

Give us a zebra plea

A PROTEST group says the battle over Southend's seafront shared space is not yet over.

The Echo revealed earlier this week that Southend Council planned to mark informal pedestrian crossing points in Marine Parade following an independent review.

But campaign group Saxon King in Priory Park has demanded the authority go further by installing zebra or pelican crossings to force drivers to stop for pedestrians.

Triathlon fundraiser

ATHLETES are needed to complete a triple challenge to support Little Havens Children's Hospice.

The third Lakeside Triathlon on June 17 will be raising funds for the Thundersley-based hospice as well as Cancer Research UK.

A total of 500 places are available for teams and individuals. To register visit www.onestepbeyond.org.uk/lakeside-triathlon.

Wildlife helpers

A WILDLIFE charity is calling on residents to help preserve local habitats.

The Essex Wildlife Trust is holding a volunteer open day to encourage more people to get involved in projects at Langdon Hills Country Park and Nature Reserve, off Lower Dunton Road, Langdon Hills.

The open day will take place at the visitor centre on Lower Dunton Road from 10am to 4pm on March 3. Call 01268 419103

Let us open longer

A FISH and chips restaurant has applied to have its opening hours extended.

Estuary Fish Company has submitted a planning application to Southend Council asking for the operating hours of its restaurant in Shoebury Road, Thorpe Bay, changed to noon to 9pm on Monday to Saturday, and noon to 8pm on Sunday.

Currently it is only permitted to opening from 3pm to 9pm on weekdays and Saturdays.

A SOUTHEND Carers' Forum disco with a Valentine's theme, takes place on February 13 at Clarence Road Baptist Church, Southend, from 6.30pm to 9.30pm.

WE'RE LEARNING TO SPEAK PROPER



■ Tongue bootcamp – pupils Lucy Stapleton and Callum Cowan being taught by Francesca Gordon-Smith and, left and right, two of their pals get stuck in Pictures: MAXINE CLARKE BA54179_12

By EMMA PALMER emma.palmer@nqe.com

FORGET "the rain in Spain". It's a case of "the tips of their tongues touched their two front teeth!" at one primary school which helping youngsters improve their pronunciation and grammar

Cherry Tree Primary School, in Basildon, has been enlisting the help of an elocution specialist for more than a year as part of the scheme.

Unlike Eliza Doolittle, who had to put up with brash Henry Higgins, Cherry Tree pupils get to enjoy weekly sessions with friendly tutor Francesca Gordon-Smith, who takes them through fun exercises such as "ho hum", "tongue bootcamp" and "stifled smile".

The results show the children now not only speak with a posher voice, but their spelling and writing has significantly improved.

Figures show elocution has made a

Elocution lessons improve pupils' speaking and writing

roaring comeback in the UK since the Oscar winning movie the Kings Speech hit cinemas.

The current economic climate is also playing a part, with people willing to go to great lengths, including ditching an unpopular accent, to enhance their chances of getting a job or securing a top university place.

English literacy co-ordinator at Cherry Tree, Terri Chudleigh, who had the bright idea of finding an elocution tutor, said staff in many subject areas at the school have really noticed the difference.

Terri said: "I really wanted to get someone in because I noticed the chil-

dren weren't saying words correctly and were therefore mis-spelling them.

"For example, we had lots of youngsters writing "sbort" instead of sport and "Wellw" instead of well.

"I had trouble finding someone to come in as there was nobody out there. I trawled the internet looking for someone and eventually e-mailed a business, who recommended Francesca.

"She's been coming for a year now, working with all our primary pupils. "They have half-hourly sessions where they get taken through exercises and learn to use the 'posh voices' in their heads. They really enjoy the sessions." Terri, who was a Cherry Tree

pupil herself and also sent her own children to the school, says she couldn't be happier with the results.

She stressed: "This is not about being ashamed of the Essex accent – I have an Essex accent and there's nothing wrong with it.

"It's about helping the children to speak properly so they can improve their reading and writing and obviously have a better education.

"The feedback we've had from parents has been very positive. We've had them tell us their children are going home and correcting them on their speech!"

Lucy Stapleton, eight, has been having elocution lessons with Francesca since September, while other groups have had lessons for a year.

Lucy said: "I like the lessons. I used to say 'computa' instead of computer. I like the 'ho hum' exercise the best as it's funny."

Callum Cowen, eight, added: "I like it when we recite verses like 'they told tall tales about whales'."



■ Say aah – Francesca with Cherry Tree pupils during one of the elocution lesson BA54179_06

Helping people mind their Ps and Qs

FRANCESCA Gordon-Smith spends her time helping people to improve their accents and learning to speak confidently in public.

The former actress, who runs her own business, Positive Voices, works with individuals and corporate clients

But Cherry Tree is the only school she works with and she says it's rare for a school to even think of bringing in a speech expert.

Francesca, who lives in Wimbledon but is originally from Cambridge, said: "Some exclusive grammar schools have lessons but not many, so it's great to see

a primary school like Cherry Tree wanting to do this. I've never heard of a primary school having elocution lessons before, to be honest.

"I've noticed the difference since I started coming here and I really enjoy being with the pupils.

"Little things the children would always say at first, like "we was doing this", have gone and many of them have seen some great improvements in their spelling."

It seems elocution is all over the news at the moment, with reports of the Only Way is Essex stars enlisting tutors to

help them mind their Ps and Qs to a rise in demand for experts who can teach the Queen's English.

Francesca added: "I've definitely noticed I'm getting a lot more calls lately.

"I teach a lot of people from London and some in Essex who want to lose their accents to help them get a job.

"I've also had a lot of clients wanting lessons because they are hoping for a place at Oxford or Cambridge and worry their accent will hold them back. "A lot of the time it is also coaching



PUZZLES

1	2		3	4	5	6	7
						8	
9	10						
11					12		
13			14		15		
					16		
17				18	19		
		20					21
22							
			23				

- #### Cryptic clues
- ACROSS**
- Plans to study outstanding features of ecclesiastical architecture (9)
 - Nothing but an endless river (3)
 - Surely not an orchestra playing at full stretch! (7,4)
 - Decoration made of stone (7)
 - Corner view (5)
 - Some of the children Americans call by a different title (6)
 - This clue is a tantalising one (6)
 - It's all part of the act (5)
 - This determines a skirt length (3-4)
 - It's not shown by the patient, but it could be nice to learn (11)
 - Pronoun used about "The Man of Property" (3)
 - Surely not an orchestra playing at full stretch! (7,4)
 - It's well-produced (3)
 - The Spanish Court? (5)
 - About money of comparatively modern times (6)
 - Main road (3-4)
 - The complaint of one who has the wrong fare, maybe (11)
 - But it doesn't provide timber for aircraft (5-4)
 - Not a practice which present workers indulge in (11)
 - Consideration of likely prospects will improve one's aim (9)
 - The great man arranges some art (7)
 - Hold a conversation around the French hut (6)
 - Make military progress for certain time each year (5)
 - Tip a line of waiters, we hear (3)
- DOWN**
- Change direction (5,6)
 - Mistaken (9)
 - Fuss (3)
 - Cancel (5)
 - Clamour (6)
 - Vest (7)
 - Ancestor (11)
 - Examiner (9)
 - Revive (11)
 - Identify (9)
 - Infant's outfit (7)
 - Looking glass (6)
 - Buffoon (5)
 - French coin (3)

- #### Quick clues
- ACROSS**
- Uncivilised (9)
 - Hasten (3)
 - As an example (3,8)
 - Cattle-thief (7)
 - Vassal (5)
 - Stronghold (6)
 - Bear witness (6)
 - Blithely (5)
 - Cutting tooth (7)
 - Change direction (5,6)
 - Group (3)
 - Mistaken (9)
- DOWN**
- Fuss (3)
 - Cancel (5)
 - Clamour (6)
 - Vest (7)
 - Ancestor (11)
 - Examiner (9)
 - Revive (11)
 - Identify (9)
 - Infant's outfit (7)
 - Looking glass (6)
 - Buffoon (5)
 - French coin (3)

SUDOKO Level one

3	7		1		2	9	
		4	6				1 8
1				7	5		4
	1	5	6			2	3
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5	9			6			2
	3	7	8	5			

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

1	2	6	5	3	7	8	9	4
4	5	8	6	9	1	2	7	3
3	9	7	2	4	8	5	6	1
2	6	4	9	5	3	1	8	7
9	3	1	7	8	6	4	2	5
7	8	5	4	1	2	9	3	6
8	4	2	3	6	5	7	1	9
5	7	3	1	2	9	6	4	8
6	1	9	8	7	4	3	5	2

SUDOKO Level two

4								
6		2	3		1			8
		1	8					3
	2			7	5			
			9		8			
	9	4			6			
8				5	9			
3	9	2	6					5
								7

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

3	4	1	7	6	2	8	5	9
6	8	2	3	9	5	4	7	1
9	7	5	8	4	1	2	3	6
4	1	3	6	2	9	5	8	7
5	9	8	4	7	3	6	1	2
2	6	7	5	1	8	3	9	4
7	3	9	2	5	4	1	6	8
8	2	6	1	3	7	9	4	5
1	5	4	9	8	6	7	2	3

YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD SOLUTION - CRYPTIC
Across: 1 Modest; 4 Precise; 9 Standing still; 10 Earnest; 11 Idiomatic; 12 Scrap; 14 Depot; 18 About; 19 Implore; 21 Spine-chilling; 22 Digest; 23 Settle. Down: 1 Master; 2 Dead-reckoning; 3 Sledge; 5 Restive; 6 Criminologist; 7 Salome; 8 Anita; 13 Artless; 15 Passed; 16 Right; 17 League; 20 Pulse. QUICK
Across: 1 Seaman; 4 Result; 9 Mohammedanism; 10 Erratum; 11 Inter; 12 Hardy; 14 Heart; 18 Minus; 19 Riposte; 21 Animadversion; 22 Ensure; 23 Beggar. Down: 1 Simper; 2 As hard as nails; 3 Admit; 5 Examine; 6 Uninteresting; 7 Timbre; 8 Jetmy; 13 Despair; 15 Impale; 16 Drive; 17 Keener; 20 Pulse.