

Togetherness is different here – youse can believe it

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■ “How are you getting on together, together?” is a question that might still be posed in Norfolk.

Standard English system, though, many other dialects have restored the difference, for the obvious reason that it's rather inconvenient not to have one.

In Ireland, and places which experienced large-scale Irish immigration, ‘you’ is singular only – the

plural is ‘youse’. If you go into a room full of people in Belfast and ask “How are you?”, they may well look around to see which one of them you are actually talking to.

In the southern USA, people say ‘y’all’ if they want to refer to more than one person.

In Jamaican Creole English, ‘you’ is singular and the plural is ‘unu’, a word from the West African language Igbo.

And it's becoming increasingly common these days for English speakers everywhere to express the plural by saying “you guys”.

You can also say things like ‘you people’ or ‘you girls’ or ‘you lot’ if that helps. It's useful to have these ways of making it clear what we mean.

But here, in our part of the world, according to the grammar of the Norfolk dialect, we have our own very special way of expressing you-plural: we use the phrase ‘you...together’.

In the singular, we say ‘come you on!’, and in the plural ‘come you on, together!’. You can also just address a group of people as “together”.

So “how are you getting on, together?” doesn't mean the same thing as “how are you getting on together?”

You can even say ‘how are you getting on together, together?’

Have a good day, together.

There is something very strange about the English pronoun system.

The Standard English dialect makes no difference between the second person singular pronoun, ‘you’, and the second person plural pronoun ... ‘you’. This is rather odd, and can be confusing. If someone enters a room and says “how are you?”, are they talking to me – or to us?

There used to be a difference in older forms of English – ‘thou’ referred to one person, and ‘ye’ or ‘you’ to two or more people.

But that original difference has been lost, except in some local dialects in the north and west of England.

The famous Yorkshire song, On Ilkka Moor Baht 'At, begins “Wheear 'ast tha bin sin' ah saw thee?” – “where hast thou been since I saw thee?”.

Clearly it was only one person who'd been seen on Ilkley Moor without a hat. Instead of settling for the confusing