

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Fall in life-saving blood donors is a very worrying trend

New figures revealing a decline in the number of blood donations in our region are cause for concern.

While demand for blood has decreased, the number of critical procedures and treatments that rely on the generosity of donors is still significant.

Until medical science cracks a replacement for blood, donors will be a life-saving part of our healthcare system. But being a lifesaver isn't always glamorous.

Rather than pulling someone out of the way of a speeding train, or cutting the right wire on a ticking bomb, it can simply involve giving up a small amount of your time.

That's all it takes to donate blood, a small sacrifice which could give someone else a fuller life.

Thousands in our area are still regularly taking that selfless step.

For many, it has become part of their routine, albeit one that will have enabled surgeries, transfusions and emergency procedures to take place.

The likes of Janet Carter, who has donated more than 100 times, are the unsung heroes of the service.

The figures also reveal that many are answering the call, only to get cold feet and cancel at the last minute.

While a combination of busy lifestyles and squeamishness makes cancellations inevitable, the numbers are making life difficult.

The answer may lie in information. Anyone unsure of the procedure or in need of reassurance should go to www.blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 23 23.

The NHS itself may also need to make it easier for donors. The numbers of complaints from donors who have been turned away is also on the rise.

This is just for starters

With a natural pantry as bountiful as ours, it's no surprise we have an array of fine restaurants in the region.

But while the food is good, our eateries haven't always been getting Michelin-star ratings when it comes to food hygiene.

Our investigation has found the situation is improving though.

And while a 2pc improvement in six months is progress, it's just the starter. Many more need to step up in the kitchen.

Councils can also help by cutting red tape, scrutinising thoroughly yet efficiently, and making sure smaller businesses are given as much help as possible.

Anyone who has been a victim of slapdash food hygiene will understand the stakes. Forking out for a meal which sends you home with a bout of food poisoning certainly leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

Keeping things clean

Of all the gifts given to the Queen for her 90th birthday, a litter-free United Kingdom would surely rank highly.

The Clean for the Queen initiative called for an army of volunteers to go out and make communities sparkle in time for the big day on April 21, in return for funding for a celebratory bash.

As always, people in our region rallied to the cause and have been working tirelessly to give Her Majesty an early present.

Let's hope they can inspire others to keep it up.

Thought for the day

Search me, O God, and test my thoughts. Point out anything you find in me that makes you sad and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Psalms 139 v 23 & 24

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ A short-eared owl on the hunt over the coastal marshes of Norfolk, captured on camera by Brian Shreeve. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Is that a weak cup of tea? You can take it as red

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My Nanny – my paternal grandmother – liked “a nice cup of tea”. And she liked it strong.

If it wasn't strong enough, she had a colourful way of expressing her distaste. She would say “thass a cuppa ol' ruddle, that is”. Ruddle was her term for weak tea. In my family we still use this word.

As a child I wondered what ruddle really meant. Was it some kind of secondary usage of a word which really signified something else? Or was there actually a special English word for weak tea? I appreciated that tea drinking was a vitally important part of British culture. And I had heard that Eskimo languages have lots of words for snow. So perhaps British English actually did have a specialised tea vocabulary, including a particular word for tea which was too watery?

Well, it turned out that it wasn't like that. I eventually found out what ruddle meant by... looking it up in the dictionary. To my surprise, it was actually there; and the dictionary told me that ruddle is a “drink made with warm beer and gin”, with sugar added.

My grandmother did like a glass of stout, but I rather doubt that she made a



■ Is there anything more British than a nice cup of tea and a biscuit?

Picture: PA

habit of drinking a mixture of gin and beer. Obviously, though, it was something she knew about. And you can see how the word for this drink could get to be transferred to a cup of tea. If you add gin to beer, the resulting liquid will be a rather pale brown in colour: not the colour of a good cup of tea, but the colour of one which is too weak.

But in that case, what is the etymology of ruddle? It seems that this is another of those “origin uncertain” words – so we are not sure. But the English Dialect Dictionary gives the main form of the

name of the drink as ruddle, with the ‘rudle’ version only being known from East Anglia. So there is a suggestion that the name of the drink ruddle/rudle might simply have been a humorous usage of another word ruddle meaning a red pigment made of ochre.

This derives ultimately from the ancient word rud which signified ‘red colour’. This word has fallen out of use in modern English, except of course for the colour adjective which is derived from it and which is very well known to Norwich City football supporters, namely ruddy.