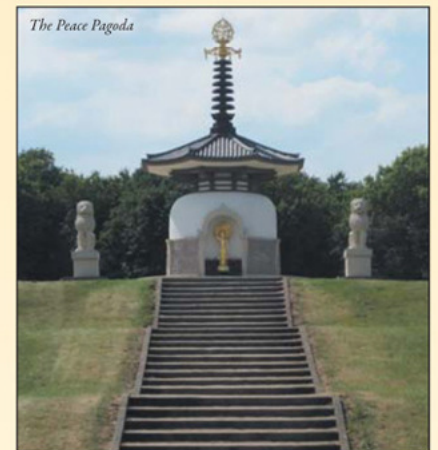


Historic Towns & Villages

Willen

‘A place of beauty and tranquillity’



Willen was included with Caldecote in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and first mentioned by name as the manor of Welyn-cum-Caldecote shortly afterwards. The name ‘Willen’ probably comes from the old English word ‘wylig’ meaning ‘at the willows’. Before the creation of the lake and local expansion of housing development for the new town of Milton Keynes, this would have been an apt description for the small village situated next to the meandering river Ouzel with its border of willow trees.

It has always been a small village, its population never exceeding a hundred people. In the 1960s, Willen comprised of a vicarage, two big farms, around a dozen cottages and the last remnants of a watermill, reflecting a situation that had existed for nearly a thousand years. The tiny parish church (1680) was designed by the architect and physicist Robert Hooke and is a classic of the early English Baroque period. It was dedicated to St Mary Magdalene.



The dominant features of the village now are Willen Lake and the Peace Pagoda, which was the first to be built in Europe. The village is also home to Willen Hospice, previously Manor Farm, overlooking the lake on its north side.

Willen is a place of beauty and tranquillity to bird watchers, dog walkers and fishermen alike.

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