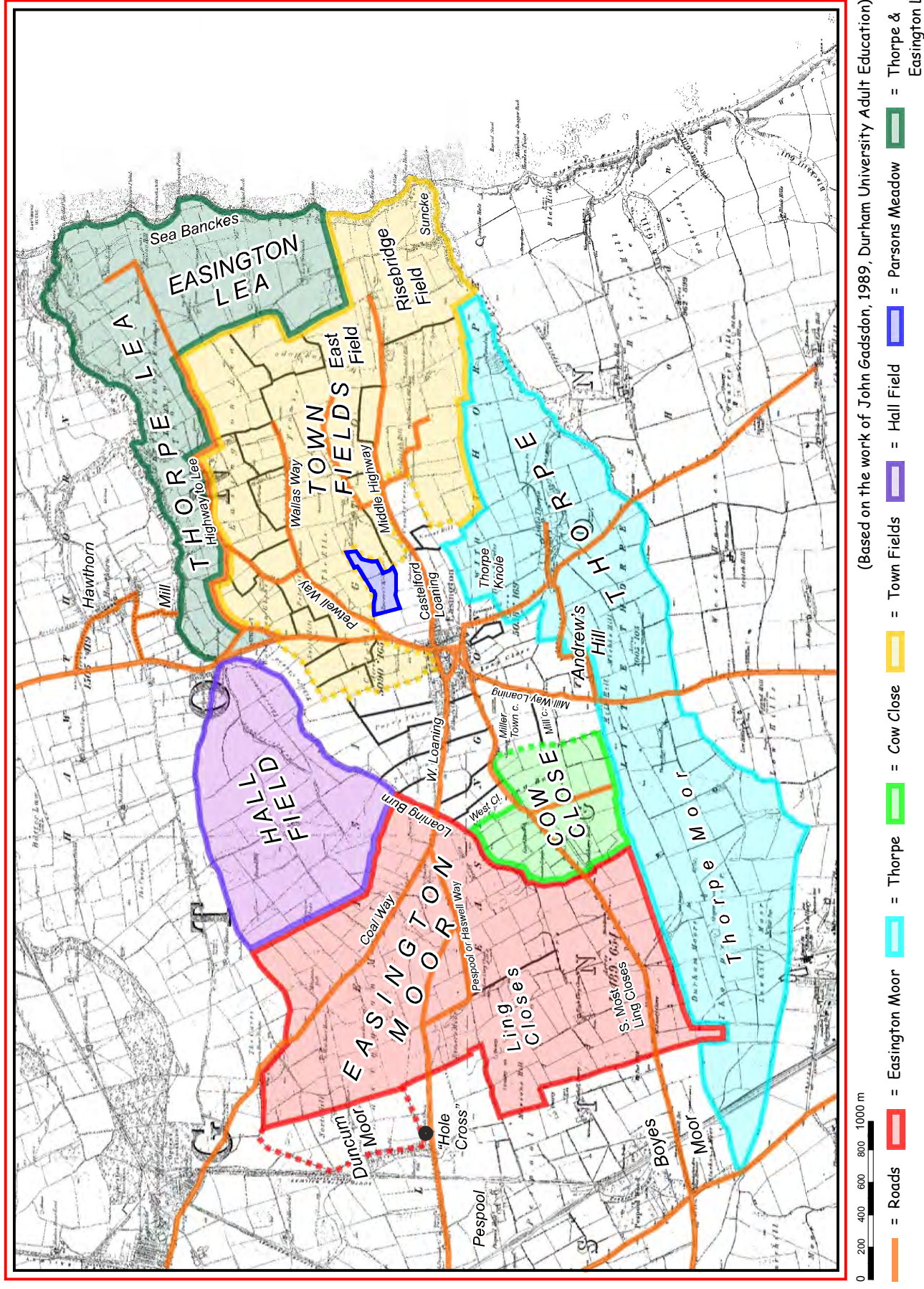
Easington was still just an agricultural village in 16th-17th centuries with no farms in the wider township. The key change was the enclosure and division of the open townfields (the community's arable land) and its common moorland between 1655 and 1672. A landscape of hedged fields and closes was created, paving the way for the dispersal of the tenants' farms throughout the township.

Easington also derived a degree of prosperity from its role as a transport hub, which received a boost with the establishment of the Bishopwearmouth and Norton turnpike trust in 1789. The village was probably already a substantial crossroads in the Middle Ages and it is likely that all the main roads passing through the green were in use by then. 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 1791 revision of Armstrong's county map marks this road's recent promotion to turnpike status, highlighting it in a deeper tone and bounding it with thicker lines to make it stand out. The mileage along the route is also noted and the position of turnpike toll-bars occasionally marked. Turnpikes were part of a nationwide improvement in transport infrastructure during the 18th century, bringing down journey times and increasing traffic along these roads, which would have generated considerable income for the inns, hotels, smiths and farriers in places like Easington

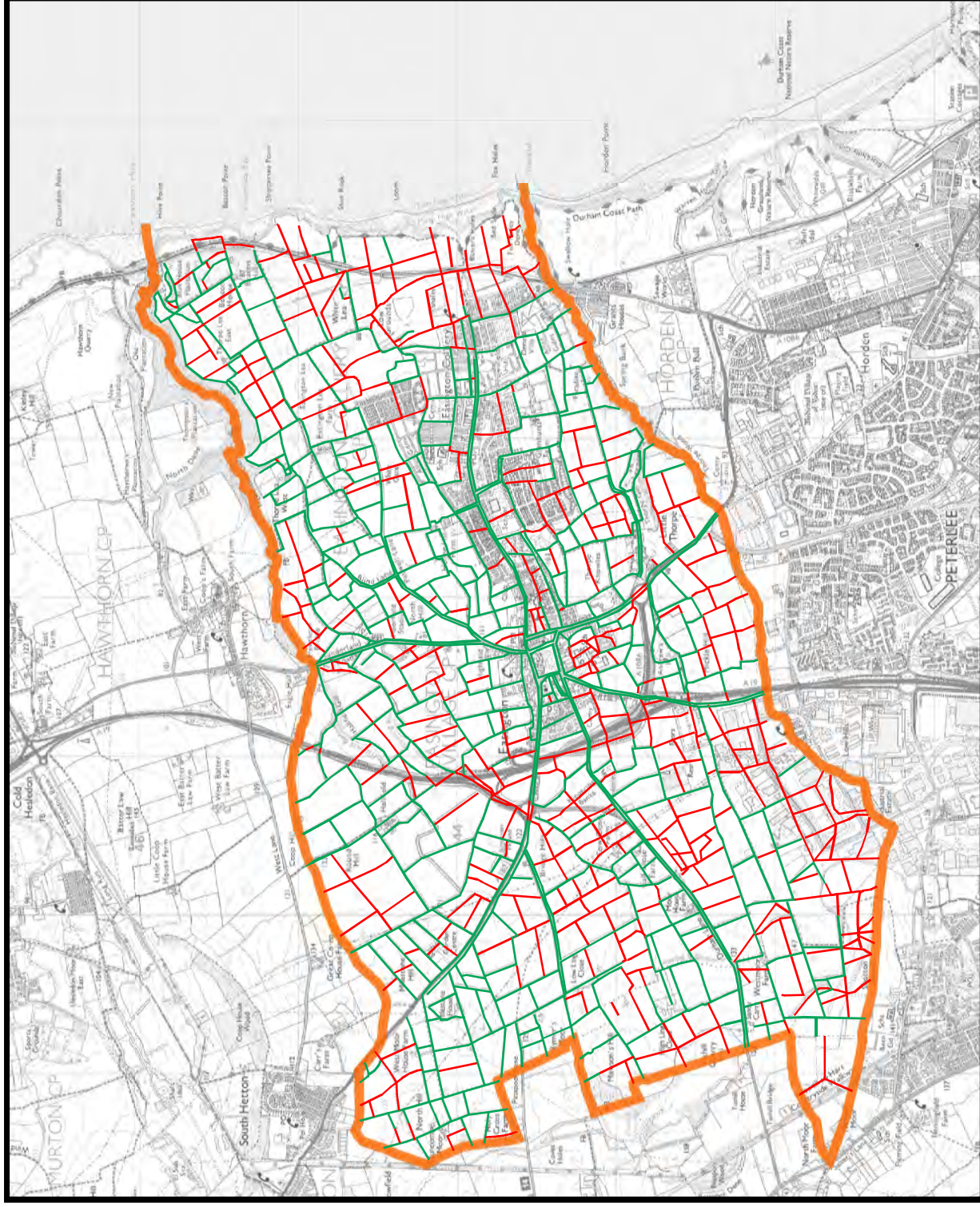


The 1791 revision of Armstrong's Map of County Durham, showing the new Sunderland to Stockton turnpike road running via Easington (Durham County Record Office, Londonderry Estate Archives D/Lo 239). Reproduced by permission of Lord Londonderry and Durham County Record Office.

Pre-Enclosure layout of Easington showing the areas covered by the Chancery Decree Enclosure Awards (1656-1672) plotted on the 6in 1st Edition Ordnance Survey base (1858)



HISTORIC FIELD BOUNDARIES



0 200 400 600 800 1000 m

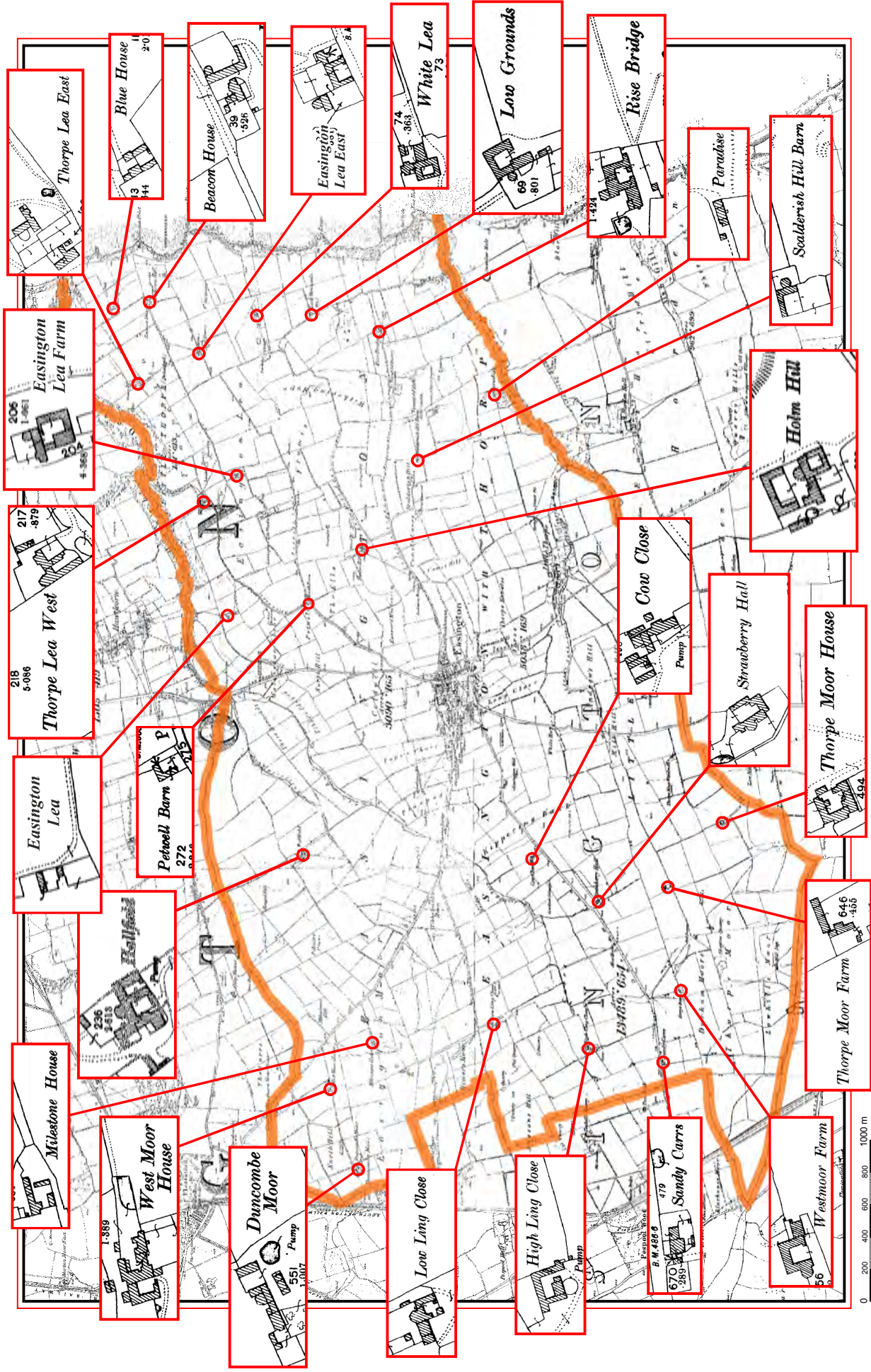
— = Atlas Study Area

— = Surviving Field Boundaries visible on 1st Edition OS

— = Destroyed Field Boundaries visible on 1st Edition OS

DISPERSED FARMS IN THE EASINGTON ATLAS STUDY AREA

- First Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1857, Scale: 6" per mile; Insets from the Second Edition Ordnance Survey 1896, Scale: 1:2500 -



= Easington Atlas Study Area (Easington & Little Thorpe Townships)

10. THE 20TH CENTURY

As the 20th century dawned Easington appeared to have changed relatively little over the course of the previous 100 years. The economic function of the village was still predominantly agricultural and administrative. However, developments already afoot were to transform its character dramatically.

The arrival of the colliery and railway

By the end of the 19th century plans were being laid to exploit the rich, but hard to access coal reserves of the Durham Coast with plans to sink mines at Easington, Horden and Blackhall, changing the character of the area irrevocably. This led to the formation of the Easington Coal Company in 1899. In conjunction, a new East Coast railway line was under development by the North Eastern Railway, underlining the symbiotic relationship of colliery and railway. The coastal route opened throughout between Sunderland and Hartlepool on 1 April 1905 and required the construction of substantial viaducts 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 was a notable example of these engineering works. Easington station opened in 1912. The sinking of Easington Colliery was to prove more difficult, however, and was associated with tragedy in 1904 when one sinker, Robert Atkinson, was drowned in the shaft. Eventually German engineers had to be brought in to complete the shafts, using the technique of freezing them to prevent water ingress. By this means the colliery was eventually brought into full operation between 1909 and 1913.

The colliery had three shafts, the North and South Shafts being the main ones, both circular, 20 feet in diameter, and sunk to depths of 1432 feet and 1500 feet respectively, giving access to five workable coal seams, the Five Quarter, Seven Quarter, Main, Low Main and Hutton. The pit typically employed well over 2000 workers. In 1929 annual coal production exceeded a million tons. Gradual improvements in working conditions included the opening of pithead baths at the colliery in 1937 so miners could get clean before they went home. By the beginning of the 1950s there were 14 coal-producing districts in the North Pit, the colliery's average daily output being 3600 tons. A total of 2235 men were employed underground in three production shifts, plus a further 652 on the surface.

The 1951 Easington Colliery Disaster

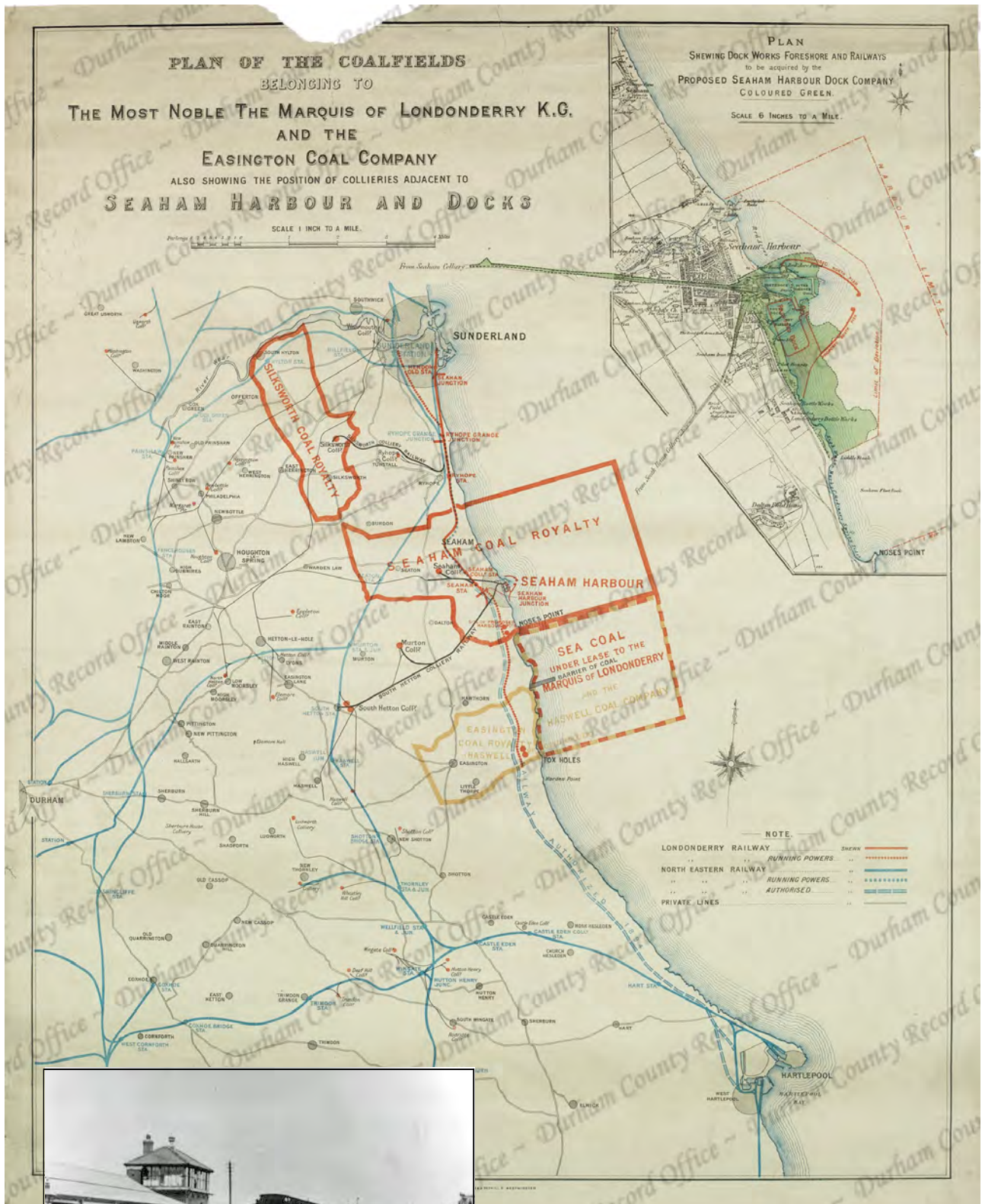
The Colliery was to suffer its worst accident on 29 May 1951 when an explosion occurred in an area of the Five Quarter Seam known as the Duckbill, just as the stoneshift and foreshift were changing over. Sparks caused by the coal cutter striking pyrites ignited firedamp which had accumulated in large cavities, the initial explosion being continued by coal dust derived from the conveyor belt and structures. A total 83 men were killed including two men from the rescue team. The valiant rescue efforts were highly praised by the official inquiry. A disaster fund, combining various local newspaper appeals for the bereaved families, raised over £190,000, a huge sum for that time.

The growth of Easington Colliery

In 1900 the site of Easington Colliery village was empty save for a few farms. A generation later a large and thriving village had grown up as a result of the sinking of the pit. This extended in an unbroken sprawl of development all the way along the main street, Seaside Lane, till it met Easington Village, forming a vibrant community complete with schools, shops, cinemas, pubs and clubs, and churches and chapels. All this was based on the employment provided by the colliery.

Meanwhile Easington Village retained its own distinct identity, as the focus of the area's farming community and as an important administrative centre, first for the local Poor Law Union and then for Easington Rural District Council established at the end of the 19th century. This role was symbolised by the workhouse built in 1850 and the Board Offices built in 1901-02 to accommodate both organisations. The local hospitals were also located in the village and in nearby Little Thorpe.

The Arrival of the Colliery and Railway



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.

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

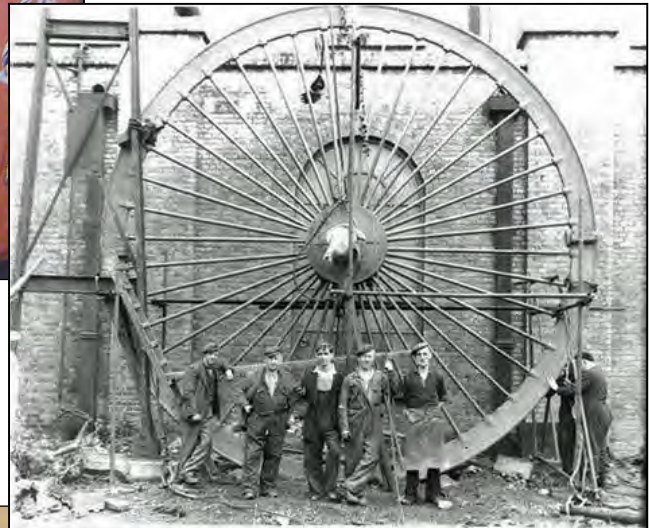
Easington Colliery Pit History



Easington Colliery Lodge Banner



Colliery sinkers and their huts 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 <u>Easington</u>									
1909. Death in the Sub-district of <u>Dawdon</u> in the County of <u>Durham</u>									
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 10th February 1909 at Easington Colliery RD	Robert Atkinson	Male	56 years	Sinker of 16 Wood Posts Easington Colliery RD	Accidentally Drowned by sudden inrush of water whilst working in Easington Colliery	Certificate received from L.E. Second Coroner for Easington Ward. Inquest held 20th February 1909	Twinty February 1909	John M. Pollock Registrar

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

W. Ganaghan Deputy
27th June 2000
Superintendent Registrar

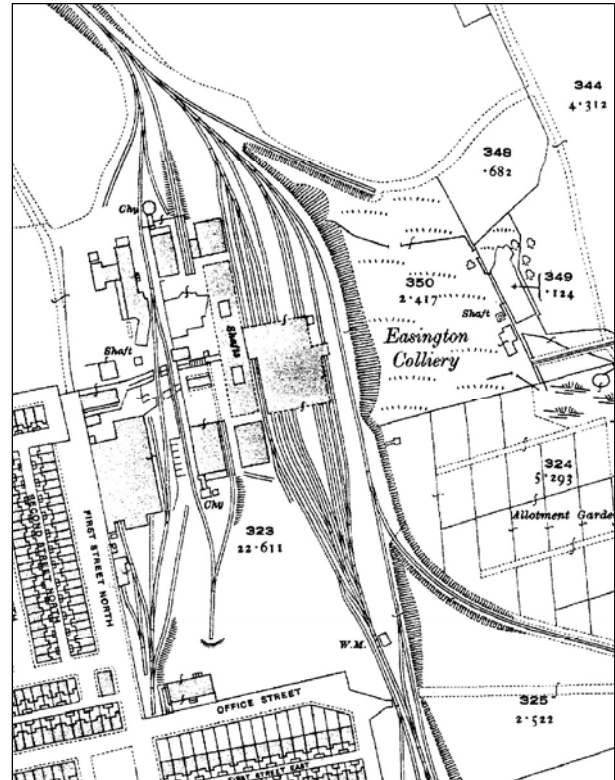
CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. ©CROWN COPYRIGHT
WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

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

Views of Easington Colliery Pit



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



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



View of Easington Colliery Pit Yard in c1970

Photograph of Easington Colliery Pit during demolition in 1993



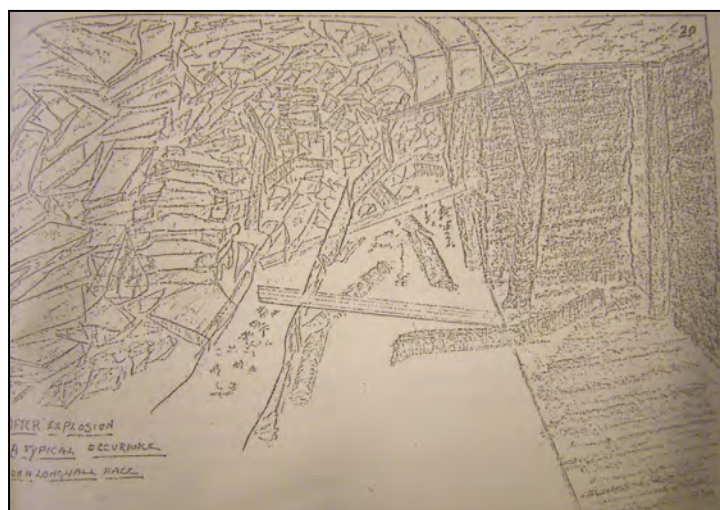
Easington Colliery Disaster 1951



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)

Easington Village in the earlier 20th century



View from the village green looking towards St Mary's



View of the Kings Head situated at the north corner of Low Row c.1920



A winning horse at the annual show



View of the frontage of the 19th-century Poor Law workhouse at Easington



View of the village from the south-east



View of the village green and Southside with a water pump in the foreground



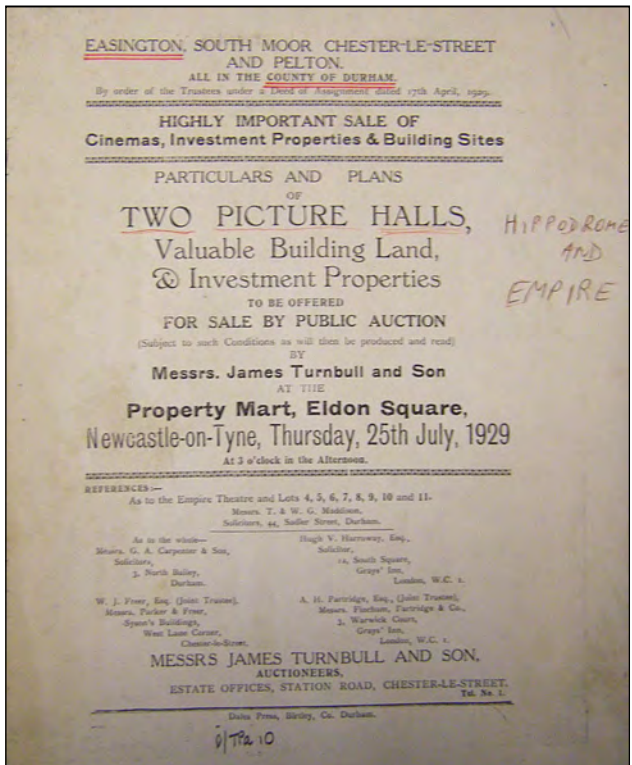
A typical view of the annual show with trophy presentations in the foreground and refreshment marquees in the background

Easington Colliery in the earlier 20th century



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

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



An early postcard of Thorpe Pumping Station



Easington Colliery C of E Mission Church 1913



Postcard of Easington Colliery (mid-C20)



View of the shops next to the Hippodrome



*The senior boys of Easington Colliery Council
School assembled in the playground (mid-C20)*

Schools in Easington Village & Colliery



*View of Easington Village
Church of England School*



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

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



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

Sports & Recreation



Easington Colliery reservoir was converted into an open-air swimming pool in 1950 and run by the Easington Amateur Swimming Club until it closed in 1960



Easington Village Rovers AFC 1930-31



Pigeon men in Easington



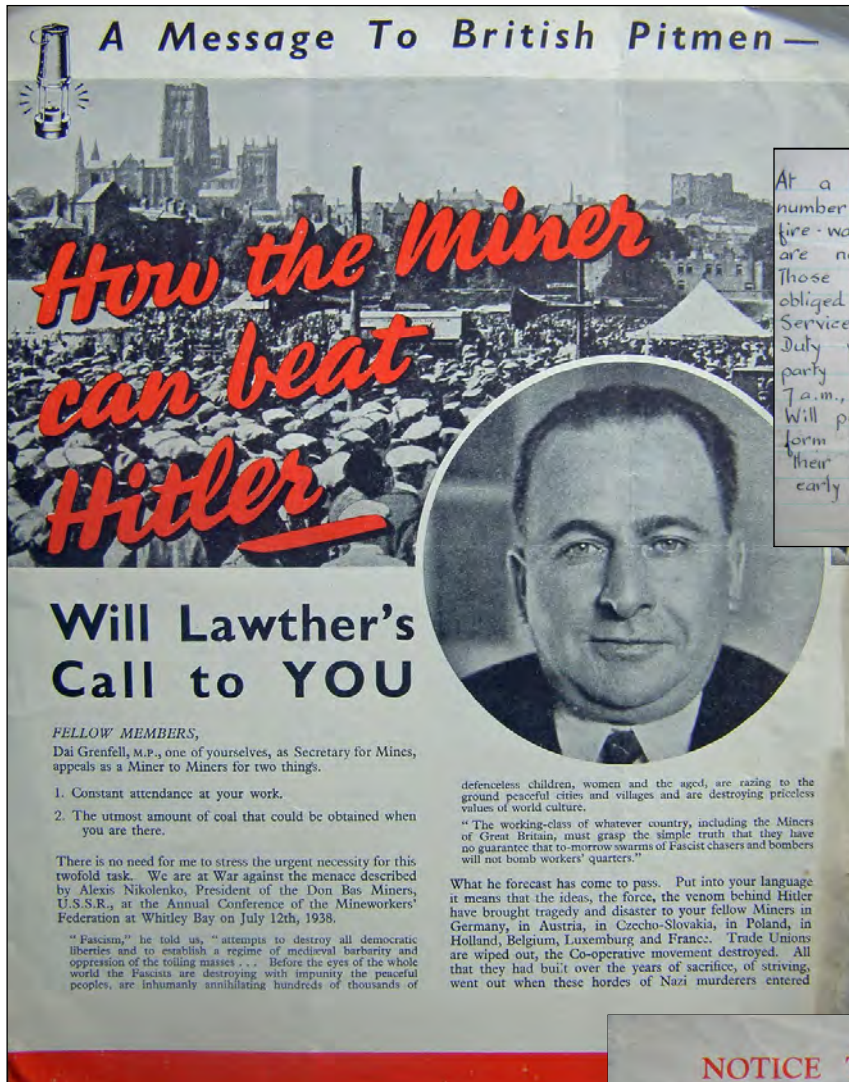
Moorfield Greyhound Stadium opened by local entertainer Frank E. Franks in 1935. It is still running today.



Easington Cricket Team 1922

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 Whitley 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 peoples, 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, Luxemburg 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 — 7p.m. to 7a.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.**

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.

OFFICE STAMP WITH DATE, NAME AND ADDRESS

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

20 APR 1938

COPYRIGHT FORM A.R.24, SHAW & SONS LTD., FETTER LANE, LONDON, E.C.4. 5863(1)

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 ho' 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.

11. EASINGTON TODAY

Easington Colliery was one of the most productive pits in the country throughout the post-War period, the beneficiary of substantial investment by the National Coal Board, which transformed it into a fully mechanised 'super-pit'. Production was already regularly exceeding 1 million tons by the early 1960s and continued to break productivity records throughout its remaining history, as working extended out under the North Sea, the coal face eventually being six miles out from the coastline. Even in the immediate aftermath of the 1984 Miners Strike there seemed little direct threat of closure, but by the early 1990s the political and economic environment for deep coalmining had changed radically. Closure of the colliery was announced in 1992 and the last coal was drawn on 30 April 1993, Easington being the last of the pits in the Durham Coalfield to close.

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. 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.

Nevertheless there have been a number of positive developments in Easington during the last two decades, notably 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. The two communities of village and colliery still retain their distinct identities – with Easington Colliery's mining heritage being brought to wider attention by the filming of *Billy Elliot* in its streets in 2000 – but the future may involve working together in this way to overcome their common challenges.

Turning the Tide: Easington's environment transformed

There was one 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, 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.

Following closure, 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. More dramatic still the cessation of mining was the catalyst for a major cleanup campaign covering 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 were removed before the material they contained was washed out by the tides to become a pollution hazard on the nearby beaches. Derelict structures, debris and rubbish were also removed.

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. Trees and shrubs were planted along the coast, and new limestone grassland created on the cliff-tops and headlands. New pathways and cycle tracks were provided to improve access and encourage greater enjoyment of the coast by local people and visitors. This ongoing work is now the remit of the Limestone Landscapes Programme, designed to enhance the environment of the Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau and Coast as a whole.

Turning the Tide Coastal Cleanup



Before the Cleanup: a coal picker by the shore



Tipping colliery waste on the beach



*Before closure:
Waste dumping
continuing in 1992*

*Turning the Tide:
Removing the
waste in 1999*



Photographs Courtesy of Eileen Hopper and Easington Village Parish Council Archive 'Easington People Past & Present'

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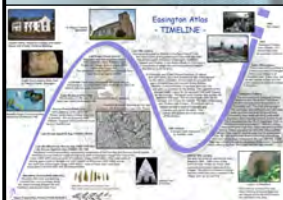
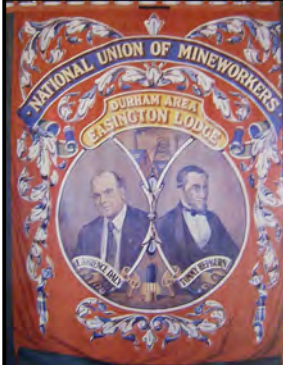
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- The Easington Atlas -

This booklet, a summary of the main Easington Atlas report, explores the unique landscape and history of Easington from its geological origins to the present day. Placing Easington firmly in its wider landscape setting, the Magnesian Limestone Plateau and Coast of East Durham, the booklet shows how that landscape was transformed over time by geological forces and previous generations of inhabitants.

Now home to two distinct but related communities - the Colliery and Village - Easington has a rich and fascinating history. The area's geology is internationally renowned, preserving remains of a 260 million year coastal barrier reef from the Permian era. The ecology is very diverse, including calcareous clifftop flora, seashore rock pools, steep-sided woodlands in the denes, and arable land hedgerows.

Historically and archaeologically there is much to excite interest, whether it is the excavated finds from the Andrew's Hill Anglo-Saxon cemetery, imposing surviving medieval buildings - St Mary's Church and Seaton Holme - and the aspect of an ancient village laid out around its historic green or the much more recent and sometimes tragic history of the 20th-century colliery. In covering all of the above, the booklet demonstrates clearly that there is much to celebrate in Easington's heritage.

