Our present-day pattern of roads is generally BO familiar that a second thought is seldom given to the possibility of its having been substantially different in the past, yet such was the case in this part of Northamptonshire only 200 years ago.

Today, Crick lies on the main road from Northampton to Coventry via Rugby or Dunchurch, with side roads to Yelvertoft and Watford, a lane to Kilsby and a field road, which starts towards Lilbourne, only to peter out. The Watling Street runs northwards along the western boundary of the parish, a legacy from the Roman occupation and in use since then, although a length of 2^- miles north from Watford Gap has been derelict since the middle of the last century. Within recent years, an ugly swathe has been cut parallel to it across the parish for the M1 motorway (names are out of fashion nowadays).

The Northampton road became an effective through route only from about 1750 when a turnpike road was made up, following the Act of 1738/9. The roads to Yelvertoft and Watford, as well as the Kilsby lane were laid down at the Inclosures of 1776, and although the Lilbourne way was also laid out then, it has since gone out of use past Shenley. These Inclosure roads were ruled on a map, so that they can be recognised readily by their long straight lengths. When the canals were cut towards the close of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, and again when the railways were made in the middle of the 19th, some of these roads had to be diverted locally, obliterating parts of their original course and disturbing their straightness. The Watford road and Kilsby lane are examples of this.

When the open fields were enclosed, such old roads as were replaced, disappeared in a surprisingly short time
under the plough except where they were taken more or less permanently under grass, when a hollow or ridge may mark their presence. In some cases an old road was used as the boundary between enclosed fields, in which case the hedge line reveals its course, but under arable, the line can often be seen where crops such as corn grow shorter in the straw along the stony bed. The primary sources, however, for discovering the existence as well as the course of a pre-inclosure road, are from documents, and on such old maps and plans, which have survived.

In 1700, Crick lay on a major route from London through Oxford to Leicester, Nottingham, and up to Newcastle. It was in use throughout the Middle Ages, was almost certainly in existence in Saxon times, and may well have pre-dated the Romans.

From Oxford, the route lay through Middleton Stoney, Brackley, Preston Capes, Daventry, Ashby-St. Legers, across the Watling Street near Watford Gap, then through Crick, Lilbourne, Swinford, Poultney (now a lost village), Gilmorton, Willoughby Waterless and to Leicester and the north.

Another important through-road was from Cambridge via Northampton to Coventry, but not by way of the modern A428. It went through Duston, Harlestone with Althorp on the north, Great Brington, Long Buckby, Watford, Watford Gap, Kilsby, Hillmorton and so to Coventry via Dunchurch or Rugby. Crick was connected to it via the Oxford Road at Watford Gap.

A third major medieval way was from Northampton through Harleston, West Haddon, Yelvertoft, straight on to Lilbourne, Cathorpe, Brownsover, then to Coventry either by Newbold and Brinklow, or the diversion through Rugby and Brandon. This was known in medieval times either as 'Salters Way’ or ‘Portway’, the 'port' meaning a market town (Northampton). Thus, Crick lay on a busy road between crossroads at Lilbourne and Watford Gap.

The Oxford Road, after leaving Daventry, took the line of the present B4038 as far as the Welton crossroads, when it followed the right fork to Ashby St. Legers. It circuitted the village there because of the 14th century incaration by the Catesby's, then followed the "Boyland Lane” towards the Watling Street, which it crossed nearer to Watford Gap than at present. It then curved northwards of its present course, to Crick, to meet the Watford road at right angles. Originally, it then skirted the village on the south and east sides through the Marsh, crossed the Yelvertoft Way, and curved off towards Lilbourne. This was in the days when the village lay more to the east, and the Marsh was built up, but later, with the decline in that part, the road from Ashby turned left to follow the Watford road into the village. It went past the church to where the present road turns sharp right to Yelvertoft by "Ranmoor” house, where instead of turning, it carried straight on to join up with the old 'east-circular' road on its way to Lilbourne. Its route there is difficult to trace all the way, but it joined the 'Portway' about 1- mile east of Lilbourne.

The Oxford Road was a vital thoroughfare. From the beginning of the 12th century to the 15th, Crick was part of the estates of the Mowbrays, and this road give direct access from their seat at Melton Mowbray to their property in the counties of Lincoln, Leicester, Warwick and Northampton, and north to the Isle of Axholme and Yorkshire. Locally, Crick was immediately accessible via Lilbourne to their estates in Newbold, Brinklow, Monks Kirby, Combe Abbey etc. The same Oxford road provided the link from Leicester Abbey to its Lilbourne and Brackley estates, and Oxford colleges found it essential for their communications. The accounts for Herton College, for instance, give many details of journeys made as early as 1300 along this road to Newcastle and beyond, citing the stops made for sleep and meals. St. John's College, with its property in Crick, was also within direct and easy reach.

After Daventry, Lilbourne was a regular place of rest for the night, but Crick seems to have had no adequate hostel even as late as 1700. In the 17th century, Sir William Dugdale, the great antiquary and Herald, did a great deal of traveling to and from his home at Blithe Hall beyond Nuneaton, and his diary records a number of occasions when he turned off the Northampton to Coventry road at Watford Gap to stay the night at Crick. When away from home, he always was able to stay with friends, and being acquainted with the Andrews, he most likely was their guest when in Crick.

These roads must have been in quite good condition, because journeys made on horseback took much the same time in winter as summer. The Watling Street was much less used, mainly because it passed through few towns or villages where stops could be made. There were some inns along its length, but they were lonely places. That at Watford Gap, called the 'New Inn' in the 17th century, was better placed than many, because it served the Oxford Road as well as the Cambridge Road and the Watling Street.

There were two other roads from Crick, the 'Rugby Way' and 'Haddon Way' which were used for local traffic mainly, until they were incorporated into the Northampton turnpike road. That event marked the beginning of changes, continued by Inclosures, when the old medieval roads went out of use by degrees because of new inclosure and turnpike roads, and these changes are still in progress even today.

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Copied by J Goodger in 2005 from Crick News Autumn 1978