



ThorngateLiving

Thorngate Churcher Trust
HOUSING AND CARE SINCE 1868

Registered charity No: 1169965 Regulator of Social Housing Registration No: 4839 Registered Company Number No: 09953572 (England and Wales)

Thorngate Churcher Trust
HOUSING AND CARE SINCE 1868

LIVING HISTORY

1865 – 2020

Forward

Specialist housing for older people plays an enormously significant role in helping local people stay independent for longer, maintain social connections and reduce fear and loneliness.

Back in the 1860s local Gosport family the Thorngates believed they should contribute to society by helping house those less fortunate than themselves, many decades before the establishment of the welfare state. The current charity has values today that mirror those of the original founders. Over the years Thorngate Churcher Trust, as it is now known, has grown into a significant local charity, providing social housing and social care to large numbers of local people, across a number of sites in the borough of Gosport.

The Trust has a rich history and it is hoped this book is a good read whether you are interested in local history or are a beneficiary, employee, or involved in the Trust's activities in some other way.

We are indebted to those who helped make this book possible: Honorary Alderman Don Lucas for extensive knowledge and previous work on the history, Heather Taylor for academic research and Churcher's Solicitors for storing the deeds for many years.

Jim Gilhooley, Chairman. **Anne Taylor**, Chief Executive 2020

Researched and written by Heather Taylor
Edited by Anne Taylor
Additional material from Hon Alderman Don Lucas


Thorngate Churcher Trust
HOUSING AND CARE SINCE 1868

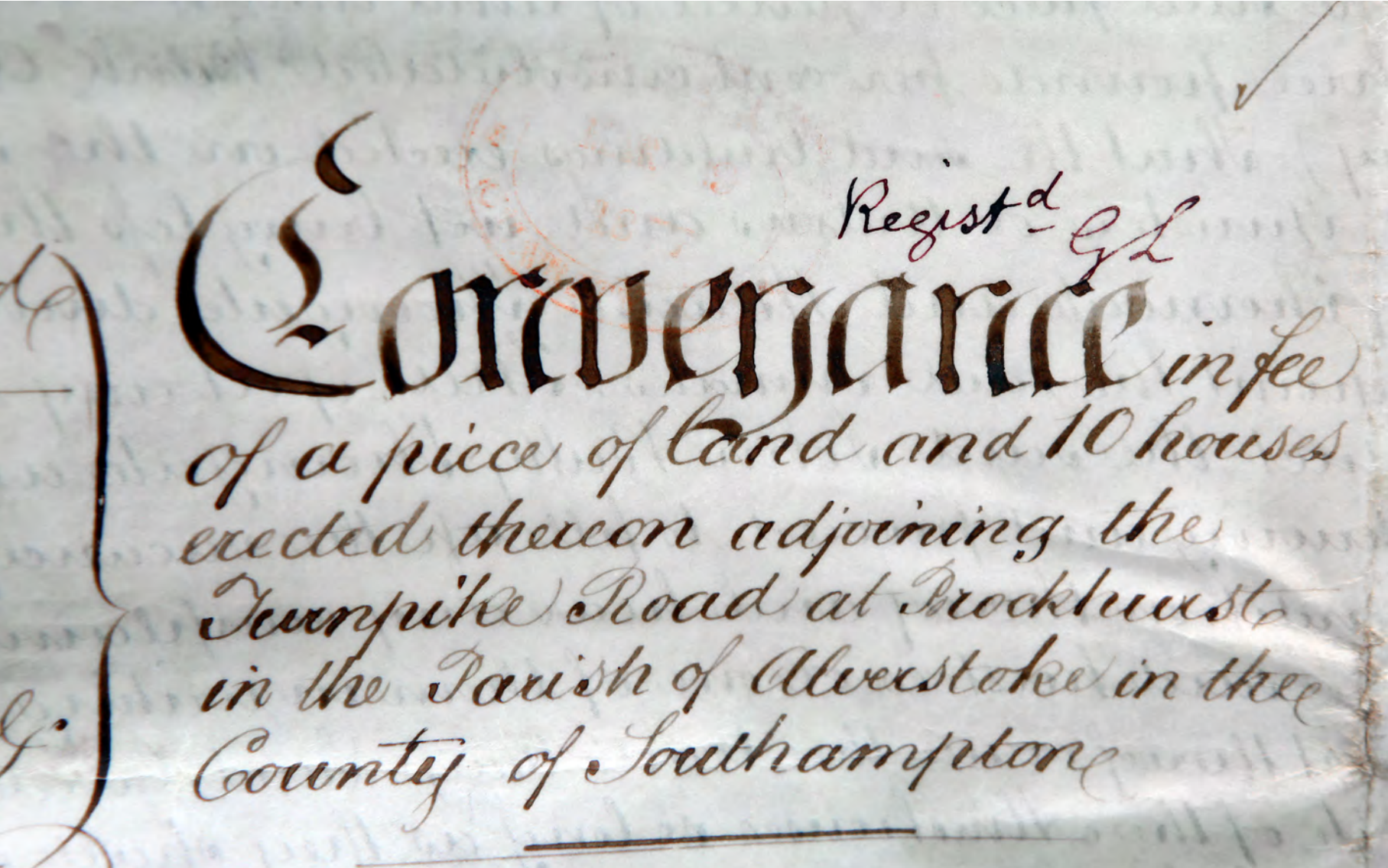
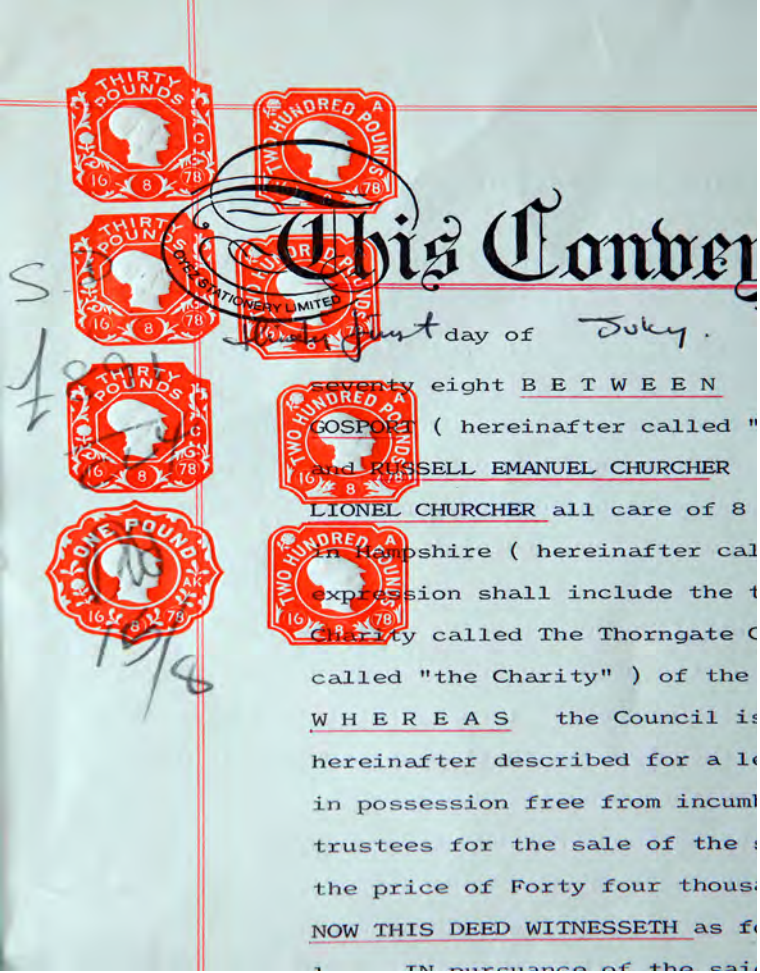
The Thorngate Family – Their Story

The Thorngates were extremely wealthy but died unmarried and childless. The brothers were shy eccentrics, frowned upon by the rigid social hierarchies of 19th century Gosport.

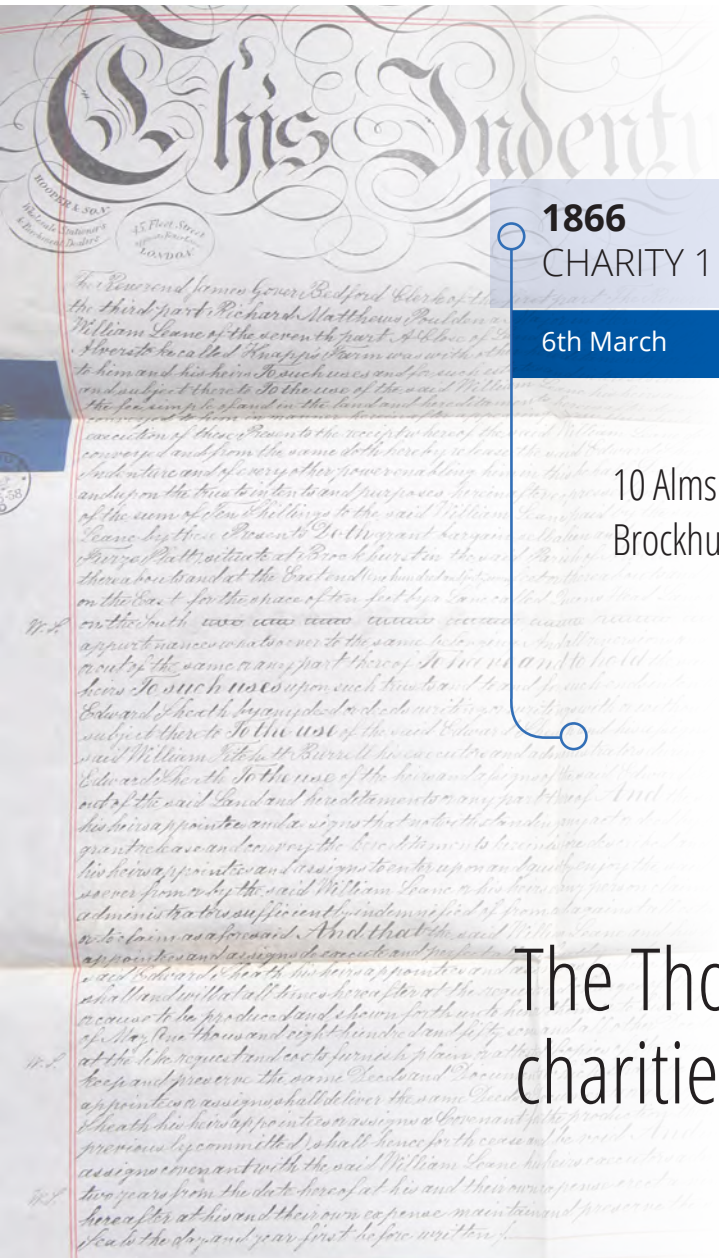
They had gained great wealth from their grocery store and investments in England, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Canada but since they had no heirs, they had to find an institution in which to place their great wealth. The younger two of the three brothers, John Batty and William, were philanthropists who, along with solicitor and family friend Emanuel Churcher (you may recognise the name from Churchers Solicitors), created 10 almshouses for widows and spinsters over 50 years of age on Brockhurst Road (the current site of part of Russell Churcher Court). After the passing of John Batty Thorngate in 1867, William Thorngate and Emanuel Churcher continued their work and built 15 more almshouses on one plot (the current site of part of Elizabeth Court) and 40 more on another site (Thorngate Court) in Camden Town, Forton. However, soon after this the last of the Thorngates, William, died.

A trust was established to maintain the works of these philanthropists. The Trustees were Emanuel Churcher, Henry Compigné and Henry John Carter Martin with the Trustees to only be replaced if one should die, resign or thought to be no longer fit to act as a Trustee. A member of the Churcher family remained on the board of Trustees until the death of Russell 'Pip' Emmanuel Churcher in 1989.

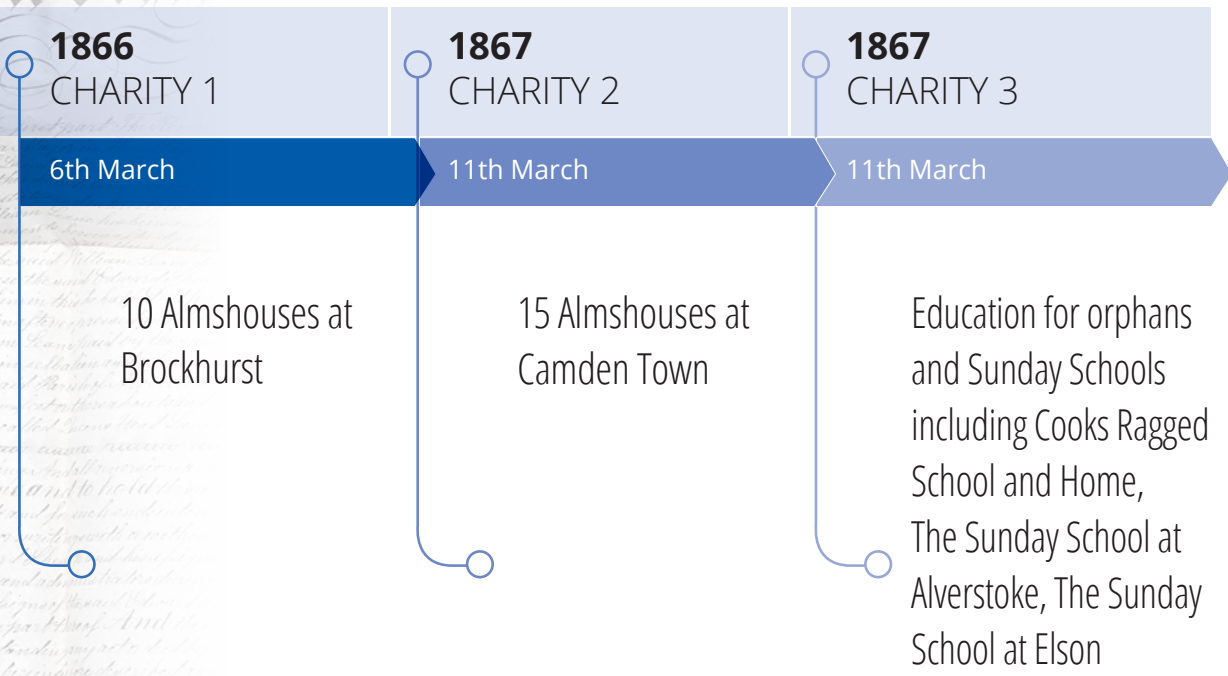
The earliest deeds are from 1858 and detail land near the Queen's Head Lane in Brockhurst which was sold for £40



Deeds from 1864 show the details of a piece of land and 10 almshouses to accommodate 10 women

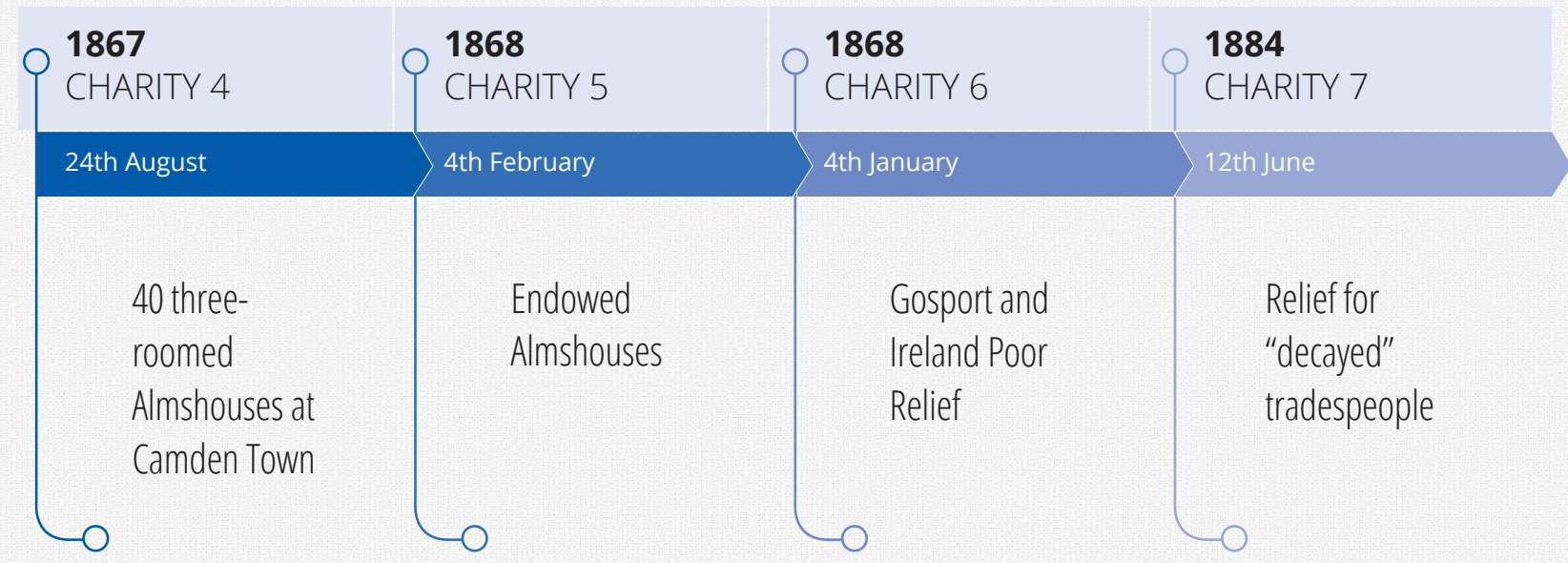


The seven charities



The Thorngate brothers established seven charities to help the people of Gosport

The seven charities



These charities helped the poor and elderly of Gosport, especially before 1908 when the first Old Age Pensions Act was introduced.

Prior to this initial Act, those beyond the age of work and poor would end up destitute. For many, this poverty

would have continued until the 1948 social security legislation took away the worst hardship associated with sickness, unemployment, widowhood and old age.

Therefore, the Thorngates' homes and donations would have saved many a widow and spinster from poverty.



The source of their fortune

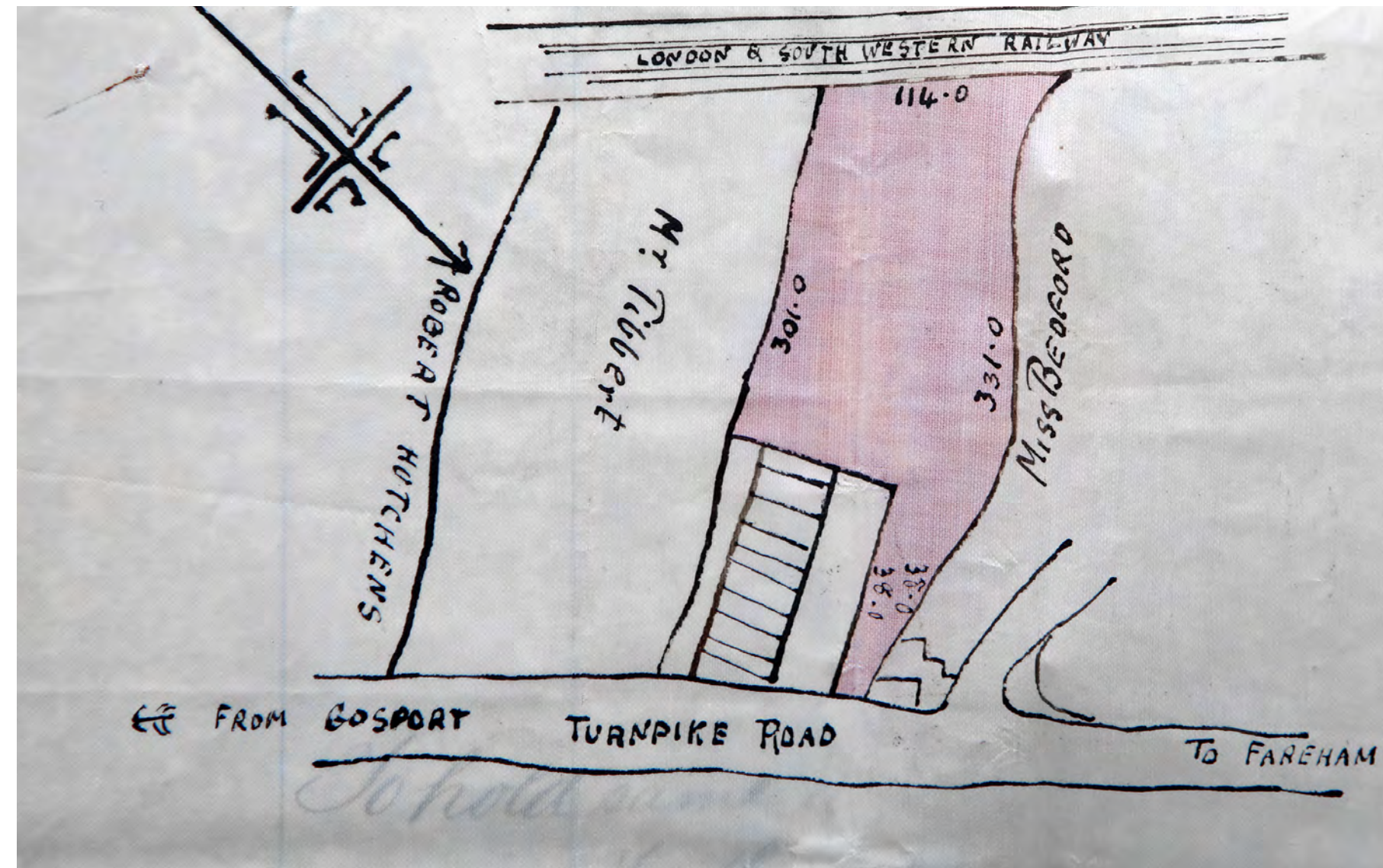
The Thorngate Family's fortune originates from the brothers' grandfather, called William.

He had a wealthy estate in Wallington, near Fareham, which was valued at £2,000 (which in modern money is around £20,000,000). The Thorngate brothers' father, also called William, bought a bakery which then became a grocery store, known as the 'best provision shop in Gosport'. William left his sons comfortable but not rich through supply contracts with the Navy during the Napoleonic Wars.

After his death, the three brothers inherited the grocery shop which they ran until their deaths. James and John Batty invested the profits from the shop in property in Gosport, mortgage lending (and repossession), investment in Government and Colonial stock, land speculation in England, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, overseas trading from Ireland, receiving a great return on them. Meanwhile the brothers maintained 'habits of inconspicuous consumption' - living frugally.

James was the holder of most of the family money and after his death in 1865, John Batty and William were left with only the remainder of his estates having given most of them to friends and family.

When John Batty died in 1867, he left all his estate (worth tens of millions of pounds) to William. Knowing he had no heirs, William decided to set up the charities to ensure his family's wealth would be put to good use helping the poor of Gosport and beyond.



Land registry maps detail land sold in Turnpike Road in 1867 - now the site of Melrose Gardens



Land registry maps detail land sold in Turnpike Road in 1867

South Australian investment

The Thorngates often invested their money in Colonial government stock but their most beneficial was in the South Australia Colony. John Batty Thorngate bought 'preliminary land orders' in the new South Australia colony. These lands were randomly allotted and the Thorngates were lucky to have lands so close to Adelaide. Their lots included 134 country acres in the Hundred of Yatala comprising the zones of what is now Medindie Gardens, Thorngate, Fitzroy and Ovingham as well as the Town Acres on Rundle Street (main shopping street) and Currie Street (important commercial area).

By 1911 the Thorngate Estate owned nearly 12,000 acres in South Australia ranging from Port MacDonnell in the South, Tumbly Bay in the West, Blanche Town in the East and Clare in the North.

William Thorngate, in an indenture dated 29th October 1867, left all his lands in South Australia to Emanuel Churcher, Henry Compigné and Henry John Carter Martin, the Trustees with the request that the land never to be sold.

Their expansion gained a great return on their investments from rent and their profits were distributed between various English charities, including the seven Thorngate Charities, totalling £1,581. £100 was also left to the Bishop of South Australia for missionary duties. Any residual profit was left to the Trustees for expenses running the Trust.

As rents rose to £11,600pa, this caused unrest from the tenants because the Trustees were able to keep £10,015 (£782,894.58 in today's money). In 1910, the Australians elected a Labour Government which introduced a tax of 2.9% on unimproved land which aimed to break up large estates and redistribute the land to smallholders. This, inevitably, reduced the return of investments and the Trustees wanted to sell but because of William's request, they could not.

The Trustees turned to the South Australian Government and after being referred through many courts, including the Supreme Court, and the inner city areas were sold while the country (now suburban) areas remained part of the estate.



Facts about the Thorngates

William Thorngate I:

- Owned an estate in Wallington worth £2,000 (source of their wealth)

William Thorngate II:

- Born c.1750, Died 1801
- Married Mary Batty
- Had 4 children: James; John Batty; William and Mary Sophia
- Bought a bakery in Gosport which then became a grocery shop
- Had supply contracts with the navy during the Napoleonic wars

Mary Batty:

- 1762 - 1834

James Thorngate:

- 1787 - 1865
- Held most of the family wealth but gave most of it away to family and friends on his death (particularly Emanuel Churcher), leaving his brothers with his overseas land and residual wealth

John Batty Thorngate:

- 1789 - 1867
- One of the philanthropists of the family
- Left all his estate to William Thorngate
- Invested in colonial government stock (South Australia Colony)

William Thorngate III:

- 1792 - 1868
- One of the philanthropists of the family
- Left all his lands in Australia to Emmanuel Churcher, Henry Compigné and John Carter Martin as trustees

Mary Sophia Thorngate:

- 1794 - 1851
- Sister of the Thorngates

Emanuel Churcher:

- Grocer's apprentice and later shop manager
- Trustee
- Released a life interest to his wife on his death. She then released her rights to their sons George and William Emanuel Churcher

Russell (Pip) Churcher

- Last member of the Churcher family to serve on the board of trustees

Henry Compigné:

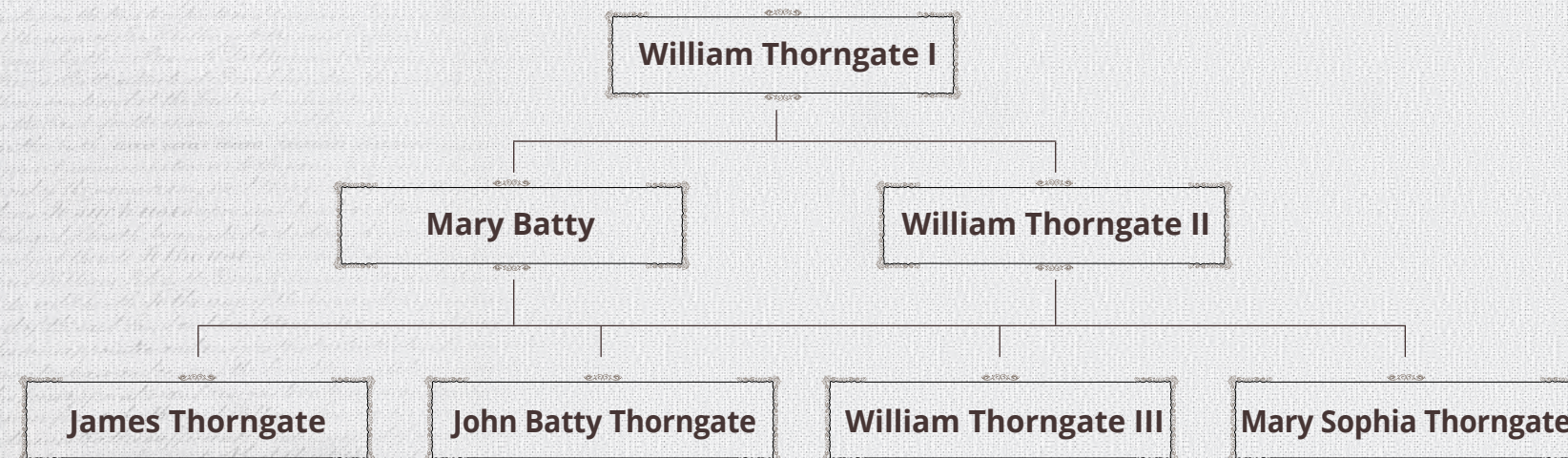
- Trustee
- Family solicitor
- Released his trustee rights to William Emanuel Churcher in 1881

John Carter Martin:

- Trustee
- Replaced as a trustee by HJ Martin (retired 1909)



About the Thorngates



A HISTORIC TIMELINE

FOLLOW THE
DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH THE AGES
FROM 1784 TO THE
PRESENT DAY

Deeds from the early days chart land acquisitions and trustee appointments

The Thorngate timeline 1784 - 2020

1784

- The Thorngate Family was listed in the Hampshire Commercial Directories as a Baker.

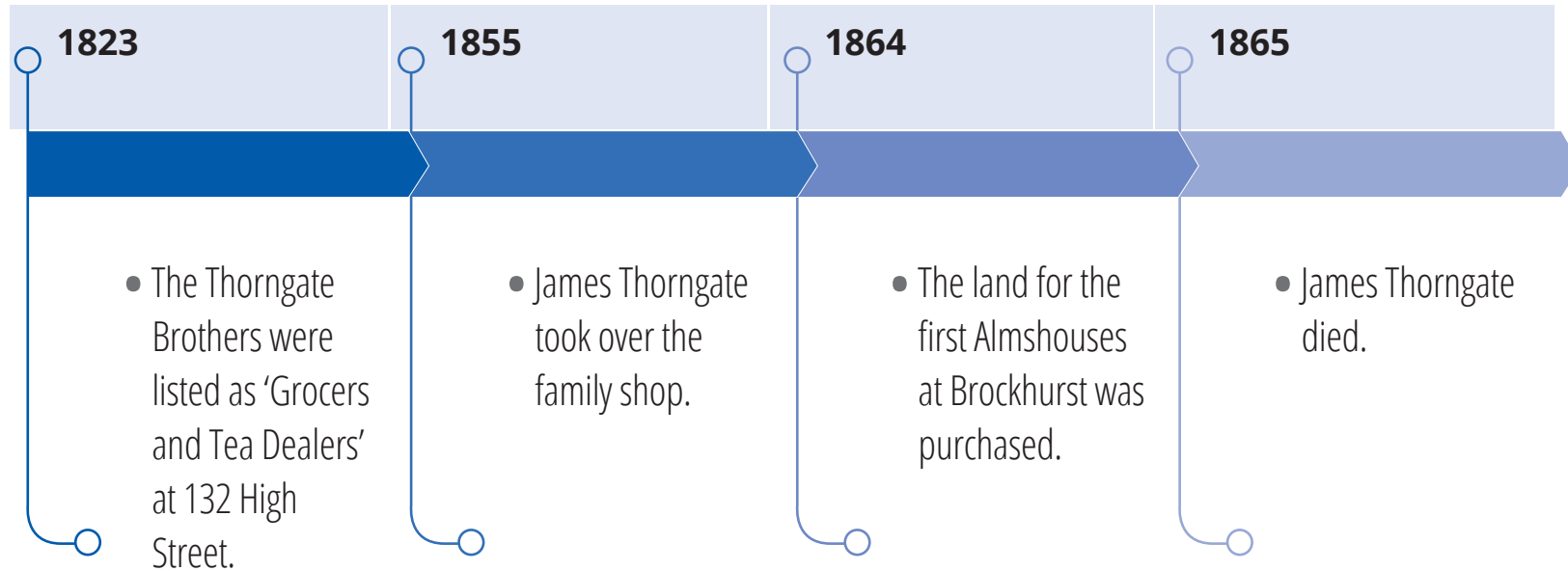
1794

- The Thorngate family was listed in the Hampshire Commercial Directories as a Grocer.

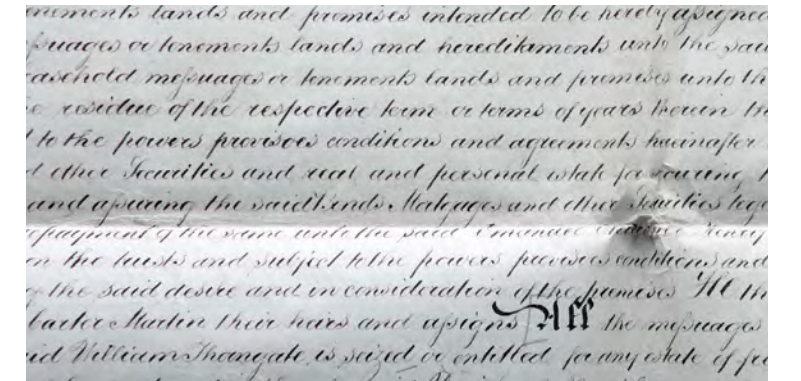
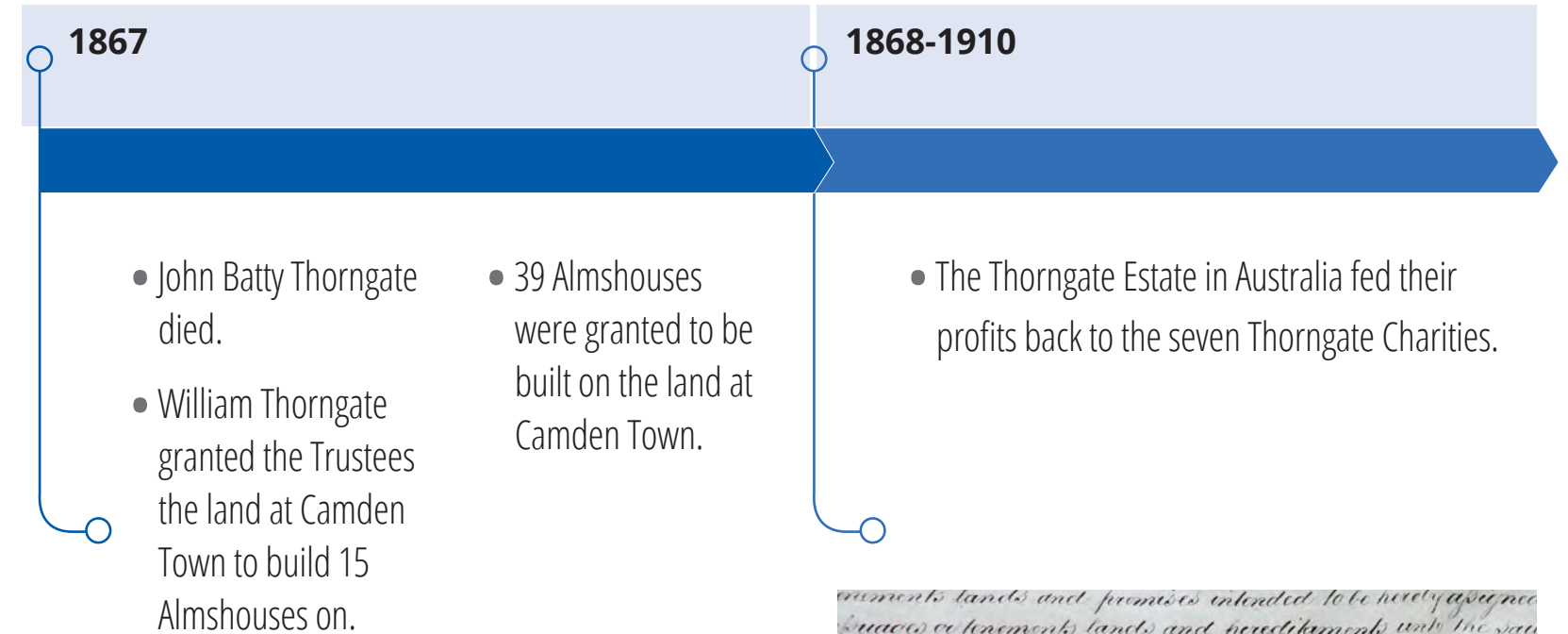
1803-1815

- Napoleonic Wars (the Thorngate shop benefitted from Navy Contracts).

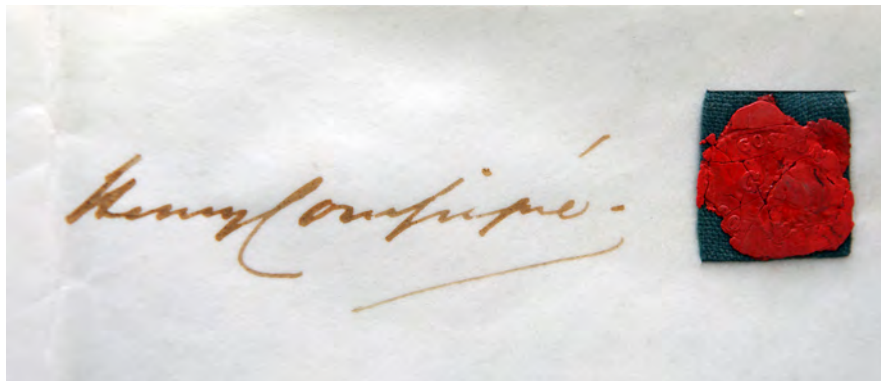
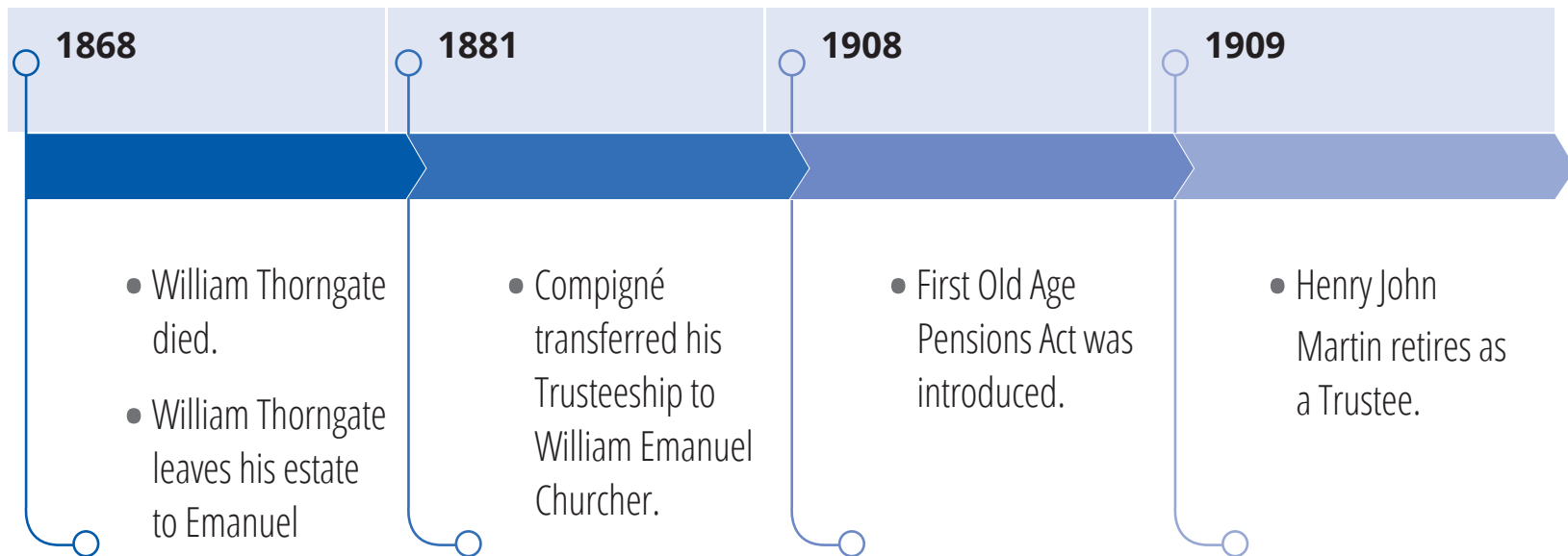
The Thorngate timeline 1858 - 2020



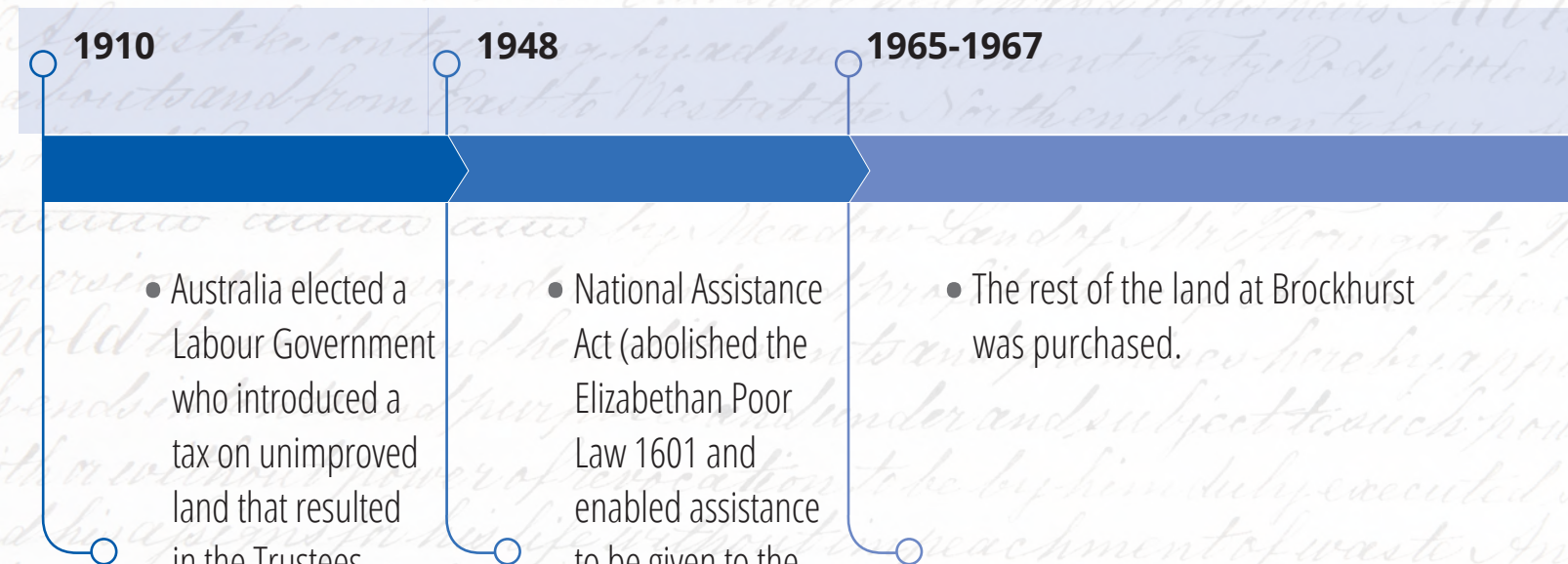
The Thorngate timeline 1858 - 2020



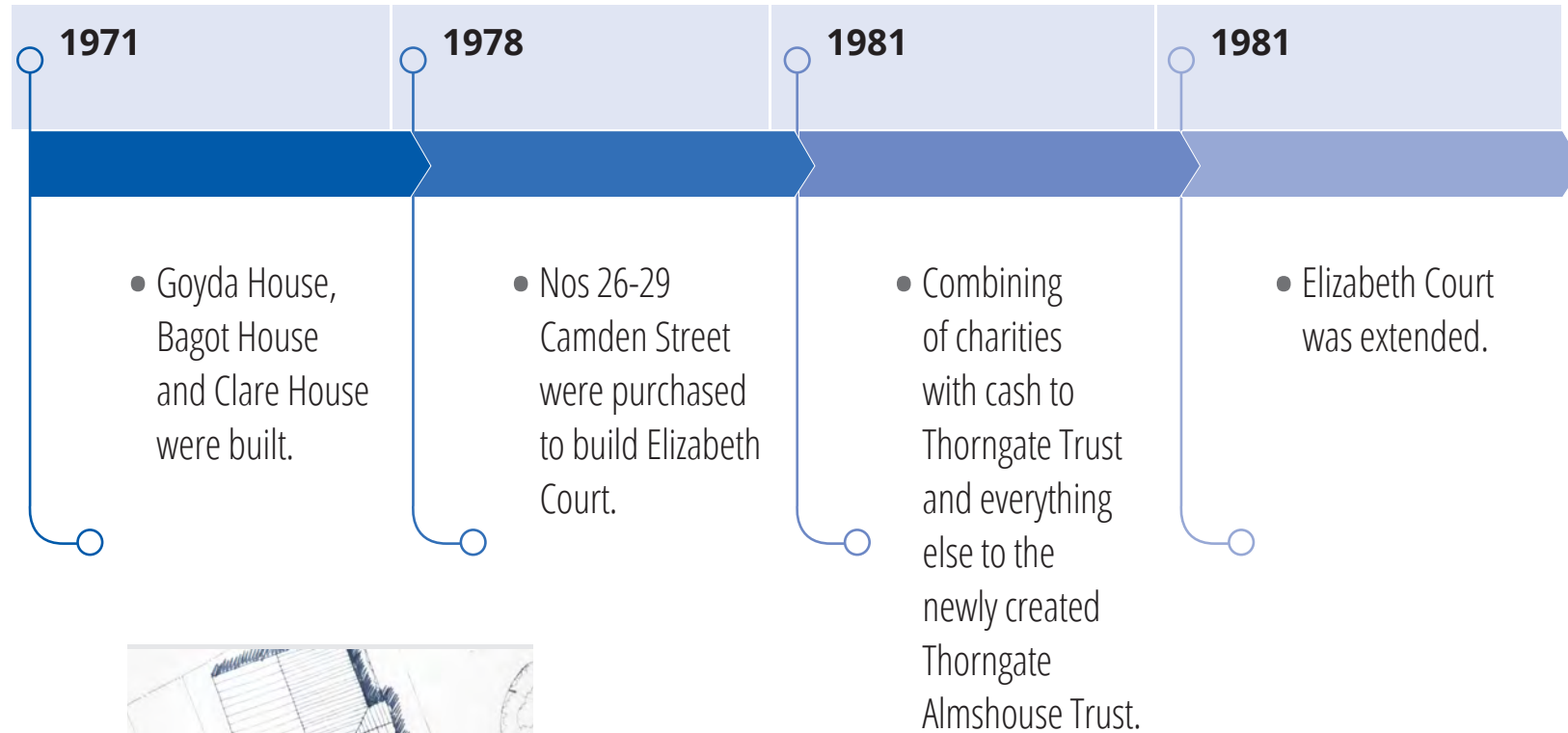
The Thorngate timeline 1858 - 2020



The Thorngate timeline 1858 - 2020

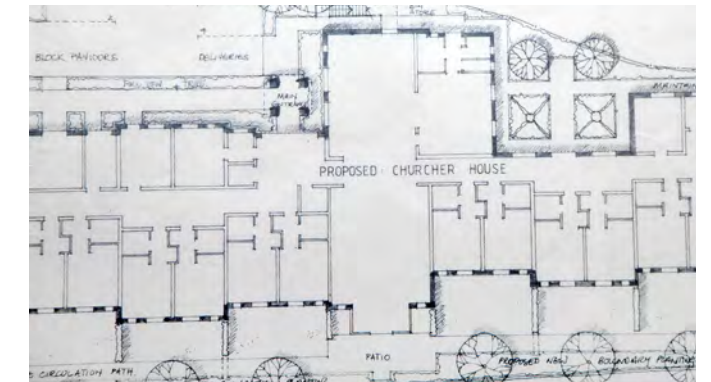
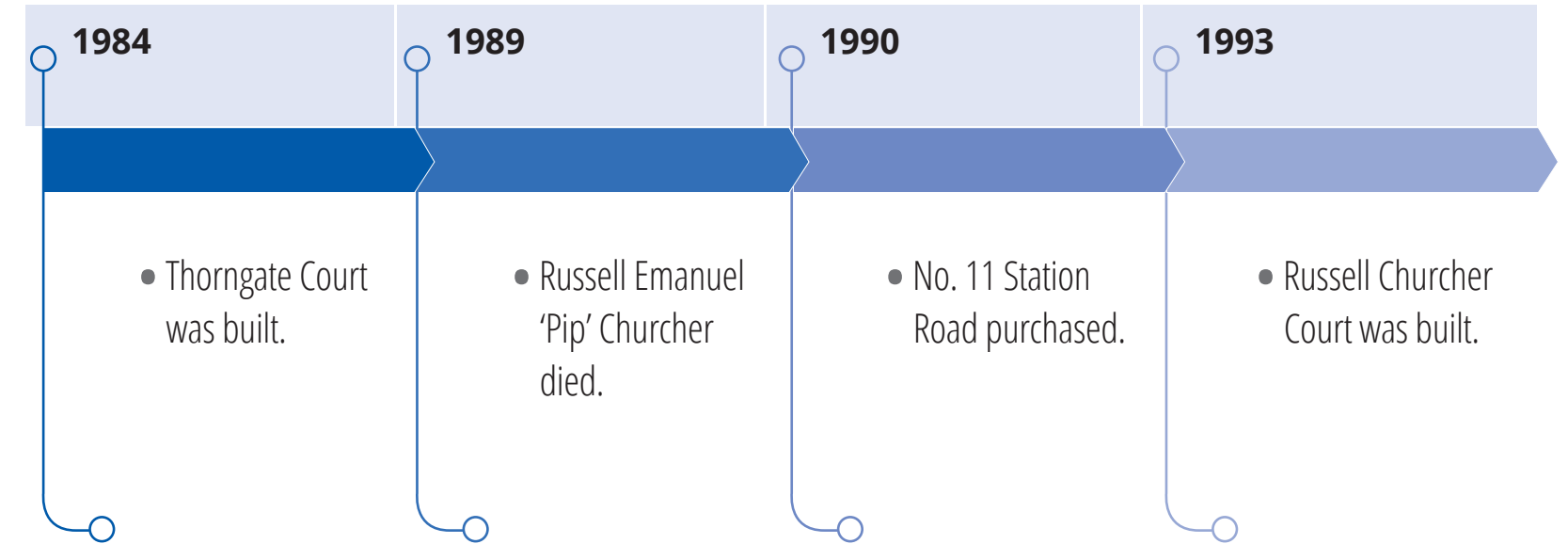


The Thorngate timeline 1858 - 2020

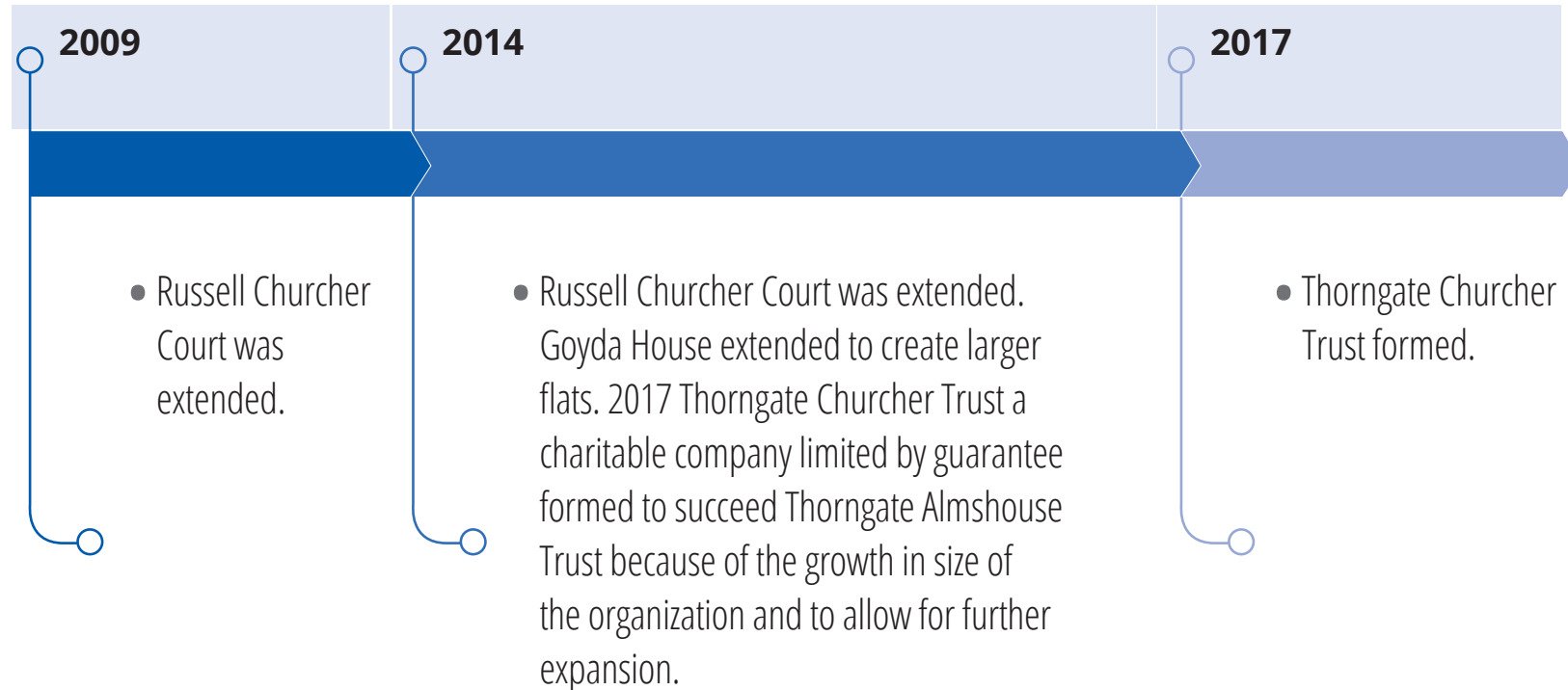


The seven Thorngate charities were combined to create two new charities; Thorngate Almshouse Trust to manage the almshouses and Thorngate Trust to use cash to make grants to those in need.

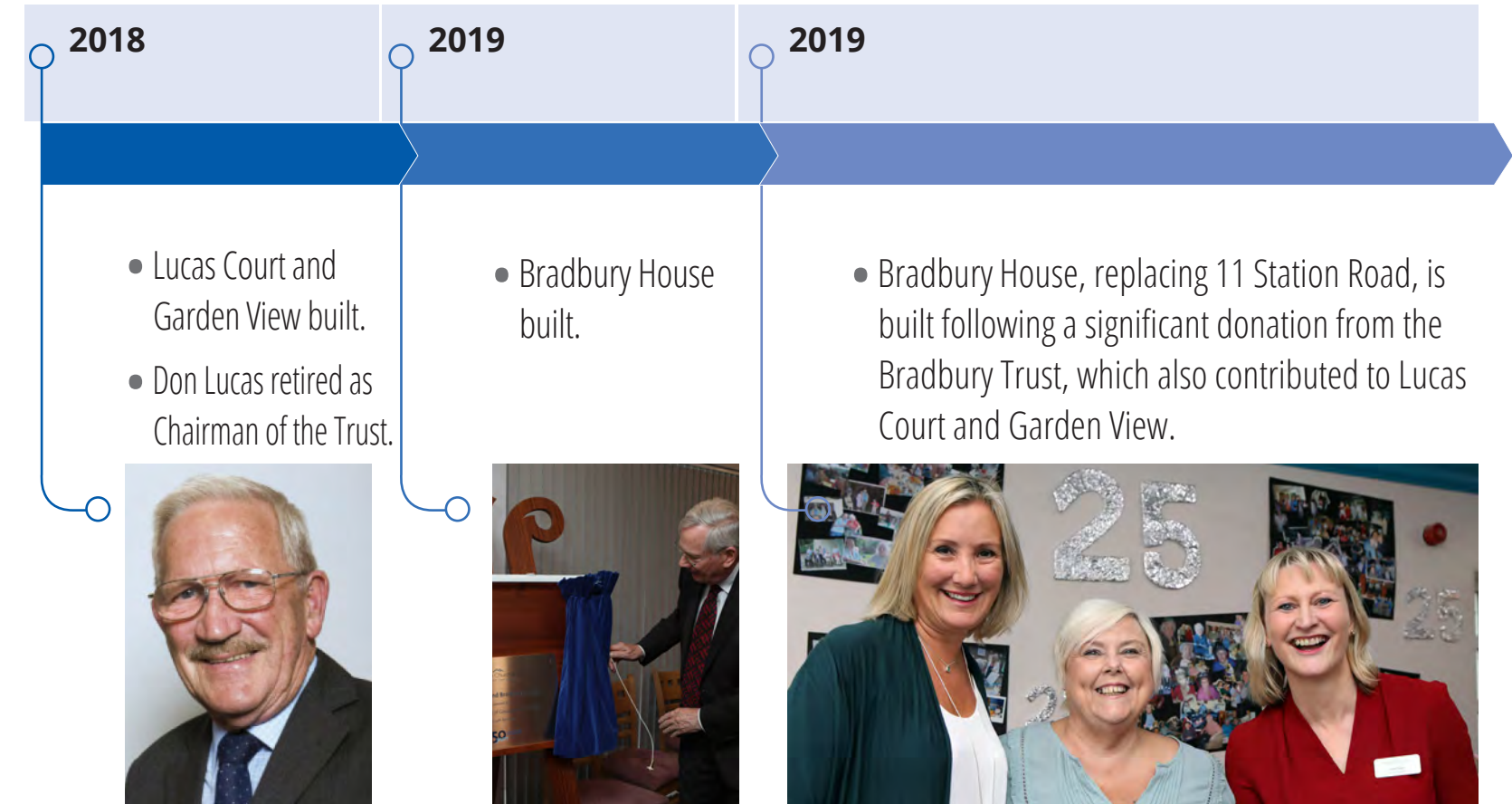
The Thorngate timeline 1858 - 2020



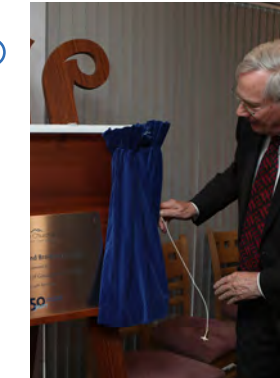
The Thorngate timeline 1858 - 2020



The Thorngate timeline 1858 - 2020



Don Lucas



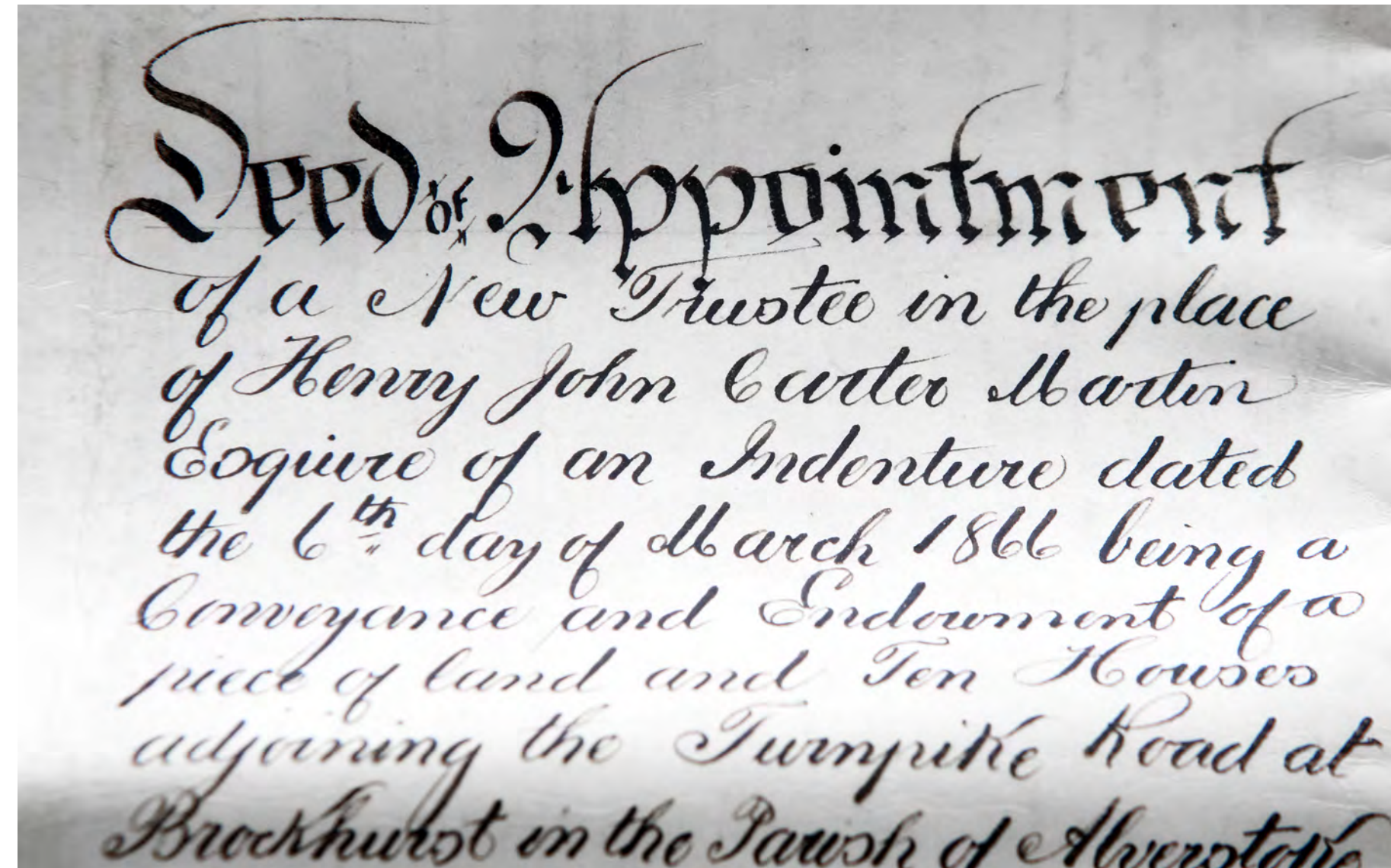
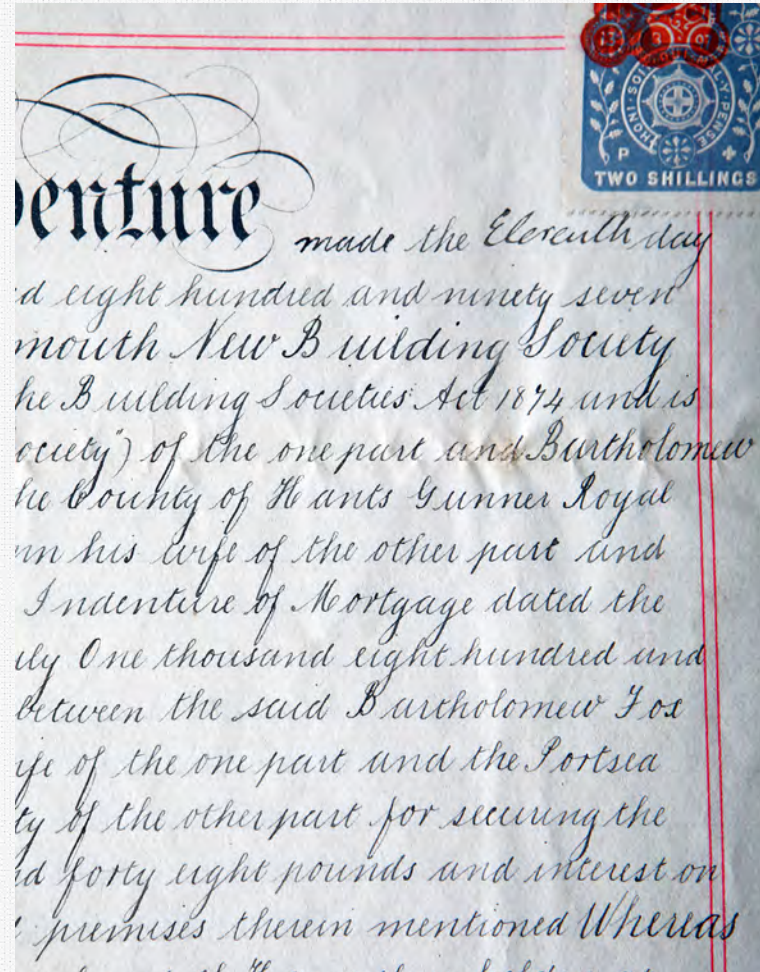
25th anniversary of Russell Churcher Court opening was marked by a visit from Gosport MP and Minister of State at the Department of Health and Social Care, Caroline Dinéage.

The new Trustees

After the death of William Thorngate, the last living Thorngate, a Trust was set up to inherit their estate. The new Trustees were Emanuel Churcher, family friend and manager of their grocery shop; Henry Compigné, the family solicitor and Henry John Carter Martin. The Trustees continued the work of John Batty and William Thorngate by continuing to support the poor of Gosport through their running of the Trust.

By 1910, Emanuel Churcher's sons were the remaining Trustees as Henry John Carter Martin was replaced by HJ Martin who retired in 1909 and Henry Compigné had released his rights to William Emanuel Churcher in 1881. Emanuel Churcher had released a life interest to his wife on his death and on her death, she released her rights to her sons, George and William Emanuel Churcher.

The last member of the Churcher family to be on the board of Trustees was Pip Churcher of Churchers Solicitors and was soon joined by Hon. Alderman Don Lucas. Together, with the help of other Trustees, this saw the development of the Trust as it now is today and the major redevelopments of Elizabeth Court and Thorngate Court. Following the death of Pip Churcher in 1989, Don Lucas continued the legacy of the Thorngates and the Churchers, acquiring more land and building the Russell Churcher Court Care Home in 1993. Following further developments in 2012 and 2018, Don Lucas retired as chairman in 2018, after serving the Trust for more than 40 years.



Deeds from 1866 talk of appointing a new trustee



Deeds from 1866 refer to No 3 Camden Villas in Forton

Wills and Bequests

James' will states that he had "Under £25,000" which in today's money would have been worth around £1,478,230 and he held most of the family wealth in his name.

James divested his brothers while enriching Emanuel Churcher with "all my lands and houses in the Town of Gosport, together with my stock-in-trade, household furniture, books and papers" and his estates in Hoegate, Soberton, East Meon, Hambledon and the Parish of Alverstoke. James gave most of his estate to friends and servants, leaving John Batty with the remaining overseas land and William with all the residual wealth.

John Batty died in 1867 and left all his possessions to his brother William (worth tens of millions of pounds).

William died in 1868 and left his family's remaining wealth to the Trustees of the seven charities he had established, Emanuel Churcher, Henry Compigné and Henry John Carter Martin.

Why did Churcher benefit so well from the Thorngates? He was their apprentice at the grocery shop and grew to manage the shop. Churcher became a close friend and confidante of the Thorngates and probably helped Henry Compigné divide the estates in the wills of the brothers (although perhaps not John Batty's will).



Purchase of the current sites

Elizabeth Court:

On the 11th March 1867, William Thorngate granted the Trustees the land at Camden Town, Forton to build 15 almshouses. Later, on the 28th April 1978, the properties of 26-29 Camden Street were purchased from Gosport Borough Council and Elizabeth Court was expanded to the size that it covers today in 1981.

Thorngate Court:

39 almshouses were granted to be built on the site of Thorngate Court on the 24th August 1867. This was the last deed William Thorngate made with the charity before his death in 1868. The form that Thorngate Court takes today was built in 1984.

Melrose Gardens:

The location of the original Thorngate Charity no.1 almshouses, called Melrose Cottages lies on Brockhurst Road, under the east end of Russell Churcher Court. The first part of the land (now Russell Churcher Court) was bought on the 6th March 1864. The Trust has a series of deeds that refer to the owners and mortgages of the surrounding land (on which the other part of Melrose Gardens now stands) and the transfers of land until it came into the possession of the Trust on the 19th May 1965 and 12th September 1967.

Since then, Goyda House, Bagot House and Clare House were built in 1971. In 1987 Melrose House was deemed unsuitable to be used by older people and was leased to the council to

be used to house homeless families until 1991 when money was granted to build Russell Churcher Court and the old cottage was destroyed.

The buildings have since been rebuilt. Russell Churcher Court was redeveloped from the original ten almshouses 1993 and extended in 2009 and 2014. Lucas Court was a much more recent development (2018) that required replacing Peachy's Lounge (built 3rd November 1999). Bradbury House was built in 2019. Garden View was built in 2018 on land previously acquired. No. 11 Station Road was purchased 10th December 1990 to provide a proper entrance to Melrose Gardens.



Garden View



Lucas Court

Remembering Don Lucas



Don was a trustee of Thorngate Churcher Trust for nearly 40 years and his dedication, commitment and foresight was a key factor in the success of the Trust today.

Don joined the board at Thorngate in 1979 and was chairman from 1989 until his retirement in 2018.

During his time as trustee, Don worked tirelessly to ensure that Thorngate provided help to those in need whether that was in the form of accommodation or residential social care. He always worked for the benefit of the residents of the Trust and his work will live on forever in the Trust.

Such was the importance of Don's work that Lucas Court was named after him and he was present when the apartment complex was officially opened by the Duke of Gloucester in 2019.

His dedication and support were widely admired by fellow trustees and staff at Thorngate who described Don as an inspiration with tremendous passion for the charity.

Chief executive Anne Taylor said that Don's commitment and support had made a positive impact on the housing sector in Gosport and his advice and expertise had been so important to Thorngate.

"He played such a crucial role in the work of Thorngate for almost 40 years and we will forever be thankful for his guiding hand."

Don was instrumental in ensuring that the original mission of the charity founders continues today – to create better housing and social conditions for the less advantaged in Gosport.

In addition to his work for Thorngate, Don also gave unstinting service to the community through his role as a local Gosport Borough councillor, and latterly Alderman, his involvement with Gosport Borough Cricket Club and his other charitable work.

