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SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

The first step to solving this problem is to admit that there is one

Calling an ambulance is something we all hope that we never have to do. But when we do have to, none of us wants to be left hoping it will arrive in time. It is only when we are at our most needy, our most vulnerable, that we dial 999 and so it is only right that at those times the best help that can be mustered is there to support us.

That is why the stories that have been coming out of East Anglia in recent times are so worrying. There is the tale of rugby scrum-half Tim Mason, left lying on a pitch for 30 minutes waiting for an ambulance. Then there is the case of 95-year-old Nora Dennington; seen by a doctor who told her family she needed a "blue light" ambulance to take her to hospital immediately. One was called at 3.31pm but was not dispatched until after 6.30pm, finally getting to her at Deben View care home in Woodbridge, Suffolk, just after 7pm. She died the following day.

Let's not forget Nancy Porter, who fell and cracked her hip in Cromer at around 4.30pm. It was 8.30pm before an ambulance arrived to take her to hospital. To any right-thinking person the evidence there says that the way things are working is not right. Our readers who rely on the East of England's ambulances know it, and it is why we are campaigning for better services.

The first step towards sorting out any problem, however, is admitting there is one.

To that end we need the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust to investigate response times in Norfolk and Suffolk alone, and let us know openly what they find.

Only when the right structural changes are made, will the people of East Anglia really know they have a service they can rely on when times get tough.

Let this be an example

There was a smidgen of irony when home secretary Theresa May said the UK would not extradite computer hacker Gary McKinnon to the United States because it would impinge on his human rights.

The decision was undoubtedly the right one. Mr McKinnon, who suffers from Asperger's syndrome, was accused by US prosecutors of "the biggest military computer hack of all time" though he claims he was just looking for evidence of UFOs.

Medical reports warned that, if extradited, Mr McKinnon, who also suffers from depressive illnesses, could have killed himself.

The Human Rights Act is derided by many as useless legislation, abused by those that do not respect other people's rights. Even Ms May has been a strong critic. So yesterday's case reminds us that where a person's human rights really are under threat it can be a useful tool for the good.

Let's hope that Mr McKinnon's story is remembered the next time the critics start shouting in the House of Commons.

Long road ahead for A47

For those living and working at the eastern extremity of the UK, the historic difficulty of getting in and out of East Anglia has always been a barrier for businesses, families and tourists.

The dualling of the A11, due to start next year after decades of campaigning by local politicians, business groups and the EDP, is a huge step in the right direction. But the same united effort may well be required to gain the same improvements for Norfolk's inadequate east-west artery, the A47.

So it is encouraging to see that moves are afoot to push the dualling of this vital road up the agenda – an important step down a long road whose potential for unlocking investment and jobs cannot be ignored.

WORDS FOR LIFE

Gossip separates the best of friends.

Proverbs 16:28



READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



MILES FERRARI

TALL STORY: Happisburgh lighthouse against a brooding, stormy sky. If you would like to submit a picture for this feature, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Stay alert or we'll go the way of Ipsidge

PETER TRUDGILL

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There's a terrible lesson to be learnt by people here in Norfolk from the example of Ipswich.

I don't mean from the town itself – it's a fine place, after all. And I don't even mean from the football club, though of course there are things to be said about that.

What I mean is that there's a salutary lesson to be learnt from the name of Ipswich itself.

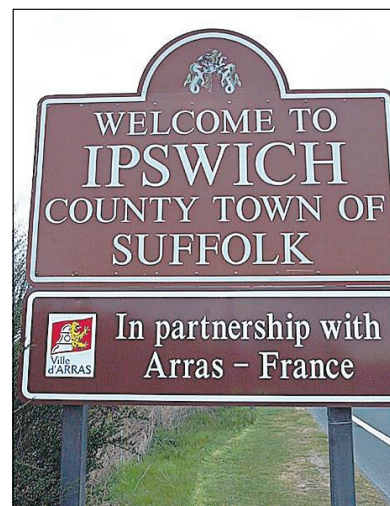
The awful truth about Ipswich is that it used to be known as "Ipsidge". That was how the name was pronounced for hundreds of years, until quite recently – perhaps three generations ago.

Then, outsiders who didn't know how to say the name thought they knew better than the locals, and started calling it Ipp-switch. And they did that so frequently and for so long and on such a large scale that the locals eventually gave in.

We don't want that to happen to Norwich, do we? There are already several towns in America called "Nor-witch".

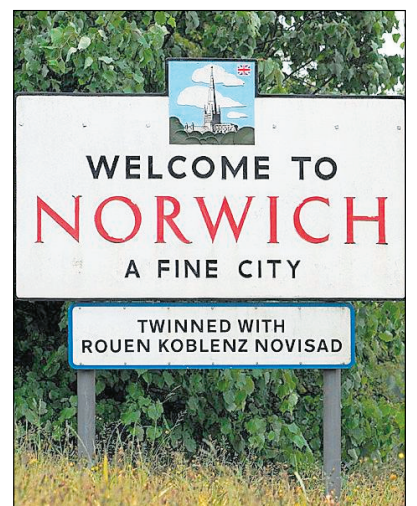
So we have to be alert.

When Americans say "Lye-cester", we smile benignly and tell them it's "Lester". We should do the same for Norfolk names – and not just with Americans. We now have so many outsiders here who, through no fault of their own, get things wrong. We ought to do them the kindness of putting



them right. It might be difficult to smile benignly if they pay no attention because they think they know best. But most incomers actually do want to get things right, and we can help them.

The first thing we can do is to gently point out to people that – this can be an important slogan for us – "there's no itch in Norwich". The right way to say Norwich is so that it rhymes with "porridge", as in the nursery rhyme "The man in the moon came down too soon". If you remember, he asked the way to Norwich and burnt his mouth on cold pease-porridge. This "idge"



pronunciation is quite normal for "-wich" placenames in England. Harwich and Greenwich also end in "-idge". And Swanage used to be spelt Swanwich.

But there are many other kindnesses we can perform as well. I have personally been kind enough to tell Chris Lakey – he is from the Fens after all – that there is no is no L on Colney – it rhymes with "pony". I think he was grateful...

■ Peter Trudgill is president of the Friends of Norfolk Dialect.

■ What do you think? Email: EDPletters@archant.co.uk