

ALFRED WILLIAM BALLARD
WR/319/45/10

At the beginning of World War II, Britain needed to increase home food production, and the area of land under cultivation was rapidly increased. County War Agricultural Executive Committees and district committees under them had exceptional powers to determine the direction of farming at a local level. Once the short-term objective of increasing food production had been met, thought was given to implementing a more general National Farm Survey with the purpose of providing data to form the basis of post-war planning. Census forms were sent out on 4th June 1941 for the farmer/market gardener to complete. In addition, every farm and holding of five acres (ranging from large farms to market gardens) received a visit from an inspector who surveyed and classified according to the physical condition of the land. These records may be viewed in the MAF 32 category at The National Archives, Kew; a team of Badsey Society members visited The National Archives in January 2013 and took copies of the records.

Alfred William Ballard (1889-1970) lived at Sunnyside, Badsey, and was a full-time market gardener. He was a tenant of George Crompton Lees-Milne of Wickhamford Manor. Alfred Ballard had around 11 acres of land which he had occupied for 20 years; he worked the land with assistance from his daughter from time to time. He grew potatoes, Brussels sprouts, parsnips, beetroot, onions, asparagus, rhubarb, tomatoes and flowers and had 27 chickens, six sows for breeding and 50 young pigs under 2 months. He did not have a tractor.

As the holding was over 5 acres in size, Form B496 needed to be completed by inspectors. The inspector, R W Sidwell, judged the farm to be 100% good, conveniently laid out, on soil which was 100% medium, when he visited on 6th February 1942. The situation in regard to road and the condition of farmhouse, farm roads, fences, ditches and field drainage was considered good; the situation in regard to railway and the condition of buildings was fair. There were no infestations of any kind and no derelict fields. There was piped water to the farmhouse for household purposes and a roof water supply for farm buildings; there was electricity in the farmhouse.

Management of the farm was classed as A. The condition of arable land was good with adequate use of fertilisers; there was no pasture.