

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Continuing our series looking at Stewkley past and present

Spot the Missing Terrace at the Top of 'South Street'.

Towards the top end of Dunton Road, or South Street as it was once known, are two terraces built in the characteristic warm, orange/red Stewkley bricks.

The terrace of labourers' cottages comprising Nos 13 to 19 Dunton Road looks very similar to its neighbouring terrace numbered 5 to 11. One might assume that the two terraces were contemporary in construction, but evidence from vintage Ordnance Survey maps shows that Nos 5 to 11 are considerably older than their neighbour. The latter were built in the second half of the 19th-century before the new terrace of Nos 13 to 19 appeared prior to the Great War on the allotments known locally as 'Barton's Gardens'. Readers can spot the missing terrace in the old images on this page.

The new terrace appeared to follow the long tradition of Victorian labourers' dwellings as simple two-up/two-down cottages in local brick. But there were important differences. The health and wellbeing provisions of the 1909 Housing and Town Planning Act set out to improve the 'housing of the working classes' which for the new terrace included extra living space and ventilation, outside privies at the back with mains drainage (although no running water in the village until more than 30 years later), rainwater tanks, and a fenced backyard and garden.

While the new terrace was being built, the new Act was enforced to require Mr Barton, the landlord of the older dilapidated terrace, to bring his properties up to the required standard with modern, healthy conveniences.

Sadly, the elegant iron railings were compulsorily removed during WWII, supposedly to make munitions for the war effort.

The Grapevine team would like to thank Rebecca Hadley and Ann Smith for inspiring and contributing to this article. There will be more to come about folk in Dunton Road in another issue.

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FROM THE GRAPEVINE 10 YEARS AGO...

From October 2012, the judges reasoning for awarding the runner-up slot to Stewkley in the Best Kept Village competition was revealed...Stewkley Scouts came away with honours from the annual Kop Hill Soapbox Challenge...St Michael's Church Fabric Committee chair reported that St Michael's was 'positively glowing' following the completion of the major masonry conservation work over the summer...the village mourned the untimely death of Janet French...there were still no applications for the vacant PC position...Patricia Downing and Joan Lewis were standing down after many years' service organizing the RBL Poppy Appeal...village decorator Jim Munro regaled us with his experience as a 'pandemonium drummer' and marshal at the opening ceremony of the London Olympics... Martin Scrivener attended to mowing the Nature Reserve for hay...and Sue Atkinson and Prue Luget were winners of the Tennis Club round-robin ladies' doubles tournament.

**FROM THE GRAPEVINE 20 YEARS AGO...**

From October 2002, the Grapevine appealed to village parents to ask, "Do you know where your children are after dark?" following an unprecedented wave of vandalism around the Rec Pavilion and the Tennis Club...village painter and decorator Norman Jones passed away...a letter to the Editor from an airline pilot living in Stewkley questioned the accuracy of a Grapevine article 'Wings Over Our Village', going so far as to suggest lack of balance and 'nimbyism'...the PC was still attempting to find a site for youthful BMX bikers...could there be 'pillow-talk' afoot as Bunt and Jill Scott were elected chair and vice-chair of Stewkley Players?...Peter Beer was about to cycle across the USA in aid of three different charities...and Richard Gill was 'hanging up his boots' after 16 years of Stewkley cricket.

