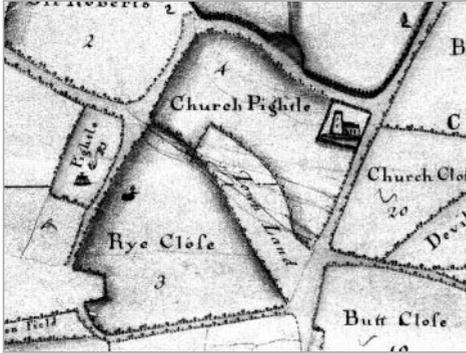


NOTES FROM THORNHAM

Left to their own devices, Suffolk roads and lanes take a lazy winding route on their way between villages or out to the fields. They take the easiest line, skirting woods and farms, ditches and long-forgotten fallen trees.

A straight length of road is a sure sign of someone who thinks they know better, and in the Thornhams we have some classic examples.



Most obvious is the A140, turnpiked and named the Pye Road long after the Roman builders had left. This takes a cleverly surveyed fairly straight route from London to the Wash via Colchester and Norwich, on high ground where possible, and with minimum river crossings. Immaculately engineered, at minor junctions you still know you are driving up onto the ancient raised roadway or 'agger'.

Next we have the straight lengths of road built across fields when the old strips were converted to enclosed fields, such as Chapel Farm Lane across the old Chapel Field and Workhouse Lane across Mill Field.

Last we have roads created to keep traffic away from the Hall and Park. My first map of 1765 shows the road from Gislingham splitting to go through the Park and past the church or along Gull Lane and towards Street Forge. Faint pencil marks show proposals for a new road continuing straight ahead. The second map shows what had happened by 1844. The road across the Park was no more and a new straight start to Gislingham Road had been built.

The new road blocked some old ditches and was built without roadside ditches. Also, there is a dip halfway along it. Not surprisingly this stretch suffers from constant flooding for which Suffolk Highways has no solution.

✳ All Notes from Thornham are now on www.thornhams.org

JANUARY 2020 IN THE THORNHAMS ● **Tues 14th:** Magna Village Meeting, 7.30, Parish Hall ● **Sat 18th:** Parish Hall jumble sale, 2-4pm, 30p ● **Fri 31st:** Parish Hall film, *Downton Abbey*, £5, please reserve on 07858 934440