

# DOWN MEMORY LANE

Continuing our series looking at Stewkley past and present



## A Dunton Road 'Stewkley Lad' at Remembrance time.

Outside the modern, new terrace of cottages comprising Nos 13 to 19 Dunton Road, the old image from the early 1910s shows local carrier, Joshua Heley, en route to Aylesbury with his horse and wagon. Two local carriers travelled twice a week to Aylesbury and Leighton Buzzard, collecting errands from villagers for 2d each and, if there was space, passengers for 4d per journey. Joshua's son Fred oversees the reins.

The second cottage from the left in the old image is No 15, and the girl in the doorway is probably young teenager Ada Dickens. By 1914, the family of John and Emily Dickens were almost certainly the first lucky occupants of one of the new cottages. They had moved into No 15 with eight children from a two up/two down property in Orchard Lane.

Ada's elder brother (and third eldest of the Dickens children) was Harry, born on 17 September 1896 in Tower Hamlets, London, where his father had found work as a gas stoker on the docks.



Harry attended Stewkley School and became a farm labourer on leaving school, aged 13, in September 1909. At the declaration of war in 1914, he immediately joined up into 3rd (Special Reserve) Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, a new garrison duty battalion of the local regiment. It was posted to Portsmouth to man vulnerable points in the port's defence system.

Sadly, Harry developed a kidney condition known as nephritis and died on 27 January 1915 in Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham, Portsmouth.

He was never to see front-line service or go overseas, and at 18, became the youngest 'Stewkley Lad' by age to die in the service of his country. His body was returned to be buried in St Michael's Churchyard where it rests today with five other Stewkley Lads fallen in two World Wars.

John Dickens' family members came-and-went, left home, married, and passed away from No 15 Dunton Road for more than 40 years. How different life must have seemed to him when he passed away himself in Stewkley aged 80 in 1948.

*The Grapevine team would once more like to thank Rebecca Hadley and Ann Smith for their contribution to this article. Background Image: 'Poppies' by Diana Sheldon from 'Stewkley Lads Fallen in the Great War' 2009.*

## FROM THE GRAPEVINE 10 YEARS AGO...

From November 2012, 14 year old Owen Hearn won his age group category in the Veolia Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition with his red kite image...Stewkley Community Enterprise Agency took over 'low-level' environmental maintenance tasks, devolved from Bucks County Council, on behalf of the PC... former villager Tony Wood passed away...Stewkley Singers 'struck a chord' to announce their double-date Christmas entertainment, *Music and Mince Pies*...the Rec Pavilion was about to celebrate its 40th birthday...Phil Haupt once again won The Swan Onion Competition...Bucks County Council halved the village bus service to Aylesbury to just one return journey per week, citing cost and lack of use...Keith Higgins was co-opted to the PC at the October meeting...Stewkley Players were about to perform the thriller, *Spygame*...and Sue Atkinson and Annette Gesoff completed the London to Brighton Off-Road Bike Race.



## FROM THE GRAPEVINE 20 YEARS AGO...

From November 2002, Bucks CC was staging a village traffic calming exhibition for proposed road narrowing on Soulbury Road and High Street North... arsonists who burnt down the Tennis Club hut were being sought by police with a PC reward offered for information... the October PC meeting was packed with villagers to hear the latest news about the proposed Newton Longville incinerator and changes to Luton Airport flight paths affecting Stewkley...villagers were reminded that planning permission is required to position a satellite dish on a wall, roof or chimney facing a road within the Conservation Area-could you be guilty?...a major two-year project to conserve the fabric of St Michael's Church was skilfully completed by Nimbus Conservation Ltd...and despite the vandalism in the Rec, the Recreation Ground Committee was keen to highlight the many 'positives' of a facility to enjoy and of which to be proud.

