

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Golden chance to protect communities must be taken up

Cast your mind back to December 2013, as the worst floods for more than 20 years swept around our coast.

Homes were reduced to matchwood, businesses left under water and parts of the coastline changed forever, demonstrating just how vulnerable our low-lying shores are.

Norfolk lay smack bang in the path of a perfect storm, a triple whammy of the year's highest tide, waves whipped up by a deep low pressure system and a northerly gale.

Defences along King's Lynn's historic waterfront came within inches of being overwhelmed.

Hides on flagship nature reserves at Snettisham and Titchwell were flattened, Wells was awash, freshwater pools at Cley were flooded and a gaping hole was left in Sheringham Prom.

At Bacton and Walcott, the waves tore down the walls of seafront properties. Some of the 150 or so people evacuated to the nearby Lighthouse Inn returned home after the waters had subsided to find they had lost everything.

Now there is a chance to secure sea defences on at least part of the Norfolk coast. The approach, known as sandscaping, has already been successfully trialled by the Dutch, who, after all, are no strangers to coping with the ravages of the sea.

North Norfolk District Council is poised to pledge £500,000 as its share of the cost. But an extra £1.9-3m of government investment would be needed to overcome the funding shortfall.

It has been described as a once in a lifetime opportunity: and it is an opportunity which should be taken.

Courage to be admired

Courage can take many forms, but while the bravery being shown by Ann Dunning might not be enough to save her life it will almost certainly prove beneficial to others.

That, at least is the hope of the family of the 70-year-old from Banham, who has been struck down by progressive supranuclear palsy, a rare brain condition that is slowly claiming her life.

Rather than wallow in the darkness and despair they must all be feeling, Mrs Dunning and her family have agreed to take part in trial research at Addenbrooke's Hospital to help others given the devastating diagnosis.

The grandmother of two said anything that would help others would be worth a try.

It is a brave and selfless attitude which hopefully will not only provide others with a brighter future but should also give Mrs Dunning and her family and friends enormous comfort in the increasingly difficult days, weeks and months to come.

One can only hope that the trials Mrs Dunning has agreed to undertake will not only help future generations but also have a positive impact on her own quality of life.

A legacy of laughter

Captain Mainwaring and co, the iconic catchphrases, and the madcap scenarios of Dad's Army which had us all in hysterics – they are all because of Jimmy Perry.

Inspired by his own experiences in the Home Guard, Perry worked with close friend David Croft to create a show which has made us laugh for nearly 50 years.

In that time the writers built strong bonds with Norfolk and Suffolk, particularly in the Thetford area, where fond memories of the pair are still shared.

His later work on It Ain't Half Hot Mum, Hi-De-Hi and You Rang M'Lord also saw him returning to the region.

His passing is, of course, a time of sadness, but he has left a legacy of laughter which will live on.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ A stunning sunrise at North Denes, Lowestoft, by Richard Sagon. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit the website www.iwitness24.co.uk

A hamlet in north Norfolk with a very interesting name

Peter
Trudgill



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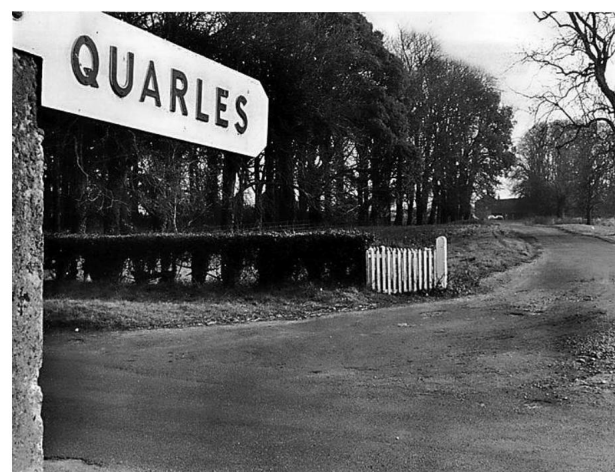
I wouldn't mind betting there are many Norfolk people who've never heard of Quarles. If you're one of them, Quarles is a hamlet in northern Norfolk, officially part of Holkham.

Compared to the names of nearby places like Burnham, Wighton, and Docking, Quarles strikes us as being rather unusual. We're used to villages whose names end in -ing, -ham, and -ton. But – Quarles? Where on earth did that come from?

The answer reveals something fascinating about medieval English, the history of Norfolk, and how Norfolk speech, in one respect, might have taken over the whole country.

Words we now spell with wh-, like the question words what, where, and when, as well as other types of words like wheel, whale, and white, used to be spelt with hw-. The Anglo-Saxon hw- spelling changed to wh- under the Normans, even though hw- was a much better representation of how these words were pronounced – and still are pronounced in Scotland and Ireland.

In our part of the country, we dropped the aitch and converted the hw-pronunciation to w- in the 1700s,



■ A signpost to the hamlet of Quarles in north Norfolk. Picture: EDP LIBRARY

probably. Unlike Scots, we now pronounce which and witch the same.

In medieval England, however, something entirely different started happening to hw-. In the 1200s, scribes in western Norfolk started writing these words with qu- as well as wh-, like quan "when".

We assume that this was because people in western Norfolk began to sometimes say kwich and kweel instead of hwich and hweel. (Sound changes like this are always occurring in languages, like th becoming f and v in Britain today.)

By the 1400s, the new kw- pronunciation had spread to the rest of Norfolk and Suffolk, then into Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, the North East, and over the border into Scotland. It looked for a while

as if the new Norfolk kw- pronunciation might take over.

But in the end, it didn't. The innovation gradually receded, and by the 1600s it survived only in Scotland. Today it has gone altogether.

Except back in one small area of western Norfolk, in just one place name: Quarles. Quarles comes from Old English hwerflas, which meant "circles". It's thought that the village got this name because in the Anglo-Saxon period there were still some prehistoric stone circles nearby. But Andrew Rogerson, of Norfolk County Council's Historic Environment Service, says that as yet we have no archaeological evidence for the existence of such circles – only the name Quarles survives.