

CHARLES MARTIN
WR/319/45/66

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.

Charles Martin (1891-1971) lived at 10 Kings Road, Evesham, and was a full-time market gardener. He was a tenant of Christ Church, whose agent was Raymond Webb in Evesham. The land had originally been owned by the trustees of John Pickup Lord, but was bought by the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, Oxford, when the estate was put up for sale in 1930. He may also have owned land which he had bought from the estate, but there is a discrepancy in what has been written on the forms.

Charles Martin had 6½ acres of land at Wickhamford, 2½ acres of which he had occupied for 29 years, 2 acres for four years and 2 acres for six years. He owned 5 acres and held 3 acres as tenant. He had either one or two regular male family workers (there is a discrepancy in the forms). He grew potatoes, strawberries, Brussels sprouts, onions, peas and asparagus. He had one horse used for agricultural purposes and had a 6 horsepower oil or petrol engine.

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, moderately laid out, on soil which was 100% heavy, when he visited on 18th October 1944. There was no farmhouse. The situation in regard to road and the condition of buildings, farm roads, fences, ditches and field drainage was considered good; the situation in regard to railway was fair. There were no infestations of any kind and no derelict fields. There was a roof water supply for the farm buildings and a well supplying water to the fields; 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.