

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Government action needed for schools to keep improving

Education in our region has been on a journey in recent years.

The painful starting point was the recognition that standards in our schools were not good enough. Norfolk and Suffolk found themselves in the national spotlight, and in the crosshairs of both Ofsted and the Department for Education.

In words that are ingrained on the minds of many local education leaders, the chief inspector used a high-profile speech to ask why education was so dire in much of Norfolk.

The fact that, unprompted, the same organisation's regional direction has now praised the progress made by schools in Norfolk and Suffolk is therefore a significant staging post as the journey continues. Exam results and Ofsted grades both suggest a picture of continuing, sustainable upward movement.

Andrew Cook also made the point that both counties still need to improve further – something which is absolutely correct.

As the EDP's week-long series interviewing key players in our education system continues, there is clear recognition of progress made so far, and of the need to keep pushing forwards. But there are also clear warnings of obstacles in the way, not least real-terms cuts in school funding, and significant problems that many schools face recruiting good quality teachers.

It appears that much of the government's energies over the months and years to come will be diverted to its grammar school plans. There are more urgent issues that ministers should be addressing.

Help find Harry's family

For the village of Drayton, April 9 next year will be a special day.

The Sunday will be a chance for the community to commemorate a war hero whose extraordinary bravery is now well-told.

Harry Cator, like so many young men of his time, was forced to show bravery beyond his years when he fought in the First World War. In an allied attack in France on April 9, 1917, he risked his own life to save those of his platoon, avoiding heavy machine gun fire and coming face to face with German soldiers.

It earned him the Victoria Cross – and a ceremony 100 years on in which a commemorative paving stone will be laid as a permanent tribute.

So it is sad to read that the parish council has been unable to trace Harry's descendants to be a part of the commemorations.

Whether they are in the east, or have moved further afield, we're sure they would love the opportunity to honour a beloved grandfather or uncle.

If you know anything that can help them be traced, please get in touch.

A big day to remember

It's always a couple's Big Day – but some manage to make a wedding bigger than others.

Mervyn Kent and Dawn James went all out as they tied the knot in Kessingland on Saturday, putting on a fairytale wedding to remember.

The arrivals – in a lorry and Cinderella carriage – set the tone for a spectacular day; only to be topped by the arrival of a barn owl delivering the rings.

Marriage can often be dismissed as an old-fashioned institution.

But for those who fall in love – with each other, and with the idea of a life of wedded bliss – it is still as special as ever.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Anne Marks, who took this photograph, said she was delighted to see this swallowtail butterfly on buddleia in Waxham. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Why do we pronounce these place names differently?

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It's a source of some puzzlement to visitors to Norfolk that Reepham is Reef'm, but Deopham is Deep'm. Ass a rum'n, they might say, if they could speak Norfolk.

Well, yes, that is a rum'n – but actually it's quite easy to explain. In Deopham, the letter p belongs to the first part of the name, while the h belongs to the second part: it's Deop-ham. With Reepham, the combination of letters ph is just another way of writing f – and this f belonged to the first part of the word: the name was originally spelt Reefham.

In both cases, the -ham part of the name is the Anglo-Saxon word for home, homestead, village, or manor. It is typically found in the names of the very earliest Anglian settlements in our area, dating perhaps from as early as the 400s or 500s AD.

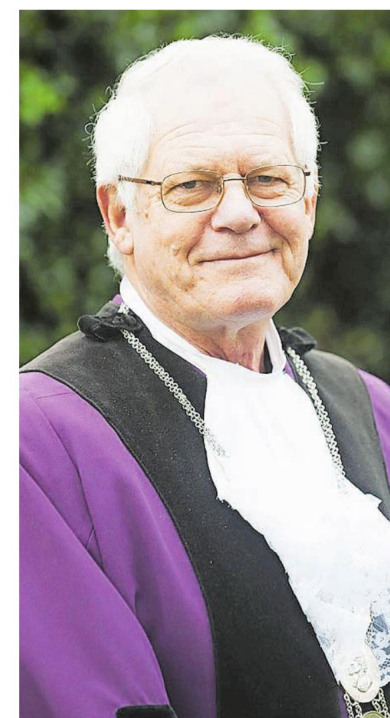
The Deop- part of Deopham probably means what it says: the most likely interpretation is that it means 'deep'. The Old English word deop meant 'a deep place'. One problem is that it was most often used

of deep places out to sea – 'a deep'. On the face of it, that seems to be rather odd, because Deopham is near Hingham, and nowhere near the sea. The explanation seems to be that Deopham is by the lake now called Seamere; and that lake was probably called Deop in Old English.

The Reef- part of Reepham is rather well understood. The name originally indicated that the settlement was a manor administered by a reeve – an Anglo-Saxon administrator. The word lives on in the modern word sheriff, which was originally shire-reeve – an officer who was in charge of a shire, and in the office of Town Reeve of Bungay. It also survives in the surname Reeves. The typical Norfolk form of the name is Reeve: in the 1886 British census, Reeve was more common in Norfolk and Suffolk than anywhere else in the country.

Rather neatly, retired journalist Terry Reeve has served (three times) as Bungay's Town Reeve.

We have the same problem of word division with the village names Martham, in the Broads, which is called Marth'm, and Wretham, in the Brecks, which is called Wrett'm. This is for the same sort of reason. The first element of Marth-am comes from the Old English word mearth, which meant marten – it was a place frequented by pine martens, which were common in England in Anglo-Saxon times. And the first half of Wret-ham comes from wrætt, which meant crosswort, a medicinal herb of the bedstraw family.



■ Retired EDP journalist Terry Reeve has held the office of Town Reeve of Bungay three times. Picture: NICK BUTCHER