

# Clophill through the years

## *The many pubs of Clophill*

Up until 1959 Clophill had six public houses for a population of about 1000. They were the Flying Horse, the Green Man, the Compasses, the New Inn, the Rising Sun and the Stone Jug. It is difficult to find a reason for the large number. Clophill was always an agricultural community. There was some passing trade on the A6 but apart from that there is no obvious reason why the village supported so many licensed premises.

### **The Flying Horse**

The earliest mention in the records of this inn is in the will of Joseph Hill, the late owner in 1731. Its position at the crossing of the north-south and east-west roads meant that it was probably a coaching inn.

As late as 1927 it still had stabling for 18 horses so there was plenty of room to stable the horses of passing travellers. At the same time it is recorded that the National Omnibus & Transport Co. Ltd. had a "garage for three buses" in the adjacent yard and that the pub "Gets charabanc parties. Best pub in village."



The inn was in Morris ownership until the company (then Morris & Company (Amphill) Limited) was sold to Luton brewers J.W.Green Limited in 1927.

J.W.Green merged with Flowers Breweries in 1954 and thereafter took the Flowers name until the company was purchased by Whitbread in 1962. Whitbread ceased to brew and to keep public houses in 2001 but the Flying Horse remained open as part of the company's subsidiary Beefeater. It is now owned by Mitchells and Butlers.

### **The Green Man**

This is another old inn and it was first mentioned in the will of John Richardson in 1758 when it was known as the Shepherd & Dog. He was recorded as being an "alekeeper" in the record of the baptism of one of his children in 1719 so it may date from that time.

It came into the ownership of Biggleswade brewers Wells & Company in 1832. In 1899 it became Wells & Winch until it merged with Greene King in 1963. The Green King Plaque is still on the front wall.



1925 Rating Valuation Act noted that they "get Luton Police & a stati fair once a year".

What the Luton Police did there is not recorded but the "stati fair" was a Thurston's fun fair which was held in the field behind the pub, known as Garton's field after the land lady. Statute Fairs were formerly held in towns and villages for the hiring of servants and farm labourers. Prospective workers would gather, often sporting some sort of badge or tool to denote their speciality. Shepherds held a crook or a tuft of wool, cowmen brought wisps of straw, dairymaids carried a milking stool or pail and housemaids held brooms or mops; this is why some hiring fairs were known as mop fairs. Employers would look them over and, if they were thought fit, hire them for the coming year, handing over a shilling to seal the arrangement

How the Clophill Statty came to be is not known as there is no record of Clophill being granted a royal statute to hold a fair.

### **The Compasses**

The first recorded mention of the Compasses is in a conveyance of 1828 when it was called the Red Cow. Two years later a gang of poachers, tried at the Quarter Sessions, is recorded as having met there before trespassing in Cainhoe Park.

Like the Flying Horse, it was owned by Morris & Company (Amphill) Ltd, J.W.Green Ltd, Flowers Breweries and then Whitbread. The public house closed in 1992 and is now a private house at 79 High Street.



### **The New Inn**

As its name suggests, the New Inn is not as old as the Flying Horse and the Green Man. It is first recorded in a directory of 1839. Like the Flying Horse and the Compasses, it was owned by Morris & Company (Amphill) Ltd, J.W.Green Ltd, Flowers Breweries and then Whitbread. The New Inn closed in 1959 and is now a private house at 120 High Street.



### **The Rising Sun**

George Garner is the earliest known licensee holding the licence of a beer retailer from approximately 1851-1881

Under the 1830 Beer Act any householder who paid rates could apply, with a one-off payment of two guineas, to sell beer or cider in his home (usually the front parlour) and even to brew his own on his premises. This is probably how the Rising Sun started. It became a public house, on being granted a full licence, on 11 March 1954 but is now a private house.

The cricketer Jack Durston, grandson of George Garner, was born in 1893. He played for Middlesex and in 1921 he played for England against Australia, when he took five wickets for 136 runs.

Was it called the Rising Sun because it was the most easterly building in of the village?

### **The Stone Jug**

This public house probably started as a beer house as the census for 1861 shows that the occupier, Eliza Issit, was a Baker, Grocer and Beer Retailer. The first mention of it by name is in about 1874 in the licensing register for Amphill Petty Sessional District.

It was planned to rename the pub the Toby Jug in 1976 when new potential owners were negotiating to buy it; the parish council strongly objected to the name change but in the event the proposed sale fell through and the name remained the same.

Interestingly, it is the only stone residence in village.

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Most of the above information was sourced from the Bedford & Luton Archives & Records Office website.