

DOWN MEMORY LANE

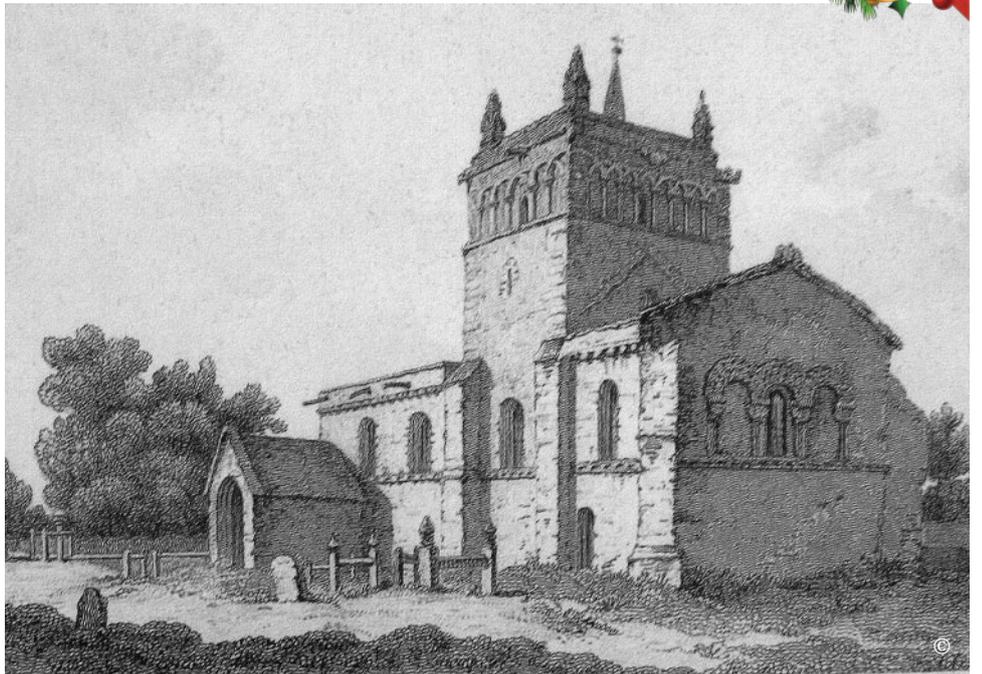
Continuing our series looking at Stewkley past and present



St Michael and All Angels Church

It seems appropriate as we approach Christmastide to feature our Norman parish church. This unusual view from the south-east happens to be our correspondent's favourite. The dappled sunshine in the contemporary image highlights the warm mixture of limestone and ironstone in the sanctuary and tower elevations. This 1808 engraving by J Roffe still shows the Roman cement stucco on these elevations, mostly removed during G E Street's 1862 conservation. The small tower steeple was also removed in 1862 and replaced by the present weathercock on a decorated iron standard. Street reproduced the design of the weathercock standard in the painted imagery on the sanctuary ceiling.

The two brick buttresses on the sanctuary corners, visible on the old engraving, were added between 1776 and 1827 when the east elevation and roof became unstable. These were replaced by Street with stone buttresses, although the brick foundations of the earlier ones were temporarily revealed in more recent excavations. The nave and chancel/sanctuary roofs were restored by Street to their original Norman pitches of 45 degrees. The unfortunate vestry was added in 1911 to a design of John Oldrid Scott, son of eminent Victorian architect Sir George Gilbert Scott.



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FROM THE GRAPEVINE 10 YEARS AGO...

From December 2010, the PC's Traffic Subcommittee had had enough and was no longer prepared to take 'no' for an answer from the authorities to pressing traffic concerns...the village was advised it was 'too small' to qualify for BT's current highspeed broadband plans... early 'fireworks' in Littlecote were caused by a reckless motorist demolishing a power pole...new lights were purchased for the village Christmas tree...Stewkley Singers were presenting a double bill of *Music and Mince Pies* and helping celebrate *Nine Lessons and Carols* in the Methodist Chapel...St Michael's Church PCC proposed that rebuilding the ailing Edwardian vestry was the preferred option to providing facilities in the church...Julie Dawson was elected chair of the Tennis Club...and Barbara Ginn ticked off those who said in the Parish Plan that Stewkley had 'cliques', recommending they join one of the many welcoming village clubs.



FROM THE GRAPEVINE 20 YEARS AGO...

From December 2000, four 'declarations of interest' had been received wishing to run a Post Office service following its closure after two armed raids...the village campaign to retain Malcolm Paterson as our 'postie' proved successful...Charlie Wood was thanked for his voluntary labour to remove the old slide and concrete bases from the Rec prior to installation of the new play equipment...John Sheldon reported on the exploits of a small party of villagers to the WWI battlefields of France for Armistice Day...Pete Stamp headed up both the Cricket Club's 1st and 2nd XI batting averages...Dave and Julia Willis' champion rough-haired lurcher Nettle, romped away with the adult dog champion awards at the Henley and East of England shows...the Christmas Band Concert would mark the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Village Hall in December 1925...and the rumour that England cricketer Darren Gough had bought a home in the village was confirmed.

