

ROBERT WILLIAM WALTERS
WR/319/45/111

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.

Robert William Walters (1890-1958) lived at 45 Wickhamford, and was a full-time market gardener who was a tenant of the Lord & Parker estate, whose agent was Raymond Webb in Evesham.

Robert Walters occupied 17 acres of land at Wickhamford, 2 acres of which he had held for 30 years, 7 acres for 22 years and 8 acres for 14 years. He employed two regular male workers. He grew strawberries, potatoes, Brussels sprouts, carrots, parsnips, onions, peas and asparagus and had 2 acres of orchards and 3 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 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 75% heavy and 25% medium, when he visited on 20th December 1942. There was no farmhouse. The situation in regard to road and the condition of buildings, fences and ditches was considered good; the condition in regard to railway and the condition of farm roads and field drainage was 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 and pasture was good with adequate use of fertilisers on the arable and to some extent on the grass land.