

THE CHAPELS OF GREAT RAVELEY

The first Wesleyan Methodist chapel was built in 1812 at the head of Heath lane. It was a free standing building exclusively for the use of worship. It provided seating for 150 people. The population in 1851 was 326. It would have 50 Sunday school scholars. The estimated number of people attending this Chapel on 30/3/1851 was 60 in the morning service, 80 in the afternoon service, and 50 for the evening service. This Chapel was eventually destroyed by fire, charred beams remain on School Farm on Heath Lane. Great Raveley had been part of Upwood parish for religious worship at St. Peter's church for many centuries but with the growing popularity of Methodism in the area, a new Wesleyan Methodist chapel was erected in Gt. Raveley village in 1900

The first Chapel, was situated just of the junction of Woodlane & Heathlane, and drew its faithful not just the village but also the fens around. In 1851 the chapel had seating for 150.

By this time the village population was 200 and the nearest Methodist chapel was at Upwood. whilst it was possible to walk across the fields to Upwood, the Great Raveley congregation had become used to having their own chapel and with 19 members and approximately 80 hearers, the chapel at Upwood, seating some 150, would scarcely accommodate the additional numbers. It was therefore decided in February 1900 to apply to the Wesleyan Chapel Committee for permission to build a new chapel in Great Raveley.

This new chapel would seat 130 and some suitable freehold land had already been located for the purpose. The original document, now held by Ben and Sue, shows the case put by the Trustees for building a new chapel and a copy of the Conveyance dated 3rd January 1900 shows that John Evison of Upwood sold the piece of land containing `14.7 perches, being part of a piece of parcel of old pasture land known as *The Pightie*' for the sum of £10 in accordance with Model Deed for Wesleyan Methodist Chapels. The new chapel was to be built at the eastern end of the village on the south side of woodlane.

It is interesting to see that of the fifteen witnesses to the Conveyance, only one man did not sign his name Henry Hobs. The following local men are all named within the Conveyance.

John Evison (of Upwood), John Cade (baker & confectioner), Joseph Patrick (baker & confectioner) William Willson (butcher) William Fordham (bootmaker) - all of Ramsey. John Thomas Bishop (farmer) Frank Bishop (farm labourer) Arthur Thomas Bishop (horsekeeper) Henry Hobbs (labourer) all of Great Raveley, William Thompson and George Thompson (machinists) both of Upwood

The new chapel cost £350 to build and the new Trustees were William Thompson, John Evison and John Cade, the latter two also being trustees for Warboys chapel. The new chapel only survived 37 years when, with falling attendance, the building was sold, dismantled and rebuilt in Warboys where it now stands. The cost of demolition and reconstruction was £586 12s 6d.

From 1938 onwards, the Methodists of Gt. Raveley had either to travel to Warboys to sit in their old chapel or attend the one at Upwood. This information was obtained from Miss Moore of Warboys @ the Huntingdon records office.