

# Eastern Daily Press

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## Our thoughts and prayers are with victims of typhoon

We have been watching with horror as the deadly typhoon has torn its way through the Philippines.

At least 10,000 people have died, and the country's president said he feared there would be substantially more casualties.

Hundreds of thousands of people have also been displaced by the typhoon, which is thought to be one of the most powerful to hit land. The true scale of the disaster will not become fully known until the next few days.

We welcome the support from Britain, which has already committed £6m to help up to 500,000 people affected. And that the money will be given to pre-approved organisations to provide crucial humanitarian aid.

Britain has also sent humanitarian specialists to assist. And we feel sure that if more money and help is needed, our nation and the whole world community will be ready to step forward.

Of course, thousands of Filipino women and men work in hospitals across the country and in our region, and their hard work and friendliness is well known.

Many have relatives in those areas worst affected by the storm.

Among them is Lily Matthews, a 61-year-old grandmother from Thorpe St Andrew who has been unable to contact her family since the devastating storm struck, and is desperate to find out if they are all right.

It is impossible to imagine how she and thousands of others are feeling.

Our thoughts and prayers rightly go out to them at this time of tragedy and sorrow.

## We must never forget

Heads bowed at memorials in villages, towns and cities and turnouts at Remembrance Day services were as large as ever yesterday.

We must never stop forgetting to remember those who have lost their lives in conflicts past and present.

The moments of silence also allow us to think about those service personnel who continue to fight and protect us all around the globe.

Poppies are rightly worn with pride and it was heartening to see so many people from toddlers to veterans with them on at the parades and services.

On Remembrance Day itself today we urge everyone to stop what that they are doing at 11am and pause again.

No one can say they are too busy to do that.

The brave fallen gave their todays for our tomorrows.

We will remember them.

## The ace in his sleeve

At just 15 years old, Alfie Hewett's achievements are remarkable.

Already the best junior wheelchair tennis player in the country, when thieves targeted his equipment he responded by winning two more titles.

He is currently ranked 22 in the world.

If he maintains this level of determination, he will surely climb higher yet.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



Seals playing on Horsey beach caught the eye of Pamela Culley. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## Strictly speaking, Tess, it takes two to tango

Peter  
Trudgill



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These couples are putting on a show - and teaching us something about grammar.

People have been asking me for my professional opinion on Strictly Come Dancing. As you might suppose, I don't actually know my salsa from my samba or, come to that, my Artem from my Anton.

So they're not consulting me about the actual dancing. People are perplexed about some of the language used in the show. In homes and pubs all across our county, Strictly-watchers are discussing one particular phrase used by the show's presenters: "the next couple is..."

It sounds really odd, which is why people are arguing about it. It's odd because it's not what any normal British person would ever say. We would say "the next couple are..."

So why do these presenters use "is" instead? It's because they've been told to. And they've been told to because someone, somewhere, thinks it's "wrong" not to.

But it isn't. With collective nouns like "couple, team, committee" you can, in principle, choose to treat them either as singular - which they are grammatically; or plural, which they are semantically - in terms of their meaning. And "couple"

does, after all, mean two! In all the dialects of English we speak in this country, it's natural and correct for us to prefer to go with the semantics.

My wife, on the other hand, finds "the next couple is..." entirely normal. That's because she's American. Americans tend quite naturally to go with the grammatical agreement. In this country we can alternate between "the government is" and "the government are", while Americans favour "is". But when it comes to sport, we really part company with them. Americans do actually say things like "Norwich City is playing well - it's going to be the league champion".

I don't like to bandy the words right and

wrong about too much. If, however, a Norwegian student of mine said "Norwich City is brilliant", I would of course entirely agree with the sentiment.

But I would tell them that, if they thought they were speaking British English, they were wrong. For us, there's a very big difference between "England are rubbish" and "England is rubbish". The former is a frequently heard remark at Wembley Stadium. The latter is a much more serious accusation, and one that strikes at the very heart of our nation.

Maybe someone should write a letter to The Times asking the BBC to tell Tess not to use American grammar.

That will work.

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The Lord is great. He should be highly praised.  
Psalm 48:1

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