

## May sad loss of Averil prove a watershed

It's hard to recall a story so pitiful as that of Averil Hart, failed so dreadfully by every NHS body there to care. Many of us can draw on our own experiences and hear echoes of the kind of poor judgments that marked her decline. Professionals are only human, of course, but there is sometimes a corporate "blindness". Perhaps it's down to over-work; perhaps relentless exposure to medical crises dulls the sense of shock at the evidence before you. Clear to us is a wide lack of awareness within the NHS about eating disorders and the risks to sufferers when they are not inpatients. In time, we hope the name of Averil Hart becomes synonymous less with sad loss and more with a watershed when things changed significantly for the better in the care of the ill.

## Vicious crime must be halted

If there's a new law we need, it's one to combat the rare but terrible crime of using a noxious chemical as a weapon. The effect is scarring: a legacy of disfigurement, plus mental scarring caused by memory of pain, uncertainty, and the realisation someone hated you so much they chose such vicious tactics. Suffolk Assistant Chief Constable Rachel Kearton, National Police Chiefs' Council lead on such attacks, is right to want to put the onus of proving legitimacy on the shoulders of someone carrying a corrosive substance. It might vex the innocent but is a price worth paying if it saves even one victim from an appalling experience.

## The voice of an angel, perhaps

Here's a lovely story that has the spirit of Christmas stamped all over it: about how accomplished singer-songwriter Roma Manleyiga Nicholson has raised £4,000 to bring cheer to the homeless sleeping on the streets of Ipswich. Impressive enough for anyone, let alone a 12-year-old. More impressive still that the money came from sales of her self-penned collection of songs - a locally-flavoured charity EP at that. The money will go a long way showing someone you care goes a long way, too.

## Thought for the day

**LUKE 11:6&7:** The angel said: "John will precede the coming of the Messiah, preparing the people for his arrival."

# Letters

## School transport shake-up

Sir - Your coverage (December 12) of Suffolk County Council's Cabinet's re-examination of its intention to consult on new plans for school transport (re-examined because the LibDem Green and Independent group "called in" the last decision) omitted some important facts - as well as any mention of the councillors who spoke in opposition, with the sole exception of the Shadow Member for Education whose urban division will not be affected.

You claim that SCC is "potentially looking at cutting £3m" from the school transport budget? Even the administration was not saying this! In fact the administration has no idea whether it will save any money at all, and if so how much. This was teased out by LibDem and Green councillors at the meeting, querying why surveys hadn't been done across the county (as Thurston Community College has done) to find out what parents are likely to do in response to changes - will they drive their children, move schools, or pay for a bus pass? We also questioned why different scenarios haven't been modelled to make clear what potential "savings" (if any) the council could make. Transport is a divisive issue in rural areas. Your failure to recognise the rural dimension of the problem is presumably also why you failed to pick up on the postcode lottery of so-called parental choice - as several public questions pointed out. More, you made no mention of how plans would potentially split siblings between schools, although Councillor Jones was urging families to respond on just this point. Finally, the EADT says the council is offering three options: the third being to make no changes but to make savings elsewhere. This was queried.

I asked - and ask again - is that really the third option? Why isn't Suffolk County Council asking our MPs to lobby government for more education transport funding - not least to cover the gap in provision for the new de facto statutory school leaving age of 18?

I am surprised that your coverage should fail to alert the people of Suffolk to such important points raised on

## Diversion signs are out too early



Eddy Alcock questions the need to put diversion signs out days before roadworks start.

Picture: ARCHANT

**Sir -** On 6th December James Marston heads his 'Opinion' page with the question 'Roadworks everywhere but where are the workmen?' I have a similar question - 'Diversion signs everywhere but where were the road works?'

Let me explain. Driving out of Debenham towards Stonham Aspal on the minor road that leaves Debenham, passing the High School & Leisure Centre, on Sunday 3rd December. Part way along this road a 'Diversion' sign accompanied by a 'Road Closed' notice confronts the traffic. Choosing to ignore it was a good move on my part as a few

hundred yards further on a notice explained that this road would be closed for roadworks for one day on 12th December, 9 days hence! Not a single sign of any road works to be seen, so even though similarly signed from the return direction, I was able to use this road completely untroubled on the same route later in the day.

Surely then, it is excellent to give advance notice of a proposed road closure, but is it really necessary to divert the traffic nine days or more before the date? I have mentioned this to several angry people who have been

slavishly obeying the diversion signs for days, driving unnecessary miles, wasting expensive fuel and time!

Surely, the signs explaining the proposed closure should be there, giving as much notice as possible of that proposal, but not preceded by a road closed and diversion notice that sends traffic on a pointless caper around the countryside for no good reason. Isn't the time for the display of that important piece of signage to be reserved for the day before the closure?

**EDDY ALCOCK,**  
Debenham.



### Tell us what you think!

We welcome letters on any subject. We receive a large volume of correspondence and cannot use every letter submitted. When referring to previous letters or stories, please include the date of the original. We never publish

their behalf by their elected councillors.

**CAROLINE PAGE,**  
Lib Dem County Councillor  
for Woodbridge & LDGI  
Spokesperson for Transport.

## Does anyone ever smile?

letters withholding name and/or address.

**Email us on [eadletters@eadt.co.uk](mailto:eadletters@eadt.co.uk), but please include your postal address.**

**Write to us at Letters to the Editor, Portman House, 120 Princes Street, Ipswich IP1 1NS.**

Sir - I haven't had the pleasure (?) of watching BBC's 'Peaky Blinders', only the trailers.

My one question is: Does anyone ever smile in the show as from what I have seen, looking miserable is the order of the day.

**MIKE HOLLIDAY,**  
Great Tey, Colchester.

## A real box of delights

Sir - How lovely to read Stacia Briggs' comments about "The Box Of Delights". I was glad to replace my worn out VHS version with a DVD version. When the BBC seem to keen to re-imagine a Charles Dickens or Agatha Christie as a big Christmas hit, it's good to know there's someone out there who relishes an thoroughly classic Christmas tale which evokes many happy memories. Now just to add the 1989 Children's BBC version of "Tom's Midnight Garden" on DVD. That would make Christmas!

**MORVYN FINCH,**  
Ipswich.