# THORPE HAMLET HISTORY GROUP

## Article 9 : THE INCIDENT IN THE FOG
## By Robin Bowling

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After we had discharged Soya bean meal at John Lee Barbers Bowling Green Wharf in Great Yarmouth which is situated in the North River just below Vauxhall Bridge, I telephoned our London office for orders. The office told me to proceed to Norwich to load scrap metal for Dunkirk. I went back aboard to tell the boys (crew) we could have a night in Great Yarmouth and we could sail up to Norwich in the morning as it was a winter and we would need daylight to negotiate the river Yare to Norwich and King's scrap yard, where the Novi Sad bridge is now. It was a bit frosty in the morning when we let go off the ropes and backed out of the river Bure and headed up the river Yare where Breydon Bridge lifted for us and we had a good uneventful trip to Norwich both Reedham and Trowse railway bridges opened for us promptly and after Calling Carrow Road Bridge on the V.H.S. radio that lifted for us as well. We went past the Scrap yard to the swinging basin (just above the Julian Bridge) to swing round to face down river and then proceeded to King's Wharf.

The trip from Yarmouth to Norwich takes about six hours and after such an uneventful trip we were alongside the Wharf at about 2 p.m. We uncovered the ship's hold and started to load the scrap. There was a big heap on the Quay, approximately 250 tons or more. The ship was called the Subro Venture could load 250 tons on a draught of 8 feet 6 inches. The scrap was lifted into the ship with a Scotch Derrick that was fixed on the quay permanently. The Derrick moved from side to side lifting the metal with a spider grab and releasing it above the ship to fall into the hold. The wharf foreman called Sammy told me the scrap had been weighed in on the weighbridge by the lorry load so it should be right but anyway I would load to fresh water marks. We finished loading the next day at about 10 a.m. and after getting the paperwork and bills of lading signed we shopped for vitals on Norwich Market and filled up with fresh water just across the river courtesy of John Dann the bridge master.

He lifted Carrow Bridge and we steamed up the river. Trowse Bridge opened for us as did Reedham Bridge and Haven Bridge to open on our arrival. As we approached the Berney Arms public house Great Yarmouth port called me on the V.H.S. and told me that visibility was less than a quarter of a mile at the lower end of Breydon Water and they could not see Breydon Bridge from Haven Bridge House. We put the ship alongside the Quay and there were no bollards so the mate put a rope round the phone box on the quay as it has a good concrete base and I don't think it would come adrift. The landlord of the Berney Arms came out of the pub to watch us tie up; the mate Cyril asked him "What time do you open?" and the landlord replied "March the 31st". At the time the Berney Arms

pub closed at the end of October and reopened in the spring. Just then Great Yarmouth Radio called us and said visibility had improved to 1½ miles so we let go and steamed to Great Yarmouth. The bridges opened and we went straight through and to sea and Dunkirk leaving the landlord standing there none the wiser.