

# Eastern Daily Press

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## The EU argument must run its course – and we must vote

In five days' time, we will know our country's fate. The people will have had their say on whether to leave or remain in the European Union.

In these final three days before polling day, campaigning would normally be expected to reach a near-deafening crescendo.

Yet in some ways, politics has been muted by the shocking murder last week of Jo Cox, the Labour MP for Batley and Spen.

Both the Leave and Remain camps suspended their campaigns in the immediate aftermath of the attack, and while both are moving back through the gears now, there is a danger that some of the energy and vigour may have drained from this debate.

This would be a shame. For this argument needs to run its full course, and at full volume.

Referendums may not seem a terribly British way of doing things, and some may have developed a distinct distaste for them over recent months.

But having embarked upon this one, we must see it through.

As the eyebrow-raising results of our regional straw poll show today, this outcome remains wildly unpredictable. Every one of us must take the opportunity to engage in the final days of this debate and then to have our say. Every vote counts.

But in these closing rounds, we must remember to respect our opponents. Every voter who puts a cross in a ballot paper on Thursday will be doing so in what they sincerely believe is the country's best interests. Whatever the result, we must still live with one another.

## A romantic notion

The idea of bringing lynx back to our countryside was always a romantic and deeply enchanting one. These magnificent creatures once strode our landscape, before vanishing from Britain around 700AD, almost certainly as a result of human persecution.

So, with the use of modern technology and cautious appliance of science, why should we not bring back these animals? To its credit, the Lynx UK Trust has done a fine and responsible job of asking that question. It has been assiduous in soliciting the views not just of those captivated by the idea, but also those with concerns. But the answer to the question is not a simple one. It is something of an understatement to point out that the British Isles have changed somewhat since 700AD. The reintroduction of the lynx here could have had far-reaching consequences.

So there are many in the Thetford area who will heave a sigh of relief at today's news their region is no longer being considered for this project. There will also, of course, be others saddened the scheme is, for now, abandoned here. It remains a romantic idea and we wish the Lynx UK Trust well with the next stage of its project.

## Focus on football

They may be holding their own at the current European Championships, but given their form of recent years there doesn't seem to be any prospect of England's footballers winning the World Cup any time soon. So it looks like the nearest fans will get to experiencing the exhilaration of just such an achievement is... Lowestoft's Crown Meadow. As we report today, this charming, yet not exactly imposing, ground is an unlikely stand-in for Wembley, in a new interactive film of England's great 1966 triumph.

So until the next World Cup victory, whenever that may be, Lowestoft will have to do. But in the meantime, some English success at the Euros would do very nicely indeed. Come on England!

## READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ David Thacker spotted this mallard duckling on a recent visit to Cley Marshes. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, send it to our website via [www.iwitness24.co.uk](http://www.iwitness24.co.uk)

## OK... so just what are the origins of this quirky word?

Peter  
Trudgill



email: [newsdesk@archant.co.uk](mailto:newsdesk@archant.co.uk)

People quite often ask about the word "okay". "Where does it come from?", they ask. "What does OK stand for?"

There's quite a lot of controversy about these questions, which is inconvenient since OK is one of the most successful English words of all time, having spread to all varieties of English around the world, where it's in very frequent use, and into very many other languages as well.

The truth is that etymologists, the sort of academic people who write about the origins of words for the Oxford English Dictionary and other learned tomes, are a bit out of their comfort zone on this one.

They tend to know a great deal about Latin and Ancient Greek and Sanskrit words. They are very well versed in Proto-Indo European and Proto Germanic vocabulary.

They know all about Old Norse and Old English. But they are a bit stumped over the word OK.

The strongest suggestion they have come up with is that it was a jocular American abbreviation of "All Correct" – as in Ork Korrekt. Well, it was certainly originally American: the first definite records we have of it in print come from the USA in the 1830s.



■ 'OK' is seen as quintessentially American but its origins may actually lie in West Africa.

Picture: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

But there's another theory which appeals to me. There's actually a probable earlier recorded instance of "okay" from the 1700s, from North Carolina.

And what was special about the south-eastern states of the USA at that time was slavery: there were large numbers of unfortunate human beings in that part of the world who had been forcibly carried across the Atlantic against their will from West Africa.

Obviously they brought their West African languages with them.

Now it has to be said that most European etymologists do not know very much about West African languages.

But one linguist who does, Dr David Dalby from the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University, pointed out more than 40 years ago that the origin of OK probably lay in the Wolof language of Senegal.

In Wolof, waw-kay means very much the same as OK: and Wolof is rather likely to have been used as a lingua franca or common language among African slaves with different mother tongues.

This usage was then transferred to their English as they learned it – and later found its way into the English of white people, who tried to make sense of it by writing it OK. For me, that's a waw-kay explanation.