

Groom Way

by Henny Shotter

Groom Way, which leads from old Ashford Road to the Community Centre and the Lenham Surgery is named after C.H. Groom a former headmaster of Lenham School whose idea it was to have the memorial cross.

Mr. Groom lived on the Old Ashford Road and from his kitchen window he could look onto the hillside of the Kent Downs where he marked out the war memorial 'The Lenham Cross' (1922). While marking the cross on the hillside, Mr. Groom faced the problem that everything which is more distant seems smaller to the eye than what is nearer. The cross just didn't look right! He applied the same trick the craftsmen used when building the inscribed columns in the Taj Mahal. The letters at the top of the inscribed columns in the Taj Mahal are bigger than the letters at the base, but to the viewer, they all appear to be the same size. Mr Groom made sure that the part of the cross furthest away from his view point (the top of the cross) was wider but appeared to be the same width as the part nearest to the viewpoint (bottom of the cross). When measured this means that the cross is wider at the top than at the bottom.



The image shows the hillside before Headmaster Groom designed the Lenham Cross. To the left of the image you can also make out the lime quarries which supported Lenham's lime

burning industry. The Douglas firs (now most are gone) were planted by Aretas Akers-Douglas, 1st Viscount Chilston who also owned large estates in Scotland.

Local legend has it, that he planted the firs for his wife who could see them from her window in Chilston Park. (we love a romantic story!)