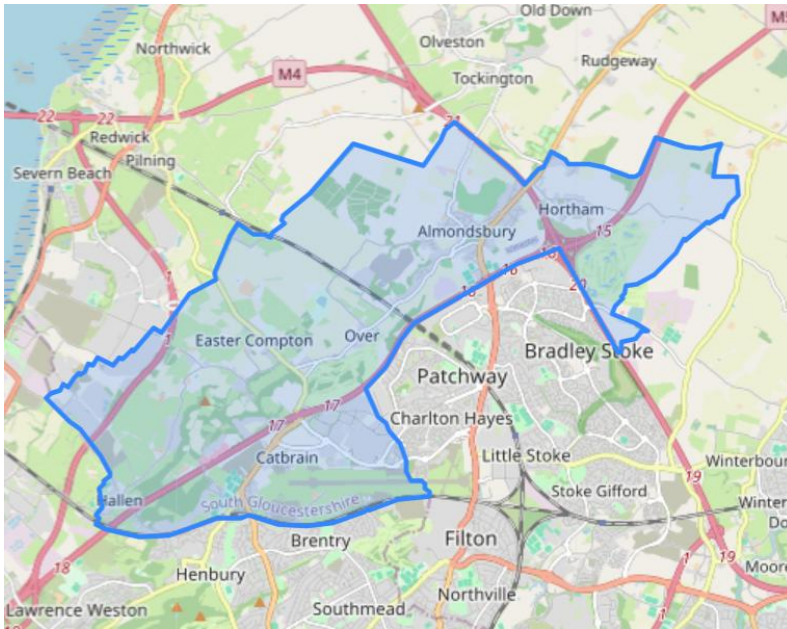




The place-name 'Almondsbury' is first attested in the Domesday Book, where it appears as *Almodesberie*. The name said to mean fortified place. The steep limestone scarp would have provided an excellent defensive site and signs of entrenchment can still be seen. Almondsbury parish was never limited to the boundaries of the manor itself. In 1548 it was seven miles in circumference and contained about 620 inhabitants, many of whom belonged to the five manors of Almondsbury, Gaunt's Earthcott, Hempton and Patchway, Over (now in Compton Ward) and Brokenborow.

When it was originally created in 1866 the civil parish also included Patchway, the Aztec West business park area (on the former hamlet of Hempton), and the northern half of Bradley Stoke, but not Easter Compton, Compton Greenfield, Hallen, Cribbs Causeway or Charlton, all of which were transferred from the parish of Henbury in 1935. The parish of Patchway was separated from Almondsbury in 1953.

Today the civil parish of Almondsbury is still much larger than the village. It includes the villages of Hortham, part of Woodhouse Down, Gaunt's Earthcott, Over, Easter Compton, Compton Greenfield and Hallen. It also includes Cribbs Causeway, Catbrain and the site of the demolished village of Charlton, now the western end of the old Filton Airfield.

Almondsbury is a large village situated on the A38 road in a Green Belt area 7 miles north of Bristol city centre. It is adjacent to junction 16 of the M5 motorway and Almondsbury Interchange, where the M4 and M5 cross.



For centuries, Almondsbury was a close-knit agricultural community under the patronage of its great manor houses of Knole Park, Over Court and Gaunts Earthcott. The Manor of Almondsbury belonged to St Augustine's Abbey in Bristol until the dissolution. The original manor house was at Court Farm, but this was sold in the late C16 and the Chester Family built Knole Park, on a hilltop half a mile to the south with views over the Bristol Channel, as their family seat. Later Almondsbury attracted Bristol's wealthy merchants and professional classes.

Almondsbury village lay on the main route (now A38) between Bristol and Gloucester and a market was established in 1285. The village is split by a steep hill, Almondsbury Hill, part of the escarpment overlooking the Severn floodplain. The centre of the village nestling under the ridge is called Lower Almondsbury where the church, school and inn are situated. South Wales, the Forest of Dean, the River Severn and both Severn Bridges are visible from the higher parts of the village, which consists mainly of ribbon development along the A38 and has more of an suburban characteristic.

The 20th century saw the greatest change in the parish when the manorial estates were sold off and modern intrusions began. The first four-level motorway crossing in Britain, the M4/M5 Almondsbury Interchange, was built in 1966, and more and more acres of new housing developments, business parks and trading estates followed.



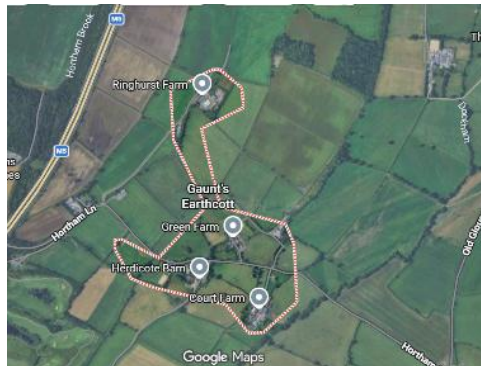


Hortham: Hortham Lane is small road eastwards to Gaunt's Earthcott from the A38 where the first establishment to be functionally designed and built as a complete institution, for just over 600 mentally handicapped patients, was built. The City and County of Bristol Hortham Colony opened in 1932 as an "open" colony which specialised in training mentally deficient people for resettlement in the community.

After the creation of National Health Service, the name was changed to Hortham Hospital. It was scaling down its work for 30 odd years, following the new trend with care in the community, and it finally closed in 1991. A new housing development, Hortham Village, was built on the site 2005-2007.



Woodlands is an old golf course to the southwest of the M4/M5 interchange. Whilst in Almondsbury Parish vehicles can only access via Bradley Stoke to Trench Lane. This land has been earmarked for residential development.



Gaunt's Earthcott is a hamlet 2.5 miles east of Almondsbury. The Gaunt's Earthcott manor was part of a monastic estate granted to Bristol Corporation after the dissolution of the monasteries. The corporation sold the manor in 1831. Now there are only a few scattered houses, plus a ruined chapel and two farms in this out of way part of the parish.

Woodhouse Down is an historic hamlet mostly located in the parish of Olveston, but Woodhouse Avenue forms the border with Almondsbury and the houses on the south side are in Almondsbury Parish.

