

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Continuing our series looking at Stewkley past and present

The Gentle Sweep of High Street South

One of the widest stretches of the village High Street, this wide, long and gentle sweep of High Street South still retains its grass verges on both sides and its distant view of mature trees linking to the countryside behind. There is a slight but discernible cross-gradient in the road which enhances the shrub and tree boundary on the east side and reduces the impact of newer housing development at Lovetts End and Maltings Close, set lower than the road, to the west.

In the 1930's image, the chimneys of Griffin's substantial brick farmhouse can just be seen behind the magnificent thatched barn which stood half-hipped, gable end onto the High Street. All lost today of course, Griffin's Farm occupied the site on High Street South where four bungalows now stand. At the vanishing point of both images can be seen the Methodist Chapel and Clarendon House.

On the right is another Grade II Listed Building, Grove Cottage, No 44 High Street South. Having a gabled thatched elevation and principal ridge at right angles to the High Street, this home with its attractive and miniature single-storey bay, reinforces the distinctive rural character of the village.

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FROM THE GRAPEVINE 10 YEARS AGO...

From June 2011, there was a kerfuffle of a reshuffle at the Parish Council when chairman of 17 years Cllr Arthur Lyttle was unexpectedly ousted by Cllr Paul Smith... the Bucks Best Kept Village judges were about to descend on Stewkley...Stewkley Local History Group was launching its publication of the history of Stewkley School to mark the school's 150th anniversary, to coincide with the school's annual fete and street parade...the village mourned the passing of well-known character and Japanese POW veteran Noel Samuel aged 94...there was to be a Norman encampment and an evening concert of classical piano music and poetry during St Michael's Church Flower Festival...lots of village celebrations went on to mark the Royal Wedding in the Rec Pavilion, Village Hall and a street party off Ivy Lane...and Nature Watch featured Chinese water deer in residence off Dunton Road.



FROM THE GRAPEVINE 20 YEARS AGO...

From June 2001, the Village Hall Committee adopted a report from its working group to proceed with a £100,000 plus scheme to extend and upgrade the present hall...Stewkley had now reached the head of the Bucks County Council queue to borrow repayable funds for a traffic calming scheme for the entire village which was to be the subject of an exhibition and consultation by the Parish Council...scaffolding had been erected around St Michael's Church as investigations got under way into the condition of the stonework, prior to long-planned conservation work to both West and East elevations and the Tower... Eleanor Johnson, who made public service to Stewkley and the local area part of her life, had passed away aged 85 years... former local lad Al Murray (aka the *Pub Landlord*) was quoted in the national press giving great praise to his junior school headmaster in Stewkley, the late Geoffrey Ginn, "He'd been a paratrooper in 1944 and was a tremendous teacher."

