

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Science is at the heart of our region's economic growth

It has been said that the John Innes Centre is more famous in the United States than it is in Norwich.

We do our best to rectify that, but this anecdote serves to highlight its significance.

From the development of drought-tolerant crops to the creation of super-broccoli with its cancer-preventing characteristics, its work has, and will, continue to save lives around the world.

But for a chancellor driven by hard-headed numbers, the economic significance of our science base is hard to understate.

When the government talks of its hi-tech industrial strategy, it is referring to successes such as the John Innes Centre.

Every blueprint for economic growth in the region puts our science base at its heart.

Projections of thousands of highly-skilled jobs rely on institutes such as the John Innes Centre continuing to succeed and expand.

So funding warnings should be heeded by George Osborne as he takes a very large axe to his budget this month.

His rhetoric about rebalancing the economy away from London will only become a reality with a thriving science base.

We all have an interest in fighting for proper science funding – from MPs to councillors, to the service industries which benefit from people with highly skilled jobs living in our region.

When the John Innes Centre warns that funding cuts could see these top scientists who choose to settle in our region look elsewhere, we, but most importantly George Osborne, should sit up and listen.

The debt we owe

Thousands of people across the region paid their respects at the weekend in this special year – 70 years after the end of the Second World War – to the fallen heroes of this and other wars.

A poignant reminder of just why we should remember is given in the story of 91-year-old Alan King, who survived and who has received France's highest commendation for bravery.

Still a teenager, he crossed the Channel on D-Day and fought his way across France and Belgium to Germany. His tank was blown up, he saw his comrades die on the battlefields, and as his daughter says, he saw and experienced terrible sights and sounds.

As the years continue to pass, we must never forget the debt we owe to Mr King, and to so many others, from conflicts past and present, who never came home.

Knitting champions

One might think it would mostly be youngsters helping charities for the elderly.

But that's not always the case, as East Anglia's champion knitters can testify. A record-breaking team of women from a Beccles day centre has been knitting to raise money for Age UK – and the fastest with her needles was Wendy Somersby, who managed to knit more than 1,000 woolly hats.

She's just 73 years old.

God loves each of us as if there
were only one of us.

Augustine



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READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Reflections of clouds and the drainage pump at How Hill on a November night by Peter Jarvis. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

It's what you say, not how you say it, that matters

Peter
Trudgill

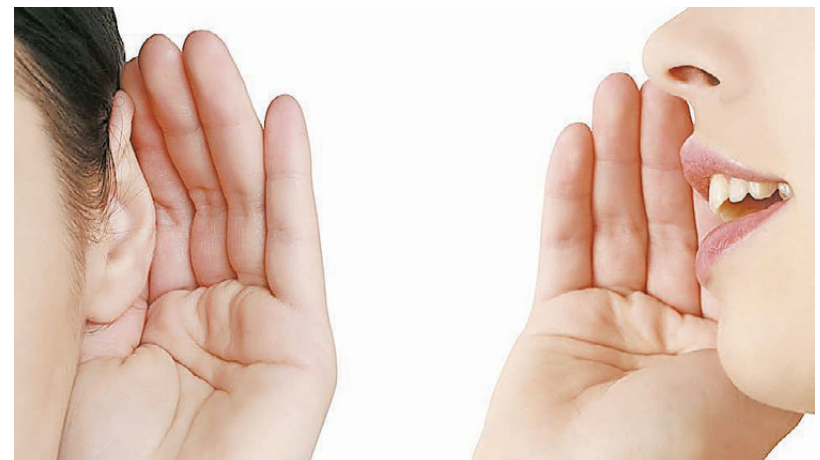


email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk

I'm lucky enough to write a column every week about language and dialect in the nation's largest-selling regional daily morning newspaper. Clare Foges, David Cameron's former speech writer, is lucky enough to write a column in the nation's most famous newspaper, The Times.

Recently she also decided to write about language and dialect. Her main theme was that social mobility seems to be decreasing. (Other sources say there is actually plenty of mobility in the downward direction.) She also observed that young working-class people hit a glass ceiling at some point on the social hierarchy and do not manage to rise any further. But she doesn't blame our society for that. Instead she claims that it's because of the way these young people speak, saying: "those who speak sloppily will always be locked out of an invisible club."

But why "always"? Can't we try to get rid of this "locking out" process? Isn't Clare's callous acceptance of the inevitability of this discrimination rather like the Victorians saying "those who are female will never be able to go to university"? Or apartheid supporters saying "those who are black will never be able to enter government"?



■ Should it matter in which accent we speak, as long as we are understandable?

Picture: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

But Clare has a solution: elocution classes. Instruct all young people to speak like toffs so that at an interview for a job at, say, The Times newspaper, they can pretend to be toffs.

We can imagine adverts offering this service. "Are you suffering from linguicism? Do bigoted people discriminate against you because of the irrational prejudice they have against working-class accents? Avoid this discrimination by attending elocution classes so you can sound more like them!"

But why stop there? How about: "Are you suffering from racism? Do bigoted people discriminate against you because of the irrational prejudice they have against non-white people? Avoid this

discrimination by attending skin-lightening clinics so you can look more like them."

In this country we have made progress in eliminating sexist and racist prejudice but, as Clare Foges reveals in her ignorant usage of terms like "sloppy accents" and "bad grammar", and her irrational objections to glottal stops and pronunciations such as "fing = thing", many influential people still feel it is perfectly proper to demonstrate the crassness of linguistic prejudices in public.

Anybody can benefit from being taught how to speak clearly, audibly, articulately and coherently. But the linguistic truth is that one can be clear and articulate in any accent.