

Upware Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies  
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Many of these stories were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014. They are supplemented by some selections 'From our Old Files' published in the Cambridge Independent Press and other notes.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at [bit.ly/CambsCollection](http://bit.ly/CambsCollection)

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised. I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – [www.mikepetty.org.uk](http://www.mikepetty.org.uk) for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2016

1898 Aug 22nd

A correspondent writes: "Two miles from Five Miles from Anywhere, No Hurry, there is a place called "Dimmock's Cote" on the waterway to Ely, about two miles from Upware, to which spot one of Messrs Bolton Bros. large furniture vans proceeded on Saturday last. Arriving without accidents a very busy time was experienced in rigging up accommodation for living and stores. It is very advisable for anyone intending to camp by the river side to take a large filter, and even then to drink as little water as possible. Fishing was very poor. The bullocks which are grazed on the washes were attracted by the unusual lights and gave

some little trouble, but owing to a good watch dog, due notice of their visits was early given, so we were always ready for the enemy”

1899 Sep 30th

A labourer of Upware was summonsed for leaving the employment of Mr J. Cornwell, a Waterbeach farmer, without notice. Defendant had worked for him for a fortnight, he having engaged him as a labourer. He entered witness's employment as a weekly servant at a wage of 12s and left without giving notice after receiving his week's wages. As he did not return to his work Cornwell made a journey to Upware so see what his reason was for not coming back. He said he should not return for anything and that witness could do as he liked in the matter. Defendant fined 1s.

1900 Mar 16th

Mr W. Farren of Regent Street, Cambridge, has received a fine specimen of the dog otter, which was killed near Upware. It weighs 24lbs and is on view in the window of his shop.

1901 Jun 22nd

Thomas R. of Cave's Yard, Old Chesterton was charged with having stolen a drake. Detective Marsh said he saw the prisoner with a sack on his back. He opened it and found a large brown and white drake which Thomas said he had bought yesterday from a man named Pope of Upware for 2s.6d. (12p). The bird was quite warm – prisoner replied it had been in his house by a blazing fire all day. Then he said: “I knocked it over down the fen against the sewage farm. It came out of a ditch and I gave it a crump. I ain't going to starve as long as there is anything about. You can do what you like: hang me if you like”. He was remanded for a week.

1904 Apr 18th

Upware seems to be a favourite hunting place for the fisherman's pest, the otter. Several have been killed there of recent years and another female, weighing about 17lbs and about six years old has been added to the list. Its capture and subsequent execution occasioned an exciting scene at Swaffham sluice. Mistress Otter was resting quietly with only her head visible above the water and it was thought to be a large frog floating on the water. However she gave a leap, dived down and reappeared with a pike in her mouth. Three men commenced a hunt, cornered it and administered the coup de grace.

1905 Aug 5th

A number of fishermen and fireman had an enjoyable outing on board the 'Majesty'. On arriving at Upware they sat down to one of Host Peachey's liberal dinners after which the fishermen went fishing and the remainder had a trip to Ely, returning for tea and games. The return journey was enlivened by songs accompanied by Mr Sid Smith on his banjo. They reached home by 10 pm. 05 08 29d

1908 Aug 07

Bank holiday tragedy – in quest at Lord Nelson into drowning of 17 year-old who gone on boat trip with friends. William Harvest of Upware heard cries and got into a boat & rowed to spot; tried to find him with a scull and another man searched with a pole, eventually finding the body. Tried artificial respiration for an hour. swimmer – CWN 08 08 07 p7

1909 Oct 21

An inquiry into County Council plans to acquire land for smallholdings at Thornhall Farm on the Upware Road, Wicken was told they needed 300 acres of land and this was suitable. They had opened negotiations but the trustees were not willing to let it for more than eight years so they'd decided on compulsory purchase. Since then the land had been leased by Robert Fuller and Henry Bailey for a period of ten years. It was so mixed up with the Spinney Estates that it would be hard to separate it CDN 09 10 21 09 10 22

1910 May 6th

Under the new Midwives Act no woman can habitually attend women in childbirth unless she is certified. There were 54 midwives on the register of whom 30 were trained. Ten of the untrained women were between the ages of 65-75 and might need replacing before long by reason of death or infirmity. There was only one trained midwife at Willingham and an untrained woman at Landbeach. There were none at Isleham, Burwell, Wicken, Upware, Milton, Cottenham, Swavesey or Histon. Some mothers can afford the fee of a medical practitioner but are unable also to pay the full fee of a skilled nurse and so may turn to unregistered women 10 05 06b & c

1911 Apr 07

Upware Ferry. At a meeting of County School Attendance Committee a letter was received from Mr Benjamin Read stating that he had obtained a new boat for ferrying the children across the river at Upware and asking that the payment to him might be increased from £6 to £8 per annum. Seven-tenths of the cost will be charged to the parish of Waterbeach 11 04 07

1911 Apr 221

Chatteris brigade were on their way to deal with a farm fire when they received a call to another at the premises of Messrs Price and Company in Railway Lane. It originated in store rooms where there was a large stock of matting, mats and materials used in the company's manufactures. In a very few minutes the whole premises were ablaze and the adjoining Cricketers public house surrounded by flames. There was danger of the range of dilapidated buildings in King Edward's Lane and the new schools becoming involved but with a good supply of water these were saved. Also fire Upware fen. 11 04 21g

1912 Sep 06

Members of the Belmont Cycle Club were proceeding to Upware on board the motor-launch Victory when it ran aground on the submerged bank of the river, the water was very high at the time, the floods extending for a considerable distance over the washes making it difficult to pick out the proper course. Patrol Leader Howard Swift of the Boy Scouts saw the party were in difficulty and the swollen stream was running with great power. He at once launched a boat and rowed over a mile to the stranded vessel and conveyed a dozen passengers to land. The members were so appreciative of his pluck that they presented him with a handsome silver medal, 12 09 06a & b

1913 Oct 13

The Pumping Station of the Burwell Lode at Upware was completely gutted by fire, the building and machinery, with the exception of the pump being destroyed and the whole station render useless. The building was about 72 years old and consisted of three rooms with the engine in the centre. The work had been done by a steam engine up till 17 years ago when the present 32 h.p. oil engine was installed. It is believed the fire was due to the floor

becoming overheated through the working of the engine and there might have been a slight leak of paraffin, which suddenly caught fire. Charles Bell, the engineer, was severely singed about the head and face, his hair, beard, moustache and eyebrows being burned. 13 10 31 p8 CIP

1913 Jun 20

Upware inquest on barmaid Castel Hotel, p8

1914 Jul 24

Burwell bargee to Lynn, lives Upware, p10 CIP

1916 03 15

Jolly Anglers, Upware closed for trade since Fen 1915; previous tenant there 1892-1907 but was making munitions; was a good house, used by anglers; referred – 16 03 15c

1917 05 30

St Chad's Red Cross Hospital celebrate anniversary by boat trip to Upware – 17 05 30d

1919 02 26

Serious Floods.—Not for many years has the County of Cambridge been visited by floods of such magnitude or of so serious a nature as those experienced within the last ten days. Thousands of acres are under water, and at Cambridge the water rose at one time to within six inches of the height reached by the memorable flood of 1879. At Ely the river touched a depth beyond any previously attained within the memory of the oldest inhabitants. It is good news to hear that since Sunday the water has been steadily falling. A serious break in the river bank midway between Waterbeach and Upware last Wednesday resulted in the disastrous flooding of hundreds of acres of low-lying land in the vicinity, the temporary isolation of several farms and cottages and considerable damage to stacks. On Tuesday night ... above the banks at Waterbeach Fen where the break in the river bank occurred, and farmers took prompt steps to remove their stock to safety, but on Wednesday morning a break occurred, and the breach rapidly becoming wider, the water poured through. Farm buildings and cottages were surrounded, and the inhabitants in some cases were forced to seek shelter in the village. All Wednesday farm workers and other helpers from Waterbeach and district worked up to their knees in water, but the gap widened, and it was found necessary to sink two barges in the breach. Thousands of sandbags were requisitioned and by this means the hole was filled and the inflow of water at this spot checked. Men have been employed night and day in "cradging" along the banks and strengthening the places where any water was found overflowing, this also being done on the Stretham bank of the Old West 19 02 26b

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1920 04 14

Washes flooded between Upware & Ely, drainage engines in Burwell fen working at full pressure, men patrolling in thigh boots

1931 Nov 06

Mr A.W. Stevens, for many years driver of the Swaffham and Bottisham drainage engine at Upware, has retired at the age of 71. He had been in sole charge for 25 years and for 22 years before that assisted his father, William Stevens, who was previously supervisor. His grandfather was employed at the Hundred Foot engine for over 40 years. 31 11 06f

1935 Jan 02

The little hamlet of Upware consists of only about 12 scattered houses on the bank of the River Cam and does not justify the expense of laying a considerable length of water main. People are able to obtain water from the river which could be purified where necessary for drinking purposes by filters provided by the householders themselves, a report states. In November the no.2 pump at the Ashley, Cheveley and Wood Ditton waterworks failed, then whilst it was under repair the other one broke when a wood splinter became wedged under the valve of the pump bucket. 35 01 02a

1937 Nov 26

The banks on the Reach, Burwell and Wicken Lodes should be raised and the main engine drain widened, the Ouse Catchment Board recommended. At Upware the old scoop wheel, engine and boilers should be sold, the building demolished and a new pump installed. Very few banks had broken in the fens in the last 20 years but those at Soham Lode had broken twice in the last 15 years. Last week the slips were very bad indeed. The County Council were pumping water from Soham Mere Farm into the lode - instead they should pump direct into the Cam 37 11 26 & a

1939 Jul 13

F.S. Fuller of Field Farm, Upware invents machine for hoeing sugar beet, attached to front of Austin Seven – 39 07 13b

1940 03 29

Ouse Catchment Board's huge projects; if pumping station at Upware would need raise banks Reach, Burwell & Wicken lodes – 40 03 29a

1940 07 02

Cottenham Methodist church annual rally Swaffham Fen, Upware – 40 07 02a

1942 06 29

Cottenham Methodist Rally, Swaffham Fen; although the chain boat at Upware was shaky and taking water badly the Ouse was crossed by many but others decided to try out the new concrete roads – 42 06 29b

1947 Sep 19th

Eagle Tavern Children's Outing. An exciting day out was enjoyed by 70 children in a river trip to Upware. On arrival they sat down to an excellent sandwich lunch, and then managed to consume five gallons of ice-cream kindly given by a local firm, besides over 1 cwt of fruit, given by a friend in the country. An exciting sports programme followed in which every child

received a prize, and then sat down to an excellent tea after which they sang themselves back to Cambridge

1949 Nov 1st

The county planning committee's decision to remove permission for the construction of a 30-house estate at Upware was criticised. There were 6,000 acres of land beyond Upware and there was a danger of them all going out of cultivation unless the farm workers got the houses they demanded. This would be nothing short of a national scandal, but men could not be persuaded to go back to the land unless they were given amenities – water, electricity and particularly houses.

1955 Sep 30

When a Hawker Hunter jet fighter crash-landed near Upware pumping station the pilot was pulled from the aircraft and taken to the Ely RAF Hospital by a helicopter which had taken off from Waterbeach airfield carrying the Station Commander, Gp Capt Chackfield, to the scene of the crash. Units from Cambs and Fordham fire brigades were called but the aircraft did not catch fire. 55 09 30a

1956 Oct 20

The Lord Nelson inn at Upware, better known as the 'No Hurry' was badly damaged by fire which destroyed the roof and charred timbers in the bedrooms. Charles Jolley who has been licensee for over 30 years said fire crews found the roof well alight and difficult to extinguish due to the covering of corrugated iron on top of 18 inches of thatch. The bar and downstairs rooms were saved from bad damage and it continues to function. Earlier in the day painters had been at work on the inn. 56 10 20c

1957 Jul 27

The drainage of the fens moved into a new era with the opening at Upware of a fully automatic electric pump. Lord Fairhaven pressed a simple button to start it in motion. It is the first electric pump in the South Level and can move 125 tons of water a minute from Burwell Lode into the Cam. The existing pumps were 18 years old, were efficient and worked very well. But they would be unable to cope under abnormal conditions. 57 07 27

1955 May 13th

The County Council, who took over liability for the Upware-Swaffham Road in 1949, would be prepared to take over Upware Lock Bridge provided the Great Ouse River Board brought it up to standard. The bridge rests on the walls of the lock which will remain the liability of the Board. It was originally constructed of timber joists and decking but during the war was strengthened by adding two steel joists. Traffic has increased since the war and loads of up to ten tons were regularly taken over the bridge

1958 Apr 09

Selective chemical weed killers have played a great part in the encouraging increase in crop yields. Today a very large area of farm land is sprayed each year and the practice is increasing. But great harm can be done. 'Self-inflicted' damage caused by spraying one's own crops is quite common. Growers have lost tomatoes when the fine mist has drifted into glasshouses and contamination of grass by arsenical weed killers is a menace to livestock. 58 04 09a

1961 Jul 15

The approach to the ferry at Upware was a public right-of-way. Barges loaded and unloaded at the spot and people went there to get water. For many years children from Waterbeach Fen used the ferry to cross the river on their way to school. In 1903 they crossed four times a day for which the ferry owner was paid £6 a year by the County Council. But since the 'No Hurry' has been demolished the track had become overgrown and a new owner had erected a



fence, obstructing access. Having seen an old postcard he agreed to remove it, magistrates were told 61 07 15 & a

1968 11 27

Richard Ramsey Fielder of Upware and Broad Arrow sign – 68 11 27a

1975 November 20th

It looks like plain sailing from now on for one of Cambridge's best known sights, the Viscountess Bury pleasure boat. It was confirmed that a new site for her mooring near the gas works had been approved by Cambridge city council. It means the 87-year-old boat will still be plying the Cam next season. Earlier it looked like it may have had to leave Cambridge as Banham Marine, the firm who own the boat, have to move to a new site at Upware

1983 Apr 15

The new 'Five Miles from Anywhere' pub at Upware is on the market for £500,000. Built by Colin Hodgson, it opened in 1980 and a marina complex offering berthing for 100 boats has just been completed. There is also outline planning permission for a 23-bedroomed hotel. The former pub burnt down in the 1950s 83 04 15

1984 Apr 27

Lack of trade and high interest rates have forced the closure of the prestigious Five Miles from Anywhere pub at Upware. In 1980 the landlord bought seven acres of land and started to construct a new version of the old inn which had burnt down in October 1956. But it struggled during the recession of 1982 which hit sales. He built the pub for £235,000, it is now worth £370,000 and could be sold to pay his debts 84 04 24 p7

1985 May 15

Fives Miles from Anywhere Upware to reopen - 85 05 15a

1987 Nov 26

A new pumping station at Upware, commissioned by Swaffham Internal Drainage Board, replaces an old diesel system dating back to 1929. Consulting engineer, Keith Stacey, says it was constructed in seven months by their own direct labour and they are pleased with the result. The new station has the capacity to pump 178 tons of water per minute into the River Cam from 12,000 acres of adjacent fenland. 87 11 26

1989 Sept 15

Workers near Upware have spent a week dredging up an historic floodgate which may have been lying in the Cam for more than a century. Tons of wood which went into make a later 18<sup>th</sup>-century staunch came to light when the National Rivers Authority decided to clean the bottom of the river after complaints from the Viscountess Bury pleasure cruiser of obstructions to navigation. More than 10 four-metre stakes the size of tree trunks were hauled from the water as well as 20 pieces of planks. 89 09 18