

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

No call or text is important enough to put lives at risk

We are very pleased to see that police in our region are getting tough on drivers using their mobile phones at the wheel.

Too many people lack the discipline and control to ignore their phone, while driving, and fail to appreciate the enormous risks they are taking.

It can only take a moment's lack of concentration to result in tragedy.

Unfortunately lives have been lost on our roads because of this sort of behaviour.

This is why the EDP launched our Hands Off Your Mobile campaign, which is urging drivers to stop using their mobile phones at the wheel and has received widespread support. We have pledged to name motorists who are taken to court in Norfolk and north Suffolk for using their phones while driving, which we hope will act as an added deterrent.

It is a worrying fact that driving while using a mobile phone is one of the fastest-rising offences. Surely no call or text is so important as to put someone's life at risk.

Next year the law may change, with offenders' penalty points increasing from three to six and fines going up from £100 and £200.

We applaud Norfolk and Suffolk police for acting swiftly, in the meantime, in using their powers to take away the option of offering educational courses for first time offenders.

If you think these actions are harsh or unwarranted, just think the next time someone flouts the law, it could be your friend, family member or loved one who suffers the consequences.

Keep countryside open

One of the delights of living in a rural region is the fact that the open countryside is right on our doorstep.

But that is no good if access to the countryside is hindered for other reasons.

Poor signposting and impassable rights of way – either overgrown by vegetation or blocked by fences – are a hindrance to walkers and provide obstacles to access to the countryside.

Now rambles are urging council bosses in Norfolk and Suffolk to do more to keep footpaths clear.

They are making the plea as they today release results of the Big Pathway, the nation's biggest ever footpath survey, which revealed problems on nearly 7,000 footpaths in the East of England. It is the duty of county councils to protect public rights of way and even though it may not be high on their list of priorities it is worth considering this..

Money spent on maintaining them could bring a welcome financial boost to local communities in the creation of work and attracting visitors. There may also be the benefits to people's wellbeing by allowing them access to the country side and the economic savings on health care later in life.

Familiar venue for Ed

For politicians seaside towns such as Brighton and Bournemouth have long been familiar names in their diaries. Many will be used to heading there once a year come party conference season.

So for former shadow chancellor Ed Balls, Blackpool will be a familiar stomping ground.

His salsa with partner Katya Jones to internet hit Gangnam Style by Psy was good enough to win them a coveted place in Strictly Come Dancing's annual pilgrimage to Blackpool Tower Ballroom next week.

But Norwich City chairman Mr Balls will know from his political past that reputations can be both made and lost at the seaside.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Southwold schoolchildren reflected in the puddles at the Remembrance service held at the war memorial on Armistice Day in this photograph by Denise Burrows. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Confused by American pronunciation? I'll explain why

Peter Trudgill

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The other day my wife said something to me about, as I thought, a woman looking raddled.

This was a bit of a surprise to me as it was a rather unkind personal remark of a type that she is generally not given to making. But then I quickly realised that what she had actually said was that the woman had been rattled.

My wife very kindly agreed to leave the USA and come to live with me in England 36 years ago, but she still sounds American to English people. And the fact is that Americans pronounce rattle and raddle the same. They pronounce a t, where it occurs between two vowels, in the same way that they pronounce a d. So there are many pairs of words that we differentiate which they do not: bitter and bidder, latter and ladder, putting and pudding, seeding and seating.

This can also happen before an l, as in metal pronounced the same as meddle. This means they can employ rhymes which don't work for us, like "put the pedal to the metal".

There is nothing wrong with any of this. Pronouncing latter and ladder the same is not bad, incorrect, lazy, sloppy or any of the other adjectives which people who



■ So how would you pronounce this man's job title? In British English it's 'waiter' – as it is spelled – but in US English the word is pronounced 'wader'.

Picture: MICHAEL BLANN/
GETTY IMAGES/
THINKSTOCKPHOTO

don't like certain accents tend to throw in their direction. It's just the American and Canadian – and, increasingly, Australian and New Zealand – way of speaking. Some English people sometimes do this too.

The lack of differentiation between some instances of t and d hardly ever causes misunderstandings.

It is extremely hard to think of a sentence where the two words waiter and wader are likely to be confused. When the lack of differentiation does cause problems, as with my confusion the other day, this mostly lasts only a second or so.

It is also only fair to point out that there are many pairs of words which we here in the east of England pronounce the same, but which most Americans differentiate between because they pronounce the letter r where we do not: paw and poor, father and farther, caught and court, spar and spa. We can rhyme idea and near in a way Americans can't.

I must confess, however, that I do remember when I was a child hearing somebody singing the American song Puttin' on the style and wondering why anybody would want to place a dessert on a stile.