

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Hoax calls are not funny – they could be life-threatening

We take for granted as a society that, should the worst happen, we can pick up the phone, dial 999 and know emergency help is on its way.

It is a luxury that we are accustomed to, and one that millions elsewhere around the world can only dream of.

But, as with any privilege, it appears it is also something a handful of people abuse.

This year, the East of England Ambulance Service received 469 calls which they classified as hoaxes – calls which wasted hours upon hours of staff's time and ones which diverted ambulances away from real emergencies.

Why anyone would want to waste ambulance time, leave paramedics driving around towns to check for casualties, and abuse those who, one day, could save our lives, is beyond most of us.

But as winter sets in and the number of calls ramps up, the service has now urged the minority of time-wasters to see the serious side of hoax calls.

There are also plenty of calls which, though not out and out hoaxes, still squander emergency services' time. A drunk person after a lift home, or someone with toothache – they are, at the time, well-meant cries for help, but ones which are not for the ambulance service to answer.

It falls to us to educate ourselves on what constitutes an emergency.

Our emergency services work tirelessly to keep us safe. Their role is not a selfish one, it is done entirely to help others.

So let's not take that for granted. Hoax calls are not funny – they are life-threatening.

Leaving on right terms

The result of the EU referendum may, on the face of it, seem simple, cut and dried.

But life is just not like that. It is not black and white, there are shades of grey too.

Today in the EDP we hear from some business leaders in East Anglia, a region which backed the Leave vote.

While there can be no doubt that migration was one of the key factors in the minds of many East Anglian people who voted Leave, these business leaders want nothing more than to make sure migrant workers are made to feel welcome here.

Why? Because many of these migrant workers are heading home for Christmas and many may never return because they no longer feel welcome here.

These are the workers in predominantly low paid jobs, plucking our turkeys, picking our sprouts and working in our care homes. Their presence may have been an issue for some who voted Leave, but we need them too and so does our economy.

That is why any agreement over migration as part of the UK's exit from the EU must be right – right for business, right for the UK and right for the hard-working foreign workers who have made their homes here.

A big pat on the back

With Christmas, the traditional time for giving almost upon us, today we have a timely opportunity to give a big pat on the back to those for whom giving is not just something reserved for the festive season but a year round choice.

Generous supporters of Norfolk-based cancer charity Big C have helped its 10 shops across Norfolk and Waveney to their best year to date bringing the charity's 35th year to a very successful close.

Big C's success is down to all those who make donations, the volunteers who give up their time to run the charity and those who choose to shop there. Well done to one and all.

READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Brian Shreeve took this photograph of late afternoon on Thurne Marshes as the sun shines through the mist and clouds and illuminates St Benet's drainage mill. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

Origins of some place names are not what they seem

Most of our local East Anglian place-names are, well, not boring exactly, but rather ordinary.

A majority end in good old Anglo-Saxon forms like -ton 'enclosure', -ing 'followers of', -ham 'homestead', -stead 'site', -worth 'homestead', -ford, and -ingham; or in good Old Danish forms like -by 'village', -thorpe 'small village'; and -toft 'site'.

Other place names do not fit into this familiar pattern but are pretty self-explanatory. Cley does actually mean 'clay'; Yarmouth really does signify 'the mouth of the river Yare'; Salhouse means what it says; so does Brooke. But a few other names can be misleading in this respect. Creak does not mean 'creek': it comes from the Old Welsh word creic, which is probably the origin of English crag. Sidestrand did not mean 'beside the beach' but rather 'broad shore'. Rackheath has nothing to do with heaths: the second part of the name is the same as the -hythe which is found in other places around the country, meaning 'landing place'. And Lyng has no connection with heather: it's from the Old English word hlinc 'hill', a word which we retain in links, as in golf links.

Generally, then, most of our place-names do not attract attention to themselves. But some of them stand out as having unusual forms in comparison with the majority of our names. With all due respect to

Peter
Trudgill



email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk

people who live there, don't you think Sporle looks just a little bit odd as a place name?

Well, maybe so, but the name did originally have two perfectly ordinary parts: Spar-lea is the earliest written form we have.

The first element is probably Old English spearr meaning 'enclosure', and the second is from Old English leah, meaning 'glade' (with the same origin as Dutch loo, as in Waterloo). Lea is still used as a poetic word for meadow in modern English.

Wormegay similarly jumps off the map at you as not being from the usual run of local village names. Has it got anything to do with worms, or gaiety?

The earliest recorded form is Wirmegeie, but this must go back to an earlier Anglo-Saxon Wirmingeie, where the -ing does come from our repertoire of usual place name elements. (We know that nearby Hilgay comes from Hythl-ing-eie 'the island of the followers of Hythla'.)

Wormegay originally meant the island (eie) of the people (ing) of a man they called Wyrn "Serpent" – and that is the same as our modern word worm.



■ The village sign in Wormegay.

Picture: IAN BURT