

# Haddiscoe New Cut

*Water Transport  
in Norfolk*

card A6



The 'New Cut' was new in 1832, and was the work of William Cubitt—son of a Norfolk corn-miller, who later became a distinguished engineer, and, after work on the Crystal Palace at the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851, was knighted by Queen Victoria.

## **Norwich becomes a port**

This canal, 2½ miles long, links the river Yare to the river Waveney and was part of a series of works designed to enable sea-going vessels to reach Norwich, via a new harbour at Lowestoft. Norwich thus became a port, and could trade direct with the continent of Europe, avoiding the expense of trans-shipping goods at Yarmouth from river to sea-going vessels and vice versa, as hitherto. It would have been easier to have given Norwich access to the sea through the port of Great Yarmouth rather than Lowestoft, but the Yarmouth middle-men had fought for some fifteen years all proposals to this effect, as they were afraid of losing their share of the profits. In spite of their opposition, which cost the Corporation of Yarmouth £8,000, Parliament authorised the 'Norwich and Lowestoft Navigation' in 1827. Thus the New Cut was excavated as a canal to link Norwich with the sea.

*An impressive engineering achievement, William Cubitt's New Cut was soon something of a white elephant.*

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## Engineering success—commercial failure

Alderman Crisp Brown, the Norwich corn merchant who had first proposed the scheme in 1814, who had led the campaign with the slogan 'Norwich a port', and who had ceremonially cut the first turf of the canal in 1827, unfortunately died bankrupt before it was even completed. Up to 1837 the navigation earned a yearly average of only £1,715, and at that date was advertised 'to be disposed of by private contract'. Three years later it was apparent that the proprietors would never be able to repay their government loan, and the navigation was sold.

### A W A maintains canal

In 1844 it was bought by Grissell and Peto (Sir Moreton Peto of Lowestoft) the railway contractors. At Norwich, the site for the harbour had become railway yards for Thorpe station; and a new line connecting Reedham with Lowestoft was built alongside the New Cut. British Rail inherited the canal, and eventually it passed to the Anglian Water Authority, who now maintains it.

The New Cut had only been in use for about sixteen years when Parliament authorised the deepening of the lower Yare and the dredging of a channel across Breydon Water: thus the more direct route to the sea via Yarmouth was at last opened, and the New Cut became virtually redundant.

This is one of a series of site cards designed to accompany the Norfolk Heritage booklet *Water Transport in Norfolk*.

Other nearby sites in the 'Water Transport' series are at Reedham Ferry (about 4 miles by minor roads, via Thurlton); and at South Quay, Great Yarmouth (about 7 miles).

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*Coke, marble, corpses and harpsichords . . . . Part of the list of duty payable in the New Cut (Norwich-Lowestoft Navigation) in 1832.*

For any Time not exceeding the First Twenty-four Hours.

|                     |  | £ | s. | d. |
|---------------------|--|---|----|----|
| Coal, &c.           | For every Chaldron (containing 36 Bushels) of Coal, Coke, Cullm, Cinders, or Breeze, - - - - -   | 0 | 0  | 3  |
| Hay and Straw.      | For every Ton of Hay, Cinquefoil, Clover, or Straw, - - - - -  | 0 | 0  | 6  |
| Timber and Deals. } | For every Load of Oak, Elm, Pine, Beech, and Fir Timber, - - - - -   | 0 | 0  | 6  |
|                     | Load of Deals, Battens, and Lath-wood, - - - - -   | 0 | 0  | 6  |
| Mahogany.           | For every Cubic Foot of Mahogany, Teak-wood, or other valuable Woods, - - - - -  | 0 | 0  | 0½ |
|                     | For every Ton of Hemp, Cordage, and Yarn, Barrel of Pitch, Tar, Grease, Rosin, &c. - - - - -   | 0 | 0  | 2  |
| Stone, Slate, &c. } | For every Ton of Stone, Slate, Plaster of Paris, Allum, Unwrought Iron, Bar Iron, Lead, &c. - - - - -  | 0 | 0  | 6  |
|                     | For every Cubic Foot of Marble - - - - -   | 0 | 0  | 1  |
|                     | 1000 of Gutter, Pan, Mathematical and Plain Tiles, - - - - -   | 0 | 0  | 9  |
|                     | 1000 of Bricks and paving Tiles, - - - - -   | 0 | 1  | 0  |
|                     | Crate of Glass or Earthenware, - - - - -   | 0 | 0  | 3  |
|                     | Carboy of Vitriol or Oil, - - - - -  | 0 | 0  | 1  |
|                     | Corpse, - - - - -  | 0 | 5  | 0  |
|                     | Organ, - - - - -   | 0 | 5  | 0  |
|                     | Piano-Forte, Harpsichord, or Harp, - - - - -   | 0 | 1  | 0  |
|                     | 100 Pipe Staves, - - - - -   | 0 | 0  | 6  |
|                     | For every Ton of Copper, Pewter, Brass, and other Metals, (except Iron and Lead,) - - - - -  | 0 | 0  | 6  |
|                     | For Bale Goods, and all other Articles, Wares, or Merchandize, not specified in this Schedule, according to the Amount of Freight, at per Cwt. - - - - - | 0 | 0  | 6  |

An Additional Rate or Duty to the same Amount for every Forty-eight Hours, beyond the first Twenty-four Hours, or for any shorter Period of Time after the first Twenty-four Hours, or after any One complete Term of Forty-eight Hours.