

# DOWN MEMORY LANE

*Continuing our series looking at Stewkley past and present*

## Stewkley School

The foundation of the National School followed the appointment of Reverend Charles Henry Travers as Vicar in 1859. Travers was a dynamic force who in his submission for public funds to the Privy Council's Education Committee, stated that, "there is no school in the district for the children of the labouring poor" and consequently "the children are sadly ignorant and neglected." The site, part of Tythe Farm, being opposite the church and central to the village, was gifted by the Bishop of Oxford. By 1860 Travers had not only commissioned the building of the new school, but also a new vicarage, and in 1862 he embarked on the major restoration of St Michael's Church.

Built in local brick with a dignified series of gables, this was the core of Stewkley providing a traditional setting to St Michael's Church.

In 1977, the inadequacies of the old school building saw the first phase of Stewkley School's move to its present site off Chapel Square, gaining a new name as St Michael's Church of England Combined School.

The contemporary image shows the sensitive 2006 conversion of the old school building to modern residential homes, including the attached former schoolmaster's family home to the right. Happily, the campanile was retained, along with the 'Boys ' and 'Girls' name plaques above the original entrances.

