

STOURTON BARTON

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

As far back as the fourteenth century, there may be references to Stourton Barton, then called Stourdeton. In 1556 there was a lease of the lands in Stordyton in the Parish of Witheridge to "John Partridge of Wytherydge" in consideration of twenty four pounds of lawful money; lease by Emmett Roo. In 1570 there was a marriage settlement of Leonard Partridge and Mary Staveley. Moiety (one of two approximately equal parts) in Stourton, sometime the inheritance of William Cade, in the tenure of John Partridge, with lands in Thelbridge, and reversion of the other moiety.

In 1601 there was another lease "one messuage or tenement known as Stourton, lately the inheritance of one John Partridge, gentleman" for four score years at a rent of £14 per annum, however by 1610 Sir Lewis Stucley sells part of Stourton to "John Partridge of Witheridge, yeoman, for three and thirty pounds".

In 1649 James Partridge buys the messuage known as Stourton alias Sturditon from John Partidge of Morchard, Benjamin Bigwood and his wife Thomazine of Woolfardisworthy, John Drake of Sandford and Willia Beare of Sandford for the sum of £200. The property includes "all houses, courtyards, gardens, lands, meadows, pastures, feedings, commons, woods, underwoods, water and watercourses...." Then in 1666 James Partridge made a settlement on his wife Joan with the remainder to his son. This included Stourton, Nott's Tenement (late in the tenure of Philip Nott, deceased), Heale Green in Witheridge, Over and Nether Storkham in Dulverton.

James Partridge's will, in 1671, refers to the 1966 deed and his mother Thomazine Bigwood. In 1687 Joan Partridge surrenders Stourton to her son James for £1,000. The relative purchasing power at 2018 prices would have been in excess of £170,000.

In 1678 James Partridge send 1s 6d towards the rebuilding of St. Paul's cathedral after the Great Fire of London and in 1682, James and Joan Partridge gave 1s 9d for repairs to Witheridge church.

A curious incident recorded in a notebook held by Wallace Boundy is of "The child found at Stourton in Witheridge was baptised on May 21 1716 in Witheridge".

From Land Tax records later owners and occupiers were:

Year	Owner	Occupier
1780	Capt. Partridge	Capt. Partridge
1790	Heir of Mr Partridge	George Luxton
1810	John Partridge, gent	Elias Tuckett
1818-32	John Partridge, gent	Samuel Bennett

Stourton was advertised for sale in the Exeter Flying Post on 7th September 1797 following John Partridge's death; the estate was intestate and passed to his only son and heir John Partridge who advertised it as having upwards of 143 acres let to William Adams. William Adams still occupied Stourton when it was advertised to let for 14 years on 18th January 1798.

The farm was again advertised to let for 7 or 14 years on 12th May and again on 5th September 1816; it may be assumed that at this time the property was vacant, since viewing was by arrangement with Farmer Chidley at Thelbridge Barton House. It seems this advertisement was unsuccessful since another was issued on 12th May 1817 with viewing to be arranged with Farmer Chidley again, but this time at Stourton House.

According to the 1841 and 1861 censuses, William Bragg and family occupied Stourton. In the Exeter Flying Post on 20th April 1848, a fire at Stourton Farm was reported:

NORTH DEVON.
WITHERIDGE.—On Wednesday last intelligence reached this place that the linnay, barn, and outhouses of Mr. Bragg, of Stourton Farm, in this Parish, was on fire. Mr. Bragg at the time, was, together with his fellow Parishioners, dining at the Angel Inn with our worthy Vicar the Rev. J. P. Benson, it being the Tithe Audit. It appears that the fire was first seen in an open linnay where was some straw, and from thence it caught the adjoining linnays and barn in which was deposited some corn which was entirely consumed. The wind being in the direction of the dwellinghouse a great deal of anxiety for its safety was manifested, and but for the laudable exertions of the women who helped this must also have been burnt. Two calves which were in the linnay, and which could not be liberated, were burnt. It is supposed that this is the act of an incendiary. A man named John Williams went to the house begging, but on Mr. Bragg telling him he should not give anything to any Irishman he used very abusive language, went away and soon after the fire was seen. He was immediately apprehended and brought before the Revds. Proctor Thomas, and J. P. Benson, the evidence against him was not sufficient to warrant a committal, but he was sent to the House of Correction for 14 days as a Vagrant. He stated he came from the city of Norwich but his brogue betrayed him. We are sorry to learn that Mr. Bragg is uninsured.

Once again Stourton Barton was advertised to let for a period of 14 or 21 years, from Michaelmas 1876, together with Mill Moor Tenement “now and for many years past in the occupation of Mr. Wm. Bragg, as tenant thereof”.

The 1881 population census listed Joseph Davis and family as residents, with the addition of “Part of Stourton” where John Oliver and his children lived. Joseph Davis was still the farmer by the time of the 1901 census.

From 30th January 1914 there was a letting agreement for Stourton Barton by J F M Furse Esq and others to Mr F W Davies; by this time the land area was given as “about 156 acres, one rood and nine perches (more or less)”.



A photograph of the family at Stourton is above. In the back row from the left are Ella, Bertha, Joe, Gertrude and Fred. In the front row "Grandpa and Grandma" Davies:

Stourton Barton was lot 1 in a 1918 sale catalogue, still in the occupation of Mr F W Davies on a Michaelmas tenancy determinable by two years' notice. Lot 2 was Mill Moor tenement, lot 3 Thelbridge Barton, lot 4 Thelbridge Inn and lot 5 a quarry.

From directories, Joseph Davies was the occupant in 1902, with Frederick William Davies the occupier from 1923.