

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Our thoughts are with the people of the US after a terrible week

This is a week the people of the United States would rather forget.

As the nation still digests the dreadful scenes from the bombings at the Boston marathon, an explosion at a Texas fertilizer factory is adding to the death toll. And in an unsettling turn of events in Washington, letters meant for President Obama and a Mississippi senator are believed to have been tainted with the poison ricin.

But amid the grim scenes there have been stories of great humanity and bravery; from the emergency services and the general public in both Boston and Texas who have rushed to rescue and treat the wounded, to the tragedy of firefighters missing after trying to rescue those in the factory explosion.

And with 15 people believed killed, more than 150 injured and dozens of homes and buildings destroyed in the blast near Waco, Texas, groups are rallying around to ensure people in the community have everything they need.

Such events prompt soul-searching can stir up painful memories of the past.

The Texas blast has come on almost the eve of the 20th anniversary of probably the last time the community of Waco really hit the headlines - when it witnessed a siege, a deadly confrontation between federal authorities and heavily armed members of a cult.

In Boston the bomb has stirred up ugly memories of the hijacked aeroplanes which flew into New York's twin towers.

Reflecting on the week, US Senate Republican Mitch McConnell said yesterday: "Our hearts are a little bit heavier." Ours are too and our thoughts and prayers are with our American cousins.

Tough times ahead

Insurance giant Aviva has been struggling in recent years. Last month it posted losses totalling £3bn as a global expansion policy helped sow the seeds for its current troubles.

As Aviva stretched out across the globe and grew further from its Norwich Union roots, so the business seemed to lose its way.

Yet yesterday's jobs losses come very close to home with the livelihoods of workers in Norwich now at risk. New chief executive Mark Wilson has signalled that the company now needs to cut its cloth and focus on its core businesses such as general insurance.

That is good news for Norwich in the long run, but in the short term the measures are likely to be painful and will have a knock-on effect sucking millions of pounds out of the wider city economy. Aviva, has long been seen as a generous employer, so it did not help soften the blow yesterday as it also announced that redundancy payments will be cut - but these are likely to come in at the end of the year, after the current process. However it is a further sign of the tough times ahead.

Victory for historic law

The Magna Carta may seem part of the distant past but ancient laws have been the undoing of a group of cockle fishermen.

Deciding they had trespassed on the jealously guarded private fishery of the Le Strange family, top judge Sir William Blackburne consulted the annals of history. The private fisheries, though very rare, have been contentious for centuries. But Sir William judged those rights are still law.

When local fishermen challenged those ancient rights, they infringed the rights of those who operate the private fishery as the Le Stranges' tenants.

Yesterday was a victory for the traditional Lord of the Manor. But have we seen the last of this saga?

WORDS FOR LIFE

Yours goodness and unending love will pursue me all the days of my life.
Psalm 23:6



READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY



DAVID THACKER, OF HOLT

AT REST: Fishing boats on Cromer beach. If you would like to submit a picture for this feature, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Historical boundaries of place... and speech

PETER TRUDGILL



In a piece I wrote for the EDP a while ago I used the expression "the Sheres", but the editors cut it out and it didn't appear in print. I don't know why they did that, but I wonder if it was because they didn't know what it meant. Do you know what it means? The 'Sheres' or "Sheers" is our way of referring to that part of the outside world which lies immediately beyond East Anglia.

If you've never heard the expression before, you can still work out where it comes from. The names of some English counties always have 'shire' (pronounced "sheer") at the end: Yorkshire, Berkshire. Others sometimes do and sometimes don't: Somerset(shire), Devon(shire). And others never do: Sussex, Surrey. The East Anglian counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex are never followed by the suffix 'shire'.

East Anglia is surrounded on three sides by the North Sea and the Thames, and on the other side by counties called "shire". If you leave East Anglia by land, you inevitably do so via Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, or Hertfordshire. And beyond those counties again you come to Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. So if you are brave enough to decide that you really do want to leave East Anglia, however briefly, you have no choice but do so through the Sheres.

Perhaps when we speak this way we're



reminding ourselves that until 870 AD, East Anglia was a separate Kingdom in its own right, alongside Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex.

If that's what we're doing, though, it's not quite right. Our Kingdom was bordered by the Cam and the Stour, and never included Essex - a small, rather minor Kingdom. The people of Essex were Saxons - East Saxons. We - the North Folk and the South Folk - were Angles.

But then, over the centuries, East Anglia annexed Essex through its dialect. Essex became part of linguistic East Anglia, as much influenced by the speech of the East

Anglian capital Norwich as by the speech of the national capital. Norfolk people traditionally said 'he go, she swim, that do', and didn't drop their h's. And traditionally that was true of Essex too.

So if you want to be sure of hearing local dialect speakers say 'he goes, she swims, it does', you'll have to pluck up your courage and cross over the border into Mercia, or as we say today, the Sheres.

■ Peter Trudgill is president of Friends of Norfolk Dialect

■ What do you think? Email: dan.grimmer@archant.co.uk