

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Promises to region must not be broken as political wars rage

Civil war has broken out in our two main political parties signalling the meltdown of the political system as we have known it for the last few decades.

Like the country, our MPs are divided.

In the Conservatives, between those who want to be in the European Union, and those who want to be out.

And in Labour about how to win back those voters who have fled elsewhere – whether to the UK Independence Party or to disenfranchisement.

The Labour Party now appears to be in meltdown with the resignation of an unprecedented number of shadow cabinet members.

The pollsters, bookies and markets did not predict that the British public would vote to leave the EU.

Indeed our government – elected just over a year ago – appears to have been taken by surprise.

This game-changing vote has created political chaos at a time when our leaders need to be on their A-game as they carve out our new place in the world.

Far from taking stock and deciding how to deliver the wishes of the British people, our leaders appear to be engaged in a war of the rosettes.

Voters said at the ballot box that they were disillusioned by the current way of doing things.

The squabbles that have bubbled to the surface of both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party distract from one of the biggest constitutional overhauls we have faced in the post-war era.

It is not just at a national level.

At a local level, a Brexit vote has consequences.

We have warnings that election manifesto promises on infrastructure may not be honoured.

This is not acceptable. Conservatives, both on the Remain and Brexit side, have a responsibility to deliver those pledges.

A referendum which did not go the government's way is no excuse. And councillors will today consider plans for an elected mayor in this context.

We have been sceptical about the devolution process and the way this has been considered, and we have unanswered questions about the cost of an extra tier of government.

What is clear is that the needs of the region when it comes to infrastructure and resources must not slip from the agenda. In fact, it is more important than ever. This is what must be at the heart of discussions about the way we are governed in the future.

As we are on the cusp of a whole new political system, it must be one which delivers in a way the current one has not done to date.

Marnie travels so well

Norfolk's misty marshes form the background for the enchanting story *When Marnie Was There*. So you might be forgiven for wondering how well this timeless children's classic would fare exported from Burnham Overy Staithe to the Land of the Rising Sun.

The daughter of its author Joan G Robinson believes her late mother would have approved of the new animated adaptation produced in Japan.

Could she ever have dreamed that the fleeting glimpse of the little girl at the window, which inspired the story of Anna and Marnie, would literally travel to the other side of the globe, to delight a new generation thousands of miles away?



READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ A kingfisher in search of food at Lackford Lakes in this photograph taken by Roger Benstead. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Saying it with words – and they were often confusing

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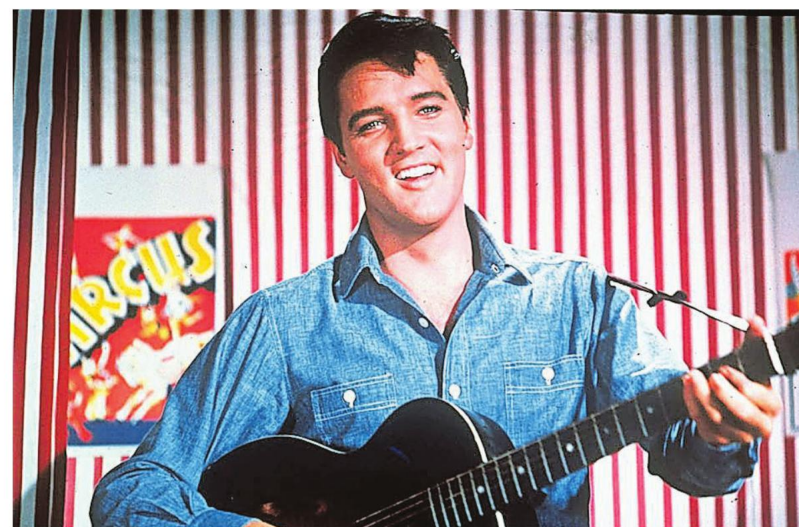
People who, like me, were teenagers around 1960 will remember Elvis Presley's hit single *Return to Sender*. As often happened in those days, we ended up discussing the words of the song – or lyrics, as we had learned to say. The problem with American songs was that it was often difficult to make out what the words actually were.

Sometimes this was a matter of coping with the American accent. It was years before I realised that Johnny Tillotson's *Poetry in Motion*, from 1961, contained the line "See her gentle sway" – his pronunciation of gentle had it rhyming with kennel, which was too hard for my teenage brain to process.

Sometimes the problem was more with combinations of words. How could you possibly put on "red blue jeans"?

Other things were cultural. What exactly was an "A-student", we wondered. And sometimes we simply didn't know what a word meant. What were sneakers? High-heeled sneakers were presumably shoes – but what sort?

When Elvis's *Return to Sender* was played on the radio – as we had only just started calling it rather than wireless – we encountered all of these problems at once.



■ The lyrics of Elvis Presley songs left many people confused years ago because they contained words not known to the British. Picture: AP

It was easy to understand that the postman had a sack instead of a bag, as we would have said. But we weren't very sure about zone – if that was the word he was actually using – in "No such number, no such zone", though we sort of worked it out. "I sent it special D" required a bit of guesswork.

But the real problem was the sentence "We had a quarrel, a lover's spat". Was he singing "a lover's pat"? Could "pat" really refer to some kind of problem? If it was "a lover's spat", what on earth did that mean? Some kind of disagreement, presumably.

But we had no idea. If there was such a word as spat, we had never heard it. Some of us looked it up in the dictionary – it wasn't there. There weren't any Americans around to ask, except for some not particularly sober USAF airmen on the streets of Norwich on a Saturday night who might have talked to our girlfriends but certainly not to us. We never really found out.

Now, 50 years on, the word spat is probably known, if not necessarily used, by most British people. And you can even find it in the pages of the Eastern Daily Press.