

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Think before you dial 999 and waste vital police time

There are some things in life which appear far-fetched to the point of being ridiculous. They're often considered to be laughable and dismissed as such.

To dial 999 and ask the police if they can babysit your son because he doesn't want to go on holiday with you for the week could fall into that category.

It may seem scarcely believable, but that is exactly what happened earlier this year according to one Norfolk police call handler.

Then there are those, often the worse for drink, who want to be arrested so they can spend the night in a cell because they have nowhere to stay.

These are just a few examples cited by Norfolk police who have today revealed they handled nearly 90,000 unnecessary calls over the past year.

That figure amounts to a staggering quarter of the 359,000 calls handled by the force's control room call handlers between August 2015 and July this year.

So, not so laughable when you stop to consider that the time spent by police dealing with such unnecessary calls could quite simply be the difference between life and death in a real emergency.

And that is exactly what Norfolk police want us all to do – think. That is why the force is launching a campaign today to encourage us all to Make the Right Call before dialling 999 or 101.

Our emergency services are there to help us in our hour of greatest need, not when we break a fingernail. We would all do well to remember that.

There may come a time when we need their services for real.

All hail the Pastons

Norfolk has a rich history full of heritage and tradition, of that there can be no doubt.

Lord Nelson, Edith Cavell and Elizabeth Fry are among the more well-known historical figures whose influences have spread far and wide, extending way beyond the county's shores.

And on Saturday some of the best minds in Norfolk gathered to ensure another piece of Norfolk's past is not forgotten.

Historians, archivists, archaeologists and council officers were among those to gather at the University of East Anglia with one thing in mind – to ensure the name of Norfolk's Paston family remains as celebrated as the West Runton elephant.

They hope to secure a £330,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant to further their cause.

The letters between members of the Paston family spanning some 200 years, the first written in 1418, provide an important and compelling social history and it is right that the Paston family takes its place alongside the most venerated of Norfolk's sons and daughters.

Will Glitter Balls shine?

Victorian Beckham famously branded husband David Golden Balls – and now our very own Ed Balls has been branded Glitter Balls by his new Russian dance partner, Katya Jones. But the jury is still out on whether the Norwich City chairman will carve out a glittering dance career for himself as he took to the stage for the first time on Strictly Come Dancing.

The former Norfolk schoolboy and cabinet minister, who is known for sweeping his wife, Yvette, off her feet on the dance floor at Labour Party conferences, says he is used to being on the wrong end of a public vote and only time will tell if he wins over the hearts of Strictly's voting viewers.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Fay Neale rounded a corner at Oxborough to see these smiling sunflowers craning their necks to see over the tops of those in front. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Be careful which experts you believe to tell the facts

Peter
Trudgill

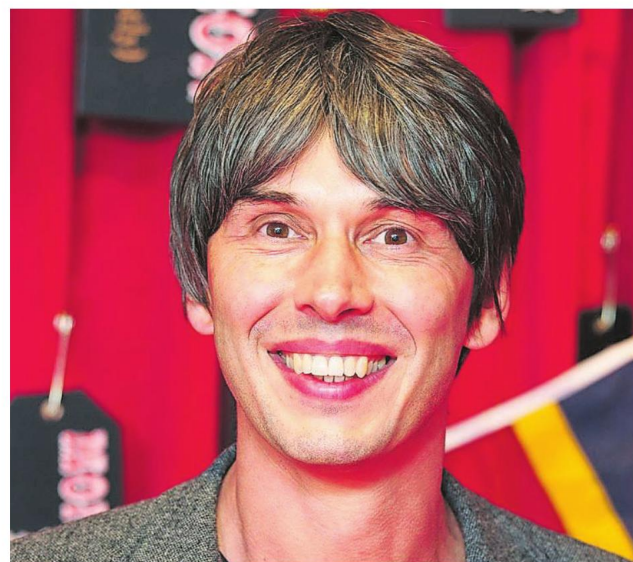


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Michael Gove famously said during his Brexit campaign that this country "has had enough of experts". This was an extraordinary thing for a former education secretary to say on national television and, happily, most people don't agree with him. We tend to prefer our surgeons and GPs to be experts at what they do. We would like our airline pilots to be experts, please. And we think it would be really good if our teachers were experts on their subjects as well.

Millions of us watch the expert physicist Professor Brian Cox talking on television about cosmology and other fascinating topics, and we respect and believe what he says. Millions of us follow the TV programmes presented by Professor Alice Roberts, where she talks about archaeology, palaeontology and human evolution. Once again, we listen to what she says and accept it as informed expert opinion. Most of us do not make a habit of disagreeing with these erudite academics – we don't generally sit there saying "well, I think you might be wrong there, Brian".

Sadly, however, there are some academic subjects where experts are not guaranteed such a respectful hearing. One of them is linguistics. There are plenty of academic



■ TV presenter Professor Brian Cox is one of those experts we need to have around.

Picture: IAN WEST/PA

linguistic scientists who have spent decades studying human language and languages. But that does not prevent some people, at least in this country, from giving us no credit for knowing more about this subject than lay-people do.

For instance, it is not always the first instinct of BBC producers needing someone to discuss language issues to turn to one of the UK's excellent university linguistic departments. They are just as likely to consult a poet or a novelist or a journalist. After all, these people are skilled in using language, aren't they? Well, yes, but that is not at all the

same thing as being an expert about language.

All of us are highly competent at speaking our native language, but that seems to lead many people to believe that they are experts on other aspects of language as well. One thing that most linguists have experienced is that, when it comes to language, some people have a bad habit of presenting their personal likes and dislikes – which of course one can't argue with – as if these preferences were objective facts. They don't say "I really don't like that way of speaking", but "that way of speaking is bad and wrong".