

HARRY HALFORD
WR/319/45/47

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.

Harry Halford (1892-?) lived at 17 Pitchers Hill, Wickhamford, and was a full-time market gardener. He was a tenant of the Lord & Parker estate, whose agent was Raymond Webb in Evesham; he also owned land which he had bought from the estate. Harry Halford had around 6½ acres of land, which he had occupied for about 20 years; he worked the land with the assistance of one seasonal female worker. He grew strawberries, potatoes, turnips/swedes, Brussels sprouts, carrots, onions, peas and asparagus and had six pigs. He did not have a tractor.

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 50% good and 50% fair, moderately laid out, on soil which was 100% heavy, when he visited on 20th December 1942. The situation in regard to road and the condition of the farmhouse was considered good; the situation in regard to railway and the condition of buildings, farm roads, fences, ditches and field drainage was considered fair. There were no infestations of any kind and no derelict fields. There was piped water to the farmhouse, a roof water supply for farm buildings and a well supplying water to the fields; there was electricity for household purposes.

Management of the farm was classed as B, the reason being shortage of labour. The condition of arable land was fair with adequate use of fertilisers; there was no pasture.