

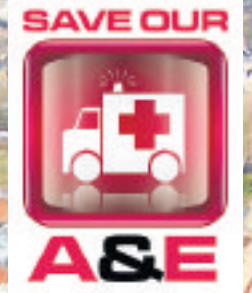
# Lewisham & Catford News Shopper

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Wednesday January 30, 2013

An aerial view of the protest march on Saturday which campaigners say was attended by at least 25,000 people  
PHOTO BY SIMON WAY



## NO MORE CUTS

### March against closure of A&E and maternity at Lewisham Hospital attracts 25,000 people

ORGANISERS say at least 25,000 people joined a march on Saturday to protest against the proposed closure of Lewisham Hospital's A&E and maternity services.

Families, health workers, GPs and politicians from across south-east London gathered at Loampit Vale before setting off on the march.

Drivers held up by the event beeped horns in support while the biggest cheers of the day came as protesters walked past the hospital a small group of nurses waved them on.

Thousands finished the walk at a

by MARK CHANDLER

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muddy Mountsfield Park in Catford to hear speeches from speakers including MPs, campaigners and radio show host Nick Ferrari, whose son's life was saved by Lewisham doctors.

Save Lewisham Hospital campaigner Dr Louise Irvine told News Shopper: "It's so exciting and I'm really proud.

"We have to thank everybody who has supported this campaign."

She said: "But even if Lewisham is saved we still have to fight to save services in Bexley, Greenwich and

Bromley where hundreds of jobs will be lost.

"This is the spearhead of a real fight back.

"We're saying 'no more, we're drawing a line'."

Lewisham East MP Heidi Alexander branded the plans, made to solve financial problems at the neighbouring South London Healthcare Trust, "sheer madness".

She told the crowds: "This whole process from the off has been driven by an accountant's bottom line."

● Turn to page three for more on the protest.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL 'CAN'T COPE' WITH DEMAND



A WOMAN whose 76-year-old mum waited 18 hours in Woolwich's casualty department has criticised plans to close Lewisham's A&E. Kathleen Gummer (pictured) arrived at a packed Queen Elizabeth Hospital with suspected heart failure at around 6pm on January 20.

But, despite being seen by doctors, she had to wait until 1.50am before finally being taken off a stretcher and given a bed, as staff tried to cope with a norovirus outbreak and the effects of wintry weather.

● Turn to page three for more.

  
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# Cuts are 'criminal vandalism'

**F**ROM your nearest doctor's surgery to pensioners and children born at Lewisham, it seemed as if every group was represented on Saturday's march.

The proposals united the south-east London community like nothing else, with people from neighbouring boroughs flocking to demonstrate, concerned at the extra pressure heaped on A&E and maternity in their area if Lewisham's services close.

Natalie Beaumont, a therapist at the hospital and star of BBC show *The Choir*, said she was "overwhelmed" by the support.

She said: "When we walked past the hospital I wanted to cry."

"It's shown people the Lewisham community supports us."

"Jeremy Hunt should listen to these people, the people who matter."

Jim Doolin, 76, of Ladywell Road, said: "It's about saving the NHS."

"Everybody needs it from the cradle to the grave."

"You have to defend it."

Radio presenter Nick Ferrari has spoken on air about how Lewisham Hospital saved his son's life, and spoke at the event.

He said: "Any closure would be like an act of criminal vandalism."

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt is due to make his decision by February 1.

If he backs the closures, Lewisham Council is expected to make a legal challenge.

In the largest public protest south-east London has seen for years, thousands of people gathered to oppose health cuts. **MARK CHANDLER** went along.



**LEFT: The march held on Saturday and (inset below) mums and their children hold a protest at the Department of Health**  
LC73555

## Maternity downgrade plans 'just not safe'

**CLOSE** to 60 mums and their children staged a protest at the Department of Health last week against the cuts.

Consultant obstetrician Ruth Cochrane said: "Proposals to downgrade these services and to have a midwife-led birth centre, without the back-up provided by full obstetric services, are just not safe."

"If women experience a complication during childbirth they would have to

be transferred from Lewisham to King's College Hospital or Queen Elizabeth in Woolwich, both of which are simply too far."

During a parliamentary debate on the issue, Lewisham East MP Heidi Alexander branded the proposals unfair and unsafe.

She said: "Unlike other health services, maternity care cannot be rationed or restricted."

## ELDERLY WOMAN WAITED 18 HOURS IN A&E

● CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE.

Mrs Gummer's daughter Jacky Ware, 56, of Plumstead Common, left the hospital at 2am, calling up the following day at noon to be told her mum was still in A&E. She said: "It's appalling. For someone to sit there and say it can cope if another A&E closes is just ridiculous. It can't."

A spokesman for the South London Healthcare Trust said it apologised to Mrs Gummer.

He said: "In the small number of cases when a patient does have to wait in the A&E department before being admitted to a ward, it is normal practice for spare beds to be brought into the A&E patient bays where they are cared for in the same way as if in a ward."

## In Brief

**FINED:** Barry Birchmore, aged 64, of Hither Green Lane, Hither Green, appeared at Bromley Magistrates' Court and admitted carrying on business as a scrap metal dealer and failing to register it with the local authority. He was fined £450 and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £20.

**NURSING:** On February 6 from 4pm to 7pm in the David Fussey Building, the School of Health and Social Care at the University of Greenwich will be holding open evenings for the new PGDip nursing programme and the BSc Hons Nursing programmes.

**CRIME SURVEY:** The Safer Lewisham Partnership wants people's views and experiences of crime and anti-social behaviour in the borough. The survey is open until 5pm on February 25. Go to [lewisham.gov.uk/consultation](http://lewisham.gov.uk/consultation)

**QUESTION TIME:** A quiz night is being held at the Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice in Bostall Hill, Abbey Wood, on February 7 from 7pm to 9.30pm. Tickets cost £5. Call 020 8319 9230 to book.

**WILDLIFE WALK:** A winter wildlife walk is being held at Woodlands Farm, in Shooters Hill, on Sunday. It costs £1. Under-18s go free. Meet at the education centre at 10.30am.

## GROVE PARK & HITHER GREEN: Mystery man rescues pet

# Puppy tracked down after night on rails

by SARAH TROTTER

[trotter@london.newsquest.co.uk](mailto:trotter@london.newsquest.co.uk)

A LOST puppy was discovered "cowering" on railway tracks as trains raced over her head in a night of "trauma".

Tigerlily fell onto the line and miraculously survived trains hurtling over her between Grove Park and Hither Green stations following a four-mile journey along the tracks.

Dog walker Bruce Rankin was exercising the 10-month-old Jack Russell-Lazarapsu in Elmstead Woods when she escaped through a hole in the fence at around 3pm on January 14.

Mr Rankin, 47, of Oxford Road, Sidcup, heard her "yelp" as she tumbled and leapt the fence to rescue her.

He searched frantically for two hours and returned later to hunt by torchlight, but with no luck.

The bread delivery man, who walks Tigerlily and mum Tara every day for their housebound owner from Mottingham, continued the search at first light.

He broke into "tears of relief" upon hearing Tigerlily had been found and taken to a Beckenham



**Bruce Rankin with puppy Tigerlily**  
BE73543

veterinary centre late that night.

Mr Rankin said: "When we lost her I was in tears and when we got her back I broke down."

"I was just so relieved to get her back in one piece."

"She got through a gap in the fence."

"At one point I heard her yelping but I couldn't locate her."

"It must have been quite a traumatic experience for her, walking along the railway line, having trains going over the top of it."

"She's virtually unscathed."

Tigerlily was rescued around seven hours later by a mystery hero who took her to Foxgrove Veterinary Centre, Beckenham.

He posted a picture of her on Facebook — covered in mud but remarkably unscathed — to help trace the owner.

Mr Rankin praised the "clever" Jack Russell for using an instinct for survival during her adventures.

He said: "She's been quite clever."

"We don't exactly know what she put herself through but she seems to have been intelligent enough to keep herself safe walking along the length of the railway line, cowering down between the railway lines to protect herself."

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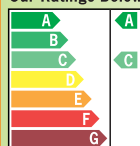
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