

LAMARSH

The tiny parish of Lamarsh, (whose name is derived from the Anglo-Saxon **Lamers** or loam ershe and **not** the French La Marsh) consists of 934 acres and nestles on the Essex side of the River Stour in an Area of Special Landscape Value beyond the Western end of the Dedham Vale AONB.

It has several mentions in Domesday Book, when its population was estimated at about 150 souls. The present parish consists of 158 people on the latest electoral register living in some 66 dwellings of which 22 are listed, mainly Grade 2.

The Church is dedicated to The Holy Innocents, the infants murdered by King Herod in the hope of eliminating the baby Jesus, and is one of only five such dedications in all England. It dates from 1140, and has a round tower, one of only three in Essex and is listed Grade 1.

The Elizabethan porch has a fascinating biblical inscription above the door and a fine and delicate rood screen of 10 bays probably installed when Lady Margaret Beaufort (mother of King Henry VII) was Lady of the Manor. The single bell dates from 1695 and has been recently restored. The little organ is a gem of its kind and was built by George Pike England probably in the 1750's. The church was much restored by Sir Arthur Blomfield between 1865 and 1868 but there remain many earlier items of interest.

There is a very popular pub, The Lamarsh Lion which was originally a boar lodge called Brownings. It is said to have been an inn since 1305. It has a high reputation for good value food and has fine views overlooking the Stour valley.



The Village Hall was originally the school and was built in 1875. It was last used as a school in 1967 and subsequently acquired for the village through funds raised by a charitable trust.

The most notable houses are:-

- Daws Hall, a Tudor building with Georgian additions, the subject of a painting by John Constable now in Anglesey Abbey. Its land includes a well-equipped Field Centre, a two Km nature trail, many species of waterfowl and a collection of interesting trees and shrubs which forms part of a charitable trust set up in 1988. It is used by over 3000 children each year from schools throughout Essex and Suffolk.
- Lamarsh Hall, also a Tudor building, was once a much larger structure.
- The Old Rectory was designed by an assistant of Lutyens in 1909 and extended by Quinlan Terry FRIBA in 1985.
- Orchard House, formerly Street Farm is a fine example of a medieval Hall House.
- Shrubs Farm, a Georgian style farmhouse, was originally constructed in 1843 but was substantially altered and extended by Raymond Erith RA in 1972 and by Ronald Geary Associates in 1988.

USEFUL WEBSITES:

The Friends of Holy Innocents, Lamarsh
www.lamarshchurch.org.uk

The Daws Hall Trust and Field Centre
www.dawshall.fsnet.co.uk

The Lamarsh Lion
www.lamarshlion.com

Shrubs Farm Gardens
www.shrubsfarm.co.uk