

Eastern Daily Press

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SINCE 1870

Sad story shows the importance of EDP ambulance campaign

It is more than a year since the Eastern Daily Press Ambulance Watch campaign was launched, yet today we hear with horror how a Norfolk patient was apparently left waiting two hours for an ambulance last month.

Even after the damning assessments, high-profile departures, restructuring, a pledge of more frontline staff and assurances that action is being taken, the tragic case of Peter Nelson suggests things are still far from resolved at the beleaguered East of England Ambulance Service Trust.

For the family and friends of Mr Nelson – who died suddenly from a brain haemorrhage – the rhetoric of the last few months will seem like empty words.

They will never know if there could have been a different ending to the events of November 14.

The ambulance trust has said it will launch an investigation into the death of Mr Nelson, and we will wait to hear what is said. Meanwhile, the wider response times must continue to be scrutinised, with difficult questions asked when targets are missed.

We welcome the news this month that Anthony Marsh, chief executive of the West Midlands Ambulance Service, will be installed as the head of the East of England service. He has a good track record, and the service needs strong leadership.

We understand change will not happen overnight. But it is deeply concerning that after all the attention given to the trust over the last 18 months, the 19-minute target appeared to be overshot. The Ambulance Watch campaign will not cease until we stop hearing such heartbreaking stories as that of Mr Nelson. The coroner must investigate as a matter of priority.

Welcome announcement

The scandal of sub-standard Poly Implant Prothèse (PIP) implants, which left many cosmetic surgery patients with faulty breast implants, was a wake-up call.

It exposed an expanding industry, but one which was not properly regulated to protect its customers.

The announcement yesterday that every breast implant operation in England will be recorded on a new register is good news.

Many women were left in limbo after a lack of records meant some surgeons were unable to tell their patients if they were affected by the recent PIP scare.

This proposed register should address this. But there is much more to do. Some cosmetic surgery procedures have the potential to go seriously wrong, yet the risks are not addressed under the current rules. Yesterday's announcement must just be the start of a clean-up of the industry.

A truly devoted fan

It is easy to get despondent with Norwich City's inconsistent performance this season. But reflecting on 100-year-old Vera Brighton's tenure as a Canaries fan, you realise she is a fan who has seen promotions, relegations, cup wins and heartbreaks, and even if she admits she gets frustrated at times, has supported the club through thick and thin. She knows more than anyone about the highs and lows of a near-lifelong devotion to the team.

As we wish her a happy birthday, we can all learn from her unwavering and enthusiastic support of the Canaries. On the ball, Vera!

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Anne Marks sent us this picture of two of her favourite visitors to her garden over the Christmas period. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Iwan has a way with words as well as with a football

Peter
Trudgill



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I'm jealous of Iwan Roberts.

Not because he was "one of the greatest goal scorers ever to pull on a Norwich City shirt". And not because he played international football as a striker for Wales.

No, I envy Iwan because he's bilingual. When he's doing football commentaries on Radio Cymru, he speaks Welsh, his native language. When he's being interviewed about Norwich City on Radio Norfolk, he speaks English, his native language. Iwan has two native languages. Like most people from his part of North Wales, he grew up in a bilingual environment; and he acquired two mother tongues effortlessly as a consequence.

Growing up bilingual is a wonderful thing. Learning a new language as an adolescent or adult is a formidable and daunting task. It can take a very long time, and is only very rarely entirely successful. Learning a language as an infant is a doddle. We all do it, easily, and in the space of a few years. Human infants are genetically programmed to learn perfectly any language they are sufficiently exposed to in early childhood. And they can readily



■ Peter Trudgill envies the way Iwan Roberts can speak two languages fluently.

learn two or three or even four languages in this way.

I only managed to acquire one language properly. In the environment I grew up in, everybody spoke Norfolk. I'm very happy to have our local dialect as my native tongue, but it would've been nice to be a mother-tongue speaker of another language as well.

And being bilingual seems to have other benefits, in addition to the practical one of being able to communicate with people who speak a particular language. Those who've grown up bilingual learn third and fourth languages better than the rest of us,

even as adults, perhaps because they are more sensitised to the nature of language. And this sensitivity shows itself in other ways as well.

Just think of Richard Burton's amazing way with the English language. He was someone else who grew up bilingual in Welsh and English. He famously said that "the only thing in life is language. Not love. Not anything else."

But he also said "I would rather have played for Wales at Cardiff Arms Park than Hamlet at the Old Vic". To be honest, I wouldn't have minded scoring a few goals at Carrow Road, like Iwan, myself.

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Be joyful. Grow to maturity.
Encourage each other. Live in
harmony and peace.
2 Corinthians 13:11

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