

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Pause for thought before consigning schools to history

Schools, like shops, churches, pubs and post offices, make a key contribution to our rural communities: giving them a sense of identity and focus.

However, in these days when every penny spent is being scrutinised, many of the smaller ones in particular do not provide the cost-efficiency demanded by accountants and Whitehall.

So, in those bald terms, they operate with either the wind of change blowing about them or the axe hovering above their roofs. Such unrelenting uncertainty is an insult to our small schools – and does not enable them to plan for a long-term future.

We support the aim by Norfolk County Council to save money and provide security by grouping some schools together in federations.

But the latest report – which calls for no single site with fewer than 105 pupils, and groups of between 400-600 children in the federations or partnerships – sets alarm bells ringing.

The place where the line could be drawn would threaten the existence of scores of schools, and the wellbeing of many communities.

We hope the early indications are correct, and that the council's members will not agree such a ruthless solution to a sensitive issue. If not, we would urge every elected individual to use the next few days to think long and hard about the importance of these schools.

Once they are gone, they are gone. And people do not forget who effectively ripped the heart from their communities.

Heroes closer to home

Personnel from 31 Squadron have every reason to be proud of their accomplishments in Afghanistan, along with their sister Tornado squadrons at RAF Marham and elsewhere.

From the men and women who fly them, to the ground crew who keep them in the air, the part they have played over the last five years has truly been a game-changer in a testing and at times unforgiving conflict.

As he climbed down from his aircraft, one fast jet crew member candidly paid tribute to one of the army of unsung heroes whose contribution is all too often overlooked – the wives and partners who keep the home fires burning, bringing up the youngsters in their absence.

Those who cope with this, along with the worry of their other halves flying over a war zone, deserve all our thanks too.

Sweet success for Daniel

Lots of people like cakes. And lots of people like the odd tittle. So Daniel Addy may have hit on something by combining the two in his boozy cupcakes.

The talented chef from Attleborough did Norfolk proud by winning the National Cupcake Championships with his chocolate and amaretto combination.

His beer, bacon and maple creation might take a bit more getting used to for fans of sweet treats, though.

Nonetheless, they are imaginative. And Daniel's success is the latest evidence that Norfolk is one of the food and drink capitals of the UK.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Mirror-image gull reflections at Strumpshaw Fen. Picture by David Thacker. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

As the ancient Romans said: It's all Greek to us

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A lot of people know that, as Julius Caesar was being stabbed to death, he turned to his friend Brutus, who was one of the assassins, and said "Et tu, Brute?", the Latin for "And you, Brutus?", or "What? You too?"

A lot of people know that, because those were the words put into Caesar's mouth by William Shakespeare. But it's probably wrong. We don't know if Caesar said anything at all – we don't have any witness reports.

But we do know that if he did say something, he probably didn't say it in Latin. It's much more likely that his dying words were uttered in Greek. The Roman historian Suetonius – not an eye-witness either, as he was writing about the event over a century after it happened – claimed that what Caesar said was "Kai su, teknon?", the Greek for "And you, my son?"

But surely the language of Ancient Rome was Latin? (It was.) So why on earth would Romans be speaking Greek? Well, most of them didn't – they spoke Latin. But the patricians – the toffs like Caesar – were bilingual in Latin and Greek, and they tended to speak Greek to each other.

When Caesar died in 44BC, Alexander of Macedon had not been dead for nearly 300



■ Julius Caesar is more likely to have spoken Greek than Latin.

years. But it was Alexander whose conquests had taken the Greek language across the Middle East and Iran into the places which are now Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, northwestern India, and parts of Kirgizstan and Kazakhstan.

Greek became vitally important as the lingua franca – the language of wider communication – in a very large area of the eastern Mediterranean.

And later on, even under the Roman Empire, Greek was the official language in the provinces of Libya, Egypt, Arabia, Judea, Syria, and Persia, as well as Greece and Asia Minor. This widespread knowledge of Greek, and its usage in the New

Testament, greatly aided the spread of Christianity.

And back in Ancient Rome itself, Greek became the prestigious language of learning and cultivation to such an extent that the upper classes actually spoke it among themselves.

Julius Caesar had a famous love affair with the 21-year-old Queen of Egypt, Cleopatra.

(She was actually in Rome when Caesar was assassinated.)

She might never have been able to seduce him, as she is said to have done, in Alexandria, if Greek hadn't been her mother tongue – and Caesar's second language.

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He is the Rock, His work is perfect;
For all His ways are justice.
Deuteronomy 32:4

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