

## HELE 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.

The earliest record found is from 1727 when James Partridge of Witheridge bequeathed the barton of Hele to John Partridge and his successors. In 1773, on the marriage of John Partridge the younger to Mary Furse, her portion of £1,000 was received by John Partridge the elder who then conveyed the Barton of Hele and the Barton of Thelbridge to trustees for John Partridge the younger's natural life and thereafter an annuity of £70 to his widow "if there be a child" or "if no child then £100 a year". The estate was to pass to the first son of the marriage and others in succession. The estate of Hele was to pass to his wife during her life, but "should she remove to her jointure of Stourton", which was another estate owned by John Partridge, then she was to give up the estate of Hele immediately.

John Partridge died at Hele in 1780; his widow Mary lived there until her death. In 1781 John Partridge the younger died leaving a widow and young son John "to whom the estate of Hele and Thelbridge descended".

In 1805 Hele Barton was advertised as to let for a period of 14 years. It was described as "consisting of a very good dwelling-house, with all requisite out-houses, garden, excellent orchards and about 212 acres of exceedingly fine pasture, meadow and arable land, so very good that the estate is well adapted for a grazing or dairy farm. The house is contiguous to the public road and the wagon from South Molton to Exeter passes by it twice every week."

In 1818 there was a timber sale of 100 oaks, 61 ash, 3 large elm and 5 alder trees that stood on Stourton, Hele Barton and Thelbridge Barton. Enquiries were to go to the tenants or John Partridge Esq.

From the 1841 census Hele was spelt Heale; John Baker was farming the land, with his wife and 5 children.

The Tiverton Gazette on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1880 recorded "The inhabitants of Witheridge have cause to regret the loss of Mr Thomas Strong of Hele Barton, who expired suddenly on Tuesday. He was ever ready to relieve the wants of the poor and took an interest in parochial affairs and had been a valuable member of the Chulmleigh Highways Board for a great many years."

Hele Barton was, and continues to be, a regular venue for the Witheridge and District Ploughing Match. It is known that matches took place in 1902, 1908, 1937 and 1952. In 1945 and 1953 the ploughing match was held jointly with Billhole Farm. More matches were held at Hele Barton in 1982, 1989, 1998 and 2007 for the 100<sup>th</sup> match, with the most recent match being held in 2014.

### History of Ownership

Taken from Land Tax records, the years included are only those where there was a change of either ownership or occupant:

1780 John Partridge, occupant William Thomas  
1781 Captain Partridge, occupant William Thomas  
1782 Heirs of Mrs Partridge & William Rowdon, occupant William Thomas  
1798 John Partridge Gent, occupant William Thomas  
1805 John Partridge Gent, occupant George Thorne  
1826 John Partridge, occupant John Baker  
1832 John Partridge Esq., occupant John Baker, who remained there until at least 1841

By 1861, from the census of that year, 240 acres was being farmed by Thomas Strong. In 1881, also from the census, Thomas was still farming, but the acreage had increased to 278.

From 1904 Hele Barton was owned by a Judge Francis Radcliffe of Oxford and sold to Geoffrey Radcliffe (Barrister) and John Henry Monsel Furse of Dolton with them sharing the rent. The tenant from at least 1917 to 1927 was Oliver Tucker.

Alfred Gillbard, from Cornwall, rented Hele Barton in 1929 and bought it in 1947. Leslie Gillbard bought the farm in 1953 following his father's death in 1952.