

Continuing lessons in the art of talking Correct Norwich

Peter
Trudgill



email: newsdesk@archant.co.uk



■ So have you guessed what a 'pairnist' is, Advanced Spoken Norwich students?

of this item? Well done if you got the right answer – which is “vaircle”. And what about leotard? “Lairtard”! And creosote? “Crairsoot”. Good.

Now let's see if you can perform the operation in reverse. Please identify the following words – the examiners provide clues to help you: “pairnist” (a keyboard instrumentalist); “pairny” (a flower); “Bairtrice” (a woman's name); “K'rairn” (citizen of an Asian country). OK? We hope you didn't find that too disagreeable.

And now, secondly, to complete the lesson, we come to those even more difficult situations where the rule has to apply across the boundary between one word and another. This means that “hair” has

three possible interpretations. It can mean not just ‘hair’ and ‘here’, as we've seen, but also ‘he have’ – as in “hair gone” (which is another way of saying ‘he in't hair no more’).

Other similar two-word sequences are ‘be a’, which should be articulated “bair”: “doon't bair nuisance”. And ‘see her’, as in the question ‘are you going to see her?’, which should be said “Are you gawta sair?” (the form “gawta” will be the subject of a later, equally advanced lesson).

We were hoping today that we would be able to get all of you through this advanced part of the course successfully.

And now I reckon wair dunnet.

We have already had a number of lessons in this column on how to talk Correct Norwich, for people who are unfortunate enough not to know already. In Lesson 1, we studied the pronunciation of words such as Hewitt – “Urt”; and Sewell – “Searle”. There was also a bonus unit on how this rule carries over into more complex words such as ‘doing’, which should be pronounced, as you will remember, “durn”.

In Correct Norwich Lesson 2, we discussed the important rule which concerns the pronunciation of here as hair, beer as bare, cheer as chair. Most students seemed to pick up on that quite nicely, so we think the class is now ready to move on, in Lesson 3 (Correct Norwich Advanced), to two closely related but more difficult extensions of that same rule.

The first extension concerns cases where the need to apply the rule is not indicated so obviously in the spelling, since the words involved have no letter r.

We will begin with a little test.

Consider the word ‘vehicle’. Is your mastery of the rule good enough to work out how to achieve the right pronunciation