

Burradon

The earliest recorded evidence of human activity at Burradon is the isolated find of part of a Neolithic stone axe (HER 307). Finds and structures from later periods include an Iron age/Romano-British beehive quernstone (HER 5441) for grinding corn, found at Burradon Farm in 1997, and late prehistoric or Romano-British enclosures (HER 305, 306, 308 and 309).

The first documentary reference to Burradon village (HER 495) comes before 1162. Though the township was quite large, the settlement always seems to have been small – there were three taxpayers in 1312 and it was said to be almost worthless in 1482 because of “barren soil” and Scots raids. In 1570 there were two cottages and six tofts and gardens, and in 1666 three houses paid the hearth tax. Surviving medieval features in and around the village include ridge and furrow cultivation features in the fields to the south of Burradon Farm on Burradon Common Fields (HER 795) and Burradon Tower (HER 312) which is thought to date to the 15th/16th century. The shape of the village in the medieval period is unclear, but by 1793 the township was divided into the East and West Farms, the buildings of the West Farm being on the north side of the east-west 'street', where the present farm buildings are, and the East Farm being of courtyard type incorporating the medieval tower in its north-west corner. Probably in the 19th century the two were amalgamated, the present house, farm buildings and cottages erected (HER 5672), and the east Farm, except for the tower, demolished. 19th century maps also show a quarry at each end of the street, along with Quarry Houses (HER 6073), presumably related. The village largely escaped the effects of industrialisation in the modern period and has remained a discreet, rural settlement. However, Burradon Colliery (HER 1079) operated between 1837-1975 and was served by a wagonway (HER 1080) until the 1940s. The Seaton Burn wagonway also runs adjacent to the village, passing nearby Weetslade colliery and its surviving spoil heap (HER 5445-6). In the 19th and early 20th centuries a mining settlement grew up which eventually included schools and a mission hospital (HER 6074-6).