

# Clophill through the years

## *The old Bedford to Luton road*

Long before the A507 east-west bypass was built in 1975 and before the dual carriageways were built to the north and south in 1938, the A6 used to run through the area known as the The Green at the west end of the village.

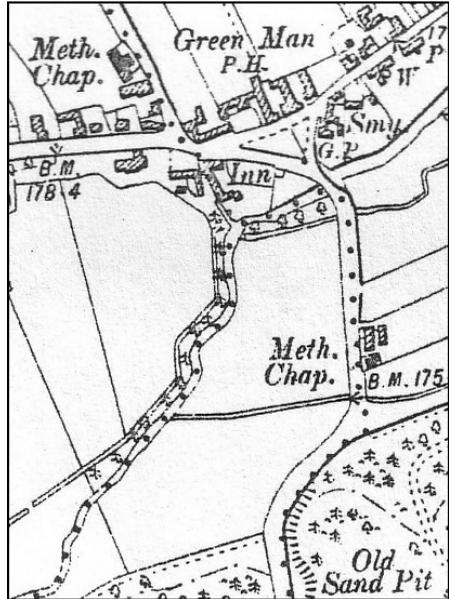
The A6 road from Bedford came down the hill past the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and Diggins' Garage to a junction. The road from Ampthill and Maulden joined it from the west. It then turned left past the Flying Horse and continued along the south side of The Green past the lockup and pound then over the old bridge and south past the Primitive Methodist Chapel to join the current A6 road at the point where there is now a filling station.

There was a wall to the west of The Flying Horse which had to be demolished to make way for the new road south. Behind the wall was Maulden Cottage, the home of the two spinster daughters of Captain Moore, a JP who had the lockup built in 1851.

The old bridge, which has been demolished and replaced with a modern one, had been the main river crossing since at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Flying Horse public house was a popular inn in the old coaching-days for travellers from London to the north and would have been a staging post where the horses were changed. Later there was a bus garage in the yard where the buses were stored overnight.

With the coming of mechanised



*Section of 1901 OS map showing the route of the A6 road.*



Looking north towards Bedford.  
Diggins' Garage and the Wesleyan Chapel

transport the old bridge became an accident black spot. Medical staff were standing by at the weekends to deal with the frequent collisions that occurred there.

To the east side of the bridge was a ford where animals could be watered or containers filled.

There are four large trees on the Green; three are European Limes and one is a Small-leaved Lime. The photos, taken in the 1900s, show that they were a good size then so they must be well over 100 years old.

The two triangles of grass are registered as a village green under the Commons Registration Act 1965. This area is very small for a village green so it probably came about more as a traffic junction than a traditional common.

The Hunt used to meet on The Green on Boxing Days before fox hunting became unpopular and a VE-day party was held there to celebrate the end of the war in Europe.

Even though the through traffic has been diverted away from this area it is still dominated by vehicles, both parked and entering and leaving the village.



Looking west to the wall at Maulden Cottage



Looking north across the old bridge to the Lime trees on The Green



Looking west across The Green with the lockup on the left