

# Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY  
SINCE 1870

## Lib Dems will have to prove they are the party of change

The Liberal Democrats are no longer the party of protest, they are the party of change. That was the message Nick Clegg conveyed during his spring conference speech yesterday. What to make of it? The first part seems true enough. People wanting to protest against government policy have no business voting Lib Dem these days.

Mr Clegg and his MPs are responsible for channelling policies through Parliament that have proved unpopular with many voters, their own included.

The Lib Dems are now more likely to be the target of protest, rather than the party of it – that mantle is now UKIP's.

But departing this niche is a positive step for Mr Clegg's group. A political party cannot have substance unless it understands that the practicalities of government will sometimes get in the way of its ideals.

It is this understanding that means Lib Dems are still Britain's third most significant party, despite recent polls showing UKIP with equal support.

But judging whether Mr Clegg's party is also the one of change is altogether harder.

It is part based on the idea that Lib Dems have anchored the government to the centre ground, where it might have veered to the right had the Tories ruled alone.

Yet we can never know what would have happened in that instance. The claim cannot be tested nor the change it may have delivered measured.

So a judgment on whether Lib Dems stand for change should and will be made in 2015 on what has actually been delivered. If Mr Clegg cannot hold up something more measurable, then his conference speech, like many others delivered before it, will have been little more than hot air.

## Thanks to heroes of floods

The fire service is one of those things you never want to need, but when you do need it, you want it to be good. At the weekend, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service showed that is exactly what it is as it went about helping people hit by difficult weather conditions.

From 11.30am on Sunday, firefighters attended 17 incidents of flooding at people's homes across north Norfolk, south Norfolk and areas near the Broads and gave advice to homeowners.

Crews were called to pump out water from homes on six occasions, after the central control was inundated with calls for assistance.

On other occasions people needed rescuing from their cars after becoming stuck in high waters.

With further difficult weather conditions set to come, we too urge drivers to be wary of driving through flooded roads.

Meanwhile lets thank Norfolk Fire Service, Norfolk Condtabulary and the Environment Agency for moving so quickly in this sudden drama. A job well done.

## Support apprenticeships

Finding meaningful employment for young people is one of the greatest challenges of our time.

Fail and we condemn them and the country as a whole to a difficult and unproductive future.

But succeed and the prize is shared by individuals and the nation alike.

That is why we are fully behind the county's efforts to guide more young people into apprenticeships this week.

We encourage both young people who need an opportunity and the businesses who need motivated and driven workers to get involved.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



TIM DAWES

WATCHING BRIEF: A sunny Norfolk hare enjoys the last rays at Mundford. If you would like to submit a picture for this feature, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## Norfolk and Romany? Now that IS a rumm'n

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"There's night and day, brother; both sweet things; sun, moon, and stars, all sweet things; there's likewise a wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother; who would wish to die?" – the famous words attributed by George Borrow to the Gypsy character Jasper Petulengro in his autobiographical novel *Lavengro: the scholar, the Gypsy, the priest*, published in 1851.

As is well known, the conversation between the novel's protagonist, no doubt a version of Borrow himself, and Petulengro, in real life called Ambrose Smith, took place on Mousehold.

Borrow was born in Dereham and, like Nelson, went to Norwich Grammar School. At one time he lived on Willow Lane in Norwich.

He was good at learning languages, though how well he learnt them we don't really know. One of the languages he learnt – perhaps on Mousehold itself – was Romany, the language of the Gypsies. Romany is, in origin, a language from northwestern India, quite closely related to Hindi/Urdu and Punjabi, but it has been transformed as a result of contact with other languages, as the Gypsies migrated over the centuries through Afghanistan, Iran, the Middle East, and the Balkans into Western Europe.

Quite a lot of words have been borrowed into English from the Romany language.



LANGUAGE:  
Author  
George  
Borrow  
learned some  
words of  
Romany – but  
the Norfolk  
dialect still  
uses many  
words of this  
descent  
today.

Lollypop, and lolly meaning money, are Gypsy words.

So are pal and cosh. And moosh, as a disrespectful form of address used to a man, comes from the Romany word for man.

Strictly speaking, though, many of these words have come into English not from Romany itself, but from Anglo-Romany. This is an in-group form of language which has English pronunciation and English grammar but uses Romany words.

It's still spoken by many Romany people in this country, and is sometimes used as an anti-language – a language which is designed to prevent other people understanding what you are saying.

Our Norfolk speech owes quite a lot to the

Gypsies. The dialect word cooshie, meaning a sweet, is probably a Romany word. And so is the word rum, meaning strange. This is a peculiarly British word – Americans don't know what it means.

And it has nothing to do with rum, the drink. It comes from the Romany word rom, which meant man, and in English originally meant exceptionally good. Then it gradually came to mean exceptional, and now it means odd.

Where would we be in Norfolk if we weren't able, from time to time, to exclaim: 'Ass a rumm'n'?

■ Peter Trudgill is president of Friends of Norfolk Dialect.

■ What do you think? Email: [EDPletters@archant.co.uk](mailto:EDPletters@archant.co.uk)

### WORDS FOR LIFE

My God will liberally supply your every need.

Phillipians 4:19

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