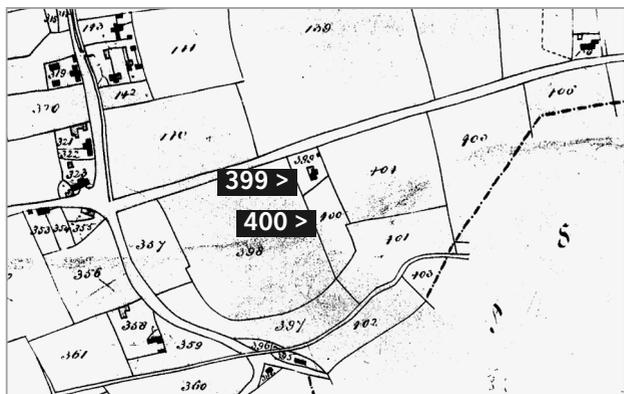


## NOTES FROM THORNHAM

**T**hornham Magna is home to two interesting and ancient charities. The older one is known as the Town Estate and was set up in 1484 under the will of John Bennett. He left the rent from the four and a half acre Town Meadow to support the church. It is one of the rare religious bequests that avoided seizure by Henry VIII, and survives today as registered charity number 256641. Its property, Town Meadow, the horse field on the corner of Gislingham Road, was somewhat reduced in size when the road took over part of it in about 1840.

Our other charity is Gobbett's Gift, set up in 1559 under the will of Austen Gobbett. This left a cottage with an acre and a half of land, the rent to be given to the poor of the parish every Christmas Day. This land was on the right hand side of Workhouse Road, about 250 yards from the junction with the Street. It is marked on the estate map of 1765 as Town Land and on the tithe map of 1844



(shown here) as plot 399 Workhouse and plot 400 Charity Field, both the property of Thornham Parish. The 1829 enquiry into charities reported that the annual rent of £1-7s was indeed paid to the poor at Christmas.

By the time of the first Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in about 1870, the field boundary and the building was gone and had become part of the larger fields we see today. By then local village workhouses had closed and inhabitants had moved to the Union Workhouse in Eye. In surrounding villages often the buildings survive as the ordinary cottages they always were, but there is no trace of ours.

Church records are in lockdown at the Ipswich Record Office, but I do have a note from 1922 that the (much reduced) rent of 12s from Workhouse Piece and Lands was paid by Phillip Palmer Esq, the agent (manager) of the Estate, and six villagers each received 2s on 19th December. Records cease in 1949, and despite later enquiries by the Charity Commission and by Rectors no information was forthcoming and this charity is considered 'lost'.

✳ You can read all my Notes from Thornham on [www.thornhams.org](http://www.thornhams.org). Keep well and please let me know about your research. Stephen Schwarz