



## WELCOME

Details of a new event are unveiled this week, and provided scope for me to create a new design which will be used in the publicity. I like the concept of the line of Red Line Warriors holding back their adversaries..

On the website a few documents have been added, and a whole new page has been given over to past copies of Redlines. It is always a challenge each week to get the publication together, making sure it is kept factual and objective. Sometimes there seems to be an abundance of contributions, with everyone sending in articles and snippets. Then there are other weeks... Remember that we want to hear your views as long as they are on topic and not party-political or divisive. Personal health or campaign stories are particularly welcome.

Again there has been quite a number of new subscribers added to Redlines. It is good to see new people coming along, especially for some of us who seem to have been campaigning for a very long time. We're glad to have you with us.

Material for future newsletters  
[editor@sohs.co.uk](mailto:editor@sohs.co.uk) by Thursday  
SOHS-Save Our Hospital  
Services  
(A non- party group whose aim is  
to campaign to protect our  
health services in North Devon)

## More Fool Them You Can't Fool Us

A new initiative is being planned by SOHS Red Line Warriors, to coincide with April Fool's Day, 1 April. Building on the idea that the STP plan is an attempt to fool people, the event will highlight and expose the stupidity of the plot to change the National Health Service. Amongst other things it will claim:

- The STP was a daft draft plan, foolish in concept and foolish in execution.
- The foolishly named "Success Regime" contrived to implement massive cuts to health services in Devon as part of their Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP). There has been little success associated with it.

- Only a fool can think about introducing the STP, a plan to:
  - cut 590 acute and community beds across Devon
  - cut hundreds of nurses and access to continuing care
  - cut acute services in North Devon
  - cut most of the re-remaining

community hospitals.

- A completely foolish claim, that these Fools seem to really believe, is that when it comes to cuts "there are no red lines".
- The foolish and even absurd claim is that the plan will enable the delivery of a better health service at the same time as making cuts to the tune of £550 million in Devon alone.

It is hoped that on 1 April communities across Devon will put a symbolic red line at each and every hospital in the area. This will be a visible statement of our own red line "No cuts to any health services anywhere in

*Continued on  
page 2 >*



Continued from Page 1

Devon". In order to do that large numbers of supporters are required to participate. So far Red Line demos are confirmed at these hospitals in North Devon: Tyrell in Ilfracombe, Torrington and Holsworthy. The demos will begin at 10am and then move on to NDDH, Barnstaple for 1pm. Bideford and South Molton need confirming. Groups in East Devon are also gearing up for similar action on 1 April.

At the moment plans are still being finalised, and more details will be given later, however it would be useful if you could put the date in your diary and notify us if you are able to support and at which hospital(s) you would want to help "draw the red line". This will enable those working on the organisation to see which areas are weaker and might need additional support for an effective campaign. Email this information to [admin@sohs.org.uk](mailto:admin@sohs.org.uk) or talk with the organisers.

There are ideas also being considered for a much larger event soon that will draw in all members of the community right across North Devon. Like our Red Day, this will be a high-profile event and will make a huge impact in the press, and the whole community. At the moment I cannot give you any details, but be assured that we will pass on the information as soon as it is available.

## SOHS Benefits: Help Needed



On Saturday 18 February a gig with The Last Rancheros and friends will be held at the Palladium Club, Lower Gunstone Bideford EX39 2DE in support of SOHS.

Andy is organising this gig and help is needed with the event. Please come along at 7pm (or as soon as you can thereafter), if possible, to help on the door, with the collecting buckets, distributing leaflets, collecting signatures and talking to people generally. Some spots will be available on stage during the evening to outline the threats to our NHS healthcare in North Devon. Banners, T shirts, badges,

coach tickets and any further info/leaflets will also be needed there. Please email [editor@sohs.org.uk](mailto:editor@sohs.org.uk) or let SOHS Devon facebook admin know if you can help in any way, so those details can be co-ordinated. A video of The Last Rancheros is on The Palladium website: [www.palladiumclub.co.uk](http://www.palladiumclub.co.uk) It will be an enjoyable evening, as well as an opportunity to inform more people of the need to stand up against the STP proposals.

## Questions will be Asked

Cafe Italia Pizzeria in Westward Ho! are hosting a quiz night on 21 February in benefit of SOHS. Please support and tell others about it. Posters can be downloaded from the website.



## Diary Dates

Visit the diary page on the website for more dates, details and maps.

**Saturday 18 February** The Last Rancheros. See above.

**Tuesday 21 February** Quiz Night Benefit Event, Cafe Italia Pizzeria, Westward Ho! See right hand column.

**Wednesday 22 February** 19.00 SOHS campaign meeting, The Guildhall. Butchers Row, Barnstaple.

**Saturday 4 March Health Campaigns Together** IT'S OUR NHS DEMONSTRATION, London, Coach tickets: £15, DEPOSIT £5. Available at SOHS Devon meetings and events or contact Dave Tel: 07887 650671. North Devon Coach pick-up points: 6.00am Ilfracombe: Petrol Garage,

High Street, 6.15am Braunton: Car Park next to SQ Bar, 6.25am Barnstaple: Old Town Station, North Walk, 6.50am Bideford : Kingsley Statue, 7.40am South Molton: The Square. Sat 4th March **East Devon Coach** pick-up points: Axminster 5.45 am; Colyford at 6.00; Sidford at 6.20; Honiton at 6.45; East Devon coach contact: Robert Crick, [ramcrick@gmail.com](mailto:ramcrick@gmail.com)

**Wednesday 15 March** 19.00 Bideford Public Meeting, Bideford College.

**Thursday 16 March** 19.00 Torrington Public Meeting, Torrington School Drama Hall.

**Don't forget to send us your dates to include in the diary. If people don't know, they won't attend**

# Wealth, not Health: Created by Stealth

A small item in the news caught my eye this week. I say "small" because it attracted few comments, and was not carried in many newspapers. In a way, it was just throw away journalism, a filler on a slow day.

But I thought it was important.

The article was about a doctor's surgery in Bournemouth that has set up a private clinic to run alongside the NHS surgery because it is claimed the surgery finances are under too much strain. Those who do not want to wait can pay a fee, and they will be seen privately the same day, by the same NHS GPs as they would have seen if they waited their turn.

Does that sound reasonable? After all, if you have an urgent need, doesn't it make sense to cough up (money that is) and been seen quickly? Let's think about it.

I am of an age where I can remember that when you needed to see the doctor you went off to the surgery and were seen the same day. You did have a wait, usually, and the seats were uncomfortable, and the magazines well-worn and dated. But, hey, the doctor saw you, and quickly you'd be off to the chemist to claim a bottle of evil-coloured medicine. It wasn't great, but it worked.

Now, if I want to see the doctor, I have to wait three weeks, and I live next door to the surgery. OK the evil elixir has gone, to be replaced by a ubiquitous white pill. But three weeks!

This change was accompanied along the way with promises that various plans would make things better, that modern was better, more efficient, better for the community, necessary, and lots of other things that seem to have been served up again to justify the latest plan.

So returning to Bournemouth, is it a better plan to have private health care for those wanting a fast service? It should be noted that the surgery claims that they do not offer the private care as an alternative to patients registered for NHS care. Really?

We have had a similar situation with dentists for a number of years now. It is possible to get NHS treatment, but it is difficult. There are long waits and maybe a long journey to reach someone who still provides this service. Of course, many have stumped up, and pay for private treatment.

Surely this is not the vision of the NHS? Was it ever designated that the poor should be treated as second class citizens having to scramble for morsels of health, because they could not afford the choice care snapped up by their rich neighbour. No! This was not what the earlier pioneers worked so hard to develop. Their concept was that the citizens of the UK should be given health care when they needed it.

Private care might seem desirable in some cases, and I have no objection to those who want to pay for a doctor or whatever is required, as long as it is by choice, and not by necessity.

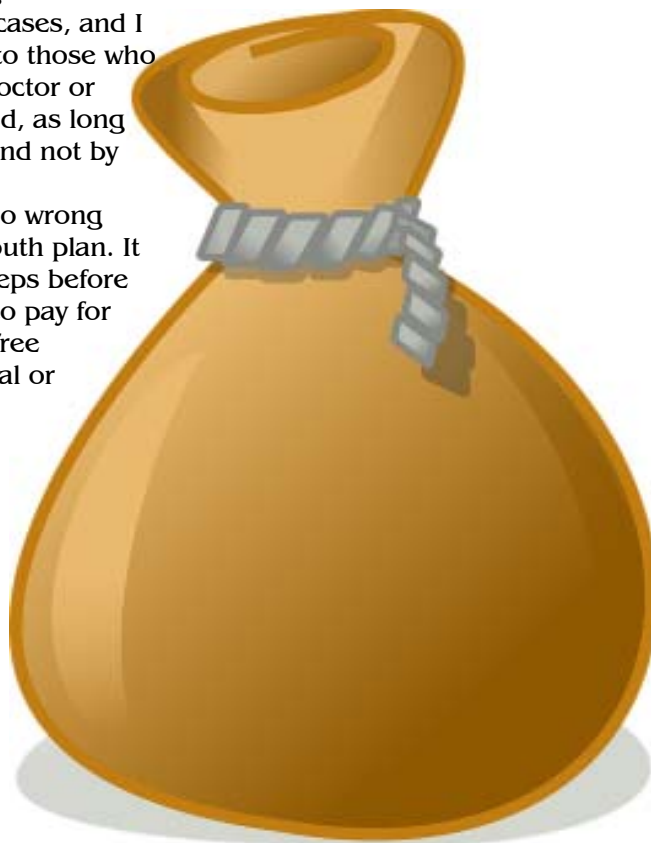
That is what is so wrong with the Bournemouth plan. It won't take many steps before people are forced to pay for care, because the free choice is so abysmal or the wait is just too long.

There will be temptations for those providing the free care to reduce the standard or availability of the care to drive more patients to get fed up and direct people towards the

payment option. Those who will suffer most are the poor and vulnerable who cannot afford to pay. Presumably, they don't matter very much to The Powers That Be in their great scheme of things.

It seems to me that the heart of the STP proposals is to direct people away from free care. Of course the plan doesn't say this, it is simply a *reorganisation*. Yet it doesn't take much to see that it is a vehicle to promoting commercial services. Simply by putting health care miles away, people are going to start looking for other solutions. If you have to attend hospital regularly, are you really going to want to make a journey of over 100 miles just to get treatment? And if someone comes along and offers a nearer, more convenient treatment at a price, aren't you going to be tempted? Of course you are, and nobody would blame you. Yet, for some, that simply is not an option.

*Continued on Page 4*



*Continued from page 3*

If the government came out with a plan and said, we are going to charge all citizens £1000 a year extra tax to fund health care, there would be a great outcry. The STP attempts to take the money by stealth instead.

Where does the money raised by payment health services go? It goes into the deep pockets of the rich; the shareholders of the health providers, the big pharma, and so on. Consumed by greed, these people want even more from the pot. The health service is a cash-cow, and they want to

exploit it ruthlessly with a lack of compassion and a cynicism that is heartbreaking.

The doctors in Bournemouth have not fully understood the game. The super-rich will not allow them to profit for long. This is a dog eats dog world. The next plan is that NHS surgeries will be taken over by commercial service providers. This has already happened in some places. I would speculate that they will then employ the doctors, and gradually the doctors will take less and the commercial operators will take more. Of course, some of this is just my

guesswork, but I don't think it takes too much for an intelligent person to see where it is leading.

Notice that the focus has shifted from health care and saving lives to wealth care and saving money. The STP has never been about the national health of the many, but about the personal wealth of the few who are already rich.

It seems to be a long fight, but it is a necessary one, and one in which every decent citizen needs to engage. Our fight is not about money, but about our health, our families and our future.

*Stephen*