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So many lessons to learn from heroes of Rio Olympics

After the excitement of London 2012, with Team GB medals a shimmering shower, there was a fear that they would dry up in Rio.

But, despite the absence of home advantage, the athletes are arguably performing even more strongly in South America.

The skill and steel on show so far has been breathtaking: from the amazing athleticism of the gymnasts to the extraordinary power of the cyclists.

Major sports such as golf, tennis and athletics have shared the limelight with the likes of diving, gymnastics and dressage, demonstrating the wonderfully egalitarian ethos of the Olympics.

The success so far for Team GB is an object lesson in how to breed success. The funding has been good, the training and pre-planning meticulous. And from that seed-bed has grown a host of brilliant athletes.

As we bask in the warm glow of success and hope for much more in the coming days, we can cast our minds back a month or so to the abject effort by England in football's Euro 2016. The squad stumbled, seemingly without a plan and devoid of drive, to humiliating failure.

Twenty years ago, at Atlanta, Team GB won one gold medal. Morale was low and interest ebbing. The authorities reacted with a bottom-up overhaul that 20 years later sees us threatening to finish second in the medals table.

England's footballers have much to learn from the Team GB athletes. And the English FA has even more to learn from its coaches and leaders.

This nation can succeed at sport. And when we find a way, it is so very uplifting.

An inspiring return

Life for Phil Armes took a different path after his 1995 crash in the Ulster Grand Prix.

But severe injury has not defeated the 57-year-old motorcyclist.

In fact, the father of three has embraced a wide range of projects, and is well known on Norwich screens and radios.

But he would not have been blamed for staying away from the scene of the injury which left him as a paraplegic. Yet his determination has seen him ride the circuit where he broke his back.

To complete a full lap of the circuit 21 years on is a huge achievement in itself, but he is also a history maker after becoming the first paraplegic to complete a solo lap of the Dundrod road circuit.

We salute charities such as Bike Experience which helped Phil to return to a motorbike after all those years.

The hero's welcome he received on completing his lap is testament to the significance of the moment.

Phil should be an inspiration to us all. The ride is proof that ghosts really can be laid to rest.

And it seems there could be no stopping him now.

The wonder of rubbish

To the untrained eye, it might seem like a load of old rubbish, but to a garbologist it opens up a valuable window into times gone by.

Tom Licence started visiting old rubbish dumps when he was about six years old. Little did he know then that he would grow up to be a professional historian, and the author of *What the Victorians Threw Away*.

The insights gained from the study of the waste thrown away by previous generations are fascinating, being pinpoint when our throw-away society truly began.

One can only be left wondering what future generations will think of us, based on what we discard without a second thought today.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Common and grey seals soaking up the sun on a sand bar at Blakeney Point. Picture by Richard Brunton. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

If it's alright with you, it's alright with me... if that's alright?

Peter Trudgill



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Are you alright? Or are you all right? Is alright one word or two? A number of people feel rather strongly about the issue; and, in particular, some of them are adamant that alright is totally wrong. My question is: why do they think that?

What the Oxford English Dictionary has to say about alright is very interesting and revealing. The dictionary gives the main entry as "All right" but then states: "The form alright is frequent, although more widespread in non-literary printed sources (eg newspapers and journals) than in literary texts. Compare the standard spellings of already, altogether, always. Although these analogues exist, the form is strongly criticized in the vast majority of usage guides, but without cogent reasons."

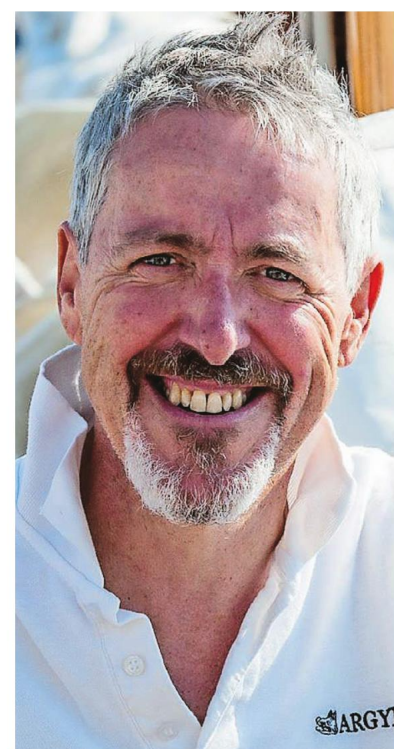
It is that last phrase that interests me. People object to the spelling alright, but they give absolutely no reason for doing so – and the experts at the Oxford English Dictionary can't think of one either. So why would anyone find fault with alright? Nobody argues that we

should write the words although, always and albeit as all though, all ways and all be it. And even a thousand years ago, Anglo-Saxon scribes were writing alright as one word.

English is my native language, and the native language of the majority of EDP readers too. Surely it is obvious to most of us, when we think about it, that alright is a single word? The most common pronunciation of the word, "orrigh", helps to confirm that too.

It's true that if you go far enough back in time, alright originated as a combination of two words, all and right. But so did the words already and although. It is a very common process as languages change for two words in a fixed expression to merge into one. Week end became week-end and then weekend. Cup board became cupboard. In the Oxford English Dictionary entry I just quoted, newspapers and widespread were both originally two words. The technical term for this completely normal merging process is univerbation. It can even occur with three-word combinations, such as albeit and nevertheless.

Perhaps, though, the most important point here is that all right and alright actually have different meanings. Just think about the distinction between "They are all right", meaning that all of them are correct; and "They are alright", meaning they are OK. That difference is concealed if we write the two forms identically.



■ It's alright for Griff... Griff Rhys Jones, host of ITV's *It'll Be Alright on the Night*.

Picture: JAMES ROBINSON TAYLOR