

Willaston WW1

Commemorative Walk

A walk around Willaston to learn more about what the village was like at the time of World War One and the lives of those who served.



There But Not There Silhouettes

During the commemorative walk, you will see silhouettes of people sitting on benches. These are a visual reminder of those that did not return from their wartime service and offer people the opportunity to pause and reflect on life 100 years ago.

The ten silhouettes can be seen in the following places:

- Christ Church porch
- Christ Church pews
- Methodist Church pews
- Entrance to Johnston Recreation Ground
- Willaston C of E School playground
- Johnston Recreation Ground Play Area
- Jacksons Pond
- Willaston Green
- Little Green
- Hadlow Road Station

In Christ Church, you can also see a poppy water-fall, created by church members.

1. Start at Christ Church in the centre of the village.

In 1918, Willaston was significantly smaller than now, with a population of 806 people, compared to 2800 now. A lot of the housing you can see today was fields and more than half the buildings that existed were farm buildings.

Christ Church was the main church in the village. However, it did not have the north aisle which was added in 1926.

Buried in the churchyard are:

- Lieutenant James Lonsdale. An officer from Sandhurst who died of wounds in France on 29th October 1914. He was the first casualty from Willaston,
- Private Ralph Wright. He served for 57 days before being discharged with tuberculosis and died on 28th April 1918 aged 31.
- Second Lieutenant Edward Gonner. An officer who lived for a short time in Willaston, he contracted influenza and died on 2nd July 1918.
- Signaller Kenneth Smyth. He died at home on 1st November 1918, aged 18.
- Private John Dickenson. He died on 9th February 1919, aged 23.
- Private John Moss. He died at home, on 27th February 1919 from the effects of being gassed, aged 31.
- Gunner Thomas Jones. He served in Bombay and the North West Frontier and died on 26th May 1920 from malaria and the side effects of wartime service, aged 30.

A further 16 soldiers are mentioned on family graves.

2. From Christ Church, turn right through the village, passing (on the other side of the road) Atworth Terrace, Gillian Dawn Florists and Gladstone Terrace. Pause at the Methodist Chapel.

In 1918, the chapel was active in the village, having moved to its present location in 1889.

Gillian Dawn florist shop was the Post Office/grocery for the village.

- Private Harry Jones lived in Atworth Terrace. He was killed in action on 1st August 1918 in France. He was 28 years old.
- Private Walter Jones also had lived in Atworth Terrace. He was killed in action on 30th May 1916 aged 26 in Vimy.
- Sergeant Horace Pugh lived in the grocery. He died on 31st July 1917, aged 23 on the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele. He was a member of the Methodist Chapel. His brother Wilf survived and returned to run the shop after the war.
- Private Arthur Maiden lived at 1 Gladstone Terrace. He was killed aged 22 on 30th July 1916 in the Troones Wood fighting at the Somme. His brother Bertie survived and lived in Great Sutton until 1966. He was a member of the Methodist Chapel.
- Sergeant John Pugh was also a member of the Methodist Chapel. He was killed in France aged 34.

3. Continue down the road and turn right after Willaston surgery, into Johnston Recreation Ground.

In 1918, there was no GP in Willaston; a doctor came from Neston but had to be paid for.

The recreation ground and school were fields.



4. Bear right after the allotments and follow the path next to the play area. Go through the gate, over Jacksons Pond and then into the Meadow.

From the Meadow, you can see Willaston Mill. In 1918, this was a working mill, powered by sails. It ground wheat flour and cattle food.

5. Come back to the path, turn left and follow the footpath signs onto Mill Green and towards the village with Christ Church on your right.

In 1918, there were no houses on Elm Road.; the area was fields.

6. Cross the road at the pelican crossing and turn left to the village Green. Facing the Memorial Hall, you will see a house on your right called the Old Red Lion, whilst on the bend in the road behind you is the Nag's Head pub.

In 1918, the school was on the Green in a sandstone building. The school leaving age was twelve years and it closed at harvest time so the children could assist on the farms. The Nag's Head and Red Lion both were pubs (the Red Lion closing in 1928). The Memorial Hall was an Institute with a Reading Room and was much smaller than it is now.

7. Now walk up Hadlow Road and past the Old Hall. Pass Cherry Brow Terrace on your right.

- Private David Percival lived at 2 Cherry Brow Terrace. He died of wounds on 7th June 1917 aged 34.
- Private Thomas Taylor also lived in Cherry Brow Terrace. He was killed in action aged 26 on 19th August 1917 in France.

8. Continuing up the road, you will reach Hadlow Terrace on your right.

- Gunner Walter Jellicoe's family lived at 4 Hadlow Terrace. He died of wounds on 31st July 1916, aged 22.
- Thomas Pemberton lived at 5 Hadlow Terrace. He died of dysentery in Basra, Iraq on 5th August 1918 aged 36.
- Private Arthur Cottrell lived at 6 Hadlow Terrace and had 11 siblings. He survived the Battle of the Somme but was killed in action by machine gun fire on 21st August 1918 in the third Battle of Albert, aged 24.

9. Further up Hadlow Road, you will reach Hadlow Road Station where our walk ends.

In 1918, the single-track railway line ran from Hooton to Neston and Parkgate and there were six men working at the station. The railway brought goods to the village which were delivered by porters to people's homes and businesses. Coal was distributed from the coal yard which is now the car park.

Private Joseph Hulse served as a signalman at Hadlow Road Station. He was killed on 10th October 1916, aged 27, whilst working with a 180 strong party digging a new fire trench in the Somme.



This walk gives information about some of the men who lost their lives as a result of the First World War. It is believed that 148 men from Willaston served in the war. 34 people are listed on the village War Memorial as having lost their lives and a further two died shortly after the war as a result of their service. To learn more about their lives and Willaston from 1910-1925, please visit the exhibition in the Memorial Hall.

WWI Commemorative Weekend

This walk is part of a series of activities taking place over the weekend of 9th -11th November 2018 to commemorate and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One.

- Friday 9th November - Concert in Christ Church 7.30pm
- Saturday 10th November - Film 'Oh! What a Lovely War' in the Methodist Chapel 7pm
- Saturday/Sunday 10th/11th November - Exhibition in the Memorial Hall 11am to 3pm
- Saturday 10th—Children's art in Methodist Chapel 9.30am - 5pm
- Sunday 11th November - Remembrance Parade and Church Service
- Sunday 11th November - Celebratory event at Hadlow Road Station 12.30 to 3.30pm

The weekend's activities have been put together by a community sub-group led by Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society, working with representatives from Christ Church, Friends of Hadlow Road Station, Royal British Legion, Willaston Festival Society, Willaston Methodist Chapel, Lest We Forget Research Group, 1st Willaston Scout Group and Girlguiding Wirral Heritage Advisers.