

# Eastern Daily Press

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## City rebuild must start now whether or not they survive

And so the Canaries have not been knocked off their Premier League perch – for the moment at least.

Yesterday's battling draw against Jose Mourinho's title challengers Chelsea at Stamford Bridge – a world away from last week's wretched surrender to Manchester United at Old Trafford – means that Norwich City cling on to their top flight status for a few more days at least.

Whether or not Neil Adams' side will get the chance to be masters of their own destiny by the time they face Arsenal – who are looking forward to the FA Cup final having sealed qualification to the UEFA Champions League – on Sunday will depend very much on whether Sunderland slip up against West Brom in midweek.

Ironically City fans across Norfolk and around the globe will be hoping that the Baggies – a team whose 1-0 win at Carrow Road last month proved so damaging and culminated in former City boss Chris Hughton being sacked – can come up with the goods to keep the dream alive.

But regardless of whether Norwich's Premier League life is extinguished or revived on Wednesday night – or whether the club, together with Fulham and Cardiff launch legal action against Gus Poyet's side over the fielding of a player with incomplete registration, the key thing is for the club to come together to start rebuilding now for next season.

The constant uncertainty over the future of the previous manager, for much of the season provided an unwelcome distraction for a team which must now find some stability, unity and clarity about its direction – whatever league it is in.

## Rail consensus needed

The ownership of our railways has long been a matter of political contention.

From the big four rail companies of the inter-war years to the creation of British Rail, and the privatisation of the late Thatcher-Major era to more recent concerns about franchises, it has always been a political football.

Now 31 would-be Labour MPs have called for a future Labour government to bring the system back into public ownership. The idea is being framed in terms of Labour's "cost of living crisis" campaign.

The issue is too important to be decided by pre-election party strategies, and subject to yet more uncertainty with each change of government. We need a national consensus on what is best, with the long-term interests of a vital service, and those who use it, firmly at the forefront.

## Worth shouting about

Congratulations to Martin Payne, the new town crier of Bungay.

For most people, a job interview which involves shouting at the top of your lungs in a busy market place may seem a touch intimidating, but not for Mr Payne, who has experience of projecting his voice to an audience.

It is fitting that the new town crier is a Punch and Judy man, and so from preserving one much-loved English tradition, he moves on to another. Let's hope he will be hailing good news in Bungay for many a year to come.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ A study in motherly love – a new little calf has been born in Bungay. Picture by Frances Crickmore. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## So, just what does it mean to eat fruit in the afternoon?

Peter  
Trudgill



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Words mean what they mean. Not what they used to mean. And not what someone thinks they ought to mean.

When I was about eight years old, in those non-paranoid days when small children were free to walk around on their own, my mother sent me to the grocers on Plumstead Road in Thorpe to do some shopping for her.

The grocer, Mr Goldsmith, was a very nice man, and I liked him. "Good morning, Peter," he said as I walked in. "It's not morning, Mr Goldsmith", I replied cockily, "it's after 12 o'clock". We had just been taught at school what the word 'noon' meant. The word is common enough in North America, but it's not one that English people use much, and we hadn't known.

The teacher told us that it meant the same as 'midday', and that it was the origin of the word 'afternoon'.

Mr Goldsmith smiled at me and answered, with great authority: "That's not afternoon until you've had your dinner".

I was rather embarrassed, because I knew he was right. Dinner was the meal you had in the middle of the day – one o'clock in our house – and afternoon began once it was over.

English-speakers know what afternoon



■ Dinner ladies serving lunch to children at Chapel Break Middle School in Norwich in 1988. According to Peter Trudgill, the afternoon starts once you have had this meal.

means. It does not mean "after noon". If someone tells you they'll visit you tomorrow afternoon, you'd be most surprised if they turned up the next day at 12.15.

English speakers also know what the word "fruit" means. If you say to your hostess that, yes please, you would like some fruit for dessert, you'd be most surprised to be served tomatoes rather than peaches or pears.

Everyone knows that tomatoes aren't fruit – except, of course, for botanists, who tell us that, technically, they are. But that doesn't make any difference to what the

word means in normal usage. In my line of business, there are academics who tell their colleagues that they're wrong if they refer to their female students as "girls".

The students are adult human beings, they say, and should be accorded the respect of being called "women".

I see what they mean. But if you and I were together in my office and I told you that a woman was about to come and see me, you would, I think, be just a little taken aback if the person who walked in turned out to be 18 years old.

Words mean what they mean.

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Jesus told them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never become hungry".  
John 6:35

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