

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Continuing our series looking at Stewkley past and present

The White Horse on High Street North

A hundred years ago there were ten public houses in Stewkley. In those days some village innkeepers brewed their own beer. Those that didn't, bought it in from others that brewed beer locally. The main brewery source was The Old Swan on Chapel Square, which was owned by Thomas Hedges, who also owned the White Horse Hotel at Islington cattle market in London. Beer for his London premises was brewed at The Old Swan in Stewkley and hauled by horse drawn waggon to London. The beer was apparently much enjoyed by dealers and drovers attending the cattle market and when they called at the Islington White Horse, they invariably ordered a 'pint of Old Stewkley'. Thomas Hedges bought Stewkley's most northerly pub, which had opened in 1854, and was known as The Jolly Dogs.



He changed its name in the late 1880s to The White Horse Inn, after his Islington premises. Following his retirement to Stewkley he built himself a rather grand home, Haywood House, nearby on the other side of High Street North.

In the old image, the pub landlord's wife, Mrs Rolfe, is chatting to a lady cyclist, with her two daughters standing by.

The old pub was demolished shortly before the Second World War. New licensed premises, to be known as The White Horse, were built in 1939 by Charles Wells Brewery in its distinctive architectural style, set further back from the High Street on the same site. In turn, these premises closed as a pub in the late 1980s, and today constitute a private home, White Horse Lodge, and the site of Fountain's hairdressing salon.

The only thing in common which the two images share today is the vanishing point of Mursley Road in the far distance. Frederick Grace, pipe in hand in the old image, would be a brave man to stand just there in today's traffic.



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FROM THE GRAPEVINE 10 YEARS AGO...

From July 2012, it seemed that the weather staged a mirror image back in 2012 with the Diamond Jubilee weather also failing to dampen spirits on that occasion... four pages of celebration photos filled the Grapevine... local MP John Bercow was spotted putting his hand in his pocket to buy raffle tickets, but failed to guess the name of the bear at the 1st Stewkley Beavers' tent... much loved Methodist Minister Jim Gorrige formally departed, as new Minister Irena Byron moved into the Manse...the Parish Council lost its longest serving member of 33 years when Councillor Alan Dickens resigned...Alan wasn't allowed to vegetate for long as he was elected Rec Ground Management Committee Chair a few days later...Nature Watch reported the distinctive call of a nightjar for the first time in many years...and the Parish Council added its opposition to the planning application for a waste incinerator at Calvert, and agreed to proceed with a BCC 20mph speed limit pilot scheme (whatever happened to that?)



FROM THE GRAPEVINE 20 YEARS AGO...

From July 2002, again back in 2002, the Golden Jubilee celebrations proved to be a four-day triumph of planning in spite of the weather forecast...John and Anthea Edwards were about to depart for the Philippines to work with street children under the Signpost International charity...vandals broke into the Rec Pavilion and caused considerable destruction but were scared off empty handed by the alarm for no reward...Alan Dickens was thanked by the Rec Ground Committee for all the unsung work that he does and which was much appreciated...and village historian Robert Dickens wrote an interesting piece set around a mystery equine photograph of Stewkley resident and local aristocrat the Earl of Orkney with his only child Lady Mary.

