

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

A worrying culture of golden goodbyes and welcome backs

At a time when a lot of people are still feeling the strain in a sluggish economic climate, many taxpayers will feel a sense of outrage at 'golden goodbyes' in the NHS.

At the end of March, the latest in a string of shake-ups in the health service saw the abolition of the primary care trusts and the end of strategic health authorities.

Two tiers of NHS management came tumbling down, to be replaced by GP-led clinical commissioning groups. The thinking is that the decisions over services will be placed in the hands of the people best placed to know what is needed. But what of those who went before?

Newly published reports have revealed that, in some cases, they have been earmarked for redundancy payments. What is not clear, from the accounts, is who actually received payments. One of the people the final annual report of NHS Norfolk says is entitled to compensation - of almost half a million pounds - is Andrew Morgan. The former chief executive of NHS Norfolk and NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney, Mr Morgan is now the interim head of the East of England Ambulance Trust, still employed by the NHS.

We've tried to find out if Mr Morgan received the compensation but are told he is abroad. It would beggar belief if he had got it, given he has remained in continuous employment with the health service.

The region's MPs are right that the culture of people getting compensation and then appearing elsewhere in the NHS needs to change. But with two health ministers, Norman Lamb in north Norfolk and Dan Poulter in Suffolk, isn't it time they stopped wringing their hands and did something to stop it?

Yellow Army must unite

It's been a tough weekend for Norwich City supporters but now is the time for unity in the stands at Carrow Road.

The Sky Sports cameras will be in the city for the club's 5.30pm kick-off against West Ham on Saturday, so any further capitulation would be broadcast to the whole nation. If the home support is divided and doesn't create an atmosphere to drive their team forward, then the building pressure could prove chastening for the Canaries.

Lose and manager Chris Hughton knows he will be lucky to avoid the sack, but win and City could jump above the Hammers into 14th place.

One thing is for sure, together the Yellow Army is much stronger, so let's give the players our full backing on Saturday and help get them back to winning ways in the Premier League.

You're most welcome back

With our weather taking a chilly turn, it's hard to imagine anyone visiting East Anglia to bask in its warmth.

But the temperature is just perfect for the swans who have escaped more northerly climes to set up home in Welney for the winter. These magnificent migrating birds are a welcome seasonal addition to our wildlife tapestry, and we should be proud that the unspoilt beauty and bounty of the Fens keeps tempting them back.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Lowestoft south light at about 7am. Photo by Ernie Taylor. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Come on, use your loaf and take a butcher's at this

Peter
Trudgill



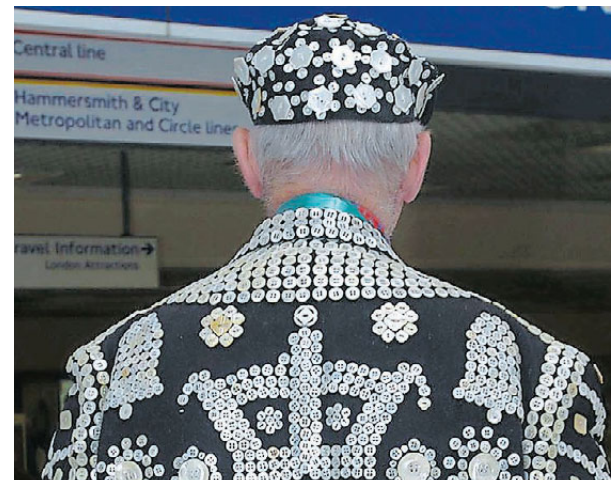
email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk

The subject of rhyming slang was raised in a letter to the EDP from Richard Shephard. Rhyming slang is an interesting phenomenon. We tend to associate it with Cockney, but it's well-known in Glasgow, Australia, and other places. You know the sort of thing - in Cockney slang, "plates" means feet, "dog" means phone.

Most people know how it works - you disguise a word by taking a phrase which rhymes with it, and then omit the rhyming word. The word "stairs" is disguised by taking the phrase "apples and pears" and then leaving out "and pears", so that "apples" means "stairs". Plates is from "plates of meat", dog is from "dog and bone".

Some of these words have moved into general usage and their origins have been forgotten. If everyone knew what the origin of "bottle" ("courage") or "cobblers" ("nonsense") was, some people might decide not to use them anymore.

When I was at school, I knew perfectly well what "give us a butcher's" meant, but I had no idea that its origins were in "look", disguised in the phrase "butcher's hook"



■ A Pearly King at Liverpool Street Station in London. Many of us use Cockney rhyming slang, but how many of us know the origins of the words we use? Picture: WENDY TURNER

with the rhyme left out. I didn't realise that "use your loaf" was a shortened version of "loaf of bread", ie head. I certainly didn't know that "on your tod" ("alone") came from "Tod Sloan"; and I was totally ignorant of the fact that Mr Sloan was an American jockey who became famous after riding five consecutive winners at Newmarket.

Rhyming slang is creative - anyone can invent their own - and fun; but it does have a purpose. One of its functions is to operate as an "anti-language" - a way of speaking which is designed to be intelligible only to insiders, like the Gipsy anti-language Anglo-Romani, which I've also written about.

But rhyming slang isn't always a particularly serious barrier to communication - you can often work out what a word means, even if you've never heard it before. Sometimes the rhyming word isn't even left out - "would you Adam and Eve it?". It's probably more important as a way of signalling that you are a member of some particular in-group.

But rhyming slang did permit Richard to smuggle a couple of rather indelicate terms into the EDP which I don't think the editor would have allowed him to use if he hadn't disguised them. I'm sure Richard knew what he was doing. If he says he didn't, we know he's telling porkies.

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I will strengthen you and help you.
I will hold you up with my
victorious right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

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