



Trails

Heritage walks in and around Milton Keynes



Willen

1. The School

The school house was built in 1847 by the Busby Trust. A single schoolmistress was employed to educate up to 24 of the village children. Attendance was not compulsory, but most of the workers' children did attend until they were 11. Children from affluent families like the Whittings tended to be educated privately, either by a governess at home or by a local Preparatory School until they were old enough to go to a boarding school, such as Westminster School in London.

The school mistresses included Mary Whitehead in 1851, Mary Perring in 1861, Elizabeth Jelley in 1871, Martha Barnes in 1881 and Janet Meads in 1891.

In the 1890s the school had 29 pupils all who had fathers who worked on the local farm.

As Willen grew, the school became too small for all the children so in 1986 they built Willen Combined School which had 500 four to twelve year olds. It is now Willen Primary School which now holds just over 400 four to eleven year olds. It is a lively and thriving school that offers a wide range of exciting experiences in addition to the basic curriculum.

2. Willen Church

The church's real name is Saint Mary Magdalene. The church was built in 1680 for Dr. Richard Busby who was the Headmaster of Westminster School. He employed a former pupil, Robert Hooke, to design the church. It is thought that Sir Christopher Wren (who had also been at Westminster School as Hooke's contemporary) may also have helped because there is an open Bible carved into the ceiling of the church.

In the 19th century an apse was added to the nave and the cupola was removed from the tower. Mr. Hooke designed this church with the intention for it to be a simple nave



and decorative tower.

Inside the church is a Prayer Board where anyone can leave messages for a prayer to be said.

If you would like to know more about Robert Hooke then there is information about him in the play area on the right as you head towards the Well.

3. The Well

The Well at Willen (a work of the Society of the Sacred Mission) is a new way of looking after families, couples and single people trying to live together respecting each others thoughts and feelings. It is based around a large house with a library and meeting rooms in three acres of land which is next to Willen Lake. It is built in the old Rectory which is thought to date from about 1700. The Community, which was founded in 1997, is Christian based but welcomes people from other churches and works to create a feeling of happiness, understanding and acceptance.

It is named after the story in John ch 4 of the Bible where Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well and offers her the water of life.

4. The Labyrinth

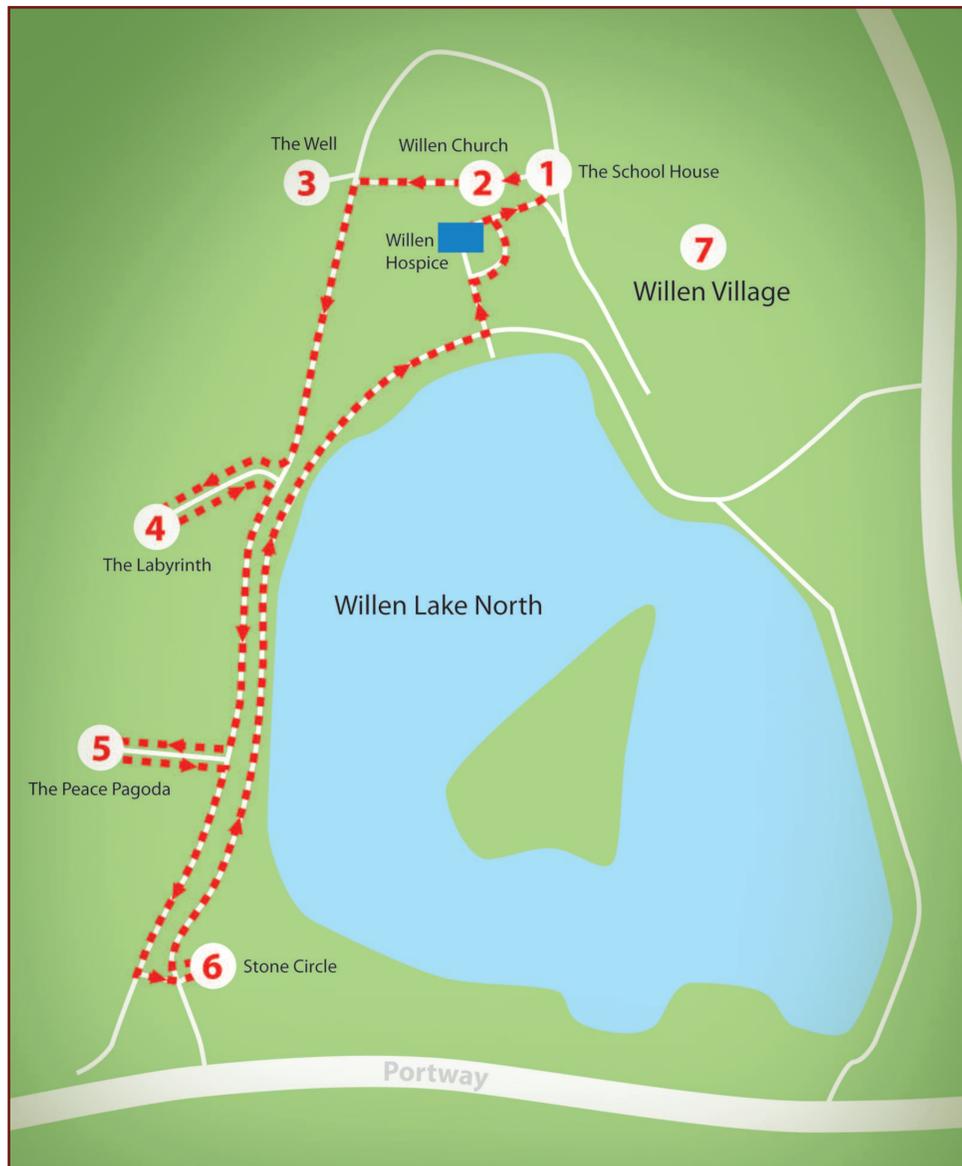
The Willen Maze (or labyrinth) is a turf maze based on an enlarged version of the Saffron Walden Rosicrucian Maze. It was designed by landscape artist Neil Higson. The four lobes of the labyrinth face north, south, east and west and in each lobe is a bronze face. The four faces represent the four faces of mankind and were designed by Tim Minnet. The maze unifies the four races and at the centre is an oak tree which symbolises the tree of life. It was built in 1985.

5. The Peace Pagoda

The Peace Pagoda was built in 1980 by the monks and nuns of Nipponzan Myohoji. It is a Buddhist stupa and has sacred relics of Lord Buddha enshrined in it. It is a working temple with regular services and is designed to provide a focus for people of all races and creeds. The carvings tell the story of Buddha from his birth to his death. It was the first Peace Pagoda to be built in the western hemisphere.

6. The Circle of Hearts Medicine Wheel

The Circle of Hearts Medicine Wheel was built to celebrate the millennium and was also built as a universal symbol of peace. The Circle of Hearts has two concentric circles which was inspired by the Hopi Nation of North America and follows the Midsummer line which extends up through the Cathedral of Trees in Campbell Park and on to

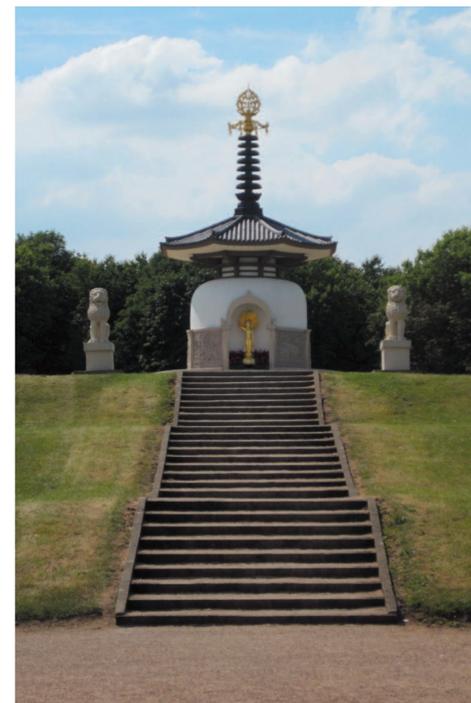


Midsummer Boulevard. It was built on the 'sacred' green patch and it is said that if prayers are offered at the centre (or source) of the wheel, those wishes are amplified but they have to be unselfish wishes. The Wheel is made up from 108 limestones from the village of Weston Underwood. Native chiefs from the Onodage tribe came to Milton Keynes and spent time praying and smoking their pipes of peace over the stones. The outer and inner circles symbolise our outer and inner worlds, the universe and humanity within.

7. Willen Village

Willen dates back to the 11th century, but it was so small that it was recorded in the Domesday Book with Newport Pagnell and Caldecotte. Willen and Caldecotte were classed as one parish until the 14th century. The name Willen probably comes from the word 'wylig' which means willow. In 1672 the whole area was sold to Sir Richard Busby who had been the Headmaster at Westminster School in London. On his death the Busby Trust was set up which kept Willen as it was for centuries, in fact until the 1960s there were never more than 100 people living in Willen. Willen became part of the new city of Milton Keynes in 1967. The lake is part of a series of balancing lakes throughout Milton

Keynes to prevent flooding. There are many activities available at Willen Lake including sailing, wake boarding, a trim trail and Aerial Extreme.



These panels can be downloaded from the Discover Milton Keynes website: www.discovermiltonkeynes.co.uk or scan the QR code.



MILTON KEYNES HERITAGE ASSOCIATION



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