

Eastern Daily Press

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The response to leak was excellent, but there must be review

When the fun of Father's Day took a frightening turn at a Norfolk holiday park, there was a fantastic response from the emergency services.

It must have been terrifying when those enjoying themselves at the swimming pool at Belton's Wild Duck Holiday Park suddenly found themselves gasping for air.

It seems a chlorine leak in the plant room at the holiday park was responsible for them feeling unwell and it is testament to the professionalism of our emergency services that the situation was rapidly dealt with.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, the East of England Ambulance Service, Norfolk Constabulary and the East Anglian Air Ambulance were all rapidly at the scene.

They quickly and calmly brought the situation under control.

They identified the problem, got people out of the swimming pool building and, most importantly of all, provided quality care to the people who needed it.

The owners of the holiday park also responded well, but now it is crucial that an investigation establishes what went wrong and measures are put in place to prevent a repeat.

The emergency services responded superbly, but standing back for a moment, there are questions which this has raised.

A number of the people taken to hospital had to go to Ipswich, not the James Paget University Hospital. The hospital needs to review whether it was equipped to take casualties on this scale.

This time, thank goodness, nobody was seriously injured and it is good practice to review how each of the emergency services functioned.

Rules take the biscuit

A policeman's lot is not an easy one.

First, we report on a pair of Norfolk police officers harnessing Periscope, a video-streaming tool, to talk directly to the public.

Their latest imaginative video shows how difficult it can be for officers to distinguish between real and imitation weapons. All very commendable.

But then we have the revelations of Stephen Bett, Norfolk police and crime commissioner, that officers must now record petty incidents as violent crimes.

These include someone being hit with a biscuit, and a child brushing a stinging nettle against another's arm.

What has happened to common sense?

Once upon a time the local bobby would have ended the matter with a sharp ticking off. But now we risk our crime statistics, and our blood pressures, going through the roof.

Historic day for women

A historic day in Norwich passed this weekend – for the first time both the Lord Mayor and Sheriff are women serving in the same year.

The civic ceremony became a celebration as the first female Dean of Norwich, Very Reverend Dr Jane Hedges, and the city's first female Archdeacon, the Venerable Jan McFarlane, joined Lord Mayor Brenda Arthur and Sheriff Beryl Blower at Norwich Cathedral.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Sunset over Ludham airfield by Paul Lambert . If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

What's in a word? Well, it all depends on the sentiment



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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 –



■ Innocent phrases which were once the norm have been twisted to be used by bullies.

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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We can go to God with bold
confidence through faith in Christ.
Ephesians 3:12

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