

Batson

The following information is derived mostly from source material collated by John Usmar in 2007 as part of his study of the Witheridge Outliers.

Based on land tax records, Batson was owned by the following:

1780 John Chichester

1810 Heirs of John Chichester

1815 R. Chichester

1832 Abraham Cole

From the tithe map of 1837, most of the land was arable with two areas cultivated as orchards and the remainder being meadows, pasture and marsh.

By the time of the 1841 census the house was occupied by the Beale family, John (a labourer) and Johanna with their three children Mary, John and Harriet. The 1861 and 1881 censuses record the Roberts family as occupiers: John (James) an agricultural labourer his wife Mary (Ann) and nine children. During the twenty year interval between these censuses the first five children listed had all moved on.

In the 1901 census one of the children, William (farm labourer) had become head of the household with his wife Mary Jane and their 11 month old daughter Laura.

The 1920's 1" map shows the only access to Batson was through Upcott; as early as the Domesday Book, it appears that Batson, Little Upcott and Shillaton all went with Upcott.

According to an interviewee, the Batson house incorporated the old cob and stone house, which originally had access from Berry Cleave (in effect maybe Upcott; there is no mention of Berry Cleave on modern maps) and later from Mill Hill. From Land Tax records Berry Cleave was owned by Mary Down & Grace Melhuish in 1788 and occupied by Thomas Bennett who also occupied Batson at this time and until at least 1808. Berry Cleave was then owned and occupied by Richard Comins in the period 1821 & 1832.

Mrs Toms lived at Batson until the fire in the 1940s, which destroyed the house – to be verified.