

***BENJAMIN RYLE SWIFT***  
***WR/319/45/106***

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.

Benjamin Ryle Swift (1866-1947) lived at 77 Port Street, Evesham, and was a full-time farmer who owned the land.

Benjamin Swift occupied 28 acres of land at Wickhamford, 20 acres of which he had held for 32 years, 7 acres for 29 years and 1 acre for 14 years. He employed three regular male workers and one female seasonal worker. He grew blackcurrants, gooseberries, potatoes, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, parsnips, onions, broad beans, runner beans, peas and asparagus and had 11¼ acres of orchards and 7 acres of permanent grazing. He had one horse used for agricultural purposes and had one wheel tractor for field work: a 2½ horsepower Auto Culto.

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% heavy, when he visited on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1943. 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 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 and pasture land was good with adequate use of fertilisers.