

# DOWN MEMORY LANE

## Rowdy Goings-on in Stewkley 120 years Ago

A recent adventure through the archives of local newspapers turned up a report dated Saturday 6 May 1899 in the *Buckinghamshire Advertiser and North Bucks Free Press* of rowdy behaviour in the village.

Thomas Dickens and George Alder, both Stewkley labourers, were summoned by William Elmer, beer-house keeper, for being disorderly and refusing to quit his licensed premises when requested to do so on 17 April.

As complainant he stated that he kept the Plough Inn beer-house in High Street North, Stewkley. On the night of 17 April, the defendants came to the inn and wanted to 'fall out' with the complainant's father. They kicked up a disturbance, threatened the family, and Dickens knocked over a quart of beer, threatening to break the clock or the lamp. They refused to leave, and challenged other young men who were enjoying the Plough's hospitality, to a fight. They refused to leave even at ten o'clock and remained until 10.15. They claimed not to be drunk, but had been at work all day, and were dissatisfied with their treatment. Miss Elmer, sister of the complainant, corroborated.

The Magistrates' Bench imposed a fine of 10s. and 8s.6d. each costs, or seven days imprisonment.

Thomas Dickens was further charged with assaulting Mr Elmer on 18 April. The complainant claimed that on the evening following the earlier offence, he was returning from Leighton Buzzard and pulled up



*The Plough Inn and Bowls Farm, HSN*

at The Swan Inn when Dickens came running out like a madman. He demanded of the witness (Elmer), "What do I owe you?" Witness replied, "Eighteen pence", and the defendant retorted, "I shan't pay you!" and struck the witness.

A young man came out of the Swan and stopped him striking the witness further. The defendant attempted to climb onto the shafts to pull the witness out of the trap, and the witness hit him with his whip as hard as he could. The defendant picked up some stones and threatened to kill the witness, and later on came to the Plough Inn and again made a great disturbance, knocking another man about, slapping Miss Elmer's face and breaking a window and a flowerpot. The defendant claimed not to be drunk but excited.

The Chairman of the Bench remarked that the complainant got the best of it, having knocked the defendant down. The fine was set at 10s. and 7s.6d. costs or seven days in jail.

George Alder, labourer of Stewkley, was further charged with using obscene language on 18 April. He did not appear before the Bench and Police Constable Cooper proved the case, defendant being fined 2s.6d. and 7s.6d. costs or seven days imprisonment.

What a carry-on!



*The Plough Inn, Stewkley, with some of its regulars. The publican, William Elder (the complainant in the article), is shown centre with two of his children in the pony and trap.*

## FROM THE GRAPEVINE

### 10 YEARS AGO...

From September 2013, Parish Councillors met with the Bucks County Council local area technician to discuss the poor state of village roads...Eileen and Jim Bishop of High Street South celebrated their Platinum Wedding Anniversary...the Youth Club was about to recommence for the autumn...efforts were being made to trace the detail of a 1930 vintage Ford lorry originally owned by local builder George Clarke...Mrs Ann-Marie Davies from Stoke Mandeville was newly appointed Parish Clerk...Stewkley Scouts' summer camp took them to visit Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour, site of the first camp of the Boy Scout movement in 1907...and John Flewin reminisced on his youthful early years in journalism, reliving his experience as junior reporter with the *LBO* at the site of the 1963 Great Train Robbery at Ledburn Junction.



## FROM THE GRAPEVINE

### 20 YEARS AGO...

From September 2003, a group of locals was forming an organisation to operate a Stewkley village website...detail from the 2001 Census revealed Stewkley Ward to be ethnically 98.7% white, 94.6% in good health(!), technically better educated with a degree or better (29.4%), and twice the England & Wales average with (57.9%) two or more vehicles per household...the PC received notification from the Church of England of its intention to seek permission from the Home Office to close St Michael's churchyard to new burials...St Michael's John Hibbard was to be ordained Deacon at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford...and Tom Beasley performed a hat-trick in helping Stewkley 1st XI defeat old rivals Drayton Parslow by six wickets.

