

Toft Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

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

Mike Petty



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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the Cambridgeshire Weekly News. They are supplemented by some articles published in the Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library together with have detailed cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection.

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 for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1898 01 2-

Cambridgeshire County Council Road and Bridges Committee reported that had received an application from Toft that the Council should support a petition to the London and North Western Railway Company to place a station or siding at Toft or Kingston Bridge. They were of the opinion that such a station would greatly benefit several villages now four or six miles distance from a railway station and would be of advantage to Caxton R.D.C. in obtaining road material. They therefore recommend the petition be supported

1899 08 24

A Toft carter was summoned at Caxton court. PC Marshall said he saw the defendant in charge of a waggon and two horses. He appeared to be asleep. He rang his bicycle bell with no effect and then hollered at defendant, who jumped up and rubbed his eyes. He was told to get off the waggon and walk and did so. The reins were thrown round the whip, which was placed in the whip socket. Defendant was not taking hold of the reins. Fined 10s.

1901 05 21

Toft scholastic dispute, p3

1901 05 22

Parishioners of Toft and Caldecote were present at a meeting protesting against the dismissal of Miss Veall, the schoolmistress. In February the rector gave out Church Catechism books to the children and asked them to learn a certain portion as a home-lesson. Three of the books were returned by the parents who said they did not wish their children to learn it. Miss Veall returned the books to the Rector and told him what they had said. He accused her of inviting the parents not to learn the Catechism and the following day she received notice. Parents proposed starting a school in the Primitive Methodist Chapel

1902 08 09 c

At a sale at the Lion Hotel, Cambridge a terrace of three newly-erected villas upon the Cherryhinton Road was put up for auction. A hint was made about electric trams which it was hoped would shortly be in vogue and increase the value of such a property. At £1,125 the three villas were knocked down to Mr Goldsmith. Two dwelling houses in Catharine Street were sold for £160. The auctioneers stated they failed to see how such property could depreciate in value. Bidding for four cottages at Toft started at £7.10s. apiece and were eventually sold for £65

1904 07 23

Four Passive Resisters from Toft appeared before the magistrates for non-payment of their poor rate. Joseph Worboys, a builder, said: "I am a Passive Resister, and my father is not, or rather he does not want the bother of it". The 1902 Education Act was made for the benefit of one religious party and he objected to supporting a doctrine to which he was opposed. The State did not ought to have anything to do with the religious convictions of the people. It was a damnable Act of Parliament. The magistrates understood and said the remedy was to get the law changed, but he had to pay in the meantime.

1905 02 18

Passive resisters, Wyatt & Toft, p3 *

1905 03 11

There was no little stir in Toft; it seemed as if the whole village had turned out to be present at the sale of Passive Resisters' goods, seized for the educational portion of the Poor Rate. The auctioneer stood on the little hillock of the Green and offered the first lot, a silver teapot the property of Mr J. Worboys. He followed with a watch belonging to Mr D.Creek, and a gold chain and watch from Mr A & B.Tebbit. A gun, the property of Mr P. Roggs caused some merriment and was sold for 12s.6d.

Afterwards the company went to the Primitive Methodist Chapel for a meeting about the injustice of the Act forced upon them by the Conservative Party 05 03 11cc

1906 06 22

Sir -. May we use your paper to thank many friends who since May 23rd 1901 have so generously aided us in the supporting Toft British School. As it has served the purpose for which it was called into being and its continuance is no longer needed, it will be finally closed on Friday 29th June 1906 – Joseph Worboys. 06 06 22a

1911 02 03

Joseph Warboys, Toft builder, had unguarded saw mill – 11 02 03a

1911 05 26

Empire Day celebrations Grantchester, Toft, Swavesey – 11 05 26k & l

1914 01 16

Plough Monday. This was observed in the usual manner at Toft. The labourers first paraded the village with their whips, etc., their collections round the village being very good. An adjournment was then made to the Black Bull where an excellent supper was provided by Host and Hostess Allen, about 50 sitting down. The meat was supplied by Mr. John Chapman. The wives of the labourers assisted in serving the supper. During the evening songs were sung. 14 01 16

1914 07 02

Sir – some weeks ago Toft School Managers petitioned the County Council to erect a danger sign to warn motorists of the proximity of the school. Last week the Surveyor's employee called to ask this signal be erected on the grass bordering my rectory hedge. I demurred and suggested it be placed on the opposite side of the road. Now I have been sent a bill for payment of the labour work since I declined to have it placed on the rectory roadside. I have paid the shilling charged but surely those of us who pay heavy rates are entitled to a little consideration without incurring the penalty of a fine – Rev T. Orbell, Toft 14 07 02

1914 07 02

Lightning strikes houses Histon, St Ives, Kingston, Toft, Comberton, Wimpole, Elsworth

1916 08 16

New Vicar. - The patrons (Christ's College, Cambridge) have offered the living of Fen Drayton, vacated by the appointment of the Rev. E. Young to the combined livings of Toft and Caldecote, to the Rev. A. S. Senior, formerly curate at Great Driffield, Yorks. who has accepted the appointment Constable's Promotion.—The many friends of P.c. A. E. Payne, of Cottenham, will be glad to learn that he has been promoted to the rank of sergeant, and will take up his duties at Stapleford in October, P.c. Payne joined the Cambs Constabulary in June, 1907 and was first stationed at Toft. He joined the Army on Sept. 23 1916, and proceeded to France, being severely wounded near Ypres in Nov. 1917 and spending several months in hospital. He was demobilised on March 11 this year, when he was stationed at Cottenham. Although the time he has spent there has been short, P.c. Payne has made many friends and become exceedingly popular both as a constable and in private life. 19 09 03

1924 03 23c

A wooden barn containing a straw stack was completely destroyed by fire on the farm of Mess Tebbit Bros, at Toft. Mr William Hellier of St Ives had tried to telephone the Borough Fire Brigade, but could not get them. He motored to Cambridge and met the Brigade as he was entering the town. It appears that someone else had continued to try to telephone, and had done so after 20 minutes waiting

1927 11 23

The Cambridge Photographic Club exhibition contained 120 entries made in connection with the scheme for providing photographic records of objects of interest in the county, most of them thatched

cottages which are not unlikely to disappear. Whittlesford, Balsham and Toft provided the largest numbers, these being villages to which excursions were organised during the summer months.

1927 12 27

The Ortona motor buses had a terrible time in the blizzard. Two buses were stuck in snowdrifts out Newmarket way, one near Teversham corner, a Willingham bus on the Huntingdon Road near the Five Bells, a Caxton bus near Toft and a Saffron Walden bus near Whittlesford station, where they remained many hours. Another bus got nearly to Sawston before it got stuck and had to be dug out and the Fulbourn bus could only get as far as the Robin Hood, Cherry Hinton. Relief gangs were sent to the rescue of the stranded vehicles and they were being dug out and coming home one by one.

1928 01 10

The Toft carrier, Mr John Chapman, lost his balance when getting into his cart while owing to a strong gust of wind, and fell heavily, striking his head on the ground. For the past 43 years as a carrier and egg and poultry dealer he has regularly attended the Cambridge market on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Although 78 years of age he was a man of exceptional vitality, able to carry on his business with all the energy and vigour of his former days.

1929 03 14

Bennett Ward, farm labourer of Toft said he went to fetch three cows from the field to be milked. He looked up and down the road, opened the gate and two crossed. The third was in the middle of the road when a motor car came along and hit her on the hindquarters, knocking her into the ditch. She weighed about half a ton and was full of milk. The two front lamps and the radiator of the car were damaged and there was a very deep skid mark which tore the road up. The farmer claimed £26 for depreciation of value to the cow, the driver counter-claimed £18 for damage to his car.

1935 02 07

Toft flooding picture – 35 02 07

1936 07 10

Considerable damage was caused by a cloudburst at Arrington where gardens were washed away and crops looked as if they had been flattened by a steam-roller. Several fields were under water and one farmer bemoaned that there were a lot of rabbits high and dry on a hillock, but he could not get to them with a gun. At Toft houses in Brook End and School Lane were flooded with residents 'living upstairs' and empty chicken coops seen floating about outside them. During the thunderstorm the village school was struck and a chimney pot knocked askew 36 07 10

1938 07 10

The B.S.A. Company's offer of a brand new bicycle to Britain's oldest woman cyclist has brought several responses. Mrs Mortimer of Chedworth Street is 63; she has ridden a cycle since she was 10 and has toured Ireland, Scotland and much of England on it. Mrs F. Plumb of Gt Shelford is 68 and delivers fruit grown in her garden to Cambridge every day. But the oldest so far is Mrs Cross of Brookside, Toft, who was born at Tydd St Mary's in 1856 and still rides regularly. 37 07 10a

1937 08 14

More ladies have come forward in the search for Britain's oldest women cyclists. Mrs Cross of Toft (81) still rides her ordinary lady's bike regularly while Annie Long of Withersfield (75) has a machine she bought in 1898. Mrs N. Plint of Gt Shelford rides into Cambridge each day to deliver fruit grown in her garden & Mrs H. Ball of Staploe (68) also bikes five miles a day to work. Mrs L.M. Mortimer (63) of Chedworth Street is one of the most consistent riders, having done thousands of miles since she was ten years of age. 37 08 14a

1938 03 21

Joseph Ward of Toft celebrates Golden Wedding – 38 03 21d

1941 12 05

Diamond Wedding. — Mr. and Mrs. Lawford Cundell, of Fire-thorn Cottage, Toft, have recently celebrated their diamond wedding by entertaining a number of friends. They were the recipients of a number of telegrams and gifts, including a gift of hot water bottles from the Mothers' Union, Mrs. Cundell having been a member of the branch since its formation. Mr. and Mrs. Cundell have resided in Toft for over 50 years. 41 12 05

1945 05 11

Stack Fires. — On Tuesday the N.F.S. were called out to deal with numerous stack fires outside Cambridge, mainly caused by VE-Day celebrations. The areas affected were Bourn, Toft, Gransden, Linton, Foxton, Wrestlingworth and Comberton. In some villages watch was kept by the N.F.S. to prevent the fires from spreading

1947 07 31

At the meeting of the Chesterton Rural District Council it was reported that a further three parishes (Coton, Fen Drayton and Lolworth) had been supplied with water mains. It was anticipated that the work involving the supply to Barton, Comberton, Toft, Haslingfield and Harlton would be put in hand during the coming year. Several parishes, notably Croxton, Eltisley, Graveley, Hardwick and Dry Drayton were extremely short of water for domestic and stock purposes and trouble was anticipated in the summer months. The position could not be improved until a new high level water tower was erected thereby affording sufficient pressure to enable a mains supply to be taken to these villages

1947 10 07

A family who had been bombed out four times in London, yesterday evening lost their home at Toft when it was gutted by fire. The cottage was one of three completely destroyed at Brookside, Toft and was occupied by Mr Thomas White, his wife and daughter. Most of the furniture was saved. In another cottage occupied by Mr Owen Braysher practically everything was destroyed, although the animals at the rear of the property were rescued. A German prisoner of war did great work in helping to save furniture. Fire brigades from Cambridge and Whittlesford attended the fire and two major pumps were used.

1948 03 15

Cambridgeshire Cottage Improvement Society have urged the Ministry of Health to give grants towards reconditioning buildings of outstanding beauty and historical interest. The Old Manor House at Fen Drayton was a building of this kind and reconditioning would enable three cottages to be made from two, one of the present cottages being much larger than was required. Water mains have recently been laid in the village and the property has been connected to the supply so that when reconditioning is possible modern conveniences will be practicable. A piped water supply will also shortly be available in Kingston, where the Society has two cottages, and later in Toft, though the main may be some distance from its property

1953 12 29

In the oil-lit schoolroom at Toft on Thursday before Christmas, the chairman of the Parish Council pressed a button, and electricity came to the village. The school was crowded for the official switching-on ceremony. The original proposals were made in 1939 but were held up by the war. With the nationalisation of the supply industry a programme for orderly development was drawn up. Toft and Caldecote were among the first villages in the Cambridge district to receive a supply, which would serve about 70 consumers. They welcomed the arrival of electricity and looked forward to the enjoyment of its many advantages. There were demonstrations of domestic appliances and cookery and washing machines.

1955 06 29

Cambridge has 1,350 dwellings unfit for human habitation including 100 in the East Road, Gothic and Doric Street areas. The Council is to submit proposals for the demolition of 500 dwellings in the next five years and the remainder within the following seven. But three condemned cottages at Brookside

in Toft have been reinstated by the Cottage Improvement Society and now make a charming group in this beautiful yet little known corner of the village. 55 06 29

1956 03 15

Cambridgeshire Cottage Improvement Society has repaired & rethatched three cottages at Toft that were under threat of demolition. At Abington a derelict bungalow was reconditioned and a beautiful thatched cottage will be repaired. Eight of their 33 cottages are still without any interior water supply. There were always many applicants for vacant cottages but not all were suitable. 56 03 15b

1959 07 21

Toft youth club held a fete in the Manor gardens to celebrate its first year's activities since it was refounded. It has maintained its membership, raised funds to buy its own record player and records as well as equipment for badminton and netball. They have organised a party for village school children, social evenings and film shows. Great importance was attached to friendly meetings between clubs and they had benefited by playing challenging matches of table tennis. 59 07 21

1960 05 06

Hardwick & Toft – 60 05 06 & a CIP

1961 12 09

Five villages, Graveley, Ickleton, Hauxton, Toft and Whaddon, have been stimulated into getting their own village halls through the closure of their local church schools. In the past they have been unable to afford the cost but now hope to purchase the buildings and convert them. The Ministry of Education has made grants for new halls at Stetchworth, Barrington and Lt Shelford while the Carnegie Trust has funded others at Newton, Orwell and Weston Colville. 61 12 09

1962 06 22

Toft Methodist Church celebrated its centenary with a gathering of 500 people in a barn at Orchard Farm. This was appropriate as both John Bunyan and John Wesley had preached in such a building very near the present chapel. Prior to the rally and afternoon service and a tea had been held and the celebrations will conclude with a barn dance. 62 06 22a

1964 07 22

Toft people are buying their former primary school and hope to re-open it as a village hall which will also serve Hardwick, Kingston and Caldecote. At present all they have is the church institute, a very small place. The building needs another exit, a kitchen and flush toilets – and it also has a leaky roof. During the war the village raised £750 for a fund that was never used and this, with a grant and interest-free loans from residents, will finance the scheme. 64 07 22

1964 12 14

Arthur Chapman celebrates 90th birthday at Red Lion pub, Toft, where he has been a regular for 75 years 64 12 14b

1967 11 21

Railway bridge on Cambridge to Bedford Line between Toft and Bassingbourn in poor condition – 67 11 21

1976 11 06

Clearing up after a meal and doing the washing up are not the most popular of tasks. For most people they are just chores. But for the residents of Orchard House, Sawston, they are some of the things which stops their home from feeling like an institution. This residential home for the elderly is trying very hard to give residents a sense of independence and freedom. It is divided up into five communal flats each shared by eight people with its own kitchen, sitting and dining rooms. The House is the third of its kind to be built in the area – there are others at Fulbourn and Toft – and will be opening a day centre for elderly people to visit during the week to have a bath, see a chiropodist or have their hair done.

1979 07 25

Cambridgeshire county council took a step towards the transport of the future when it brought into service the country's first electric mobile library. One of the largest electric road vehicles to go into commercial service, it was built by Hyrotechnick of Toft and is based on an electric travelling shop which has been successful in Holland. It is powered by four independent motor-drive systems on the rear wheels and has a speed of 12½ miles an hour, suitable for its task in the city. A second one on order will be faster with a speed of around 40 mph