

People of Norfolk must be at the forefront of 2013 intake's minds

UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage warned yesterday that his party will cause a political "earthquake" in next year's European elections. This is a real possibility. His party has already sent strong tremors through Westminster, with vast gains in the local elections giving all of the three main parties cause for concern.

New curbs on benefits and access to the NHS for immigrants will be at the heart of the Queen's Speech on Wednesday – a direct response to the growing popularity of Mr Farage and his party which has put migration at the heart of its manifesto.

UKIP does not yet have a voice in parliament, but its seismic impact is perhaps at its most stark in Norfolk where the county council has been left with no overall majority. UKIP is now the official opposition at County Hall, with Labour and other parties also taking seats from the previous rulers.

These great changes come at a particularly challenging time for the council, which is grappling with concerns about Children's Services and will also have to find a further £40m to cut from its budget.

Important decisions will need to be made and a culture of deep scrutiny must be at the heart of the new administration.

But politicians from all parties will have to work together too.

The electorate has voted for a change in the way things are done, but this must not be characterised by a culture of party political point scoring. Everything the 2013 intake do over the next four years must put the people of Norfolk first and they must remember that the county benefits most when everybody works together.

Strikes heighten tension

Raids by Israeli warplanes, which struck areas in and around Syria's capital yesterday, ratchet up tensions in the Middle East by another notch.

The series of explosions, which the Israelis claim targeted a shipment of Iranian-made guided missiles believed to be on their way to Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, came just 48 hours after another strike on Friday.

Foreign Secretary William Hague insists Israel's right to defend itself must be respected after the reports. Israel is understandably concerned about advanced weapons being handed over to Hezbollah, and the attacks will be designed to send a strong signal.

But it is a real concern how the Syrian regime will react. Will President Bashar al-Assad want to show resistance against Israel? Any direct response could spark a much larger confrontation. It is likely Mr Assad and his ally Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah will want to avoid this.

But the Syrian crisis appears to be entering new territory. This is a worrying development.

Great start to festival

This weekend was a great time to be in and around the Norfolk Broads whether a business, tourist or local. In the opening weekend of the Broads Outdoors Festival the hard work of the organisers of the inaugural Horning Boat Show paid off as an estimated 5,000 people flocked to the event.

Communities also came together to put on the Ludham Arts and Crafts Event and more than 80 scarecrows were put up around Martham for the fifth year running. Shows like these are a great chance to meet our neighbours, learn more about our region and show what we have to offer to visitors. There are few better backdrops for a bank holiday weekend than the Norfolk Broads – especially when the sun shines.

WORDS FOR LIFE

His miraculous signs are impressive. He uses his power to do amazing things.
Daniel 4:3



READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY



DAVID BROOKER

STUNNING: David Brooker caught this beautiful image of The Pines at Lenwade when going fishing on a Sunday morning. If you would like to submit a picture for this feature, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Rules of pronunciation taught at Urt School

PETER TRUDGILL

email newsdesk@archant.co.uk



All languages have rules. And I don't mean foolish rules invented by self-appointed experts like "you mustn't end a sentence with a preposition". (If someone tells you that, the only correct response is "why not?")

I mean the real linguistic rules that we're all clever enough to acquire as small children without realising it. No one ever told you there was an English rule "adjectives come before nouns" – when you got to school you knew that already, without knowing you knew it. You had also worked out why the negative of "I will" is "I will not" but the negative of "I sing" is not "I sing not". (To know exactly how this rule works, ask a foreigner who learnt it in English lessons at school.)

And there are pronunciation rules too. Think of how to achieve the true Norwich pronunciation of the name of the local school named after the 17th-century Norwich benefactor Mordecai Hewett.

The first thing to notice is you have to omit the 'y' sound after the 'h' in 'hyoo-wit'. In Norfolk we pronounce "view" as 'voo' and "music" as 'moosic'. Its called "yod-dropping". So you have to say 'hoo-wit'.

You also have to drop the 'h', as city people do. This will give you 'oo-wit'. But then you have to be sure, too, not to pronounce the second syllable of Hewett like "it".

Unlike Londoners, Norfolk people



WHAT'S IN A NAME? A class from 1962 at the Hewett (or 'Urt') School.

pronounce "roses" and "Rosa's" the same – "ros-uhs". So you have to say 'oo-wuht', not 'oo-witt'. "Hewett School" rhymes with "do at school".

And finally there comes the most important Norwich rule – it's the same rule that sees "Heigham" pronounced "Ham".

One Christmas, years ago, when I was working as a temporary postman, I noticed a lot of cards going to the bakery on Unthank Road which weren't addressed to "Sewells" but "Searles".

In Norwich these words sound the same. The rule is that if an 'oo' vowel, like in "soon", comes before an unstressed 'uh'

vowel – as in "do it" – they combine to give an 'ur' vowel instead. So "do it" and "dirt" are pronounced the same. "Sewer" and "sir" sound the same too. "Chewing" is the same as "churn"; and "pure" is identical with "purr". In linguistics we call this rule "smoothing".

Jake Humphrey, and lots of other good Norwich people – and by the way, don't forget to pronounce the 't' as a glottal stop – went to the Urt School.

■ Peter Trudgill is president of Friends of Norfolk Dialect (FOND).
■ What do you think? Email EDP Letters at edpleters@archant.co.uk