

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Labelling Norwich as 'godless' ignores much evidence to contrary

So, according to those who favour a shallow interpretation of statistics, Norwich is the "most godless city in the UK".

It is hardly a slogan that our tourism chiefs will be seizing upon as they bid to attract more visitors to sample the city's charms.

In fact, it is rather unpleasant and certainly not correct, as a host of pieces of evidence demonstrate.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, visited Norwich last month, there was genuine affection from the many people who gathered to greet him.

And Norwich Cathedral is a much-loved city landmark that is so much more than an ancient monument to a past belief. It remains a vibrant place, with yesterday's congregations the head of a stream of events, services and good work that flows through it and from it.

And across the city and beyond, there are scores of churches and groups where the flame of faith is kept burning. Meanwhile, others show that faith in God is not just about ticking a census box or entering a church building.

There has always been a tendency to do different in Norwich: a non-conformist streak in more ways than one.

What that has created is a city that has opened its doors to the oppressed in the past, including the Huguenots from northern Europe, and to people of all races and creeds today.

Norwich is an eclectic, tolerant and wonderful place.

Belief in God plays a part in that for many people, at the same time as it does not for many others.

To label our Fine City as "godless" on the basis of cold statistics is clumsy and lacking in understanding.

A47 improvements vital

It's good news that transport minister Stephen Hammond is on his way to Norfolk to see for himself the problems with the A47.

And it is also encouraging that he says the road is "ideally placed" to get government funding, although the letter he sent to MP George Freeman before making that statement contained a fair few mixed messages.

Credit is due to the campaigners, including MPs, business bosses and councillors, who have been trying to persuade Mr Hammond that the A47 is worthy of improvement.

Getting him up here to experience that road first-hand will surely convince him that the A47 is in need of improvement. For too long we've put up with sub-standard roads in Norfolk.

It took an age for confirmation that the A11 was going to be dualled, but at least we are getting positive noises on the A47.

However, words only go so far. It is action which the people of Norfolk are demanding. Let's hope we get it.

Support your local pub

For years they have been at the very heart of our communities. But pubs have had a tough time in recent years, with falling numbers of people popping in for a pint at their local.

However, landlords were given some good news in last month's budget, where the beer duty escalator was scrapped. And they are hoping to build on that by encouraging more people to pass through their doors.

This is the start of Community Pubs Month, set up by the Campaign for Real Ale, with landlords encouraged to put on and publicise events held within their walls.

Many of our wonderful pubs in Norfolk and Suffolk have long done just that, but it's well worth reminding people how important pubs are. We don't want to lose them.

WORDS FOR LIFE

He is not here; he
has risen!
Luke 24:6



READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



STAN GROOM

UP CLOSE: A ladybird investigates the stamen of a flower. If you would like to submit a picture for this feature, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

So... what exactly are the rules of English?

PETER TRUDGILL

email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk



Dear Mr Gove, I have seen in our local newspaper, the Eastern Daily Press, that you are keen on testing children in our schools on their knowledge of the rules of English grammar.

I think this is a good idea. Grammar is an important subject. I am rather worried, though, as there are a number of grammatical rules which I am not too sure about.

I would be very grateful if you – I suppose you are very much an expert on the subject? – could explain them to me.

If children are going to be tested about rules, it would be good if adults were in a position to help them and answer any questions they might have.

Here are some of the things I'm worried about.

It is correct grammar to say "a big new red house" but not "a red new big house" or "a new red big house"?

I think I'm right, aren't I? But why is that exactly? What is the rule?

It is also true, I think, that according to the rules of English grammar the negative of "you may" is "you may not", but the negative of "you write" is not "you write not"? Why not? What is the rule?

It seems rather odd. Has it got anything to do with the fact that the interrogative of "you write" is "do you write?" but the



MICHAEL GOVE: Will the education secretary find it harder than he thinks to explain English grammar?

interrogative of "you may" is not "do you may?"? I would be glad to have the rule explained, please.

It is correct, too, to say "I know him very well" but not to say "I am knowing him very well". Can you please tell me why this is?

And another mysterious thing is: you can say "I turned the light out" and "I turned out the light"; but, while you can say "I asked my friend out", you can't say "I asked out my friend". There must be a rule there. But what is it? How does that work?

I also notice that it is good grammar to

say "I like, you like, we like, they like" but not "she like". Why not? You are supposed to say "she likes".

But what is the point of that "s" there? In Norfolk we don't bother with it, but perhaps we should? Is it important? If so, why is that?

All of your expert opinions will be very gratefully received.

Yours sincerely, Puzzled of Norwich.

■ Peter Trudgill is president of Friends of

Norfolk Dialect (FOND)

■ What do you think? Contact Kim Briscoe at kim.briscoe@archant.co.uk