

# OPINION & COMMENT

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## Happy and glorious festival of sport

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As the curtain came down on our happy and glorious festival of sport, it is hard to imagine how we will replace the excitement of the last two weeks.

We can look back on a truly uplifting Olympics in which dreams were realised and the doom-mongers were proved wrong on every possible level. The opening ceremony was jaw-dropping. The weather, for the most part, was bright. The stadia were glittering cauldrons of drama. The security operation, mercifully, never made the same headlines as its preparations did.

And, most importantly, we have been bequeathed a host of new heroes for the next generation to look up to.

The historic moments which defined London 2012 will stay with us forever. From Mo Farah's double distance dominance, to Jessica Ennis fulfilling her destiny as the "Face of the Games" and cyclist Sir Chris Hoy's tears at being crowned our most decorated Olympian.

Then there was the effervescent Nicola Adams, making history as the first ever gold medallist in women's boxing, and rower Kathryn Grainger finally triumphing after the disappointment of three successive silver medals – a perfect embodiment of the utter dedication, resilience and sacrifice required to be a champion.

And it's not just the major box-office events which have excelled. Our medallists have brought new interest to everything from the face-kicking combat of taekwondo to the elegant finesse of dressage and gymnastics.

These people are trailblazers for their sports, and it is important we harbour that golden glow to cash in on their achievements, otherwise their legacy will not last.

It has been a Herculean achievement for the organising committee to have made London the "capital of success", advertising itself to the world in a way which is sure to bring its own pot of gold.

So London has its reward. And, after deservedly securing his role as the UK's Olympics legacy ambassador, Lord Coe has his too. But what of the rest of the country?

With such extraordinary role models to choose from, schools have an opportunity to make our children fitter, more disciplined, more focused... skills which will serve them well regardless of whether they can become future Olympians.

The signs are good. Cycle sales are rising, and we hear of queues at gyms and a boom in applications to athletics clubs. But without proper funding, such inspirational levels of success cannot be sustained. Thankfully, the prime minister has confirmed that the exchequer's funding of UK Sport will continue until Rio in 2016, rewarding the unprecedented medal haul of 2012 and augmenting the vital National Lottery which has underpinned so many achievements.

But the real achievements of these Games have transcended sport. The world was watching and we showed it the very best of Britain – where competitors, spectators and volunteers of all ages, cultures and backgrounds joined together to inspire a generation.

## Helping the bereaved

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Families who have lost loved ones in crashes on Norfolk's roads have been urged to have their say on the way police carry out investigations.

The consultation will concentrate on police standards when responding, reporting and investigating road traffic collisions and will influence an agreed policy and guidance published by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Losing a loved one in such circumstances is unimaginable but if other people who have suffered such tragedy can help provide details of how investigations or support for relatives can be bettered then that surely is to be welcomed. It might not bring someone back but it will make a big difference to how families are helped in the aftermath of such a tragedy.

### WORDS FOR LIFE

God is love.

1 John 4:16



tbc-online.org

### READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY



GORDON BURWOOD

**RESTING PLACE:** The Wherry Albion moored at Riverside, Norwich, and open to the public for viewing. If you would like to submit a picture for this feature, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## Championing the use of our local dialect

I am lucky enough to have a part-time job teaching at the University of Agder in Kristiansand.

That's how I know that every year an important national prize is awarded in Norway. The prize has been awarded every year since 1978, and it is presented to a person who, on Norwegian TV or radio, "distinguishes themselves through their good use of language and employment of dialect".

Last time, the prize-winner was Trude Teige. Trude is a kind of Norwegian Jeremy Paxman. She presents a prime-time news programme four times a week on the Norwegian equivalent of BBC 2.

The committee who awarded her the prize congratulated her on using her dialect in a clear and natural way. At the award ceremony, Trude told journalists she believed it was important in broadcasting to speak your own dialect, and to speak it in a modern, clear and comprehensible way. Like that, you can concentrate on what you are saying and not, self-consciously, on how you are saying it.

Wouldn't it be nice if we had such a prize here in this country? At the moment this is unthinkable. Ms Teige comes from a rather out-of-the-way place on the west coast of Norway called Sunnmøre – a sort of Norwegian Norfolk – and she started her broadcasting career presenting the news on local TV there in her local dialect. Can we imagine that here?

It's only relatively recently that we have had radio and TV presenters in England

PETER TRUDGILL



who use any kind of local accent at all, let alone local dialect. Older people remember when, if you wanted to be a newsreader, you needed two qualities: you had to be able to read – and you had to have a public school accent.

So BBC Radio Norfolk must take credit for employing some presenters and other broadcasters who do speak in a Norfolk way: what a joy it was to hear John Taylor's vivid reports of local football matches – local events reported in the local media in a local form of English. And Radio Norfolk does give lots of airtime to locally-accented people who phone in, take part in interviews, or make other types of contribution – and it's very good that they do.

But how long will it be before we actually have the news presented in a Norfolk accent? We get to listen to people with local accents from elsewhere – who don't always know how to pronounce local place names correctly – but not with Norfolk accents.

In Scotland it is expected that presenters will have Scottish accents. But here we have learnt not to have any such expectation.

If the BBC did start using locally-accented presenters to read the local news, there would be people who would protest. Some of them, sadly, would be local people. They would feel, perhaps, that it was "inappropriate" to use local speech in this way. One of the tasks that the Friends of Norfolk Dialect organisation has set itself is to help people get over this kind of embarrassment – to encourage people to feel that local speech can always be appropriate in local settings.

Too often, when the local dialect is used in the printed media here, this is done for comic effect. But a dialect which is used only for jokes is suffering rather badly from an inferiority complex.

Perhaps this is not surprising when outsiders keep telling us that our local speech is "mangled" and that we "struggle" with our language – both words which have been used in this newspaper recently.

The fact is that no one dialect or accent is in itself better or worse than any other. It is only attitudes towards them which differ. We can make a beginning locally in producing more positive attitudes towards our local speech by deciding that we are all going to start feeling positive, here in Norfolk, about speaking in a distinctively Norfolk way.

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