

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

We must see end of the unacceptable ambulance delays

We all hope that we will never need the emergency assistance of the East of England Ambulance Service.

However, when a 999 situation arises, we expect the ambulance service to attend quickly and promptly in our hour of need.

Unfortunately, 90-year-old Barbara Hedley had to go through more than six hours of pain after falling and fracturing her pelvis at home before an ambulance arrived.

After years of dedicated service in the NHS, the former nurse deserved much better when she needed to be taken to hospital.

She is full of praise for the staff when they arrived and the trust has rightly apologised and offered to visit Mrs Hedley to see what lessons can be learned.

But her story is a sharp reminder that the ambulance trust has a lot more work to do to transform its fortunes and fully regain the public's confidence.

We understand that work is under way to get more ambulances on the road, recruit more staff and improve the skills of current teams.

But North Norfolk MP Norman Lamb – also a health minister – is spot-on when he says any failings are “unacceptable.”

The changes may take time but no stone must be left unturned to ensure everything possible is done to make the improvements.

Our Ambulance Watch campaign continues – and we are watching closely.

Please listen Mr Hague

It is just over ten days since Scotland voted no to independence and the prime minister promised a fairer deal for English voters.

Leader of the House of Commons William Hague will be in charge of delivering the promises.

It is vital that Mr Hague, in his last few months as a parliamentarian, is ambitious with his cabinet committee.

Promises have been made to Scotland with little thought of the consequences and appetite south of the border.

Mr Hague must not lose sight of the Cinderella regions of England, which are desperately in need of investment and support.

Our MPs have made the right noises, and they must now make it clear that the status quo is not good enough and deprivation in our counties must be tackled.

Big boost for landmark

Twenty-five years is quite a short period in the timeline of the Guildhall in Norwich, which has served as prison, court, and chapel in the past.

Many visitors will know the prominent building as the home of the Caley's Cocoa Café, but it is good news that new tenant, Norwich's Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust (HEART), is looking to open up the site further to give a valuable insight into its rich history. Tourism plays a very important role in the economic prospects of Norwich and it is very welcome to hear that the Guildhall will be home to more open days, talks and educational projects.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Chris Smy took this picture one morning out at Hen Reedbeds, where there was an assortment of birds and, of course, a horse. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Local dialect can overcome communication problems

Peter
Trudgill



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There's a place by the side of Ipswich Road, just after the junction with Hall Road, which has a special importance for certain Norwich people of my age. At one time, it was our gateway to the world.

These days, it seems that jetting off with your children to foreign holidays in the sun is a basic human right that no one should be denied, least of all by petty annoyances like the kids having to go to school.

In the 1960s, things were very different. Our only way to go on foreign trips, as teenagers, was to pack a rucksack and stand by the side of the road with our thumbs out. And that's what we did – hitch-hiking was a brilliant and exciting way to travel and explore the European continent. From that Ipswich Road starting point, we found our way to Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Venice – even Athens. Our route lay through Ipswich, Colchester, Brentwood, the Tilbury ferry, along the A2 to Dover, and then by cross-channel ferry to France or Belgium.

It was a fascinating and educational series of experiences we had, and as Norfolk youngsters encountering the world on the other side of the North Sea, we were on a series of steep learning



■ A trip on the ferry offered a world of adventure to Norfolk youngsters in the 1960s.

Picture: PA

curves. Not the least of these curves was linguistic. We would make terrible gaffes, like getting off the ferry in Ostend and speaking French to everyone, and then wondering why they didn't reply. It's embarrassing to think of how little we knew about the language situation on the European continent. Shouldn't it have been obvious that a place with a name like Oostende was Dutch speaking?

It was fascinating, too, to observe the changes of language as we travelled. As hitch-hikers, it was important in Belgium to know that Liege was called Luik in Dutch (and Lüttich in German); and that Mons and Bergen were the same place.

Stopping at the passport control between Holland and Germany, in those pre-Schengen days, we watched the German and Dutch border officials talking. How did they understand one another? Which language were they speaking? We gradually realised they were speaking their local dialects, and that the dialects on either side of the border were so similar that communication was no problem at all.

If they'd been speaking Standard German and Dutch, communication would have been much more problematical.

Often, speaking your local dialect is the best thing to do.

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Refuse good advice and watch
your plans fail.
Proverbs 15:22

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