

**History of
Amberley Farmhouse at Pentrich
& it's former Residents.**

**Researched & written by
Eric Galvin ©August 2006**

Chairman of:
['Pentrich Historical Society'](#)



This is Amberley Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building in Pentrich.

Introduction

The name Amberley first appears in church records for 1547 (Ministers Accounts held in the Public Record Office), although it is unclear whether there was a house on the site at that time or for how long the name had been used before its appearance in surviving records. Of Anglian origin, the name means the “clearing in the forest near the River Amber”. “Amber” is a Celtic word meaning “water”. Likewise Pentrich is of Celtic origin, meaning “the hill where boars live”. Crich within sight of Amberley on the opposite side of the valley is also has a Celtic name, suggesting the survival of a small Romano-British community hereabouts well into the Saxon period when many current place names began to be used.

The Parish and estate

Pentrich was in the Morleston and Litchurch hundred of Derbyshire and is now part of the Amber Valley District Council area.

See - <http://www.roman-britain.org/people/veranius.htm>

There is some evidence that Pentrich was already settled when the Romans came into the area in the first century CE. The signal station at Coney Grey Farm, about half a mile from Amberley, is attributed to Aulus Didius Gallus, Governor of *Britannia* from AD52 to 57. Tacitus said that he maintained the ground gained by his predecessors, and pushed forward a few forts into remoter districts in order to gain credit for enlarging his province. The fort is on Rykneld Street, the Roman road from Little Chester (Derby) to Chesterfield and Sheffield that passes between Amberley and Pentrich.

Throughout the Roman era and well into the Romano-British period there were extensive and prosperous lead mines in Crich, probably giving rise to the sustained Romano-British community hereabouts.

The village was on the northern edge of Duffield Frith; a Norman major hunting preserve; and the centre of Pentrich Forest. The names Buckland Hollow and Buckland Pasture indicate land known for its deer. Pentrich was recorded as Pentric in the Domesday Book as a manor belonging to Ralph FitzHerbert, Viscount of Maine, who fought at the Battle of Hastings in October 1066.

Pentrich manor belonged to Darley Abbey for most of the medieval period. This abbey of Augustinian canons dedicated to St Helen was founded around 1137 by a Derby burgess named Towyne. In 1154 Robert Ferrers, 2nd earl of Derby, endowed the new foundation with land and churches; and it is likely that Pentrich passed to the Abbey at this time. In 1160 the oratory moved to Little Darley where a new monastery was built on land donated by Hugh, then rural dean of Derby.

The Church of St. Matthew in Pentrich dates from around 1150. It is possible that its building reflected the monks concern for the spiritual well being of the residents of their newly acquired manor. It is not the first Christian relic as there was a Saxon preaching cross at the junction of Asher Lane and Main Road. The Black Death visited Pentrich in 1349, when three vicars died in one year.

Darley Abbey was dissolved on 22 October 1538 and the manor of Pentrich passed to the Zouch family of Codnor Castle, as part of larger transfer of ownership.

"For manor of Westnyng and £98 7s. 6d. (1) to (2) manor of Rypley and advowson of Pentriche, and all premises of late monastery of Derley there; all tenants named and the following premises named:- Housele House and Maryott House (being 1 house), Dawrydings, Smythouse, Rede Feldes, Whyteley, Bakers, Roger Ryddynges, Padley Feld, Paylefeld, Marley alias Merehey Park, coal mine in occ. Rob. Ragge, Butterley Parke and hunting therein, Wyngrenes, tithes of parish of Uston (Derbs), water called Highdam in Pentrich and water mill called Nether Mill, Herthe Wood, Herthey Land, Salter Common Wood, Whey Wood, Hunters Wood, Bakers Wood, Lewes Common; also Barley Common in Duffeld (Derbs); also £3 6s. 8d. p.a. from rectory of Geynsbury (Hunts.), late belonging to monastery of St. Neots (Hunts.). To hold by service of 1/10 knights fee, paying £5 19s. 6d. p.a. (2) also to have all Ripley rents from Lady Day 1540"

In 1634 Pentrich manor passed to the Cavendish family of Chatsworth, later to become the Dukes of Devonshire. This was part of a much larger sale of Zouch property. Pentrich manor remained part of the Chatsworth Estate until October 1950. In 1611 the estate contained 1252 acres and by 1950 this had grown to 1382 acres; in part by the addition of Amberley to the estate.

During the first century after the dissolution, Amberley was not administered as part of Pentrich manor; rather it was grouped with Zouch lands in South Wingfield, Coddington and Oakerthorpe for administrative purposes. Thus the map of Pentrich manor based on William Senior's survey of 1611 excludes the site of Amberley farmhouse, though not the common to the north that later became part of the farm after about 1790. Between 1634 and 1658 Amberley belonged to the Howards, the Dukes of Arundel and Norfolk. It may have been sold towards the end of the Commonwealth period to pay debts and fines accrued by the Howards who were leading Catholics and Royalist supporters.

Well into the eighteenth century many documents held in the Cavendish Collection at Chatsworth emphasise that they include Amberley as a separate administrative entity. By about 1750 Amberley was seen an integral part of the Pentrich estate.

Situation

Amberley Farmhouse is about 1 mile to the north west of Pentrich village in the Amber Valley. It lies about 100 metres above sea level midway between the river and the crest of the eastern slope. It is tucked into a niche in the hillside protecting the house from cold northerly and easterly winds. It has a more open aspect to the sun and warmer winds from the south and west.

Geologically, it lies on the western edge of the exposed coal measures of the York, Derby and Nottingham coalfield; with a surface seam running directly under the farmhouse. The land dips steeply to the south towards the river and rises gently to the north and east. The coal measures are overlain by clay soils. The average mean flow of the River Amber at Wingfield Park is 1.39 cubic metres per second. The land in the bottom of the valley tends to be damp and floods after wet weather.

The Listing

In the Grade II listing from 1988 the house is described as follows

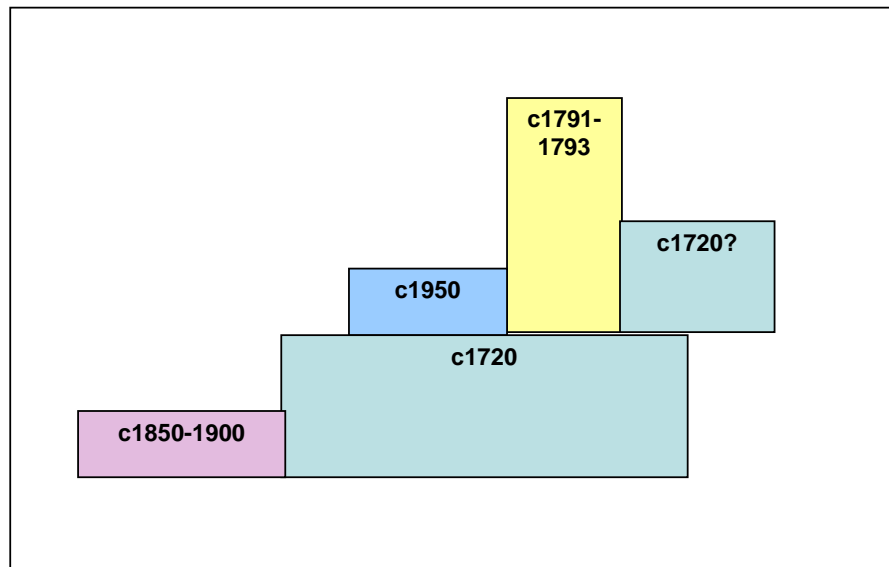
"Farmhouse. Mid C18, remodelled early C19. Coursed rubble coal measures sandstone rising from a broad plinth of massive ashlar, with coped gables, and ashlar ridge stacks and a slated roof. "L" plan. Three storeys, two bays, with single glazing bar sashes to ground and first floor openings in plain surrounds which project slightly. Upper floor has two 3 light flush mullioned windows with casements. Central doorway with quoined surround, C19 six panelled door with upper two panels glazed, beneath massive lintel and shallow bracketed hood. Rear wing retains 2 light flush mullioned windows. Small single storey addition to west gable with a stone slated roof, and, in gable wall, evidence of fire place".

The House

The existing farm house was built for the use of the prosperous tenant farmers renting the land from the Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth estate. The tenants' prosperity is apparent from their entitlement to vote in the early and mid 19th Century when the property qualification was in place. Before 1832 the vote was restricted to around 2% of the population with freehold property (including leases for life as at Amberley) worth 40 shillings (£2 or £4333 in 2002 GDP terms).

The existing building was constructed in four main phases, probably between the early 18th Century and 1950.

Amberley Farmhouse Phases of construction



The **original farmhouse** is reputed to date from around 1720 though there is no documentary evidence for this. However there is reference in leases of 1658 to lands in Amberley and in 1690 to "a house called Amberley". Whether this is the core of the existing house or even if it was on the same site is unclear.

The oldest part of the existing house is a three storey single range structure. This style, with a single run of rooms was common in rural areas until the first quarter of the 18th century; after which buildings with a double range of rooms on each floor gradually became the more usual style of domestic architecture. The original building has three floors, each with two rooms. Kitchen and other facilities would, in all probability, have been in separate outbuildings to the rear of the house. The stairwell to the rear of the house probably dates from this period. There is a stone built, stone roofed former privy in the garden. There is also a well shaft in the garden. Either or both may be associated with the original building.

This part of the house was built of local stone, possibly from the former quarry, to the north along Chesterfield Road. The stone to the front and west sides of the house has been dressed to form regular ashlar blocks whereas the rest of building has rough-cut blocks. The walls are generally around 21 inches thick and the windows are of the original style, but date from the end of the 20th century.

The roof is mainly of old slate, although the house was re-roofed in the middle of the 20th Century. The roof structure is of king post trusses (mostly original) bearing off the external walls. The gutters and down pipes are of modern PVC construction.

The **cold store** attached to the stair well at rear of the original house may have been one of the original outbuildings later incorporated into the main building. It may have been the kitchen given the evidence of a former fireplace. It has a stone slab roof. Its foundations may even predate the main house. Just above the current ground level the stonework changes abruptly from a rough stone to a finish closer in style to that of the main house. The floor level in the cold store is around 4 feet lower than that in the main house.

The single range building, but not the cold store, is seen clearly in the survey map of 1789. Shortly afterwards between 1791 and 1793 the Chatsworth estate embarked on an ambitious building project at Amberley. This building work may have coincided with the enclosure of Pentrich Common, which on the 1789 map comes right up to Amberley Farmhouse. The enclosure extended the acreage farmed by Amberley and Coney Grey farms. Early 19th Century maps show the “L” shaped house and extensive buildings around the farmyard. This work probably included the rear extension to the house, cowshed, stables and barn. The invoices and receipts for this work are in the Devonshire collection at Chatsworth show expenditure of around £550 on this work – this being equivalent to at least £1.3m in 2002 GDP terms.

The origins of the **dairy** are less clear. There has been a building on this site since at least the time of the tithe map of 1843, but this may have been replaced by the present single storey construction early in the 20th Century. The most recent part of the structure dates from the second half of the 20th century. This is the **utility room** leading into the rear courtyard. This probably dates from the 1950s or early 1960s.

By 1950 the farm had mains electricity and water. Mains gas arrived in 2000. After a period of dereliction, the house and outbuildings were converted into their present form in the late 1990s.

The main features of the interior have been developed over the years. These are

- The entrance hall with its stone walls, red and black slate floor (similar to that seen in the Dog inn in Pentrich village)
- The “added light” window between the hall and the dining room may reflect the eighteenth century practice of having two front doors to reduce cold draughts but with a window to allow residents to see who was calling before the main inner door is opened.

- The old fireplace in the small lounge
- The kitchen has been remodelled several times. There are three distinct layers of tiles around the original chimney space; respectively brown tile with flower motifs; a white, blue and yellow layer; and modern coloured tiles.
- The cold store has a stone thrall and well worn steps leading to the cellar extending beneath the kitchen. This has the bricked up remains of a fireplace, a barrel vaulted ceiling and a stone bacon-curing table.

The Steading

Most of the original buildings in the farmyard are date from the extensive work carried out in the 1790s when the house was extended.

At the time of the estate sale in 1950 the farm buildings were described as being soundly built and mostly formed round a good yard. They were of stone with slated and pantilled roofs. They comprised

- Three loose boxes with Chamber over
- Stable for four with box
- Cowshed for six with Loft over
- Fodderham
- Barn
- Grain pit
- Cowshed for 29
- Cowshed for 6
- Five calf places
- Two loose boxes
- Coal place with Chamber over
- Dairy, half white tiled (now incorporated into the farmhouse)
- Wash house
- Two-bay implement shed
- Stirk shed for 7
- Fodderham with chamber above
- New Dutch barn (five bay)
- Implement shed
- Stone built crew yard with open shed

There was also a separate detached farm cottage containing a living room, kitchen and two bedrooms. It was of stone and slate construction. It also had a coal place with loft over, and earth-closet and garden.

The other buildings in the farm were converted into six additional dwellings in the 1990s.



Side aspect of Amberley Farmhouse

The Farm

In the Middle Ages Pentrich, like most other manors, was farmed using the open field system. Each tenant was entitled to a fixed number of strips in one of four “open fields” and had grazing rights on common land. Pentrich had four fields – Upper, Nether, Riley and Asher. The land farmed from Amberley in later years may have been outside the Pentrich open field system. Some of the land to the north of the current farmhouse was part of Pentrich Common and other parts to the east of Chesterfield Road may have been part of Riley Field. The common practice was for tenants to live in the main village and commute daily to their various strips of land in the open fields.

In most parts of the country the open field system ended in the eighteenth century as landowners sponsored Parliamentary Enclosure Acts. These allowed them to split the land permanently between themselves creating large permanent blocks of land where it was worthwhile investing in drainage, hedges and other improvements. Usually they also removed common land grazing rights from tenants. However this was not necessary in Pentrich and Amberley as the Duke of Devonshire owned virtually all the land. Pentrich Common remained until about 1790 when it was enclosed to form Coney Grey Farm and part of Amberley farm.

The overall size of Amberley farm

The Dukes of Devonshire were able to configure the land into different sized tenancies as they thought fit. The impact of this is seen in the changing size of Amberley Farm over the years.

Year	Acreage			Rent			Rent/Acre	
	Acres	Roods	Poles	Current	2004 prices (£s)		Current	2004 RPI
					Av Earn	RPI		
1789	92	1	6	£ 80 4s 0d	-	-	17s 4d	-
1809	122	2	9	£ 94 0s 5d	-	-	15s 4d	-
1818	147	2	28	£209 2s 3d	-	-	18s 4d	-
1829	153	-	12	£153 0s 0d	109,153	10,099	£1 0s 0d	£66.01
1843	147	1	16	-	-	-	-	-
1861	171	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1898	179	3	1	£180 0s 0d	70,619	12,991	£1 0s 0d	£72.17
1950	186	0	38	£262 15s 0d	17,101	5,862	£1 8s3d	£31.52

From the table the steady growth in the size of Amberley Farm is apparent. By 1950 it farm was just over twice the size than in 1789. The growth in the prosperity of the farm is not as easily discerned from the Chatsworth records. One measure is the rent received by the Chatsworth Estate but in reality rents were fixed whereas income from produce varied year by year. The rent paid is a poor measure given the changes in the acreages farmed; fluctuations in the value of money; variations in the production and prices secured for produce; the long leases for major tenancies like Amberley; and the absence of good measures of the real value of money before 1830.

That said, between 1789 and 1898 the real value of the rents paid to the Dukes of Devonshire for Amberley Farm grew by around 125% at current prices. Adjusted for changes in the size of the farm and the value of money (i.e. rent per acre in 2004 RPI terms) this reduces to about 14%. The first 50 years of the twentieth century were less successful financially for the Chatsworth Estate. Rents rose by 31% at current prices but rent per acre fell by 56% in real terms.

The fields farmed from Amberley

The periodic surveys carried out for the Chatsworth Estate show how the land holding of the Amberley tenancy varied between 1789 and 1939. The survey records are difficult to interpret as three forces were at work. The estate was being consolidated into larger more profitable units; the size and shape of individual fields were being modified; and field names were changing.

<i>Field Name</i>	<i>1789</i>	<i>1829</i>	<i>1843</i>	<i>1939</i>
<i>Far Allotment</i>		✓	✓	✓
<i>Near Brookshaw</i>		✓	✓	✓
<i>Upper Allotment</i>		✓	✓	✓
<i>Near Allotment</i>		✓	✓	✓
<i>Lower Margin Hagg</i>			✓	✓
<i>Rivington Close</i>		✓	✓	
<i>Pingle</i>	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Amberley Hill</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Round Meadow</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Osier Bed</i>		✓	✓	
<i>Part of Far Amberley</i>			✓	
<i>Hillside</i>		✓	✓	✓
<i>Orchard</i>		✓	✓	✓
<i>Horse Field or Meadow</i>		✓	✓	✓
<i>First Margin Hagg</i>			✓	
<i>Paddock or Stallion paddock</i>			✓	✓
<i>Upper Margin Hagg or Morgan Meadow</i>			✓	✓
<i>House, Outbuildings, Yard, Garden & Orchard</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Orchard</i>		✓	✓	
<i>Barn Croft</i>	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Near Amberley</i>	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Far Amberley or Near Broom Hill</i>	✓	✓		
<i>Far Amberley or Near Broom Hill</i>	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Hill End</i>		✓	✓	

<i>Bridge, Brigg or Big Meadow</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Long Meadow</i>		✓	✓	
<i>Thistley Close</i>	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Croft</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Moor Close (part)</i>	✓		✓	
<i>Moor Close</i>	✓		✓	✓
<i>Nether Cote Close</i>		✓	✓	✓
<i>Upper Cote Close</i>		✓	✓	✓
<i>Far Brookshaw</i>		✓	✓	
<i>Mill Close</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Intake</i>	✓			
<i>Near Meadow</i>	✓			
<i>Mill End</i>	✓			
<i>Far Rivington Close</i>	✓			
<i>Middle Close</i>	✓			
<i>Common Close</i>	✓			
<i>Lane</i>	✓			
<i>East Amberley hill</i>	✓			
<i>South Amberley</i>	✓			
<i>North Amberley</i>	✓			
<i>Intake</i>	✓			
<i>Margin Hagg</i>		✓		
<i>Common on Quarry Piece</i>				✓
<i>Cottage Garden and Quarry</i>				✓
<i>Amberley Plantation</i>				✓
<i>Far and Near Amberley, and Hill End</i>				✓
<i>Long Meadow</i>				✓
<i>Little Hagg</i>				✓
<i>Bottom Allotment</i>				✓
<i>Coer Close</i>				✓
<i>Nether Close or Horse field</i>				✓
<i>Garden</i>				✓
<i>Hillside(2)</i>				✓
<i>Mount Sorel</i>				✓

Land Use

We have two pictures of the way in which the farm operated from contemporary records. William Lister, writing at the end of the nineteenth century recalled growing up at Amberley in the 1830s and 1840s He recalled that the Duke had been a good landlord. About two-thirds of the farm had been under pasture and all manure was to be returned to the land. At the time in the Midlands, farm labourers earned 12s 0d to 15s 0d a week; plus their keep including “small beer at all times and lashings of ale during harvest”. In 1844 the farm had 44 acres under wheat and grew some oats and hay was taken from some of the pastures.

The 1843 tithe map shows the pattern of fields and land use at the time when William Lister was the tenant.

<i>Field Name</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Size</i>			<i>£</i>	<i>Rent</i>	
		<i>a</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>		<i>s</i>	<i>d</i>
<i>Far Allotment</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	6	-	7		4	2
<i>Near Brookshaw</i>	<i>Arable</i>	6	-	12		4	2
<i>Upper Allotment</i>	<i>Arable</i>	9	1	5		6	5
<i>Near Allotment</i>	<i>Arable</i>	4	-	37		3	-
<i>Lower Margin Hagg</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	5	3	37		4	2
<i>Rivington Close</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	3	1	36		2	5
<i>Pingle</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	1	3	38		1	5
<i>Amberley Hill</i>	<i>Arable</i>	7	-	8		4	11
<i>Round Meadow</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	2	-	32		1	6
<i>Osier Bed</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	-	1	29		-	4
<i>Part of Far Amberley</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	1	1	-		-	10
<i>Hillside</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	6	-	8		4	2
<i>Orchard</i>	<i>Meadow</i>	1	-	23		-	9
<i>Horse Field</i>	<i>Meadow</i>	3	1	16		2	4
<i>First Margin Hagg</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	1	2	9		1	1
<i>Paddock</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	2	1	16		1	8
<i>Upper Margin Hagg</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	2	3	10		1	11
<i>House, Outbuildings, Yard, Garden & Orchard</i>	1	3	12		1	3
<i>Orchard</i>	-	1	14	-	-	3
<i>Barn Croft</i>	<i>Meadow</i>	4	1	39	-	3	1
<i>Near Amberley</i>	<i>Arable</i>	7	3	6	-	5	4
<i>Far Amberley or Near Broom Hill</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	3	3	18	-	2	8
<i>Hill End</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	4	1	13	-	3	-
<i>Bridge Meadow</i>	<i>Arable</i>	9	2	28	-	6	8
<i>Long Meadow</i>	<i>Arable</i>	8	-	12	-	5	7
<i>Thistley Close</i>	<i>Arable</i>	3	-	36	-	2	3

<i>Croft</i>	<i>Arable</i>	7	1	8	-	5	-
<i>Moor Close</i>	<i>Arable</i>	8	-	9	-	5	7
<i>Nether Cote Close</i>	<i>Arable</i>	8	2	21	-	6	-
<i>Upper Cote Close</i>	<i>Arable</i>	5	1	10	-	3	8
<i>Far Brookshaw</i>	<i>Arable</i>	4	2	25	-	3	3
<i>Mill Close</i>	<i>Arable</i>	4	2	2	-	3	1

By the time of the 1861 Population census, Amberley was one of the larger farms in Pentrich with 171 acres. The only larger farms were Fletchers holding (probably Amberside and land elsewhere) with 300 acres and Coney Grey with 220 acres. Broad Oaks had 75 acres. There were other farms (unnamed in the census records) with 55 and 41 acres. There were 6 small holdings with between 7 and 12 acres in the village.

In 1950 at the time of the Pentrich sale the use of the land was split between arable, grass, open cast mining, orchard and the homestead.

<i>Land use</i>	<i>1843</i>		<i>1950</i>	
	<i>Acres</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Grass (inc Meadow)</i>	42.33	30.65	101.964	54.75
<i>Arable</i>	93.61	67.78	57.773	31.02
<i>Buildings</i>	1.83	1.33	3.448	1.85
<i>Opencast mining</i>	-	-	20.153	10.82
<i>Orchard</i>	0.33	.24	1.129	0.61
<i>River</i>	-	-	1.770	0.95
<i>Total</i>	138.1	100.00	186.237	100.00

The way in which the land was used remained fairly similar over the century but there was a major shift from meadow and pasture to arable use. It is not clear whether this was a response to the needs of the wartime economy or a shift in the relative profitability of livestock and arable farming. However by 1950 several of the fields, amounting to 21 acres, to the north of the farmhouse had been requisitioned for open cast mining. In the event 14 acres were mined.

Further information on the land use comes from a 1953 Journal article about Leslie Ottewell's stewardship of the farm. At the time the farm covered 186 acres. The arable land used a 3 years rotation of wheat, roots and under sown oats. This suggested that the centre of the farm's production was dairying. The herd produced around 30 heifer calves a year with milk production of 860 gallons from heifers and an average of 1,000 gallons from cows. The butter fat average was 4.1%. 30 acres were devoted to hay production

Previous occupiers

In the middle ages the site of Amberley was owned by Darley Abbey. At the Dissolution of the Monasteries it passed to the Zouch Family of Codnor castle; and through them to the Howards of Arundel and Surrey to the Cavendish family who became the Earls and Dukes of Devonshire. In October 1950 Amberley, along with the rest of the Pentrich and Shottle estate was sold to pay death duties.

There seem to have been six main tenants of Amberley over the past three hundred and fifty years.

Taylors

The earliest records relate to the beginning of the Seventeenth Century.

In William senior's survey of 1611 Nicholas and Edward Tailer held 40 acres 2 rood and 30 poles, mostly in Ashwell field. The house and croft were just over 2 acres and pastures a further 6 acres. This was not land that was later to be part of Amberley as most of Amberley, other than the part to the east of the Buckland Hollow to Oakerthorpe road, was outside the Pentrich estate at the time. In 1611 the Taylor's land seems to have been mainly to the east of the Main Street.

By the middle of the century, on 26th February 1658 Henry Howard, son of Henry, Earl of Arundel and Surrey (deceased) conveyed lands in Amberley and Walsborough in Pentrich in the tenure of Nicholas Taylor (cooper) and John Lambert (yeoman) to the Earl of Devonshire. On 20th July 1659 the leases of John Lambert and Nicholas Taylor were confirmed by the Duke of Devonshire.

Eleven years later on 20th October 1670 Christian, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, leased "house and lands" respectively to Nicholas Taylor (husbandman), John Taylor (yeoman) and Edward Taylor (cooper). It is unclear whether any of these houses occupied the site of Amberley Farm. Matthew Taylor also leased lands in this era.

The Hearth tax returns from 1670 show 6 Taylor households in the parish, including those of Nicholas, John and Edward.

Sometime after 1691 Henry Taylor (chandler) of Pentrich leased Buckland Pastures (located on the eastern side of Chesterfield Road midway between Amberley and Pentrich Mil) formerly occupied by Matthew Taylor. At the same time, George Taylor of Pentrich (cooper) leased lands formerly occupied by Matthew Taylor. The relationship between Matthew, George and Henry Taylor is not clear; or whether the trade of cooper shared by Edward and George is significant.

In 1692-93 a receipt was issued by the estate manager (Roger Jacson) on behalf of the Duke of Devonshire to John Taylor of Pentrich.

Adin

In December 1691 John Adin of Heage leased the “house called Amberley formerly occupied by Edward Taylor.” John Adin of Pentrich married Anne Brookshaw of South Wingfield on 25th June 1696 at South Wingfield and a generation later Ann Adin of Pentrich married John Hall of Heage 20 July 1722, again at South Wingfield. John Adin left early in the eighteenth century. Writing in about 1790 John Taylor says his grandfather bought the tenancy from John Adin “ninety years earlier”.

Taylor (again)

The Chatsworth estate records for the first decade of the eighteenth century show three sets of rent related to “parts of Amberlee” – probably referring the lands formerly outside the Pentrich estate. It is not clear whether Amberlee at this stage covered anything like the territory farmed from Amberley in later times. These rents were paid by 5 people.

Enoch Taylor paid rent of £17 in 1707 and £18 18s in 1712. Enoch and Elizabeth lost at least two children in infancy – Enoch in 1714 and Hester in 1733. Enoch Snr. Was buried 18th March 1745. Writing in 1790 John Taylor gives an account of his family came to the Amberlees Farme at Pentridges'; Thus, we know Enoch lived on the site of the existing Amberley Farm but it is not certain whether or how he was related to the Taylors of the seventeenth century.

John Taylor paid £31.15s 6d in 1707. He disappears from the record before 1712. This might suggest that he might be the same John Taylor who leased the land and house in 1670. Certainly sometime between 1708 and 1712 records of fines due for leases in collections include Mr Taylor, Pentrich.

In 1712 Nathaniel Taylor, formerly “Amberlee”, paid just £6 for a half year. It is possible that he may have taken over John Taylor’s land for a short period and handed the lease to Matthew Bramley. He was buried on 27th August 1729.

Matthew Bramley paid £22 11s rent in 1712 and may have taken over John and Nathaniel Taylor’s lease. Later in the Century the Bramleys appear as millers possibly suggesting that the land they occupied the Pentrich Mill and Amberside farm sites. Matthew Bramley’s will was proved on 4th April 1715.

Thomas Critchley paid 14s for “part of his rent” in 1707. In 1712 the entry in the rent book for Thomas Critchley refers to an additional payment for the “house where he now dwells”. John Taylor’s account of about 1790 says his grandfather acquired part of Amberley from “widow Critchley” but the date is uncertain.

The Taylors seem to have been associated with Amberley for about 90 years; but their tenancy was not without its ups and downs. Although Enoch Taylor died in 1745 rent was paid in his name until 1750; and probate was not granted until 15 October 1751. A document in the Litchfield Archives dated refers to “Taylor, Matthew, executor; Taylor, Enoch, deceased; Hodgkinson, Sarah alias Taylor”.

In 1760 John Taylor took over the lease for Amberley Farm and lands in the tenure of Matthew Taylor at £32 10s a year for 16 years (1760 – 1776). Shortly afterwards

John Taylor, farmer of Pentrich is recorded as marrying Phoebe Riley of Kirk Hallam on 6 January 1763. Matthew was buried on 23rd July 1764. The Wirksworth Petty Sessions records for 1779 show that "Taylor, John (Pentrich) Farmer was convicted of poaching with nets".

John's departure from Amberley in 1790 was highly controversial and may have resulted from the estate survey carried out in 1798. The rent book for the period shows John's entry crossed out in favour of George Hodgkinson and then John Lister. An undated lease in the Chatsworth collection shows a lease to George Hodgkinson for a house, appurtenances and lands from Anne Bell, Matthew Taylor and Elizabeth Hodgkinson. How these Hodgkinsons relate to Sarah Hodgkinson, alias Taylor, and beneficiary under Enoch Taylor's will is unclear.

A petition in the Portland Collection at Nottingham University from about 1790 provides John Taylor's account of:

"how my onsetters ... came unto the Amberlees Farme at Pentridges'; describing its acquisition by his grandfather Enoch Taylor, its occupancy by his own father Mathew, the latter's reduced circumstances and 9 children, other debts and obligations attended to by sale of farm which the author inherited; improvements to farm and buildings."

A second petition, probably at the same date, and signed by about 10 neighbours and tenants of the Duke of Devonshire, gives an account of how:

"Taylor has been given notice to quit entirely on account of having a bad character amongst his neighbours; subscribers are tenants and freeholders in the Ripley area who give Taylor a good character; rumours and allegations; believe it all arises from a trial at Derby between Joseph Epworth and Timothy Cartwright, in which Taylor was involved and in which false allegation about unlawful killing of game were made".

There were doubts about the competence of George Barker the land agent responsible for Pentrich at the time. A few years' earlier William Gould, The Duke of Devonshire's land agent, recorded a meeting with 'Mr. Heaton' in London on 28th July 1784. He wrote

"... Returned with him (Mr Heaton) to dinner at 4 o'clock, after which we entered into the business which he had sent for me to town. He proposed to divide Mr Barker's collection into several parts and began to class them into about 2 to 3000 a year each..... The estate at Pentridge (Pentrich) and that neighbourhood ... about £1700 to Mr George Barker. In all these arrangements he observed he wished to put

Mr George Barker in some situation where he could not possibly do any mischief, he had no opinion of his abilities and had better give his some salary to stay at home...."

Nevertheless John Taylor and his wife Phoebe left Amberley in 1790. John died in 1802 aged 62 and Phoebe in February 1806 aged 65. Phoebe was living in Somercotes at the time of her death.

Listers

John Lister took over Amberley Farm in 1790. He came from Leeds, where his father and grandfather were carpenters. He was very close to his cousin John Lupton who was a farmer at Greenhill Hall, Norton., just south of Sheffield and at that time in Derbyshire. Perhaps it was through his influence that John Lister took up farming. John Lupton was to continue as a friend and benefactor of John's children and grandchildren and he left Greenhill Hall to them in his will.

In 1790, he married Sarah Metcalf, daughter of Isaac Metcalf of Brampton Moor, near Chesterfield. John and Sarah had two children, William, born 17 September 1791 and Elizabeth, born 19 May 1794.

Certainly by 1793 the bundle of receipts and invoices in the Chatsworth archive relating to the extension of the farm all refer to Mr Lister's house. John Lister was a Quaker and may have been bought in by the estate to offer stability and order after the Taylor's tenancy. John Lister died on 14th December 1813 and probate against his will dated 20th January 1809 was granted at Upton Hall on 27th April 1814. The will is at Litchfield joint record office.

His son, William Lister then took over the farm. The records show that William Lister was christened on 25 February 1814 as an adult aged 26 "son of Quakers". At roughly the same time William married Anne Frost from Duffield.

He was the tenant at the time of the Pentrich Revolution in 1817. The records for the subsequent trial show that:

"On Monday night Joseph Wilkinson, George Weightman & several others of the party, went to William Lister's house at Pentrich common & demanded his gun & on his refusing to give it them they broke his window and went away".

The Derbyshire Quarter sessions for 1817 show that a John Bowler, a labourer of Pentrich, was charged with assault on William Lister. It is not clear whether this relates to the revolution or was a separate incident.

In 1819 a pew was held for Amberley Farm by a Mr Lockett. William was a churchwarden at St Matthew's from 1820 to 1842. The Derbyshire poll book for 1832 showed that William Lister voted Liberal – and thus in favour of the Great Reform Act of that year

During the next two decades the Parish register shows the steady growth of William and Anne Lister's young family. Those christened were:

John (2/9/1815) / Robert (b30/10/1816 – c 13/4/1817) / Sarah (25/1/1819) / Ann (18/2/1821) / Eliza (30/5/1824) / Mary (30/4/1826) / William (bn. 1/3/1828 ch. 16/4/1828) / Phoebe (3/7/1831)

Thus William and Anne had eight children over a 16-year period. Most survived though Phoebe was buried on 23rd February 1832 aged 8 months.

At the time of the 1841 population census, the household contained nine people (five members of the Lister family; plus four servants) ... all nine were recorded as being born within Derbyshire.

William Lister 49 yrs, Farmer ; Annie Lister 50 yrs ; Annie Lister 20 yrs ; Eliza Lister 15 yrs ; Mary Lister 13 yrs .

The servants were: John Hunt 25 yrs, Male Servant ; William Tims 20 yrs, Male Servant ; Henry Cheetham 15 yrs, Male Servant ; Elizabeth Hopkinson 15 yrs, Female Servant.

William Lister, born at Amberley in 1828, describes the family's life in the 1830s and 1840s in his memoirs written in Natal in the late 19th Century. William emigrated to Port Natal in 1850.

His recollections of childhood included wild thyme, wild strawberries, and a wide variety of wild flowers. He enjoyed Christmas with feasting and entertaining friends but liked mid summer the best. Visiting Wingfield Manor was a favourite summer occupation; as was fishing in the Amber using wasps taken from their nests as bait. He had fond recollections of summer fruits – gooseberries, currants, strawberries and cherries.

He disliked his first school near Matlock with a stern morose master. The second, in the suburbs of Sheffield, was better. He recalls going to church at St Philip's, probably at Shalesmoor. He left school at 15 and after three years in agriculture went to his Uncle in Liverpool to acquire five years commercial training.

Anne Lister died in November 1849 aged 60 and has a memorial in the Pentrich churchyard. William gave up the tenancy of Amberley farm after her death, and moved to Greenhill Hall, Norton. He is described as a gentleman or farmer; he died in December 1877 aged 86.

Smedleys

The next family to occupy Amberley farm were the Smedleys; who arrived in the middle of the 19th century. At the time of the 1861 population census, the household contained 13 people – 8 Smedleys and 5 staff.

Richard Smedley was 35 and his wife Hannah 29. Their children were William (10), Richard (8), Hannah Dorothy (6 – 22/7/55), Elizabeth Ann (4 – 7/1/57), John (3) and Mary Clara (11 months). Later additions to the Smedley family were Isaac Henry, James, Lucy Fanny and Isabelle.

The servants were John Fielding (18 – Waggoner), Peter Hopkinson (19 – ploughman), John Fox (15 cow boy), Ann Parker (16 – dairy maid) and Fanny Hobson (15 – kitchen maid).

It appears that in all there were 10 Smedley children over 20 years or so; and no infant deaths are recorded in the Parish records.

The Derbyshire Poll books show that Richard Smedley voted in the 1857, 1865 and 1868 elections – each time for the conservative candidate.

The eldest son, William married Mary Hepworth, daughter of Herbert Hepworth – publican, on 15th March 1876. Two years later on 19th March 1878, Elizabeth married Joseph, a farmer's son from South Wingfield.

Richard Smedley died in December 1891 aged 66; his will is held at the Derbyshire Record Office. Hannah died in January 1910 aged 80. Both have memorials in Pentrich churchyard.

The parish records show that William, the eldest son, married in 1876 and Elizabeth Ann in 1878. By the time of the 1881 Census, Richard Smedley Jnr. the second son had also married and was working as a farm bailiff at Tollgate Farm in Belper. By 1895 he was back in Pentrich as tenant of Asherfields Farm. He was still the tenant farmer there in 1912. In June 1949, Charles Robert Smedley, the Smedley's grandson, was buried in Pentrich churchyard, aged 69 years old.

Matthew Henry Davenport seems to have been the tenant from Lady Day 1898 for about two years. His children attended the Pentrich School for a time.

Atkinsons

In the first half of the 20th Century, the farm was tenanted by the Atkinsons who had their origins at Dent, now in Cumbria, but then in the West Riding. In the 1880s and 1890s Richard Atkinson Snr. was tenant at Coney Grey Farm, Pentrich. Their daughter, Edith Agnes died on 27th January 1888 when she was just 5 years old.

Between 1900, when Matthew Davenport left Amberley farm and 1909 the Atkinson's – father and son – seem to have operated the farms at Amberley and Coney Grey as a single entity.

Richard Atkinson Snr. died aged 85 in 1916 and his wife Elizabeth Agnes in 1933 aged 85.

Richard Atkinson Jnr. died in 1943 aged 74 and Alice Francis his widow in November 1952 aged 73. They had four daughters whose descendants still live within sight of Amberley farm and are active within the village; as a churchwarden and parish councillor.

Ottewells

The final family to farm at Amberley were the Ottewells. Leslie Ottewell arrived in the early 1943 from Nottinghamshire and built the farm up to prize winning standards in the 1950s. It was described in detail in the Derbyshire farmer in 1952. At the time the farm was worked by Leslie Ottewell, his son Sydney Ottewell and two labourers. Their daughter was a teacher locally.