

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Medieval Stewkley

The Hollow Way at Nuneham Hill Field

Forming part of the Scheduled Monument moated site at Nuneham Hill Field is a medieval hollow way running beside the moat on its north-west side. Hollow ways, sometimes known as sunken lanes, are a common characteristic of the landscape of southern England.

It is an ancient continuation of today's School Lane, now a cul-de-sac, which turns south-west off High Street North opposite the parish church. A public footpath follows the route of the hollow way, descending the slope of Nuneham Hill Field and crossing over the headwater stream of Hardwick Brook, the most northerly tributary of the River Thames. The footpath route continues up the other side



The Hollow Way, Nuneham Hill Historic England scheduled monument site

of the valley and connects Stewkley village and its Grade I Listed St Michael's Church with Littlecote 1.5 miles to the south-west. This is the site of the deserted medieval hamlet of Lidcote, also an Historic England Scheduled Monument.

The hollow way is up to 1m deep and about 5m wide. At a point about half way along the adjacent



The route of the Hollow Way south-west towards Littlecote

moat's north-west side, it has been infilled to form a causeway from the moat to a more recent track running along the far side of the hollow way.

Post Roman Britain and prior to the 18th-century, most new roads were merely unmetalled, heavily-used trackways. This one almost certainly evolved as the most convenient and direct route to get the medieval worshippers of Lidcote (without a separate parish church) to religious services and events in Stewkley Church.

The Grapevine Heritage Correspondent thanks Historic England in researching this article.

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FROM THE GRAPEVINE

10 YEARS AGO...

From May 2013, excitement mounted as Stewkley FC reached the final of the Oving Cup where they were to play Wingrave...Ann Winsor won a Bucks High Sheriff Award for services to Bucks Children's Centres...Sue Neale featured in the news once more, this time as victorious captain of the Short Mat Bowls team that bowled over favourites Ivinghoe Beacon in the John Robinson Cup Final at Wing...the village churches combined to process through the village to bear witness on an unseasonably snowy and bitterly cold Palm Sunday...Stewkley Singers were busy putting the final touches to their May concert, a 'Night at the Opera'...the PC gave its approval to government funding to restore a passenger rail service, East-West Rail, between Oxford and Bedford to be operational by December 2017 (ah well, better late than never)...Alan Dickens produced his usual comprehensive and informative Wildlife Reserve annual report...and Natalie Mills' The Shop rescued Andrew Beer's bees with a life-saving next day delivery of cane sugar.



FROM THE GRAPEVINE

20 YEARS AGO...

From May 2003, there was to be an election in Stewkley Parish Council for the first time in 16 years with nine hopeful and (judging by their mugshots in Grapevine) youthful-looking candidates for eight seats...having last lifted the trophy 43 years ago, Stewkley FC appeared in the Oving Cup Final against Berton, but as the score had still been drawn after extra time, it was due a replay...the PC reported that the Newton Longville waste incinerator proposal had been shelved...a minute from the 1938 PC minute book noted an appeal from the Leighton Buzzard postmaster that insufficient street numbering of Stewkley village properties made delivering letters very difficult for his postmen (gosh Mr Postmaster, ANY postal deliveries would be welcome in 2023)...and St Michael's Church bells were at last on the move to Hayward Mills foundry in Nottingham for their specialist restoration after four years of dedicated village fund raising which realised £35,000 (roughly £60,000 at today's value.)

