

Eastern Daily Press

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SINCE 1870

Farron's hope of defections may be over optimistic

Once the Conservatives eyed the Liberal Democrats with fear in rural Norfolk. In North Norfolk Norman Lamb managed to oust a sitting Conservative.

At the height of Clegg-mania in 2010, Simon Wright was the lightning rod for disaffected Labour voters in Norwich.

But the Lib Dems paid a tough price at last year's general election for the years they spent in coalition.

After being reduced to a shadow of their former selves, and with just eight MPs, there is a belief in Brighton, where they are meeting for their annual conference, that the vote to leave the European Union is an opportunity for them.

They hope that as the unequivocally pro-European party they could win over support from those who voted to remain. Tim Farron is hoping in vain that a lurch to the left in Labour and a lurch to the right for the Conservatives under new prime minister Theresa May could give them a shot at the centre ground.

There is no doubt that both the Conservatives and Labour parties have MPs who are uncomfortable bedfellows. But it was ever thus.

There is no sign yet that disgruntled MPs from the two main parties are willing to change shades. It will be a hard sell to convince an MP to join a band of just eight.

And the Liberal Democrats must also confront that fact that the majority – by a margin of over a million – opted to leave the European Union just a few months ago in a democratic poll.

Whether they are a party of eight or 108, it is vital that they continue the important job of challenging and holding the government to account.

Countdown to Christmas

Christmas isn't known as the most magical time of the year for nothing.

There's so much fun to be had – decorating a tree, meeting friends, shopping for gifts, and even taking in a pantomime.

But Christmas is also about remembering the story of the Nativity and the values of compassion, charity and respect that are so central to Christianity.

We are blessed to be able to celebrate the festive season in such a stunning and historic city such as Norwich.

It's all the more exciting when we hear of the plans announced today by the Norwich BID (Business Development District), which looks set to transform our lanes, streets and squares into a wintry wonderland.

The group's vision for illuminations, markets and dazzling light displays are something to look forward to and will doubtless draw visitors from far and wide.

And the EDP and our sister paper, the Norwich Evening News, are delighted to add some Christmas cheer with our ice rink, which will be even bigger and better than its debut at Castle Meadow in 2015.

It may only be September, but there are already plenty of reasons to start getting excited about Christmas.

A sepia-tinted treasure

This is a forward-thinking region, but there's nothing wrong with having a foot in the past.

Over the weekend, there were thousands of pairs of feet firmly planted in the past as they gathered for the 1940s weekend in Sheringham and Holt.

There were soldiers, evacuees, spivs, police officers and char-ladies – all giving a corner of Norfolk a step-back-in-time feel.

The towns benefited from the trade and the people had a fantastic time: this is an event that is a genuine treasure. Now it is in the past, but the future is bright as people look forward to the next event.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

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■ A tranquil scene taken at Sandringham by EDP reader Lesley Buckley. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Beware our 'faux friends' in the world of language

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Foreign language teachers sometimes use the term "false friends", or the corresponding French form "faux amis", for words in different languages which look similar but do not actually mean the same thing. In French, for example, *demande* looks like the English word *demand*; but a *demande* is in fact something much more polite, a request. German *aktuell* looks like our *actual*, but actually (!) means *current* or *present*; Germans speaking English sometimes say *actually* meaning "right now". Catalan *embarrassada* means *pregnant*, not *embarrassed*.

Even among varieties of English there are a number of false friends. Most of us probably think we are quite good at comprehending American vocabulary. We all know that the boot of a car is the trunk in the USA. We realise that a freeway is the same kind of entity as a motorway. When Americans say *dumb*, we understand that we would say *stupid* instead. And we know that their sidewalk is what we would call a pavement.

But how many people on this side of the Atlantic know what Americans mean by pavement? The first time I saw a sign in a small American town saying "No cycling



■ Peter Trudgill explains that the same word in different countries can have different meanings - a scrappy game in the UK means it wasn't very good but in the USA it means it was a good scrap...
Picture: PA/SIMON COOPER

on pavement", I was not at all surprised – you are not allowed to cycle on the pavement in this country either (not that that stops cyclists doing just that these days). But then someone told me that, actually, it means that you must cycle on what we would call the pavement, because in the USA, the pavement is the roadway. In this small town, they wanted cyclists to keep to the sidewalks!

Other American false friends include the words *nervy* and *scrappy*, particularly in a sporting context. In this country, a *nervy* player would be one who is rather

on the timid and nervous side – full of nerves – and you wouldn't want such a person taking your penalties in a football match. But in America, a *nervy* player is one who is full, not of nerves, but of nerve – that is, very brave and courageous!

And in this country, if you said of a football match that it was a *scrappy* game, you would mean that it was not very good: there was no coherent play, and neither side really got going. In the US, a *scrappy* football game is one which is a good scrap: a keenly-fought contest where both teams are trying their hardest.