

# Eastern Daily Press

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## Questions need to be answered over issue of contaminated air

It sounds like a far-fetched conspiracy theory – or the plot of the latest blockbuster thriller.

That pilots, air crew and passengers may have been poisoned while flying will be a concept many find hard to get their heads around.

To many, boarding a plane has become as routine a task as getting in a car, bus or on a train – and every day thousands put their trust in airlines without even thinking twice. But this isn't a story made up for the big screen.

There is a growing body of evidence so-called aerotoxic syndrome is, in fact, a reality.

After years of debate and claims and counter-claims about the possible problem, events of the past few months have thrust the issue back into the limelight.

So far this year two UK coroners have highlighted their concerns the syndrome could be to blame for the deaths of otherwise healthy aircrew. Meanwhile, the union for crew staff is pursuing 17 cases of members suffering from ill-health, with more likely to follow.

The same air is pumped to passengers as goes to staff, so if it is subsequently proven to have caused some harm, it's likely members of the public will also have been affected to some extent.

That is why this is an issue that demands the serious attention of airlines, the Civil Aviation Authority and the government. The era of passenger flights is unlikely to go away and it's vital people can fly with peace of mind that it isn't causing damage to their health.

## Tragedy raises issues

The terrible plane crash at the Shoreham Airshow will have horrified everyone who saw it.

What had been a day of family fun and nostalgia turned into a nightmare as spectators watched a 1950s Hawker Hunter jet hit the A27, killing at least 11 people just passing by on the dual carriageway.

This is the third tragedy of its type in England over the past few months, including one at Old Buckenham that killed a respected local flier. While it is too soon to know what caused this latest incident, it is inevitable that questions will arise about how we ensure that these events, which are loved by so many, are absolutely as safe as possible. Keith Simpson MP is right to say the government should look again some of the issues surrounding air shows, to ensure they continue to have the full confidence of the public. While those airshows where the planes fly over the coast and out to sea have an in-built degree of safety, any review needs to look carefully at shows where planes fly over some of this country's busiest roads.

## Fine sportsmanship

Whilst England celebrate the return of The Ashes, it is the sportsmanship which must not be forgotten as cricket's finest competition draws to a close.

It was a glorious 3-2 scoreline for England after their drubbing Down Under last time out.

But our team still gave out-going Australia captain Michael Clarke a guard of honour as he walked out to the crease on day one of the final test at The Oval.

He too deserves to be commended as long-serving and fine player who served his country with distinction.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ A little egret is reflected in the water at Strumpshaw in this photo by Peter Dent. 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 past is another language when we think about it

Peter  
Trudgill



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Have you ever wondered why the past tense of 'I go' is 'I went'? OK, so you haven't – but I bet plenty of people studying English as a foreign language have, because it causes them problems.

The normal way to make past-tense verb forms in English is to add -ed to the basic form of the verb: want, wanted.

Went is not even remotely normal. Even with irregular verbs, such as ring, rang and rung.

But there's nothing obvious about go and went – a nice illustration of how languages are not necessarily particularly logical systems.

They have to have regularity, or infants would not be able to learn them, but they can tolerate a certain amount of irregularity of this kind.

The illogical go/went situation came about because the modern verb was originally two separate words.

Went used to be the past tense of wend, and only came to function as the past tense of go in about 1500. Wend then had to acquire a new past-tense form wended, as in "he wended his way".

We can see the same pattern with the adjective good.



■ This man decided to go for a walk. He went to Great Yarmouth. But, asks Peter Trudgill, why is it went and not goed?

If we say nice, nicer, nicest, why on earth don't we say good, gooder, goodest? We can ask the same question for all the Germanic languages: Norwegian god, bedre, best, Dutch has goed, beter, best, German gut, besser, best – the pattern must have been present in our parent Germanic language.

So although it's obvious that we're again dealing with two originally different words here, the peculiarity is so ancient that we don't know what the words were.

When it comes to the adjective bad, we know a little bit more, though we don't actually know where bad came from – it appears to be a word peculiar to English.

Mediaeval English speakers said bad, badder, baddest; but gradually speakers started instead to use worse, worst – and this is actually an old Germanic word: in Danish worst is værst.

When unrelated forms are used as different versions of a single word like this, linguistic scientists call it suppletion.

You can see the same thing happening with the noun person.

We say one person, and while it's possible to say two persons, the normal plural is people, so we usually say two people.

A good question at this point would be: why? Why do languages have suppletion? As I say, that's a good question.

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And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings.

Daniel 2:21 [tlcnorwich.com](http://tlcnorwich.com)

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