

DOWN MEMORY LANE

The Commercial Hub of Stewkley

In the past, villagers' shopping needs were met by premises such as Hedges' grocery shop, which traded in the 17th-century Grade II listed thatched cottage on the left, now No 7 High Street North. The shutters hanging from the window sill secured the shop windows at night. The small boy is maybe savouring how far his pennies might stretch on sweets from Mrs Hedges.

Further north, the substantial kerb-side frontage of Bury Farmhouse can be seen. Once a prominent High Street farm, it made way for the village telephone exchange.

Opposite the grocer's, under the hanging sign, was an early 19th-century pub, The Bull and Butcher. Known locally as The Bull, with its coach entrance through to the rear, it served Benskins of Watford ales and stout. The Bull closed as a pub in 1963 and the building became the village library and doctors' surgery until 2006.

It is now a private home, No 6 High Street North.

In the distance can be seen yet another village pub, The King's Head and Hounslow's shop and smithy, but more on those another month.

FROM THE GRAPEVINE 10 YEARS AGO...

From November 2009, villagers were advised by police of a crime spree in the Vale involving vehicle theft and domestic burglary...a number of Stewkley stalwarts gave their time in the Wildlife Reserve to create a badger sett and to dig out a new pond... Stewkley Local History Group's first book, *The Stewkley Lads Fallen in the Great War*, was to be launched on Remembrance Sunday in the Rec Pavilion, hosted by Stewkley Royal British Legion...the Rev Ian Ogilvie was placed in temporary charge of pastoral matters at St Michael's Church...Stewkley Players were presenting the comedy *Nil by Mouth*... David Lett was organizing a workshop to measure need for a village youth club...Bucks County Council were reducing the local bus service to Leighton Buzzard...and Geoff Stott had been awarded a trophy by Aylesbury Vale North Sports Council for tireless service over many years to Stewkley Tennis Club.

FROM THE GRAPEVINE 20 YEARS AGO...

From November 1999, the Aylesbury Vale District Council public consultation period over the proposals for the Stewkley Conservation Area would last until the end of December...local MP John Bercow tucked into *Winnie the Pooh* cake after officially opening the new nursery class at St Michael's School... Andrew Beer was pleading for new village bee-keepers as he was the only one in the parish, and both bees and crops were endangered...due to high demand for his services in 1998, Father Christmas was to extend the opening of his grotto at the church to three days in December...Patrick Murphy slotted a hat-trick of goals as Stewkley U-13s walloped Downs Barn 8-2...and the Carpenters Arms won the 1999 regional *Carlsberg Pubs in Bloom Award*.

