

Reach Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

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

summarised by

Mike Petty

Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at
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 for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1898 07 27

Newmarket rural council was told that the water supply of Swaffham Prior was derived from springs, and was abundant and naturally pure. All that was necessary was to see that it was properly safeguarded. Some of the existing wells were so circumstanced that they ran the risk of contamination. Four bored wells would be sufficient for the village and one more for the hamlet of Reach. Only one outbreak of diphtheria had occurred in the village, in 1894, when four cases occurred in one house, but analysis of the water supply showed that it was pure and fit for drinking purposes

1899 09 20

Newmarket RDC heard that at Landwade there was a pump that had been erected by subscription, the piping had never been properly fixed and there was now a leakage. Complaints were made as to the indifferent water supply at Reach. There was a spring of good water near the Delph Bridge, which by reason of its being open was often full of tadpoles and other little animals. If a cover were put over it would be a good source of water. The inhabitants of Kirtling obtained a great deal of their water from a dirty pond. The water to certain homes in Soham was filled with dead cats.

1904 05 10

The ancient custom of proclaiming Reach Fair is observed on Rogation Monday by the Mayor and Corporation of Cambridge and has the advantage of imparting pomp and circumstance it would otherwise lack, of making glad the hearts of children en route with the sprinklings of copper coin, of affording members of the Corporation pleasing relaxation from weightier cares and of increasing the profits of proprietors of pleasure fair paraphernalia, particularly those of owners of cocoanut shies. Trading in horses constitutes practically the only business part of the fair and this year the animals were in short supply. A quack paid one or two people a shilling for the privilege of extracting their unsound teeth and then did a brisk trade selling patent medicines for most of the ills of mankind

1904 10 01

This week the once famous Stourbridge fair has been held and the question arises, how much does the Borough of Cambridge benefit by allowing its ground to be used for trading purposes. Last year £30 10s. was paid in tolls but council expenditure was £18 17s. including wages for the collectors of tolls, carriages in which the Civic Fathers rode to the proclamation and printing bills. Then there is 'new copper'. That is the shining pence our benevolent Borough rules have the privileged of hurling to crowds of children. That cost 18s. But in the case of Reach fair we have actually to pay in hard cash for the privilege of exercising jurisdiction over the village merrymaking and horse-dealing transactions

1907 10 31

Mr Payne Garnett, the art master of the Leys School, is a versatile artist who has discovered many beauty spots in Swaffham. He shows the neighbourhood of Reach and the fens during the four seasons. There is a night scene, the moonlight gently illuminating a typical piece of Fen scenery and another of a deserted village road covered with hardened snow, so full of atmosphere that you need an overcoat. 07 10 31a

1908 02 15

Swaffham Prior had nine licenced houses, six full and three beer 'on' for a population of 950. The John Bull was in a dilapidated condition, it was next door to the Red Lion which had stables for four horses and had been put into a thorough state of repair. Bottisham have seven pubs; the Rose and Crown was in bad repair but the Swan had six bedrooms and a bakehouse. Cow and Hare, Rock Hotel, Fen Ditton|: Blue Lion, Fulbourn: Royal Oak, Bottisham: Rose and Crown, Swaffham Prior: John Bull, Reach: Uncle Tom's Cabin, Lt Wilbraham: Hole in the Wall. 08 02 15 & a & b

1909 02 12

Licensing objections to Bottisham Rose and Crown, Swaffham Prior John Bull and Uncle Tom's Cabin at Reach – 09 02 12

1909 07 04

Reach church was built on the site of the old one in 1860 and for 40 years schooling has been held there. But the Board of Education had signified its intention of withdrawing recognition so a new school is being built on the site of the old Ship Inn to accommodate 80 children. The architect is Hubert Hunt of Burwell and the builder J.G. Cowell of Soham. CWN 09 07 04

1909 10 22

In 1860 a 'school-church' was built on the site of the ancient chapel-of-ease dedicated to St Etheldreda at Reach. It was served for 49 years before in 1909 the Board of Education refused to allow it to continue. However villagers had meanwhile bought an inn from the Cambridge Brewery Company and decided to use the site to build a new school to accommodate 80 children. At the opening villagers were praised for their good work: it was an example to many other places. CWN 09 10 22

1912 02 23

The funeral of Canon John William Cockshott was held at Burwell. After leaving Cambridge University he'd hoped never to return to the fens but was called to the curacy of Soham. From there he went to Burwell where he established the Mission Church. He built a school at Reach, which has since been consecrated, and also restored the church at Landwade. In 1885 he was appointed vicar of Stretham where he remained until 1906 when he felt unable to fulfil his duties to his satisfaction. On his retirement he went to live at Shelford where he did active pastoral work. 12 02 23a

1913 04 04

The Congregational Union heard that West Wrattling chapel had been renovated and a new hall built at Cheveley but the chapel at Reach, built in 1863, needed to be put in repair before it celebrated its jubilee. At Castle Camps the work was becoming increasingly difficult though the pastor has not lost heart after 24 years in the ministry. Chrishall congregations are steadily strengthening, Gt Eversden had celebrated the wedding of the minister and young people continued to meet at the Nixon Hall. The most difficult station was Stetchworth where the spiritual indifference of the people was a great obstacle to progress

1913 05 02

Reach fair proclaimed; Corporation spend £17 to collect £1.18.9d

1913 06 06

In 1823 Mr Edward Ball procured a coal shed near the waterside at Reach and had it fitted up as a place of worship. Numbers increased and in 1830 the first Congregational chapel was opened. It was enlarged several times and a burial ground secured. Then two cottages at the back were purchased and the old chapel taken down in 1863. The replacement is now sadly out of repair but is being renovated and will soon be reopened 13 06 06 p12

1914 05 22

The tolls at Reach fair have been steadily diminishing but the cost of proclaiming it and collecting the money were increasing. The time had come to discontinue it or for members of the Council to throw away their own coppers. But the deficit was trivial for such a historically important event that dated back to the time of King John. What would Americans think if they recklessly dispensed with such an interesting custom for the sake of a few pounds? 13 12 19 p7 CIP Reach fair proclamation – new arrangements mean no more free carriage rides for councillors – 14 05 08l Reach fair procession made by motor car, councillors paid own expenses in view small amount raised from tolls – 14 05 22d, 14 05 22h

1914 06 26

Reach Vicar thrashed youth p8

1914 08 28

Patriotic Cambridge has furnished a squadron of Yeomanry and 129 recruits for Lord Kitchener's Second Army. Many firms are making provision for wives and families left behind, supplementing the men's army wages. The University Press has sent 61 men, the Gas Company 35, Eaden Lilley 18 and William Saint the builder 17. (The paper lists the names of the men). Several men have left Sawston and at Reach Jack Ridgell offered his services but was not accepted, he being just over the age limit of 42 years. But at Linton men were asked not to join up until the harvest has been gathered in. also Fulbourn, Histon, Fen Drayton,

1916 05 31

Reach Fair half a dozen horses and one ice-cream barrow 16 05 31a

1917 05 16

Reach Fair – to be no lunch; the fair as a commercial proposition has died on inanition – 17 05 16b

1924 04 12c

Newmarket rural council heard that Messrs Lack and sons had completed the boring of the well at Reach, and the water had been analysed and found fit for drinking purposes. It was recommended that the mayor of Cambridge be asked to declare the pump open when he attends to open the Reach fair

1924 0518c

A number of parents from Swaffham Prior and Reach were brought before the Bottisham police court for not sending their children to Burwell School. In order to provide children over eleven years of age with a superior education it was found advisable to reorganise the schools in that area. The county education committee has provided a motor omnibus to convey the children to Burwell. Far from overcoming the objections of the parents this bus seems one of the chief sources of objection. Other parents object on the score of extra expense for packing up their children's dinners

1924 05 25c

At Reach fair, in accordance with custom, the mayor and members of the corporation forsook their dignity and became boys (and one girl) again. Following the official proclamation the mayor (H.B. Bailey) performed the opening ceremony of the new village pump. His worship pumped the first jug of water and quaffed off, or rather sipped suspiciously the first glass of it. Following luncheon the mayor repaired to the field and commenced an onslaught on the coconuts. First blood in this respect was drawn by the Chief Constable but the Borough Coroner contrived to "wangle" three with one throw. The more sedate members of the corporation contented themselves with the roundabouts

1926 01 07

Further manifestation of the stubbornness of parents in the Bottisham area against sending their children to school at Burwell was forthcoming when a number of summonses for non-attendance were heard. One case was adjourned in order to consider whether the County Council would sanction a child remaining at Swaffham School, where there was plenty of room. One parent contended it would be detrimental to the health of his children, who were delicate, to go to Burwell. If the girl was allowed to go to Reach school for a year he would be prepared to send her to Burwell after that, if she grew out of her delicate condition.

1927 05 24

There is one day in the whole year when the little village of Reach throws off its cares and takes a holiday all on its own – the day of its fair. And this year the day re-captured its old spirit of joyous abandon and merry-making. The roundabouts soon had a load of laughing councillors who rode their wooden steeds with schoolboy enthusiasm, the coconuts went over at a merry pace to the

accompaniment of civic cheers while the bell of the test-your-strength machine was rung time after time by the strong men of the party, the Mayor of Cambridge showing himself to be a past-master at the game.

1933 05 23

Reach Fair opening – 33 05 23

1935 01 12

Nonagenarian Richard Chapman was born at Swaffham Prior and started work before he was seven, scaring crows and rooks off land for a shilling a week. He never went to a day school but obtained his knowledge from a night school he attended when 18 years of age. He was leader of the choir at Reach Congregational Church in which he used to lay the concert flute before they had an organ. He has been engaged in agricultural work, fossil digging and as a peat master, employing men cutting peat in Swaffham Prior Fen for use as fuel. During the war this peat was also used in homes as a preventative against influenza. 35 01 12c

1937 11 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 05 16

There was only a solitary sweet stall on the green which is usually well-filled with swings and roundabouts when the Mayor of Cambridge came to open Reach Fair. After lunch two or three side-shows had arrived, but they were unrepresentative of the noise and excitement traditionally associated with the event. But the ceremony followed its time-honoured procedure, pennies were thrown and the Town Clerk read the proclamation. Though it seems a little decrepit, the fair may flower again, the Master of Magdalene predicted 39 05 16 & a

1939 12 20

Mr W. King's latest films represent a remarkable advance on his past achievements. Apart from films of a domestic nature, such as the visit of Rotarians to Hemingford Grey and their outing to Houghton, there was one of the proclamation of Reach Fair. He visited this year to make a pictorial record but was unlucky in that the fair itself failed to materialise apart from a few side shows. He was able to catch the atmosphere of the opening ceremony and the children scrambling for new pennies. He also filmed the lunch in the village schoolroom, obtaining some candid shots. This might find its way into the archives if the fair suffers the same fate as Stourbridge Fair. The best of his colour films depicted a visit to Messrs Engelmann's nurseries at Saffron Walden showing glasshouses filled with carnations. 39 12 20 # c.65.6

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 04 30

Almost a departed glory.—When the Mayor and Corporation of Cambridge visited Reach on Monday, it was found that the fair consisted of one sweet stall. Owing to the petrol restrictions, the Mayoral party was much smaller than usual, and the lunch in the village schoolroom was also cancelled. Apart from these differences, the procedure followed the usual lines. The Town Clerk (Mr. C. H. Kemp) read the proclamation at two places in the village and: new pennies were distributed in the villages en route. Several of the visitors made purchases at the "fair" and went up on to the bank before returning home. – 40 04 30

1941 05 20

Reach Fair proclaimed, but no fair – 41 05 20

1941 09 13

Briscoe Snelson has pictures accepted for Royal Photographic Society's annual show; all of fenland scenery – rainbow over Reach lode, Reach, river farm at Fen Ditton – 41 09 13

1942 06 19

King and Queen Tour Fens, - Their Majesties the King and Queen on Saturday paid a visit to reclaimed fen land in Cambridgeshire, and saw for themselves the magnificent work that is being carried out by the Cambs War Agricultural Executive on the vital food front. Indeed the whole five thousand acres at Swaffham Prior Fen and Adventurers Fen, Burwell is nothing more nor less than a battlefield where men and women, armed with the latest weapons of agriculture, are carrying out relentless warfare against rushes, scrub, bog oaks and flooding. Considerably more than half the 5,000 acres was derelict in 1939; the remainder produced only moderate crops . . . During their visit their Majesties travelled over miles of new concrete roads through Reach to Adventurers Fen, Burwell where they embarked on barges at Cock Up Bridge on Burwell Lode, which runs through artificial banks above the level of the fen. While the barges were sailing down the Lode demonstrations of blasting bog oaks by explosives were given

1942 12 23

Reach Fair proclamation 1912 – named photo – 42 12 23

1944 04 15

Stone gateway at Holy Trinity churchyard erected by Richard Reynolds in 1770; he occupied a hose and had a right of way over the churchyard from Crane Lane. It was made from materials removed from the ruins of an ancient chapel at Reach, a small portion of which remains – 44 04 15

1945 05 11

Reach Fair. — Even though we are in the midst of world-shaking events, the old tradition of proclaiming the opening of the Reach Fair was not neglected on Monday morning. The Mayor of Cambridge (Mr. G. Wilding), together with the Town Clerk (Mr. C. H. Kemp) and the Sergeant-at-Mace (Mr. W. H. Ingle), made the journey out to the village for the formal proclamation, which is the only remaining feature of the Fair, but though much of the old glory has gone, the children were still able to scramble for halfpennies. For the youngsters, at least, Reach Fair still means something

1948 05 05

Much of the ceremonial splendours which in the olden days used to surround the proclamation of Reach Fair has now disappeared, but there has nevertheless been left behind a certain amount of pageantry which the present day village people - both young and old alike - eagerly watched and thoroughly enjoyed on Monday. About half an hour before the arrival of the Mayoral party the fair was a hive of activity with the last few nails being hammered into the various stalls. Then suddenly there was a blare of music without which a fair does not seem to be complete, closely followed by the opening of practically every door in the village and the appearance of the older men, women and youngsters

1949 05 25

When the custom of having a luncheon after the proclamation of Reach fair was revived on Monday, Counc G. Edwards recalled that 25 years ago the Mayor was a brewer and an additional ceremony he performed was the opening of a new village pump. This led him to remark that he did not quite understand why a brewer should be asked to open a pump; he could have understood it if a dairyman had been asked to perform the ceremony!

1952 05 20

When Reach fair was proclaimed by the Mayor of Cambridge (Ald. H.O. Lagdon) on Monday schoolchildren from Wicken and Upware revived the aged custom of arriving in a barge on the Reach Lode. Rigged with sails the boat had been navigated from Upware. It is many years since anyone set sail for Reach fair but some of the children say they have heard their parents talk of having made the same journey. The boat was moored in the Hythe where it formed part of the background for the proclamation by the Town Clerk of Cambridge (Mr Alan Swift)

1952 05 23

Cambridge City Council received with thanks a gift from Papworth Industries of a carrying case for the Mayoral chain. Some 235 guests were present at a complimentary dinner at the Dorothy to the outgoing Mayor Ald H. O. Lagdon. He was "a tradesman, a man of humble birth" who had carried off his duties connected with the visit by the Queen as if to the manner born. There was one occasion when he had not followed the traditions of the city. He did not ride on a roundabout at Reach Fair!

1952 12 04

The villagers of Reach want their village to remain a village in its own right. They do not want to become part of Swaffham Prior. Strictly speaking Reach has never been a village in its own right – part of it lying within the parish of Burwell and part in Swaffham Prior, now an Inquiry is trying to sort the matter out. They concede that the present set-up is unsatisfactory but feel the answer is to make Reach a parish of its own.

1953 05 12

After Reach Fair was proclaimed with all the pageantry and ceremony which has survived the years since medieval times the Mayor of Cambridge (Ald. S.T. Bull) toured the stalls and sideshows. He invested three shillings at the coconut shy and came away with two coconuts. At the rifle range he tested his skill as a marksman and came away with a glass sugar basin, then went aboard the 'Jollity Farm' roundabout for two whirling trips. At the Mayor's luncheon it is the tradition that any newcomers to the ceremony, known as 'colts' and 'fillies', have to pay a crown or be imprisoned in the stocks. But Lady Bragg protested at being called a 'filly'.

1953 11 17

Reach's oldest inhabitant, 84-year-old Mrs Badcock, leaned across a table in the lamplight and pulled a switch to turn on the village's electricity supply. The lights blazed and a six foot sign of red, white and blue bulbs glowed 'Welcome to E.E.B.' "This is a great day in the history of the village", Mr B. Day, chairman of the parish council, told the enthusiastic audience which packed the school to overflowing. A large number stayed to watch a television that had been installed, others went home to find their houses brightly lit by electricity and others went to the hostelrys across the green to celebrate in the traditional way.

1954 04 05

The 'birth' of the Parish of Reach was marked by a ceremony in the schoolroom when the Chairman of the County Council formally handed over to the new Chairman of the Parish Council (Mr A. Housden) a copy of the Statutory Order and a minute book. The people of Reach felt they had lost their identity by being swallowed up by Burwell and Swaffham and recognised that a small unit of local government, if it adopted a method of 'give and take', could be a benefit to everyone concerned. There were no worse quarrels than those which took place over neighbouring walls and it was the spirit of forgiving neighbours which was so necessary to make life enduring in Reach.

1956 01 20

W.C. Squires had been a founder-member of the Cambridge Camera Club; he was a master of the technique of bromoil, his work being exhibited overseas, and an enthusiastic lantern slide worker. But he refused to lecture and many of his slides had never been shown. His speciality was the portrayal of open landscape and he aimed for a natural effect, be the conditions stormy or sunny. He loved the fen country round Reach. 56 01 20d

1957 05 01

Feelings have been running high in the ancient village of Reach over the break in tradition with the date of their fair. It has always been opened on Rogation Monday by the Mayor of Cambridge but this year the date of Mayor-making has been changed so it has been brought forward. Villagers are concerned a precedent would be established and it would be on Christmas Day next! This is the only social event in the village and coincides with the Chapel Anniversary when locals parade their new spring clothes. 57 05 01

1957 05 07

Reach fair proclaimed – 57 05 07

1958 09 04

Lightning struck the century-old parish church at Reach. The roof was stripped of tiles and there are three gaping holes letting daylight through. Inside the church, masonry and roof timber litter the floor, many of the seats are broken and the stained glass windows blown out. The chapel clock was struck and stopped at 7.34 am, the pendulum was blown away and stuck in one of the rafters. The Vicar has pinned a notice saying 'Any persons entering this church do so at their own risk' All lights in the village went out. 58 09 04

1959 05 05

Reach fair proclaimed – 59 05 05b & c

The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 05 05

Reach mother and daughter found dead with gunshot wounds – 60 05 05 & 09

1961 05 20

Sir –. In the 12th century merchants from the Continent brought their goods by sailing vessels across the sea and up the waters to Reach Fair. Many arrived too soon but their merchandise was landed on the Hythe and stored in the Merchant's Yard, now part of the grounds of the 'White Rose'. On Rogation Monday the goods were sold on the Hythe. The horses came by road and many were tethered in the courtyard of the Ship Inn. This wall still stands round the school playground and incorporates iron rings as evidence of the horse fair. There was always a triumphal procession, headed by the mace bearer, from the Green to the Hythe and I hope future mayors will uphold the true tradition of proclaiming the Fair in both places – F.H. Hutt 61 05 20a

1961 09 15

A new 'baroque' organ at the church of St Etheldreda in Reach has been built by one of the churchwardens, Mr C.C. Washtell, an electronics engineer. For many years he had toyed with the idea of building an organ but it was not until the church at Reach had been badly damaged by lightning and the restoration work was nearing completion that he began the actual construction. Last Saturday, two-and-a-half years later, the last screw was placed in position and the organ was ready for an informal demonstration 61 09 15

1962 03 23

White Roses at The Hythe, Reach is a Tudor manor house continuously inhabited for more than 400 years. At one time it was a merchant's house with a yard alongside the Quay at the back. It was damaged by fire and the yard destroyed and in 1890, when it became a vicarage, an East wing was added. It features the entrance to a tunnel between the fireplaces, a hidden room which was possibly a priest hole and seats which came from the old 'Black Susan of the Evil Eye' inn opposite. 62 03 23 c & d

1962 08 07

The annual tug-of-war over Reach Lode went ahead as planned despite heavy rain and was watched by a large crowd in mackintoshes and Wellington boots. The first match was between married men and bachelors, the second featured an American team from Mildenhall who found the appalling conditions too difficult and were beaten by local men more used to them. However they braved the cold water into which they were pulled cheerfully.

1962 09 26

A farm labourer from the Hythe Reach, who has never been outside the county, has won £8,925 on Littlewoods Pools (about £158,000 today). He has been doing the football pools for the past 30 years. A bachelor, he has no plans for his win, except perhaps to buy a car. "I have lived in this village all my life and I have everything I want. We don't bother with holidays in this part of the world, the money will go into the bank and I shall carry on working. But it means that I will have security for the rest of my life" 62 09 26b

1963 05 21

Reach Fair opening – 63 05 21c

1964 05 04

Reach fair opened by ringing a bell for first time – 64 05 04

1965 05 11

Reach history – Len Warren seeks archives – 65 05 11b

1965 05 11

Reach history as separate kingdom – 65 09 02a

1966 04 18

King Len Warren of Reach threatens to advertise village for sale to Russians or Americans – 66 04 18e

1966 04 21

Reach will be handed to crown if proved to be a Kingdom in its own right – 66 04 21a

1967 12 06

Reach loses last pub as White Horse closes – 67 12 06b

1969 07 09

Reach - 'King Len' abdicates, gives village back to Queen – 69 07 09

1973 05 29

There was no one to take the Mayor of Cambridge for a ride when he opened the centuries-old fair at the tiny fenland village of Reach. After performing the traditional opening ceremony the Mayor usually takes off his hat, and the town clerk hangs on to his wig for a civic whirl on the dodgems. But this time there were no dodgems. There were not any coconut shies either, or rifle ranges, or roundabouts. In fact Reach green was almost deserted apart from a hot dog caravan, a fluffy doll stall, a sweet stand and a beer tent. The cause of all the trouble was that the newly designated spring bank holiday this year had clashed with the anniversary of the Reach fair charter, which was granted by King John in 1201

1973 08 20

Only three boats took part in a demonstration cruise to draw attention to the Reach and Burwell lodes which were in danger of being closed and drained. But Great Ouse River Authority had already agreed to spend £155,000 in preserving the waterway. The lodes were constructed to drain the fens but the drainage has shrunk the peat soil so that the waterways and their banks stand above the

surrounding land. Now the banks are wearing and leaking - flooding the land they were constructed to drain

1973 12 07

Reach, the tiny but historic village in the middle of the Cambridgeshire fens could do with a pub. The last public house closed some years ago. It is considered that the village would benefit socially if a public house were re-established, but, of course, such a project must be shown to be commercially viable. This need is spotlighted by the County Planning Department in their outline proposals for village development in the next ten years.

1974 05 10

Water seeping through the banks of the Reach, Burwell, Swaffham Bulbeck and Bottisham lodes presented the Great Ouse local land drainage committee with a cash dilemma: spending a smaller amount of money but partly closing the system to navigation or spending a lot more to allow boating to continue. The engineer said there was a straight choice. This involved demolishing all or part of the high-level lode systems so creating a new low-level system of drains, or retaining the high-level systems and controlling the seepage that occurs. "Once you close a system of waterways to navigation you will never get it open again", he said.

1975 01 17

After nearly seven years of having to travel two miles for a drink, Reach villagers may soon be getting a pub of their own. Mr Michael Warrington of Church Farm House has applied to magistrates for a provisional licence to sell drink from his home. The last pub in Reach was the White Horse which closed in December 1967. If the application is approved the pub will be called Dykes End.

1975 08 19

Villagers at Reach have waited a long time for a pint in their own local but now they have the chance at last in The Dyke's End which opened last week. It is seven years since the only other pub, The White Horse, was closed. The 'King of Reach', Mr Len Warren said: "This is utopia for Reach. This is what we have wanted since the last one closed".

1976 09 01

"Out of Reach" parish magazine was launched at a reception. Its editor said that although the village has a population of only 260 it would fulfil a real need for the distribution of news. In the first issue news of the village hall committee's fund-raising bingo, fishing competition and the "Pork and Punch" tramps' ball is leavened with the fruit of some personal research which indicates there are many more pigs than people in the village. It's the same with hens, but budgerigars, donkeys, ferrets and geese are in a distinct minority.

1977 01 19

Reach mothers are uniting to press for the rebuilding of a bridge which they say is a potential death trap. It spans the disused railway line on the only main road into Reach from Swaffham Prior. Twenty feet below the bridge are the remains of the parapets, demolished by hooligans, brick by brick, over the last two years. A water main had burst on the surface of the bridge, which has subsided. The Assistant County Surveyor agreed the ideal solution would be to demolish the bridge and level the road, but they were unable to make funds available at the moment. The council is still in the process of taking the bridge over from the Railways Board.

1978 08 12

Mr Len Warren, the self-styled King of Reach, stepped quietly into retirement- but he went with a promise that eventually the village would have independence. "King Len", sporting regal shoulder-length hair left the University Faculty of Economics where he has been caretaker for 16 years. He claims that in a Charter of 1201 King John gave Reach – then a prosperous port – the status of kingdom for ever. Len claimed the right to rule when he learned that the ruler, Count Allen was

murdered in 1349 and a successor never found. "Once it is recognised as an independent kingdom I will give it back to the Queen", he said.

1978 08 30

Cambridge councillors are having second thoughts about the historic and ancient Reach Fair festivities. Times have changed a bit since the year 1201 when King John granted the village a charter to hold its own fair during Rogation Week, a moveable church festival. This year the 'proclamation' date coincided with the new, politically inspired, May Bank Holiday, which resulted in a bumper turnout. Now Reach Parish Council has asked that this should always be the official opening date.

1979 05 22

Nineteen adults and one baby defied the might of Cambridge City Council and the Home Office. Never mind that Reach Fair came and went two weeks ago the more traditional residents remain convinced that the charter of 1201 should be obeyed and that it should take place during Rogation Week. They dismissed the decision that for commercial reasons it would be held on the new May bank holiday instead. In a modest ceremony 'King' Len Warren proclaimed the charter to the modest crowd. Apart from the swings on the common there was no fair to speak of, so revellers made their way back into the Dykes End pub to continue their celebrations.

1982 07 09

Another £264,000 is to be spent on improving the banks of Burwell and Reach Lodes as part of a 20-year scheme to prevent flooding. The work was implemented after a long protest campaign to ensure the present system of lodes was preserved. About two miles of bank are involved and a road is being extended to make full use of the clay available nearby. 82 07 09

1988 08 12

Reach parish church organ is being restored by Walkers Organs of Brandon who installed it 80 years ago and have looked after it ever since. The organ is inspected twice a year but this is its first major restoration since 1948. Money for the overhaul was raised over three years with most coming from a marathon 10-hour hymn singing by bass baritone Gareth Hayward. During the work a piano has been brought in to accompany the congregation 88 08 12