



Scatterford, Gloucestershire, has 12 acres of gardens, paddocks and woodland. £2.5m

## Setting the scene

Looking for homes that were once part of large estates reveals a rich tapestry

**L**OCKDOWN buyers looking to swap a city environment for a family farmhouse in a picturesque location could narrow their search by homing in on houses historically owned by traditional landed estates: these are usually solidly built and always have the best views. Although not many of these buyers would consider a major renovation project in the current economic climate, the launch onto the market of a few expertly restored farmhouse complexes in idyllic West Country estate settings may tempt the more adventurous to go that extra mile.

Most historic farmhouses sold away from a landed estate tend to be altered or extended over time, but few can match the progression of Scatterford, near Newland, in the Forest of Dean, 21 miles from Gloucester and five miles from Monmouth. Over the centuries, it has graduated from a medieval one-up, one-down dwelling on a small freehold farm in 1478 to today's immaculate, Grade II-listed, 7,160sq ft country house, set in 12 acres of gardens, paddocks and woodland to the east of the scenic Wye Valley, which is now on the market with Knight Frank (020-7861 1707) at a guide price of £2.5 million.

The original house at Scatterford was altered and extended in the 16th and 17th centuries, before the farm became part of the Newland estate owned by the Symons family in the 1720s. Numerous alterations were

carried out in the 18th and 19th centuries before the estate was split up in the 1870s. A further renovation took place in the late 1980s/early 1990s, before its current owner, Tim Hely Hutchinson, embarked on a full restoration and improvement programme between October 2010 and the spring of 2013.

**‘The restoration of the house and garden was a single “living project” ;**

A holistic approach to the renovation saw the restoration of the house and garden as a single ‘living project’, with the building works directed by the architect, John McCall, and the creation of the formal and informal gardens an inspired collaboration between Mr Hely Hutchinson's partner, garden designer Sean Swallow, and landscape architect Max Askew.

Hundreds of tons of earth were moved to create the gardens and allow more light into the house. The house, comprising two parallel ranges linked by a central corridor, was completely re-roofed, with private water and drainage systems renewed, new bathrooms and kitchen installed, and windows replaced or restored. The list of repairs, alterations and



additions is encyclopaedic, the end result a remarkable blend of architectural integrity, historic character and discreet innovation. Accommodation includes a drawing room, dining room, snug, study, kitchen/breakfast room, master-bedroom suite, four further bedrooms and three bathrooms, plus a one-bedroom annexe. The outbuildings include a studio/office and a substantial stone barn with evident scope for further improvement.

Down in deepest Devon, the tiny hamlet of Penstone, 4½ miles west of Crediton and 12½ miles from Exeter, sits in a traditional farming area scattered with old manors and farmhouses. Here, the Exeter office of Strutt & Parker (01392 215631) quotes a guide price of £2m for a proper Devon residential farm, the 105-acre Penstone Barton, which offers land, privacy, seclusion and glorious views across the undulating mid Devon countryside towards Dartmoor National Park, with the River Yeo running through the land from north to south.

Once part of the Coombe estate, Penstone Barton has been farmed for the past 20 ➤



*Above:* Grade II-listed Scatterford has been imaginatively restored. *Below:* There are glorious views from Penstone Barton, Devon. £2m



# Property market



**The impressive Grade I-listed Leigh Barton, in the beautiful South Hams AONB in Devon, is steeped in history. Set in 11 acres of custom-designed gardens, it dates from 1120 and was restored by English Heritage. £2m**

years by its present owners, who are now retiring to their native Herefordshire. At its heart stands Penstone Barton Farmhouse, listed Grade II\*, which, according to its listing, 'probably dates from the 16th century, with major 17th-, early-18th- and 19th-century improvements and extensions'. Being unusually large for a thatched house, it may even have been a manor house back in the day, selling agent Will Morrison suggests.

Recently re-roofed and beautifully maintained, the house is full of character and original features, from the central plastered ceiling motif dated 1737 in the drawing room to the original fireplace behind the Aga in the kitchen. Surrounded by traditional outbuildings and well-kept gardens, it offers some 6,000sq ft of living space laid out around a central courtyard, including three main reception rooms, a large country kitchen, seven bedrooms and four bath/shower rooms, with a further two bedrooms in the self-contained annexe at the rear.

The land runs down the valley to the south and east of the house, and comprises 93½ acres of pasture and arable, with 2½ acres of orchards and two trout lakes, all of which provides a natural haven for the rich and varied local wildlife.

Down in the ever-popular South Hams AONB, the Kingsbridge office of Marchand Petit (01548 857588) is handling the sale—also at £2m—of the impressive, Grade I-listed Leigh Barton at Churchstow, two miles from Kingsbridge, which was a Buckfast Abbey property until the Dissolution of the monasteries and later a farm, before lapsing into obscurity until the late 20th century, when it was rescued by English Heritage.

There followed a 10-year-long restoration of the entire complex of ancient buildings arranged around two courtyards, the oldest of which is the medieval main house, which dates from 1120, and the most recent two 18th-century cottages, listed Grade II, now

used as holiday lets. Later extensions to the house and the standalone gatehouse date from about 1450 to 1475.

The location and size of the complex suggests that it served in medieval times to house pilgrims journeying from Buckfast to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain. It comprises the original four/five-bedroom main house, attached to which is a range of restored 15th-century ecclesiastical buildings, one chamber of which is now used as a library, another as a party room.

The present owners have spent the past five years developing Leigh Barton's 11 acres of custom-designed gardens, based on monastic principles of design and incorporating plants known to have been cultivated in England before the Dissolution. Set away from main roads towards the bottom of a quiet, sheltered valley in the heart of the South Hams countryside, where better to confront the mysteries of life in the uncertain times ahead?

Across the county boundary in south-east Cornwall, Falmouth-based agent Jonathan

Cunliffe (01326 617447) quotes a guide price of £2.5m for the wonderfully private Hill Farm, set in 20 acres of gardens, woodland and pasture on the edge of the historic Boconnoc estate, near Lostwithiel, with far-reaching views over the surrounding countryside towards the coast.

Over the past 10 years, Hill Farm, built in the 18th century and previously a farm on the Boconnoc estate, has been sympathetically renovated by architects Harrison Sutton and conservation builders Heritage Cornwall. The project has included the total renovation of the five-bedroom main house, two barns and a workshop/laundry room, and the construction of a new stable block, a heated outdoor swimming pool and a landscaped Mediterranean garden. 'Largely protected by Boconnoc, this part of Cornwall has escaped development and is tremendously peaceful, with huge expanses of unspoiled rolling countryside running down to the River Lerryn, a tributary of the Fowey estuary', Mr Cunliffe points out with pride. 🐾



**The secluded Hill Farm is hidden in 20 acres of woodland and pasture in Cornwall. £2.5m**