

# Eastern Daily Press

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## Cash is a welcome recognition of the coast's importance

Our coast is a place of contrasts. There are places of beauty, places of prosperity – and areas of economic deprivation.

It is easy for people to see the positives, which are many, and ignore the negatives.

But, in order for us to ensure that one of our greatest assets thrives, we have to see it in the round.

The government's Coastal Communities Fund may not be a panacea, but it does recognise the need for investment in towns where the sea laps at people's toes.

The £1.6m shared between North Norfolk Railway, Great Yarmouth and a stretch of the Suffolk coast is both welcome and well balanced.

It ticks the tourism and heritage boxes by funding a revamp of the wonderful steam railway at Sheringham – one of the true treasures of north Norfolk.

Along the coast, it provides welcome cash to fund job creation and training at Great Yarmouth, which is fighting back from some lean years and re-establishing itself as a remarkable resort.

Then, on a stretch from Southwold, money will boost the quality of the coastal path and deliver other tourism gains.

More money would be welcome, particularly to solve the biggest problem of all on the coast – erosion and flooding.

But this is a start, and shows that ministers are finally beginning to understand that, while they are on the edge, coastal communities deserve to be at the heart of our thoughts.

## Castle is a treasure

It's a beloved landmark in Norwich, towering over the city centre and a treasure trove for people wanting to find out more about the city and the county's rich history.

But what sometimes gets forgotten about Norwich Castle is just what a magnificent building it is. And no wonder, given it was built to be a Norman palace.

Because it has been used for a myriad of purposes, including as a prison, the Norman heritage of the castle is sometimes a little overlooked, which is remarkable given the wonderful keep.

It's an exciting suggestion that the keep could be transformed, to bring the Norman experience back to life for visitors.

And to have the British Museum on board is fantastic. These are exciting times for this glorious building and an ambitious scheme deserving of support.

## Owl shots are magical

Owls are beautiful creatures, and their beauty is arguably enhanced by their elusive nature.

So it is wonderful to see the photos taken by Norfolk photographer Paul Newton, of tawny and barn owls.

Each photo captures a magical moment for each of us to wonder at.

Mr Newton had to be very patient – but his time and trouble were clearly well worth the wait.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ An evocative view of the seafront at Sheringham. Picture by David Harper. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## The demonic dog with a name that is all East Anglian



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The word eschew is not one that everybody uses, but most readers will know that it means 'to deliberately avoid something', as in "to eschew violence". Eschew is one of the many words which were borrowed into English in mediaeval times from Old French, where the word was eschiver "to shun, avoid, do without". The modern French word is esquivar – and the Italian equivalent is schivare, which may be the source of the etymologically puzzling word skive, as in "skiving off school".

Eschiver, though, was originally a word which arrived in France with the Frankish invaders who gave the country its name. The word came from ancient Germanic skeukhwaz meaning 'afraid'. So did modern German scheuen 'to fear, shrink from', scheuchen 'to scare off', and the adjective scheu 'timid' – which is also obviously the same as the English 'shy'. The Anglo-Saxon was sceoh.

There was also a related Anglo-Saxon word sceucca or scucca, which referred to a being that was to be feared: scucca meant 'devil, demon', and was used in Old English to refer to Satan: "Da wæs se scucca him betwux", literally 'then was the devil them between', so 'then the devil



■ Black Shuck is the mythical demon hound of East Anglia.

Picture: LIBRARY

was amongst them'. Unlike the adjective sceoh, which gives us 'shy', this Anglo-Saxon noun doesn't appear to have any obvious modern counterpart. But here in East Anglia it does. Scucca 'devil' is the source of our word Shuck, the name of the spectral dog who we know in these parts as Old Shuck or Black Shuck.

Shuck is the demon hound, the black ghost dog with glowing eyes who patrols our marshes and fens and, especially in coastal areas, our country lanes. His apparition is much to be feared because it signifies that some calamity is about to

happen, or perhaps has already happened at the spot where you see him. And "if you touch him he bites you to the bone – you will bear his mark to your dying day".

This tradition of a black spectral dog is found in many parts of northern Europe, but the name Shuck is all our own. The English Dialect Dictionary found it only in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. The demon dog once killed two people in Bungay Church, leaving scorch marks on the door and causing the tower to collapse. It would seem to be a good idea, if you can, to eschew contact with Shuck.

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Happy is the man who finds  
wisdom, And the man who gains  
understanding.  
Proverbs 3:13

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