

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

We all have to take responsibility to cut the roads death toll

Even in the context of a bleak year so far on Norfolk's roads, the loss of three lives in just 24 hours over the weekend is shocking.

The toll of tragedy keeps rising. More families are facing the horror of coming to terms with the sudden loss of one of their nearest and dearest.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who have been affected by these latest fatal crashes.

The circumstances surrounding the three collisions are being investigated by the traffic police officers and we are certainly not pre-empting any of their inquiries.

Every time another life is lost in our county – especially on the A47 – the pressure intensifies for improvements to our roads.

We have long campaigned for our main trunk roads to be upgraded and support the voices calling for the A47 to follow the A11 in getting long overdue investment.

But better infrastructure is only part of the answer and police have again urged drivers to adapt to roads and the conditions.

Every one of us will see bad driving as we travel around each day.

Impatience, lack of concentration and dangerous manoeuvring are sadly all too common sights.

Improvements to the roads may reduce some of the perceived necessity to overtake and make the most of straight sections and dual carriageways.

But ultimately we all have to share our responsibility in reducing the awful death toll.

Please drive carefully.

Carers are so valuable

Carers' Week is a chance to recognise the hard work and unflinching devotion of the selfless thousands who put their own lives on hold to care for their families.

For most, it is not a life they choose, but one which they accept willingly to help their loved ones through whatever difficulty they may face.

Norfolk's new Carers Agency Partnership must do everything it can to help these people – and particularly those who are concerned that a generalised support structure could reduce the specialised expertise which they rely on to meet the complex demands of caring for relatives with mental health difficulties.

Of course, the county council must explore every option for saving public money. But the true value of these everyday heroes – whose efforts reduce the financial burden on our health authorities – must not be overlooked.

Broadband boost

It seems like ever since the dawn of the world wide web, Norfolk has been lagging behind in the technology race. While the rest of the globe happily traded and socialised online, thousands in this region were left isolated in broadband black holes.

The EDP, alongside the county council, has campaigned for months to champion this cause, to help generate the funds and tempt the private investment to resolve this fundamental problem. So we're proud, at last, to see the first tangible benefits on the horizon which could bring a genuine positive change for households and businesses.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Richard Woodhouse spotted this bearded tit, also known as the reedling, looking for food in the reeds at Pensthorpe. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

'Mate' can be the most appropriate way to address a man

Peter Trudgill



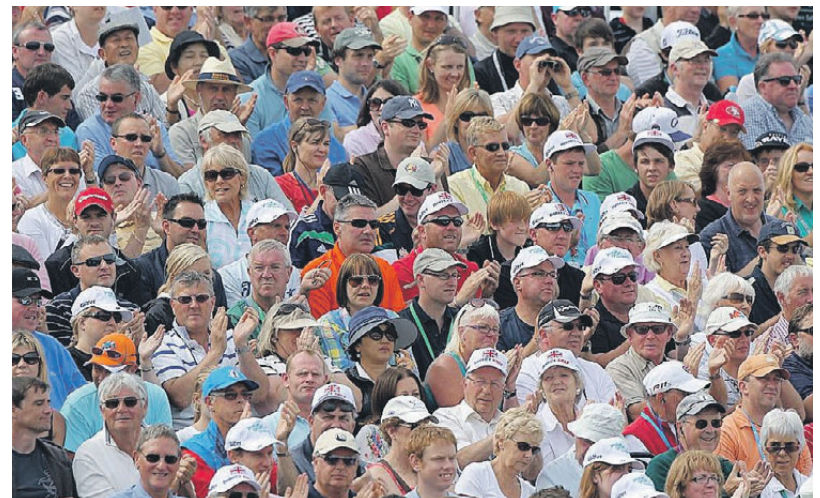
email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk

Our EDP colleague Steve Downes wrote in his column that he doesn't like being called 'mate', and doesn't want anyone to call him that unless they really are his mate. Now I'm not actually Steve's mate. I haven't met him, though I would like to sometime. But I do rather think that if I accidentally bumped into him on The Walk, I might just say "Sorry, mate" by way of an apology.

I respect the way Steve feels about this, but I think he's missing the point. There are two different usages of this word. Yes, 'mate' can be a noun meaning 'friend', as in "they are good mates". (It comes from the Hamburg-area Low German 'ge-mate', meaning a person one shares food with – the 'mat' part is the same as English 'meat', which originally meant 'food'.)

But 'mate' can also be a term of address. All languages have words which speakers use to address other people, like Norfolk 'bor'. These words are employed according to specific rules – very often to be polite or friendly – and don't necessarily have much meaning of their own.

Think about the rules for using 'mate' as a way of addressing someone. First, you



■ How many of us in a crowd such as this are 'friends' or 'mates' – or both or neither...?

can only say it to a man – and it's used much more by men than by women. Most address terms are gendered in some way like this. The word "dear" is not used in Norfolk by men to men. It's used by women, and by men to women.

Then, mate is also rather informal. It implies some kind of equality. You wouldn't call your doctor 'mate'.

And 'mate' is very helpful, the way many of us use it, as a means of addressing men if we don't know their name. It's good to have something to call out to people to attract their attention. Americans would

say "Sir!". We're often reduced to a cough or an embarrassed "Excuse me!". 'Mate' can work much better. In the BBC film footage from the scene of that shocking accident by Vauxhall Station in London when a helicopter crashed into a crane, a man can be heard shouting "Mate! Mate! My car's on fire!" Those two men weren't mates. And that was the point. If he had been his mate, he would have shouted his name.

Many of us reserve the word 'mate', as a term of address, for precisely those people who are not our mates.

WORDS FOR LIFE

The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.
Psalm 23:1

