

# Eastern Daily Press

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## We can't afford to lose our status as a cultural powerhouse

In an era of widespread reductions in public spending – and seemingly ever greater demands on the public purse – making the case for spending on the arts is a difficult sell.

To his great credit, Chris Gribble, chief executive of the Writers's Centre, in Norwich, is swift to admit this in his piece in today's EDP.

We regularly cover the problems facing our badly stretched health service while, elsewhere in today's newspaper, we report on the challenges of ensuring the most vulnerable in our region are cared for.

Against such a backdrop, calling for money to be diverted to support festivals, theatre groups and the like can seem almost flippant.

And yet the argument made today by Mr Gribble and other leading figures from the arts is a very persuasive one. Our region quite rightly prides itself on its cultural excellence and enjoys such a reputation among outsiders.

Not only does this create great vibrancy for our corner of the country, but it is also one of the strengths of our economy. Culture boosts businesses, creates wealth and gets those all important tax revenues flowing. But such a system does require occasional priming. Arts groups need nurturing – and that means money, comparatively small amounts of which can go a long way.

Private funding and sponsorship play a major role, but may not be able to meet every need. The public finances may be desperate. But there really is one thing East Anglia cannot afford and that is to lose its status as a cultural powerhouse.

## Appeal is cold reality

The very concept of "excess winter deaths" is a hard one to comprehend. How can it be that in a developed, wealthy country like the UK, we are still in a situation where people are dying because of the cold?

As we move deeper into the winter, this is a subject that needs tackling – and readers can do just that.

While debate will rage about high energy pricing, poor housing insulation, and the isolation in which many in our rural region find themselves, it should be remembered that there are some simple steps which anyone can take, to help those at risk.

The EDP-backed Surviving Winter Appeal is there to help those in greatest need, by raising money for individuals who cannot afford to heat their own homes. This is not just hot air. It can be a matter of life and death.

## Come on Caroline!

It's time to Back Flack. The Thetford-born television presenter Caroline Flack stormed into next weekend's Strictly Come Dancing final in fine style – scoring the first "perfect 40" of the series and topping the leaderboard for the third week running.

She has gone from dark horse to favourite – and all at the end of a week in which she was said to have split from her boyfriend. As the reality show cliché has it, she has been on a "journey".

Being favourite is tricky, but she can count on our support to win that Glitterball Trophy for the region.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

# iwitness24



■ Gavin Bickerton-Jones took this picture in Carleton Rode. He came across this lone deer in the woods and said it looked at him, stuck its tongue out and then ran away. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## Speak out loud and proud if you have a Norfolk accent

### Peter Trudgill



email: [newsdesk@archant.co.uk](mailto:newsdesk@archant.co.uk)

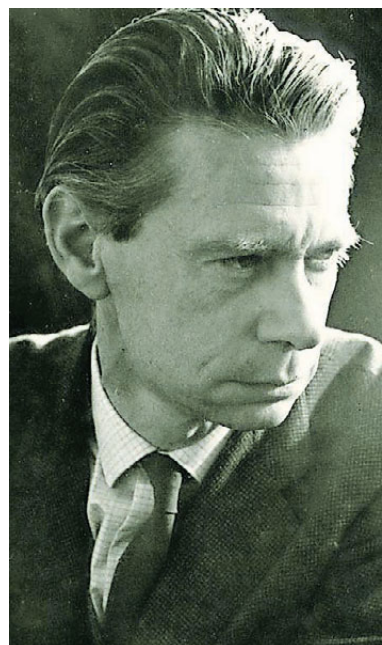
Some while ago I wrote about how, 60 years ago, my father felt he had to modify his Norwich accent to avoid being discriminated against in his working life.

He was manager of the publishing department at Jarrolds for very many years, here in the city, but the problem wasn't there; it was out in the wider world of East Anglian and British business generally.

My column was republished in the EDP24 online edition, and a number of people posted interesting and sympathetic comments. One lady wrote that she was deeply saddened when she heard about how others are judged by their accents: "We should be applauding their rich variety, not condemning or making judgements." Of course I agree.

She then reported that someone she knew had said that they would remove their children from a particular local school in our area if the children started speaking with a regional accent.

"As a person born and bred in Norfolk",



■ Left, Peter Trudgill's father John modified his Norfolk accent for the sake of his career.

Picture: SUBMITTED

dren quite naturally learn to speak like the people around them.

It is part of our heritage as primates that we are social animals.

Humans are genetically programmed to engage in "behavioural coordination" with the other human beings we associate with.

We talk like the others talk. That's how we learn our language in the first place; and the particular form of the language we learn will almost always be the dialect and accent of those around us.

If children speak like the rest of the pupils they go to school with, that's a good sign. It's normal. When young children don't speak like everybody else at their school, it indicates that something's wrong – that somehow they don't belong, and aren't properly integrated into the community they should be part of.

And the comment was offensive because the person whose remarks were reported was objecting specifically to OUR local accent.

If you live in Norfolk and are pleased about that, then you should expect your children to sound like they grew up in Norfolk, and be pleased about that too!

If you want them to grow up sounding like they come from London, you should move to London.

Please.

she continued, "I find this kind of ignorance deeply offensive."

So do I. It was ignorant. And it was offensive.

It was ignorant because everybody in the world grows up with a regional accent of some kind. This is because young chil-

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The precepts of the Lord are right,  
giving joy to the heart.  
The commands of the Lord are radiant.  
Psalm 19:8

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