

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

We have to look at the root cause to help these migrants

Hundreds of people are feared dead in the Mediterranean after they attempted to escape their desperate lives on the African continent.

Close to 700 are thought to have drowned in Libyan waters south of the Italian island of Lampedusa, the biggest death toll in a string of incidents that have claimed at least 900 lives already in 2015.

The sea which most of us associate with summer holiday fun can be a dangerous and deadly place.

It may seem far away from the British Isles. But are we doing all we can to prevent more deaths?

The British government has come under fire for withdrawing support for European maritime rescue missions in favour of a more land-based approach to our borders. But the roots of the problem go further back than this.

The refugees make their way from countries such as Somalia and Eritrea, through to Libya where they can find the shortest route to what they believe will be a new life in Europe – and who can blame them for trying to create a better future for their children?

Because most migrants want to reach family or other members of their community in northern Europe, Italian governments have pushed for those countries to do more, particularly by taking in the migrants while their requests for asylum or refugee status are examined.

But preventing the loss of lives in the waters of the Mediterranean means that we must work to help solve the problems of the countries themselves.

Making them better, safer and more prosperous places for families to grow up in will curb the numbers trying to take such a dangerous escape route.

The shame of speeding

Anyone who has seen the devastation caused by a speeding driver – the deaths, the injuries, the ruined lives – will not easily forget it.

Yet still we read today, as the latest speeding crackdown comes to an end, that drivers were caught doing as much as 125 mph on our roads.

Chief Insp Chris Spinks, head of Norfolk and Suffolk's roads policing unit, points out: "People think they are invincible, but they are not."

Unbelievably, there are still those who think speeding is a minor issue: a bit of a joke, even a badge of honour. The cars which can go so fast, the journey achieved in so many minutes fewer than before, and the people who drive so slowly and get in the way of the racers, are all acceptable topics for comment in some circles.

They are wrong. Being caught speeding should be a source of shame.

Time for jug to return

Hand on heart, the jug which has been at the centre of a wrangle stretching back more than a year does not look like a classic antique that would have them gasping at an auction house. But that's not the point. Charles Tucker has evidence which shows that it belongs at Hindringham Hall – the very place pictured on the jug.

We hope councillors will agree that it's time for this little jug to go back home.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ A short-eared owl hunting near Langley captured the attention of Gavin Bickerton-Jones. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk.

You don't have no need to worry about double negatives

Peter
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When people are suffering from linguistic pain, they sometimes seek solace by writing to this newspaper in the hope of easing their distress.

Since the EDP are kind enough to let me write a column on language, I feel I ought to try to help.

We've had letter writers bemoaning too many 'likes' and 'wells' in the speech of others. Now we have a complaint about 'double negatives' which, a correspondent suggests, indicate a need for more education.

Perhaps he might find this soothing. William Shakespeare was a very educated man. His grammar school education gave him a great knowledge of the grammar of Ancient Greek and Latin – much more than the majority of EDP readers have, including me – and he was very familiar with the works of Ovid, Virgil, Seneca, Plutarch, Cicero, Horace...

He also wrote the following lines: "You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have" (As You Like It); "Nor go neither; but you'll lie like dogs and yet say nothing neither" (The Tempest); and "No woman has, nor never none shall be, mistress of it" (Twelfth Night).

Sufferers often argue that two negatives



■ Mark Rylance as Olivia, right, and Stephen Fry as Malvolio, during a performance of William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night. Picture: AP/BONEAU/BRYAN-BROWN/GERAINT LEWIS

make a positive. But that's maths, not language. If you ask for something in a shop and get the reply "We in't got none", you don't hang around waiting for it, you leave the shop.

The label 'double negative' is wrong, too, because there can be more than two negatives – "nor never none shall be" – and if we really were dealing with maths, three negatives would actually make a negative, though complainants don't seem to find this any less painful.

Linguists call grammatical constructions with more than one negative 'multiple negation' or 'negative concord'. Most languages in the world have multiple

negation. Just think of French: je ne sais pas = I not know not.

All varieties of English used to have it, as the Shakespeare examples show. But over the last few centuries, Standard English has gradually lost it, while most other English dialects around the world have kept it.

As it's not Standard English, we don't normally use it in writing. But there's nothing wrong or bad about multiple negation as such.

You don't have to use it yourself if you don't want to. But if you feel the pain coming on again when others use it, try relaxing and thinking of the Bard.

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You make the path of life known to me. Complete joy is in your presence. Pleasures are by your side forever.

Psalms 16:11

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