

# Eastern Daily Press

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SINCE 1870

## Why Norfolk's war heroes must not be forgotten

We pledge to remember our war dead every year through Remembrance Day services and events.

However, it is sad that some of the brave men who fought for the freedom of our country in the Second World War do not even have a lasting memorial.

News that a dedicated memorial for 705 former RAF Downham Market airmen has been held up because of red tape is even more frustrating.

Author Chris Coverdale's quest to replace a wooden plaque outside the village church with a granite memorial should be applauded.

However, the project has received a blow after council officials were unable to find out who owns the 20 yard strip of land, which means he can not apply for planning permission.

The current memorial only has the names of two of the 705 Pathfinder squadron air crew who lost their lives whilst serving at RAF Downham Market during the war.

The number of people who remember seeing Stirlings, Mosquitoes and Lancasters flying from the base dwindles every year and there are very few physical reminders of the former airfield at Bexwell.

This is why a permanent memorial is so important so that future generations never forget Norfolk's war heroes.

After 70 years without a memorial, it is not right that there should be unnecessary planning delays in getting a lasting tribute to those airmen.

No one can argue against a war memorial. So let's cut the red tape and make this project happen.

## Potato breakthrough

Whatever your opinion on the ethics of genetically modified food, the latest findings from the John Innes Centre highlights Norfolk's importance as a global player in food research.

Potato blight costs the farming industry billions of pounds because of a loss of so many crops.

However, the results of a three-year trial from Norfolk-based scientists show that two varieties of GM potato survived a devastating season of blight.

The latest news opens up the debate again on GM food.

These new strains of potato may be resistant to blight, but questions still remain on the impact of growing GM food on the eco-system and the effect of eating such crops.

Also, is the £750,000 cost of this research worth it?

And will anyone want to eat these GM foods?

## Best wishes Ken

Norwich City fans have not had much silverware to cheer over the years.

So it is only right that we celebrate the man who led the Canaries to one of the club's greatest wins with victory in the 1985 Milk Cup.

The word legend is an overused one in the world of sport. However, legend is fitting for Ken Brown, who led the club to promotion twice and a 1-0 win over Sunderland in a Wembley cup final.

Happy 80th birthday Ken!

looking for GOD.com

By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me.  
Psalm 42:8

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## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Trees battered by onshore winds stand at a rakish angle on the cliffs at Hopton, near Great Yarmouth, in this photograph by Adele Southall. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## Tracing our county's past links with the Roman Empire

Peter  
Trudgill

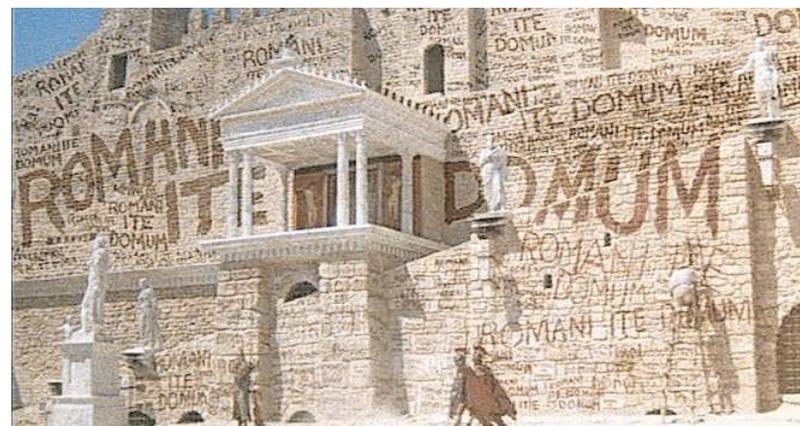


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Norwich Castle Museum is hosting a fascinating exhibition on the Roman Empire, including items from the Middle East and North Africa as well as Europe. Among the European materials, there are displays from Walsingham, Hockwold and Hoxne – the Romans were here in East Anglia, too, for more than 350 years.

How did we get on with these Romans who came over here, invading our country? Maybe "we" isn't the right word. The people who lived in Norfolk when the Romans arrived weren't English-speaking. They were the Icenii, Celts who spoke a language we now call Brittonic, which was the ancestor of Welsh, Cornish and Breton. Famously, to start with, the two groups got on very, very badly indeed. The Icenii queen Boudicca led a brave but ultimately doomed revolt against the Romans.

Not surprisingly, though, after centuries of increasingly peaceful contact with the Romans, the Brittonic language acquired many Latin words from the Romans, as we can see in Modern Welsh words like pont "bridge", and llafur "labour". But in much of Roman Europe, the linguistic conse-



■ The Roman Empire and the Latin graffiti scene as seen through the eyes of the Monty Python team in the film *The Life of Brian*.  
Picture: LIBRARY

quences of the Roman Empire were much greater. The Celts in Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy, under the influence of Roman culture, abandoned their native tongues altogether and shifted to Latin.

Why didn't that happen here? Well – it did! As the Roman legions were pulling out of Norfolk in AD410, perhaps most of the Celts walking around the streets of Venta Icenorum (Caistor St Edmund) would have been speaking Latin – many of them would have actually been bilingual in Latin and Celtic.

Linguists believe the dialect of Latin which was spoken here in southern England would eventually have ended up being very like Old French. Norfolk would

have gone from being, if you like, Welsh speaking to being French speaking.

So what stopped this happening? Well, we did – depending once again on who you mean by "we". Our linguistic ancestors, the Anglo-Saxons, sailed across the North Sea to our shores, and came to dominate the Romano-Celts politically, culturally and linguistically. They brought with them the Germanic language which eventually became English. The very oldest word of written English ever discovered anywhere was found, engraved on a bone, in the Anglo-Saxon graveyard in Caistor. It reads RAIHAN "roe deer".

You can see that in the Castle Museum too.