

# Eastern Daily Press

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## Could you give the ultimate gift of life this Christmas?

The loss of a loved one is a traumatic time for a family.

And at this time of acute bereavement, some mourners are asked a very difficult question – whether or not they will agree to donate the organs of a family member who had registered for donation.

Today, we tell the heartfelt story of the Beckerton family, who suddenly lost an adored wife and mother, but still found the courage to give an incredible gift of life to three very ill people.

And another mother spoke of the enormous gratitude she feels to the donor and family who enabled her to have a life-saving kidney transplant.

From being constantly exhausted and having to spend hours each week on dialysis, Becky Baker has been given a new lease of life thanks to the kidney she received in September.

There are already more than 20 million people in the UK who have joined the NHS Organ Donor Register.

But there could be so many more and they are desperately needed, as around three people die every day due to the shortage of organs.

Just one donor can save or transform up to nine lives.

Some people may think they are too old or too ill to join the register, but age is no barrier to being a donor and neither are most medical conditions, with people in their 70s and 80s becoming donors and saving many lives.

So this Christmas we are asking readers if they would consider giving the ultimate gift to a complete stranger, by joining NHS Blood and Transplant's organ donation register and telling their family about their wishes.

## Caroline did us proud

Eleven million viewers saw it live, and all of Norfolk knows it – Caroline Flack is the queen of the Strictly dance floor.

What's more, cheerful Caroline, whose perfect performance on Saturday evening was worthy of the win, is one of ours.

And we are very proud of her.

She showed remarkable skill to pick up complicated dance moves, developed as the show progressed – and did it all with a winning smile.

Strictly has been great fun to watch on these chilly early winter evenings. And, apart from Len Goodman's recent slip of the tongue and Craig Revell-Horwood's X-rated glare, it is good, clean, family entertainment.

Caroline Flack was one of the many reasons that it stole so many viewers' hearts. She deserves to celebrate with our praise ringing in her ears.

## Share some festive love

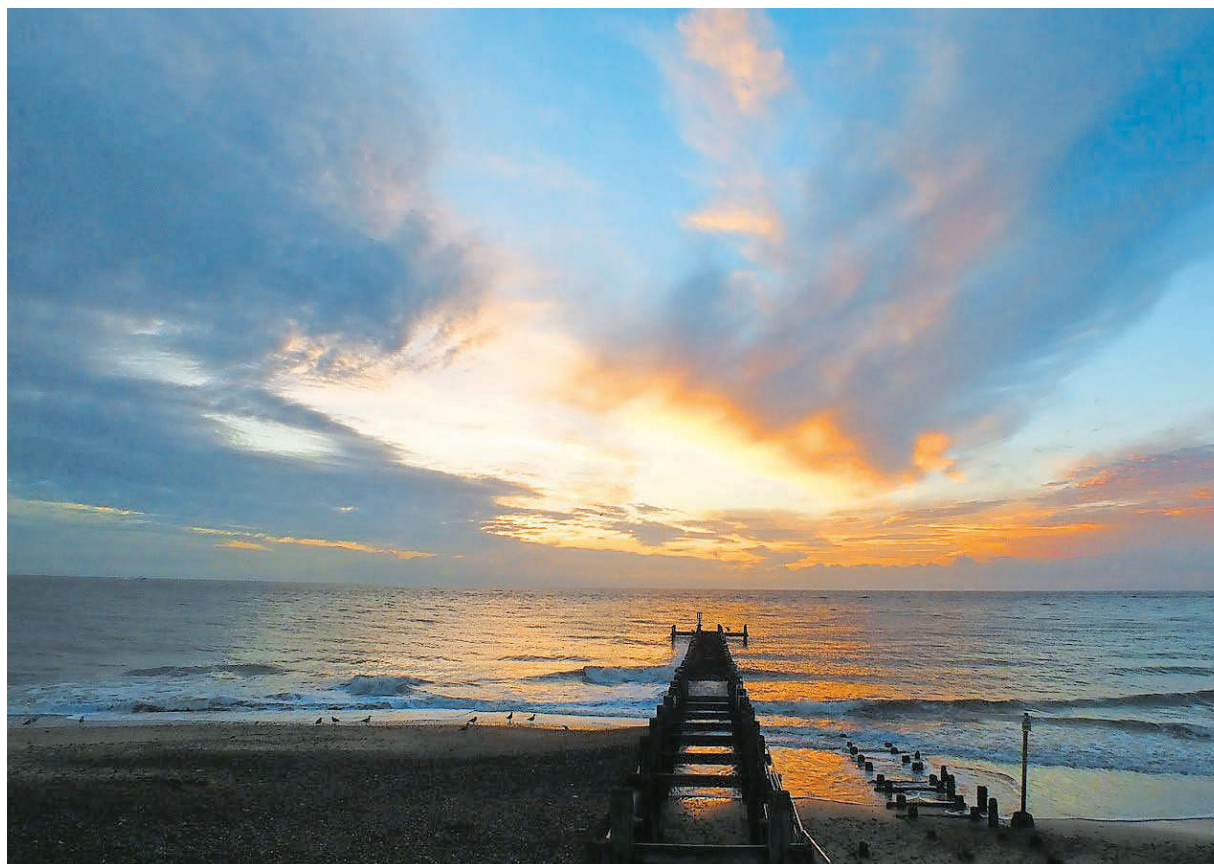
Christmas is a wonderful time of the year, bringing excitement and joy to millions.

But, as the big day approaches, spare a thought – and some good deeds – for those who find it challenging, lonely and traumatic.

Try to take time out to visit a neighbour in need or call a friend who needs a listening ear. You never know, it might be the best gift you give this Christmas.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

# iwitness24



■ The golden glow of sunrise at Lowestoft by Ernie Taylor. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## Blame the prejudice - not the words that are used

Peter  
Trudgill



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In the 1940s and 1950s, if I remember rightly, schoolchildren who were seriously intellectually handicapped by difficulties with learning and understanding were, perhaps, given special help, and labelled “retarded”.

This was an originally innocent word which meant “delayed” – these children's development was somewhat delayed compared to the average.

To retard was, and still is, a normal verb which English-speaking people use to refer to holding back or impeding something – as in fire retardant, for example.

Unfortunately, though, elements in our society were prejudiced against people who were handicapped in this way, and so the word “retarded” gradually took on very negative connotations. It was even used by spiteful children, and adults who should have known better, as an insult which they used for denigrating and abusing others.

In view of this abuse, it was natural that responsible people involved in education saw the need for another descriptive word to use instead, and “educationally subnormal” began to be employed. This was once again meant to be a neutral, descriptive term with no malice attached to it –



■ The words we use to describe situations and conditions sensitively are soon twisted to become as hurtful as the phrases they replaced.

subnormal simply meant below normal.

But then this term, too, sadly began to acquire negative overtones and so, quite naturally, it began to fall out of favour as well – and new words started appearing.

In the few last decades, different terms have been used, including “special needs”.

But now this phrase itself, it seems, is beginning to be used maliciously for hurling insults at others. We have to wonder how long we will be able to persevere with it as a designation.

It's not my place as a linguist to intervene in this issue.

But one thing is clear to linguists – because of what we know about the way in which the meanings of words change: this

cycle of stigmatisation and replacement – it's sometimes called the “euphemism treadmill” – is bound to continue until attitudes change.

We must of course be sensitive to the problem, refer to minority groups as they wish to be referred to, and drop words which are used to demean people. But these words are a symptom of this disease of prejudice, not the disease itself. When a patient is ill, it's no good just removing their symptoms. You have to treat the sickness itself.

You can change words, but unless you can get rid of the sick underlying prejudice, you'll have to change those words again and again – and again.

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The angel said to them, “Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, a message that will fill everyone with joy.”

tlc

Luke 2:10 [tlcnorwich.com](http://tlcnorwich.com)