

GEORGE JOSEPH SUTTON
WR/319/45/104

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.

George Joseph Sutton (1882-1964) lived at 11 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 and also occupied land at Murcot.

George Sutton occupied around 9½ acres of land at Wickhamford, 3 acres of which he had held for 28 years, 2 acres for 22 years and 2½ acres for 34 years. He had the assistance of two regular male family members and two male seasonal workers. He grew strawberries, potatoes, Brussels sprouts, carrots, parsnips, beetroot, onions, runner beans, peas and asparagus and had 4½ acres of orchards. He also kept 74 chickens and one horse used for agricultural purposes; 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 100% good, moderately laid out, on soil which was 100% heavy, when he visited on 2nd January 1943. The situation in regard to road and the condition of the farmhouse, buildings, fences, ditches and field drainage was considered good; the situation in regard to railway and the condition of farm roads 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 providing water to the fields; there was electricity for household purposes.

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



*George Joseph Sutton
outside the Memorial Hall.*