

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT AMBERLEY

The Parish of Amberley

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The term 'parish' has different connotations: Ancient parish, Ecclesiastical parish, and Civil parish; it is important to understand the differences between these. The notes below are largely adapted from *Guide of the Local Administrative Units of England*, by Frederic A Youngs, Jr (London: Royal Historical Society, 1979). This book provides details of all 'administrative units', such as parishes. The data on Amberley is expanded and updated from the relevant entries in Youngs.

Ancient Parish: one which existed at first for ecclesiastical purposes, as an area under the jurisdiction of a clergyman with cure of souls, but which gained secular functions in later periods. The first secular function was relief of the poor, under successive statutory authorities beginning with the Elizabethan poor law of 1597. Therefore 'ancient parish' may be applied to a parish which existed before 1597 and which afterwards for a time served both ecclesiastical and secular roles. But later the separation of the two roles led to two distinct types of parish evolving, a civil parish dealing with the secular role, and an ecclesiastical parish for the original role. The separate evolution of the two parishes often led to them covering quite different, though overlapping, geographic areas. Amberley provides a good example of such evolution, demonstrating the importance of not confusing the two types of parish.

Ecclesiastical parish: came into existence after 1597 to serve ecclesiastical roles only. The number of these was much greater than that of civil parishes, particularly as efforts were made to build new churches in increasingly populated urban areas. Many ecclesiastically subordinate areas within parishes, such as chapelries, were raised to parochial rank, and many were formed which had no earlier status. The Commissioners of *Queen Anne's Bounty* provided financial assistance to clergymen with inadequate financial resources, after which the benefice was termed a 'perpetual curacy'. This had no effect on the independence of previously separate parishes, but 'augmentation' of revenues for hitherto subordinate units gave them new independent status and many ecclesiastical parishes date from that augmentation. In the 19th and 20th centuries a number of statutory provisions allowed the creation of many different types of ecclesiastical parish, alike only in their newly independent status. It was thus not unusual for a parish to be 're-founded' to gain privileges and rights according to newer statutes which it had not earlier enjoyed as a perpetual curacy.

Civil parish: civil role only. It was common before 1930 to define civil parishes as ones "for which a separate poor rate is or can be assessed". The existence, alteration or abolition of civil parishes had no effect on the ecclesiastical arrangement of the identical geographic area. Many civil parishes were at first subordinate to another parish but subsequently became independent. Such parishes were variously called *hamlets* (small settlements), *tithings* or *townships*, *chapelries* (areas with a clergyman dependent upon the incumbent of the mother parish), *liberties* or *lordships* (areas with early dependence upon a secular or ecclesiastical lord), or were called by a variety of other names of local importance. If a separate poor law rate was levied in the subordinate unit, it was then called by its own 'rank' such as hamlet and/or as 'parish'. To avoid this confusion the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1866 stipulated that those areas should thereafter be called 'parishes'.

Amberley Ancient parish

Included hamlet of Rackham (separate civil parish 1866) until 1898, when Rackham was moved to the civil and to the ecclesiastical parishes of Parham. The chapelry of Houghton was within Amberley civil and ecclesiastical parishes until 1935.

Amberley Ecclesiastical parish

Pre-1935: *Amberley with Houghton*. In old documents the parish is frequently referred to as 'Amberley cum Houghton', and both names seem to have been used almost interchangeably. The parish magazines from Jan 1930 (NB The parish magazine was not published between 1919 and 1930) were entitled '*Amberley, Houghton and North Stoke Parish Magazine*', so North Stoke appears to have been treated informally as part of *Amberley with Houghton* before 1935. In the March 1932 parish magazine it is reported that The Amberley with Houghton Parochial Church Council hoped to have a meeting in North Stoke church to start a Parochial Church Council for North Stoke. North Stoke became a separate ecclesiastical parish between 1935 and 1984, but is now no longer used for regular services and is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

Houghton had a separate civil identity early, but was a chapelry within Amberley, whence the early name of the ecclesiastical parish. Houghton was ecclesiastically severed from Amberley in on 1 January 1935 to help create *Bury with Houghton* ecclesiastical parish.

Rackham was within Amberley ecclesiastical parish until February 1898, when it was transferred to Parham

1935-1984: *Amberley*

Amberley and North Stoke were created a united benefice by an Order in Council of 6 June 1935. [*Amberley Parish Magazine*, September 1935]

1984- to date: *Amberley with North Stoke*

Extract from Pastoral Measure, 5 June 1984:

‘The benefice of Amberley with North Stoke and the benefice of Parham and Wiggonholt with Greatham in the diocese of Chichester shall be united to create a new benefice which shall be named "The Benefice of Amberley with North Stoke and Parham, Wiggonholt and Greatham”.

.....The area of the new benefice shall comprise the new parish of Amberley with North Stoke, the parish of Parham, the parish of Wiggonholt and the parish of Greatham, which parishes shall continue distinct.

.....The parish church of the parish of Amberley shall be the parish church of the new parish of Amberley with North Stoke.’

The ecclesiastical parish was in Arundel Rural Deanery until 1871, Storrington I RD1871-1913, Storrington RD 1913-35. There was an additional ecclesiastical boundary alteration in 1898.

North Stoke ecclesiastical parish was in Arundel RD until 1871, Arundel I RD 1871-80, Storrington I RD 1880-1913, Arundel RD 1913-29, then Storrington RD from 1929. In 1984 the ecclesiastical parish of North Stoke was incorporated into Amberley with North Stoke. (North Stoke parish church, St Mary the Virgin, was declared redundant in 1992 and is now under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.)

Amberley Civil parish

Pre-1933: *Amberley*

1933-to date: *Amberley*.

North Stoke was an Ancient Parish, but the civil parish of North Stoke was abolished in 1933 and incorporated into Amberley parish.

Historically, Amberley was within West Easwirth hundred (in the [rape](#) of Arundel), East Preston Poor Law Union from 1791-1869, then Thakeham Poor Law Union 1869-1930. The Rural District was Thakeham 1894-1933 then Chanctonbury 1933-74. A civil boundary alteration was made in 1933, to include North Stoke Ancient Parish. Amberley is now within Horsham District of West Sussex.

Spellings of Amberley

Amberley has been spelled in many different ways over the centuries. When doing online searching this should be borne in mind. Among the variants to be found are: AMBERLE, AMBRELIE, AMBERLEGH, AMBERLEA, AMBERESLEGE, AUMBERLEY, AUMBERLE, AUMBERLY, AUMBERESLEYE, OMBYRLE, AMERLEY, AUMBIRLE, AMBURLEY.

Amberley Street Names

The street names in Amberley have varied over the years since they started to be used and so the names in early documents are not necessarily the same as used now. The names used in the censuses from 1841 to 1911 are shown below.

School Road, AKA South Street

- 1871, 1881 Censuses: *South Street*
- 1891, 1901, 1911 *School Road*

The Square

This name only appears in the 1911 census.

Church Street

Used consistently.

The Alley

Appears in 1881, 1901 and 1911, but not in 1891.

Hog Lane, North Street, North Road, Middle Street

Originally Hog Lane was just the western, north-south portion of what is now all Hog Lane. The northern, east-west portion was North Street in the 1871 census, North Road in 1881, Middle Street in 1891, North Road in 1901 and 1911.

High Street

Used consistently.

East Street

Used from 1881.

High Titten

This name appears in the 1851 census, does not appear in that of 1861 or 1871. In 1881 the houses there are recorded simply as '*Station Road*'; in 1891 as '*High Titten, Station Road*'. In 1901, the name *Chalky Road* is used, but *High Titten* reappears in 1911.

Crossgates

The name used for the part of the village now known as Crossgates is a particularly varied.

The census records use the following:

1851: There is 1 schedule for '*Cross Gate*'

1861 & 1871, no addresses are given for properties in this area.

1881: 10 schedules, all '*Rackham Road*'

1891: 9 schedules, 1-5 are '*Rackham Road*', 6-9 are '*Cross-Gate*' or '*Cross Gate*'

1901: 7 schedules, all '*Rackham Road, Cross Gate*'

1911: 9 schedules, all '*Crossgate*'

On the 1910 OS map '*Cross Gate*' is the cluster of buildings where Farm Cottages are now.

In the 1939 Register: all the houses which are now 1-20 Crossgates were 1-20 Council Cottages

So, when (and why? By mistake or deliberate?) did Cross Gate/Crossgate become plural? One gets the impression that this may have come about by mistake.