

## *BUCKLEY BENT*

### *WR/319/45/17*

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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

Buckley Bent (1864-1933) lived at Bowers Hill, Badsey, but had died some years earlier and so the form was completed by his executors: his widow, Margaret Bent (1869-1964), his eldest son, Francis Buckley Bent (1898-?) and his youngest son, John Martin Bent (1909-1985). Buckley Bent had been a full-time farmer who owned the land. The Bent executors had 9.8 acres of land at Wickhamford, which they had occupied for eight years (calculated from the date of Buckley's death), but the land had been in the family for much longer. The land was at Knowle Hill and had been bought in 1896 by Buckley's sister, Rosabel Bent (1866-1902) for £718. Rosabel was unmarried and died intestate and so the land passed to her father, Buckley Bent (1833-1909). By the time of the 1910 Lloyd George Land Valuation Survey, the land was in the hands of Buckley Senior's executors: his wife, Lavina Bent (1843-1922), and three of his remaining five children, Buckley Bent (1864-1933), John Bradbury Bent (1866-1950), and Dora Taylor (1869-?); it included 6 acres in the Wickhamford return and 3½ acres in the Bengeworth return. The land then passed to Buckley Bent Junior. At the time of the 1941 Farm Survey, two women worked the land. Potatoes and tomatoes were grown; there was no tractor. One of the executors, John Martin Bent, also owned 78 acres of land at Bowers Hill, Badsey.

As the farm 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 20<sup>th</sup> December 1942. There was no farmhouse. The situation in regard to road and railway and the condition of buildings, farm roads, fences, ditches and field drainage was considered good. There were no infestations of any kind and no derelict fields. There was no water supply which resulted in a seasonal shortage of water; there was no electricity.

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