

# Eastern Daily Press

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## Patience is tested as demand leads to longer waiting times

It is the day many people dread. Having an operation in hospital, however minor the procedure may be, is never going to be a pleasant experience for any patient.

The very least those patients deserve is that their operation is carried out precisely and promptly.

But, as evidenced by our story today, that does not happen often enough across the region's hospitals.

More than 2,200 patients across Norfolk and Suffolk had their operations cancelled after arriving at a hospital last year.

That equates to six people per day being told to go home and come back at a later, and unspecified, date.

It is an enormous inconvenience to patients and adds further pressure to the hospitals, as each person should have their operation within four weeks of a cancellation.

But sadly, such is the demand on hospitals that some patients wait even longer, sometimes enduring pain and anxiety as a result.

The rise in cancelled operations was far smaller last year than the year before, but every rise should be treated with concern.

And we shouldn't forget that hospitals are struggling to meet waiting-time targets for patients who have been referred for treatment.

As demand on our NHS grows, patients face longer waits for a GP appointment, and longer waits again for the treatment they need. With the NHS stuttering through one of the toughest financial periods in its history, it's hard to see those waits becoming anything but longer.

And that means the tax-payers' patience will become increasingly tested.

## No need for any alarm

There's an almost surreal nature to the news that there was a plot to smuggle 26 migrants by yacht to Sea Palling.

From Vietnam and Albania, via Holland, to the sweeping sands of a north-east Norfolk beach: the plot sounds outlandish.

But in this case it appears to have many grains of truth.

So should we be worried? Is the Norfolk coast a soft underbelly for people smugglers to exploit? Is there any prospect of us seeing a scaled-down version of the scenes that are being played out on other European coastlines?

The answer to all of these questions is a sensibly cautious "no".

Coastguards, who are the eagle-eyes of our shores, have heard of nothing like this happening before. Neither, it seems, have locals.

Given that it is very tricky to get any vessel ashore in our region without it being spotted, it would be bizarre and reckless for people smugglers to target it.

There cannot be complacency, of course. And there must be vigilance.

But we can remain quietly confident that this plot is not the tip of the iceberg.

## Cat that got the cream

Pets bring an enormous amount of pleasure to people's lives. One of the few downsides, though, is that their lifespans are short and their death brings genuine grief.

Cats are loved by millions of people and – though rather aloof – have a strong bond with their owners.

Sally Brown's bond with Henry must be particularly strong, for the proud puss is still feline fine at the extraordinary age of 30.

Maybe it's the Norfolk air, or perhaps the quality of his food. It could just be his owner's love and dedication that has kept Henry in fine fettle for so long.

He may be the world's oldest living cat. But if not, he's still the cat that got the cream.

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ The magnificence of Blickling Hall, as seen on a briefly sunny afternoon through clouds of wisteria. Picture by David Brooker. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## How the early railways helped bring Cly to Clay

My mother left school, aged 14, in 1932 and went to work at a newsagents in Holt. She was a bright pupil who would have benefited from staying at school. But her father was an agricultural worker, and it wasn't possible financially for the family to keep her in education.

That was the reality of the world of Norfolk farm-labourers.

In the shop, Mum came into contact with another world – the world of the schoolboys from nearby Gresham's School who came in, often secretly, to buy cigarettes.

This was the very different world of families who were able to pay for a privileged education.

Perhaps this tale of two worlds sheds new light on the issue of the pronunciation of the name of the nearby village, Cly.

The original, centuries-old pronunciation was Clay. It was very often spelt Clay; and the earliest form of the name, Anglo-Saxon Clæg, meant clay. For the last several decades, though, there's been an alternative pronunciation, Cly. Many people believe this is the correct pronunciation.

Helpful light is shed on the origin of the Clay/Cly dispute in an EDP letter from Mr R J F Wortley, a supporter of Cly. Amongst his Norfolk credentials, he cites the fact that he went to school at Gresham's.

In 2013, Mr J Scales also wrote a letter to the EDP on this topic, stating that in his view the correct pronunciation was Clay, and that "only posh outsiders" said Cly.



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What Mr Scales wrote is true – or at least it was true in the past.

The name remained Clay until the late 1800s, when the railways started bringing outsiders to "Poppyland" and other parts of the Norfolk coast. On the marshes, wildfowling became popular with gentry from elsewhere in the country, and these "posh outsiders", listening to the name Clay as pronounced by Norfolk people, misheard it as Cly.

Even today, the way the Queen says pint sounds very like a Norfolkman saying paint.

More and more influential outsiders subsequently visited and settled in the area and acquired the new pronunciation, as passed on by their peers.

Because these people were influential, many insiders also took to using their pronunciation.

Even some elderly local members of my own family have switched from Clay to Cly.

But my grandparents, who were born in the 1880s and lived in Cly, called it Clay. So do I.

And I think it's relevant that I didn't go to Gresham's.



■ One of Norfolk's most iconic images, the windmill at Cly. Picture: MARK BULLIMORE