

ALFRED RUSSELL
WR/319/45/92

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 Russell (?) lived at 53 Northwick Road, Evesham, and was a full-time market gardener. He was a tenant of the Lord & Parker estate, whose agent was Raymond Webb in Evesham, and was also a tenant of Col Porter/Woodrow & Hands.

Alfred Russell occupied around 6 acres of land at Wickhamford, 2 acres of which he had occupied for seven years and 3½ acres for five years. He had no assistance. He grew strawberries, Brussels sprouts, parsnips, beetroot, runner beans and asparagus and had one pig. He had two tractors for field work: a 6 horsepower Anzani Iron Horse and a 2 horsepower Gravely.

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, not well laid out, on soil which was 80% heavy and 20% medium, when he visited on 18th January 1943. There was no farmhouse. The situation in regard to road and the condition of fences and field drainage was considered good; the situation in regard to railway and the condition of buildings, farm roads, and ditches was considered fair. There were no infestations of any kind and no derelict fields. There was a roof water supply for 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.