THORPE HAMLET HISTORY GROUP

Article 10 : CARGOES TO AND FROM NORWICH
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Norwich has been a port for over a thousand years. The Angles settled in Norwich around the King street area followed by the Vikings who gave Norwich it's name. They came up Rivers Yare and Wensum and traded with Denmark and the Low Countries. Later came the Normans who built the castle and Cathedral with Caen stone from France in vessels very similar to the Keels that were used on the Broads before the wherries. The good Burghers of Norwich shipped wool for cloth to Flanders and the Low countries. Other cargoes came to Norwich and the ships paid harbour dues to the city at the Boom Towers; the chains would be lowered upon payment to allow the ship passage to the wharves that lined King Street.

With the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries the river was improved to allow bigger ships to reach Norwich. There were cargoes to Colman's, coal to the power station, timber for the timber yards, slate and tiles for the building trade, wheat for Reads Mill all shipped in steam coasters and Thames Sailing Barges. Cargoes being exported were Norfolk barley for the Dutch and Belgium breweries, scrap metal from King's scrap yard in King Street to Dunkirk, Rotterdam and Spain. Wherries shipped and transported all sorts of cargoes including household refuse from Norwich to Whitlingham where it was unloaded by steam crane onto the refuse dump. It is all finished now and the last ship to be unloaded in Norwich was the Dutch coaster 'Buccaneer' in 1987. We are now in the age of the Lorry; nowhere near the cargo capacity and eight times the cost, but that's progress!