

# DOWN MEMORY LANE

## Stewkley's Pubs and Beer Houses.



*The Kings Head, High Street North, c.1915*



*The Kings Head on the High Street around 1927*



*Kings Head House*



*Old Rose and Crown, 2 Ivy Lane*

Over the next couple of *Grapevine* editions, we're visiting the sites of pubs that were once in the epicentre of Victorian downtown Stewkley!

Barely a hop, skip and a jump north of The Bull on the other side of High Street North stands Kings Head House at No 15 High Street North, formerly The Kings Head, another of the village's ten pubs lost to changing times.

The original property was built as a public house in 1758 with the 'business' elevation facing the High Street. It is a double pile building with a recessed central arched doorway, solidly constructed of red brick in Flemish bond, with a traditional pub cellar.

Its Register of Ale House Keepers extends from 1758 to 1828 and the pub is recorded in Trade Directories from 1853 to 1939.

The Kings Head was extensively restored following a fire in 1887. The oldest image, from a postcard date marked 13 December 1922, is believed to date from 1915. The landlord had not long moved into the pub and the words on the postcard from his wife, Em, told her sister that "we are very well up to now, but I have gone rather thin. I think it was working so hard at first coming here."

The signage on both vintage images tells us that the Kings Head purveyed ales and stout from Brackley brewery, Hopcraft and Norris. This brewery merged with Chesham Brewery in 1946 to form Chesham and Brackley Breweries Ltd and brewing ceased in 1959.

The pub closed for business in 1972, after Stewkley's longest continuous tenure as a public house, and the building is now a private residence.

The Rose and Crown is almost certainly one of Stewkley's oldest extant public houses, keeping company with The Red Lion on Dunton Road. This is quite probably due to its location on the former Drovers' Way at the south end of Ivy Lane or 'Back Way', where herdsmen would avail themselves of a beer or two for themselves. Today, the old Rose and Crown is the private residence of No 2 Ivy Lane, and the clue is in the metal bracket for the former pub sign, replaced now with a lantern, on the front elevation.

It is now a heavily extended, double pile building of red brick construction, later rendered and painted.

Its earliest deeds date from 1683 as a 'cottage and premises.' The premises has passed down several generations of the Roe (Rowe) family since 1707, with leasehold to Joseph Mead in 1748 and 1756 and to the Meacher family from 1779. It seems likely that Thomas Meacher brewed his own beer as his 1831 will recorded his trade as a 'common brewer.'

Interestingly, the pub changed hands in 1879 to William Wilson and Henry Roberts of Ivinghoe, the owners of the Roberts and Wilson Brewery in that village. Charles Rowe was the licensed publican in 1891. The Rose and Crown is recorded in Trade Directories from 1853 to 1911.

The property passed into private hands in 1922 when it ceased trading as a public house. Certainly, from a will recorded in 1944, the property was first mentioned as 'now known as 2 Ivy Lane.'

Next month, our pub crawl takes us down Ivy Lane to The Swan...

**FROM THE GRAPEVINE**

**10 YEARS AGO...**

From July 2014, this was the month when the projected rollout of super-fast fibre broadband by BT Openreach in the North End got into a complete muddle with administrators and contractors in total confusion as to what they were doing (was anyone surprised?!)...views were being sought for a potential solar power farm on the site of the former Wing Airfield...the 'Stewkley Plod' scarecrow on Dunton Road for Open Gardens weekend caused consternation to motorists and scooped 1st prize in the competition...Nature Watch reported a very rare visitor to Dunton Road in the shape of a black redstart, on the RSPB amber list of conservation concern...glorious sunshine welcomed Stewkley's ten village Open Gardens and 34 scarecrows throughout the village, recorded photographically in *Grapevine*.



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

From July 2004, the PAVAN airport resistance group claimed that the latest Luton Airport proposed air traffic arrivals route, just skirting Stewkley, would still have adverse effects on the village...Darren Roadnight received the 1st team Players' Player Award at Stewkley FC end of season dinner dance...the Rev John Hibbard, deacon and curate at St Michael's Church, was to be ordained priest in September at Aylesbury...Stewkley 1st XI easily outbatted Soulbury in the local derby with 80 not out from Tom Beasley...and tennis playing youngsters were gearing up for the Tennis Club's Piers Draper Junior Challenge Cup Tournament.membership.

