

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

It's vital that our schools get a fair and thorough scrutiny

Every single person working in a school knows the huge pressure Ofsted inspections bring.

There is the uncertainty around when the scrutiny team will come in and once it turns up, everyone from the headteacher to the classroom assistants knows their reputations are under the spotlight.

In principle, we support the idea of inspections.

Schools must be held to account and generally if they are being run properly, there is nothing to hide.

What we certainly do frown upon is any suspicion of political meddling in the Ofsted system.

Strong words were uttered yesterday by the chief inspector of schools Sir Michael Wilshaw, who warned education secretary Michael Gove that school standards could be damaged if his authority was undermined.

Sir Michael claimed there were right-wing attacks on Ofsted and said he was "spitting blood" over it.

He said he felt "intimidated" and strongly alluded to mischief making and briefings against him.

Mr Gove was quick to dismiss the claims and heaped praise on the chief inspector.

We sense elements of smoke and fire and not surprisingly Labour quickly pounced and stirred up talk of smear campaigns.

The truth, as is often the case, may lie somewhere in the midst of the unseemly mess.

What must happen is for this to be sorted out and attention given to ensuring schools are given thorough and fair scrutiny.

A solution is essential

There can't be many drivers in Norfolk who, at some point or other, have not cursed while making their way around Thickthorn roundabout.

Recently, the terrible road surface and the lack of lane markings have been the problem, which has only served to increase the confusion there.

But the other problem is the sheer volume of traffic which needs to use that roundabout.

And, if all the homes earmarked for the county over the next few decades go ahead that is a problem which is only going to get worse.

This is a junction which, as the council and the Local Enterprise Partnership, rightly state, is one of the most important in the county.

So it is good to see that Norfolk County Council is working on proposals to solve the capacity issues.

Mervyn's still our King

Many of us will have watched with disappointment as Mervyn King from Norfolk was defeated in yesterday's World Bowls Final.

The local hero certainly had the backing of the crowd at Potters at Hopton but couldn't quite lift the crown.

We're proud of Mervyn for getting so far and also delighted that the tournament has again proved such a massive success.

The crowds were as fantastic as ever and the venue is a credit to the whole county.

Roll on next year!

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My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
John 10:27

tlc
tlcnorwich.com

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



The evening sun sheds light on the layers of chalk, red chalk and carrstone in the stunning cliffs at Hunstanton in this photograph by Valerie Bardsley. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

A shame to see dialect words suffer from 'lexical attrition'

Peter
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English dialects in this country are holding up pretty well, but we are sadly seeing quite a lot of what dialectologists call "lexical attrition".

This simply means that there's a tendency for local dialect words to disappear in favour of more widespread, nationally recognised vocabulary.

Local words, though, are still surviving, and they tend to endure most strongly when they apply to informal and domestic areas of life which are less subject to influence from the written language, the education system and the media.

Nobody much, I think, uses the Norfolk word "mawther" (girl) very often any more. But when it comes to humble, everyday objects and activities, we do tend to still stick to the local words we learned here in our own part of the world when we were children.

Norfolk people may still have their troughings repaired, rather than the guttering around their house. And many of us still talk about the linen – and linen lines, linen cupboards, linen pegs – rather than the washing or the laundry.



Children at play often used words of their own making in the past says Professor Peter Trudgill. Picture: LIBRARY

But perhaps the area of life where local words survive most strongly, because they do so in a subterranean kind of way, is children's games and activities.

One well-known example has to do with truce words – terms children use when playing so they can be deemed to be out of the game for a short time in order, for example, to do their shoes up.

In 1959, a fascinating book came out called *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, by Iona and Peter Opie – it was republished in 2000. One of the children's oral subculture topics which Peter and Iona researched was truce words, and their book contains a map showing which terms were used by children in which parts of the country.

Do you remember what you used to say when you were playing games when you were a kid?

In London, children say – or said – "fainites". In the northwest of England, the word was "barley", probably from "parlay". Other terms in different parts of the country included "kings", "keys", "skinch", "cree", "scribs" and "crosses".

The Opies reported that in the Ipswich and Norwich areas, the term used was one which seemed to be connected to the form "crosses", namely "exes".

And that is more or less what I remember: If you had a stitch and needed to stop playing for a moment, you crossed your fingers and shouted "exies!".