

Ham Lane/ Old Ham Lane

By Henny Shotter

At the suggestion of Reginald Tolhurst, the then owner of Lenham Storage the southern part of Ham Lane, became 'Old Ham Lane'¹ when new estates were built in Lenham. The word 'ham' has nothing to do with the bacon factory which was once where Lenham Storage is today, but goes back to the Anglo Saxon word 'ham' which means 'village'. The conundrum over the name of this lane remains. Lesley Feakes, founder of Lenham Heritage Society pointed out that the original Ham Lane, the original 'village' lane was a mile outside of the old part of Lenham. Her suggestion that there was a village, the 'original' Lenham, somewhere at the southern end of Old Ham Lane, nearer to the source of the river Len, doesn't seem that far fetched. However so far we don't have any evidence to support this interesting theory.

Looking at the map it is obvious that Old Ham Lane, Ham Lane and the road to the north of the A20 (which is today inappropriately called 'Pilgrims Way') connected the former Manor of Marley to Lenham Heath Road which was a major thoroughfare until the 18th century.

¹ Lesley Feakes tells us that this happened