

Earsdon

The earliest recorded evidence of human activity at Earsdon is a prehistoric polished stone axe (HER 729) found sometime before the 1930s. Finds and structures from later periods include rectilinear enclosures (HER 4847 and 5679), including a single-ditched enclosure (HER 4835) and possible roundhouses (HER 4848), all of likely Iron Age/Romano-British date. The first documentary references to Earsdon date from the early 12th century in a document listing the possessions of Tynemouth Priory. This shows that the village of Earsdon (HER 783) was established in the medieval period. In 1292, except for two freeholds, the whole township was in 17 bondage holdings, 14 owners of which are listed in a document of 1296 (the lay subsidy roll). The number of holdings decreased in the later Middle Ages, so that in 1538 there were only eight farms. In 1649 the common fields were enclosed. Earsdon was basically a two-row village, probably with a green, with a strong rectangular outline until developments in the 19th and 20th centuries. The chapel of St. Alban (HER 782) was built originally in the early 13th century, but in 1837 was demolished and replaced with the current church. Other probable medieval survivals in Earsdon are the earthwork remains of ridge and furrow cultivation features, which can be seen on the Common Fields (HER 784), enclosed in 1649. During the 19th century, coal mining grew in importance alongside the agricultural economy. The Duke and Duchess Pit (HER 1111) at Earsdon Colliery was open throughout the century until replaced by the Abbey Shot Factory. The Church Pit (HER 1114), was open between 1838-1933, and some of its buildings still survive. In St. Albans Churchyard there is a memorial (HER 5247) to the 204 miners that lost their lives at Hartley Colliery in 1862. Remnants from the Second World War can be found in Earsdon in the form of pillboxes and a Spigot Mortar Emplacement (HER 5420). The village is still largely built of stone and retains something of its earlier character, with two farms at the west end, and some rather grand houses. Modern sites of importance to the local cultural heritage include a World War Two weapons pit and pillbox, and a roadblock site.