

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Heading in right direction over A47, but not there yet

So, following months of suggestions, hints and downright teases, the cat is finally out of the bag.

The Prime Minister has promised that, under his watch, there would be a £300m investment on the A47 in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. And the A12 in Suffolk would be renumbered to become a part of the A47.

The announcement, a few days before the Chancellor's autumn statement and at a time when the Government is looking to switch the debate from immigration to the economy, has been welcomed by those who have campaigned for A47 improvements.

Mr Cameron is saying that, along with other improvements to the A47, a Conservative government would dual about seven more miles of it in Norfolk – the stretches between North Burlingham and Blofield and between North Tuddenham and Easton.

That's clearly a long way short of the long-term goal of end-to-end dualling of the road, which would have cost some £1.4bn. And it's short of the £416m worth of improvements which the A47 Alliance had pushed the Government for. But it's a start - now we need the other parties to pledge they would do the same.

The Acle Straight remains a concern. There's a promise of safety measures and a study by Natural England of how longer-term improvements might be possible, but is that yet another example of a difficult problem being kicked into the long grass?

The pledges are a move in the right direction. But this is far from the end of the road in terms of the improvements needed.

Shop a drink-driver

It is a depressing fact that there is still a need for anti drink-driving campaigns.

Too often we see headlines that make the gravity of the offence clear.

People who took the foolish decision to get behind the wheel while under the influence and paid with their lives.

Or worse – people whose selfish actions claimed the life of an innocent person.

Attitudes to drink-driving have changed, but some people are still willing to dice with death.

It is these offenders that the police hope to catch in their Christmas crackdown.

If you know someone who makes a habit of drink-driving, let the police know.

It may save somebody's life.

Idea is comic genius

Some 700,000 years after he perished in a muddy river bed, West Runton's world-famous elephant has been reborn in comic-strip form.

Suzie Lay's imaginative drawings and tale of mammoth Hugh Mungus and his tiny friend Shrewsbury Fines are an inspired way of introducing children to the elephant's important place in Norfolk's story.

And who knows where it might lead? We may even see an animated Hugh on our cinema screens one day – and think what that could do for tourism in north Norfolk.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ The beautiful and distinctive plumage of a Mandarin duck and its reflection in the water was caught by John Bilcliffe at Pensthorpe Natural Park. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

We may speak with a Norfolk accent but we aren't stupid

Peter
Trudgill



email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk

I recently received a revealing letter about my piece on the term "well-spoken". The correspondent wrote that it's "difficult enough to make one's way in the world without encumbering oneself with a local accent".

This is, apparently, because speaking with a Norfolk accent makes him, or at least certain other people, think that we sound "slow of brain". This tells us a lot about what's going on in the minds of these certain people: THEY think we sound "slow". So the problem isn't with us, but with the people who brazenly indulge in this... well, doesn't it feel rather like racism to you?

The only possible reason for thinking a Norfolk accent makes someone sound stupid is because you believe that Norfolk people ARE stupid. Which we are not. It's horrible to recall, but it's quite true that the 19th century conventional wisdom in Britain was that non-white people – and women – were "slow of brain" too, compared to white men. Which they were not, either.

What we need to do is not remove local accents, but rid our land of the highly unappealing mind-set this letter exemplifies, just as we have tried to rid the coun-



■ The Singing Postman Allan Smethurst was well known for his strong Norfolk accent.

Picture: LIBRARY

try of racism and sexism. People are not "encumbered" by their accents, but rather by irrational prejudices against them which hide behind false judgments about "slowness" and incomprehensibility.

The correspondent offers what he thinks is a solution: it is "better not to acquire the accent in the first place" – just as it would've been better not to have been born black or female, I suppose?

Apart from the 4pc of the UK population who speak RP, everybody grows up with a local accent, like normal people everywhere else in the world. We all grow up speaking like the people around us. The

only way to ensure a child won't acquire a local accent is to keep a check on who the people around them are – to segregate them from the locally-accented majority of the population.

The most efficient form of segregation is to send children to "pukka" (the correspondent's word) schools, which of course most people can't afford to do. Which is the point. This apartheid-type "solution" will work only for the small minority it already works for. It can't work for everybody.

What we must try to do is get rid of the prejudice. You can't abolish racism by turning everybody white.

looking for
GOD.com

For the law was given through
Moses; grace and truth came
through Jesus Christ.
John 14:6

tlc

tlcnorwich.com