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This positive move will help men with mental health issues

Anything that can be done to help the growing number of men who are suffering with mental health problems can only be welcomed.

A new study, published to coincide with World Mental Health Day today, shows why.

The results of the research, carried out by the UCL Institute of Education, show men born between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, known as Generation X, were more likely to suffer mental health issues than those born between 1946 and 1964, the generation before them, known as the baby boomers.

In Norfolk and Waveney, the most recent statistics show suicide rates to be highest in men aged 35 to 64, followed by men aged between 18 and 34. The lower rates were for women aged between 35 to 64, with the lowest rates of all among young women aged between 18 and 34.

So the news that a men's wellbeing nursing lead is due to start work at the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust later this month should be applauded.

According to Gabriel Abotsie, his priority will be to look at ways to better engage with men to encourage them to seek help if they are experiencing mental health problems.

It is well known that men often find it more difficult than women to admit to and talk about the way they may be feeling. That is why getting them to open up is the biggest challenge of all facing health workers and why finding ways to engage with them in the first place is so important.

Important decisions

Anyone who has driven through Norwich city centre in recent months could be forgiven for feeling someone at Norfolk County Council had it in for them.

Hardly a week has gone by without roadworks disrupting journeys in one part of the city or another.

Of course, building a £178m road to the north of the city is always disruptive, but some have been left baffled by why so much work has been happening at the same time in the city centre itself.

The fact is that they are two sides of the same coin. The work in the city centre is happening precisely because the Norwich Northern Distributor Road is being built.

There's a wider strategy at play here. Up to now, the council has not done a great job of explaining how everything fits together or demonstrating just why this work is needed.

Maybe, after reading John Barnard's explanations in our paper today, the motivations will be clearer.

However, issues such as having to move a traffic island because of a design "oversight" and the surfacing trouble on two schemes have not instilled confidence. Businesses are correct to keep scrutinising the work, particularly on the inner ring road. The decisions being made have a huge impact on all of us – now and in the future.

Fascinating Nelson link

Known as Nelson's County, Norfolk is rightly proud of its links to Vice Admiral Lord Nelson, one of Britain's greatest naval commanders, who was born in Burnham Thorpe in 1758, the son of the rector at the church of All Saints.

But while Nelson's life and his maritime achievements are well documented, a lesser known story has come to light – that of Thomas Goble, who was quickly promoted to Secretary to the Fleet after Nelson's secretary John Scott was killed. Now Malcolm Paton, Thomas Goble's 90-year-old great grandson, who lives at Weybourne, wants to ensure his great grandfather's story is not lost and intends to write a book about his exploits. His story shouldn't be lost.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Blue skies and blue waters – reflection on lake at Blickling Hall, by Ron Graham. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

English has hunted other languages to point of extinction

Peter Trudgill



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The 17th-century expansion of English out of the British Isles turned it into a killer language. The first casualties were the languages of the Bahamas, the Caribbean, and North America.

In what is now Canada and the USA, there were about 300 languages at the time of the first contact between the indigenous peoples and Europeans.

Now, well over 100 of these languages have gone, and another 75 or so are only remembered by a small number of elderly speakers. Navaho, spoken in Arizona and New Mexico, is the only North American language with more than 100,000 speakers.

Experts say that nearly all of the remaining 100-odd indigenous languages are likely to be gone by the end of the 21st century.

If this miserable prediction is correct, then it will only have taken 500 years from the time of the first English settlement in Jamestown, Virginia for English to have killed off nearly all the indigenous languages of North America.

Australia had about 250 languages at the time of the first British colonisation. More than half of these have died out already, and Australian linguists are constantly revising downwards the number of indige-



■ A traditional Maori welcome: The New Zealand Maori language is one of those under threat from the march of English. Picture: JOHN STILLWELL/PA

nous languages they think will survive into the 22nd century. Now, no more than 20 are currently being learnt by children, so in another generation more than 90pc of all Australian languages will have been killed off.

This is partly due to language shift – meaning that a community has abandoned its language and switched to another.

In many cases communities had no choice about this: their children were forcibly taken from them and put into boarding schools where speaking Australian languages was not allowed.

But it was also partly due to genocide, especially in Tasmania, where natives were hunted down and killed. In the

Pacific Ocean, some of the 40 or so Polynesian languages, and 50-plus Micronesian languages are also threatened by language shift. Hawaiian and New Zealand Maori, which are both spoken in places where English is now dominant, are particularly vulnerable.

The expansion of English has been a remarkable phenomenon, but it has created many losers. In fact, there's an important sense in which we are all losers.

The loss of linguistic diversity from the world is a language-ecological disaster. Seven per cent of all mammal species in the world are on the endangered list. But when it comes to human languages, 90pc are in danger of extinction.