

### Willaston in 1963

In the 1960s, Liverpool University's Department of Civit Design studied three villages on the Wirral: Irby in 1962, Willaston in 1963 and Greasby in 1965. (The Metropolitan Village, FI Masser and DC Stroud, *The Town Planning Review* Vol 36 No 2 (Jul 1965) pp 111-124). The following information and sketches are from this paper.



**Willaston: the village green**

In 1961, Willaston had a population of 1,600. There had been limited growth between 1951 and 1961 of only 31 people. 28% of people had been born in Willaston and about 35% had come to the village in the past ten years. People had come to the village out of a desire to live in a better environment and a desire for a particular type of house. Also, the desire to be near employment featured because of its proximity to the 'growing industrial area centred on Ellesmere Port.'

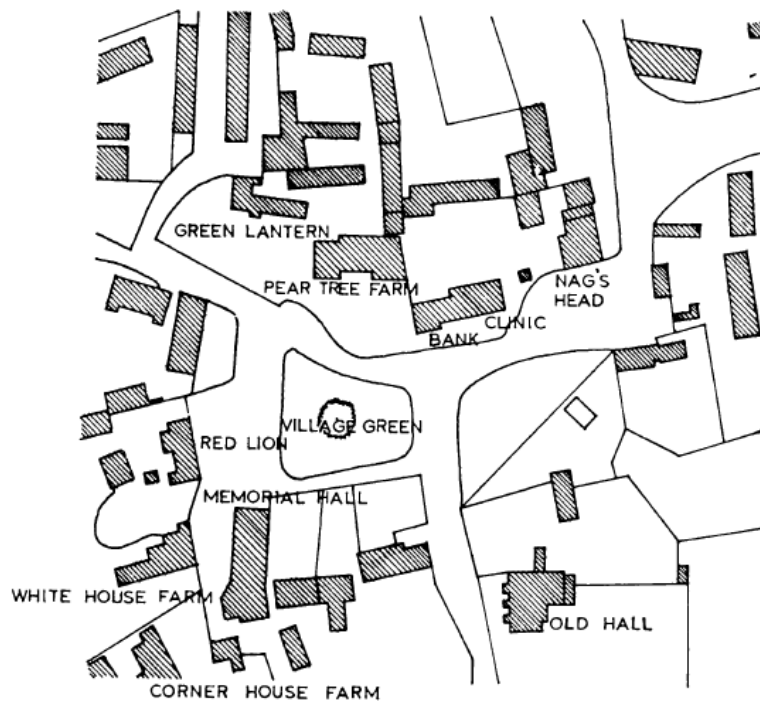
There were a relatively high proportion of heads of households from professional and managerial occupations in comparison with the rest of Merseyside. However, Willaston also had a relatively high proportion working in semi-skilled agricultural occupations.

Professional	Intermediate	Skilled	Partly Skilled	Unskilled	Unspecified
22%	11%	32%	32%	3%	0%

At least half the households had use of a car and 11% of households interviewed had two cars or more. Despite the relatively high car ownership, only 35% of the employed population in Willaston went to work by car.

Nearly one third of the employed population travelled daily to the centre of the conurbation in Liverpool or Birkenhead. 30% of the employed population worked in the village, mainly in agriculture.

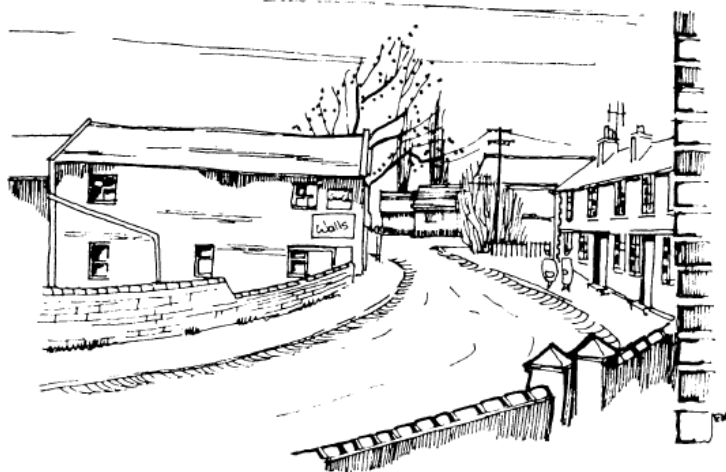
Willaston Village centre showing the village green and the old buildings surrounding it



Willaston had 12 shops. 21% of households considered themselves dissatisfied with the shopping facilities, although there were criticisms of high prices and lack of competition.

Willaston had a church and two halls. 57% of people interviewed participated in one or more village activities. It was also estimated that a quarter of members of groups came from outside the village, as far away as Birkenhead.

51% of people interviewed were dissatisfied with public transport services and the need to improve bus transport ranked first in the list of planning priorities. Nearly half the suggestions made about improvements concerned better road or rail links to the rest of the metropolitan area.



Willaston: two sketches showing the entrance to the village from the east and the small-scale cottages lining the village street







