

Nottingham

STOP THE CUTS

STOP THE SACKINGS



Keep our NHS public

Save the NHS!

Protest...

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION: Saturday 3rd March

LOCAL PROTESTS: Demonstrate from 5th February every Monday and Friday from 12pm—take time in your lunch break to join the protests

Public Meeting...

**THURSDAY 8th FEBRUARY
7.30PM, NOTTINGHAM MECHANICS
INSTITUTE, NORTH SHERWOOD ST,
CENTRAL NOTTINGHAM**

**With speakers from East Mids Regional TUC, Unison,
Keep Our NHS Public and others**

Regular Meetings...

Campaigners, health workers and local trade union supporters meet every Thursday from 7pm in the White Hart Pub near the Queens Medical Centre

Nottingham HEALTH WORKER



A RANK-AND-FILE NEWSLETTER FOR HEALTH WORKERS IN NOTTINGHAM—ISSUE 1, JAN 2006

Organise to stop sackings and cuts

YA BASTA!

Nottingham University Hospitals Trust (NUH) has temporarily suspended the sacking of staff, bed closures and ward closures but it has made not a jot of improvement to morale. We make no apologies for using the term 'sacking' either because no matter what euphemism it is dressed up in, be it 'redundancy', 'early retirement' or 'reconfiguration' if someone is forced out of a job against their will then they have been sacked. Bullying and belligerent management is the order of the day. Their idea of consultation with staff is to tell us what they have decided and if anyone doesn't like it they know what they can do. Highly experienced teams, nurses included, are being broken up and put elsewhere to cover for criminal shortages of staff. Shift times have been changed, with the usual 'consultation', simply to save the trust money as it cuts down unsocial hour's payments to staff. Never mind that many workers rely on every penny they get because their pay is so abysmally low in the first place. Some

nurses have arbitrarily had the number of their monthly night shifts nearly doubled, again to cover for deliberately low staffing levels. This might, to some, not seem much to bear but these shifts are 12 hours long and, contrary to the story management always puts out, it is not quieter and less busy on nights.

LET'S TAKE OUR OWN MEDICINE

It is quite common to go all night without a rest, sit down or proper break period. We lecture patients about drinking plenty to keep properly hydrated but go home at the end of most shifts, day and night, with a thumping dehydration headache. We are expected to find beds for patients when no free beds exist so the first thing that happens is looking at who can be discharged. Never mind that minutes before there was no talk of this or that person going home, because they are not ready for discharge, but all of a sudden they are when a bed is needed. Either that or patients will be packed up and shifted, anytime of day or night, to another area to make way for in-

coming ones.

Domestic services are suffering from a chronic shortage of staff. There used to be 2 per ward but now with privatisation and all the negative baggage that brings most are down to 1. Even then that domestic will often have to cover another ward to make up for shortages and, while this is not the sole reason for the increase in MRSA and other infection rates, it obviously does not help.

BUILDING A CAMPAIGN

From the above you would be forgiven for thinking that it is all doom and gloom in the health service, well it is. If you work in it you will likely be only too familiar with it all and could probably add many more facts of your own; well please do. We welcome any contributions from health workers that help expose the appalling state of affairs they have to work under and that patients and relatives have to suffer under. Anonymity guaranteed, just send contributions to the email address.

Continued overleaf...

SAVE NHS JOBS

Phone Frank on 07905322813 or Dave on 0115 9535631

Email: nottmnhscampaign@yahoo.co.uk

Visit: nottmnhscampaign.blogspot.com

**A rank-and-file
campaign of health-
workers and union
activists working in
solidarity to
save the NHS**

Continued from front page...

This brings us to another bone of contention among health workers. We are constantly bombarded with poll after poll saying how highly satisfied the public are with the care they receive when in hospital and of course the respondents to these polls are being sincere and truthful. However, we also know that there is a big reluctance to say otherwise where it applies in case it is construed as a criticism of nursing and medical staff. There are many occasions where a patient or relative not only has the right to complain to management about aspects of care that are a fault of the crazy way hospitals are run now but are encouraged to by hospital staff in the hope of bringing about improvements. But they won't because, and the reason they give: it will reflect badly on the staff. NO IT WILL NOT.

LET THEM KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON

If patients or carers have a grievance they must air it to management because if enough of them do they might, and only might, listen to them because they sure

as hell do not listen to staff. We think a more accurate view of standards of patient care would be obtained by asking those who have to deliver it, the workers. They are the ones rushing from patient to patient trying to get everything done but having no time for anything other than production line care. They are the ones who go home at the end of the shift feeling guilty because they know that patients deserve much better. They are the ones who often blame themselves for this poor quality care. They are the ones who constantly worry that today might be the day they make a catastrophic error that results in a deterioration, or worse, in someone's condition.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

So what can we do? One suggestion has been a work-to-rule in which we insist on full breaks and make sure we take them. In addition go home on time, no staying behind to help out 'just for a minute'. If we all did this every shift not only would we feel a lot better physically and mentally but eventually the guilt of doing so would quickly disappear. Another suggestion is to start up a series of

lunch-time walkouts. The Medical Secretaries did so twice in September and demonstrated on Derby Road outside the main entrance. The public must be kept informed and involved in what is happening and this would be one way of doing it.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTION

Let's make a New Year resolution. From Monday 5th February demonstrate on Derby Road every Monday and Friday from 12.00. for as long as you can manage. Arrange your break-time to coincide with this. If we all do only 30 minutes but they overlap the demonstration could be visible for quite some time. Put pressure on your union to support this action by publicly voicing its support and by encouraging members to attend. Get placards from your union or make your own. Remember, management only get away with intimidating us because we let them. No one can empower us, we can only empower ourselves. Let's do it!

p.s. Ya Basta is Spanish for 'enough is enough'.

A. NURSE

Unison to meet

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Unison have organised a session for members to prepare activity for the New Year. Regional Unison, together with the Royal College of Nursing and other unions, organised a very successful local demonstration and participated in the national lobby of Parliament earlier in the year. These two events show that many health workers oppose the planned cuts and job losses and demonstrates a willingness to be part of a campaign against them. The meeting is likely to be large but will only be useful if ordinary members attend and have their say. If you agree that more needs to be done—that a public campaign together with local action will make a difference—then attend and put your case. Supporters of *Nottingham Health Worker* will be there on the day but the more people the better.

Details: Saturday 13th January, 10am—1pm, UNISON Regional Office on Vivian Avenue. The meeting is open to all QMC and City Unison members.

NHS: support a national campaign

After a year-long assault on the NHS the government is starting to feel the force of opposition to their 'reform' programme.

A loss of credibility is not surprising when ministers continue to deny the reality of closures, job cuts and creeping privatisation by hiding behind dodgy statistics and the cynical double-speak of "increasing patient choice". In their world there have only been 900 job losses and the 19,000 posts that have been lost through recruitment freezing and 'natural wastage' do not appear in figures.

'Choice' means ploughing money into profit making private treatment centres and letting the NHS slowly rot away.

National Campaign

There is still the need for a national campaign to pull together local campaigns. A start has been made with a meeting called by *People United Saving Hospitals* (PUSH) and the *Keep Our NHS Public* campaign, together with the union-led cam-

paign *NHS Together*. There is a urgent need for these different groups - community campaigns, user groups and trade unions - to come together in a national campaign and for unions to take decisive action over the cuts. The national demonstration in March, KONSP conference in January and the building local campaigns should make this possible. The key is for trade union members to take the lead and take action where they can.

Strike Action in Blood Service

Balloting is underway for strike action in the NHS Blood and Transplant Authority. It follows plans to consolidate work from 14 centres into three over the next few years. These moves threaten the loss of highly skilled technical and scientific staff and leaves major cities without facilities for the testing and processing of blood. Amicus has conducted a ballot showing that 81% favour industrial action. If a further ballot is successful then action will take place over the Christmas period.

CONTACT THE CAMPAIGN

If you have any comments or questions for the campaign or wish to receive multiple copies of the newsletter then either email us at **nottmnhscampaign@yahoo.co.uk** or cut out this coupon and send to NHSCAMPAIGN, c/o 571a Mansfield Road, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 2JN.

Name

Address

Phone Number

KEEP OUR NHS PUBLIC CAMPAIGN

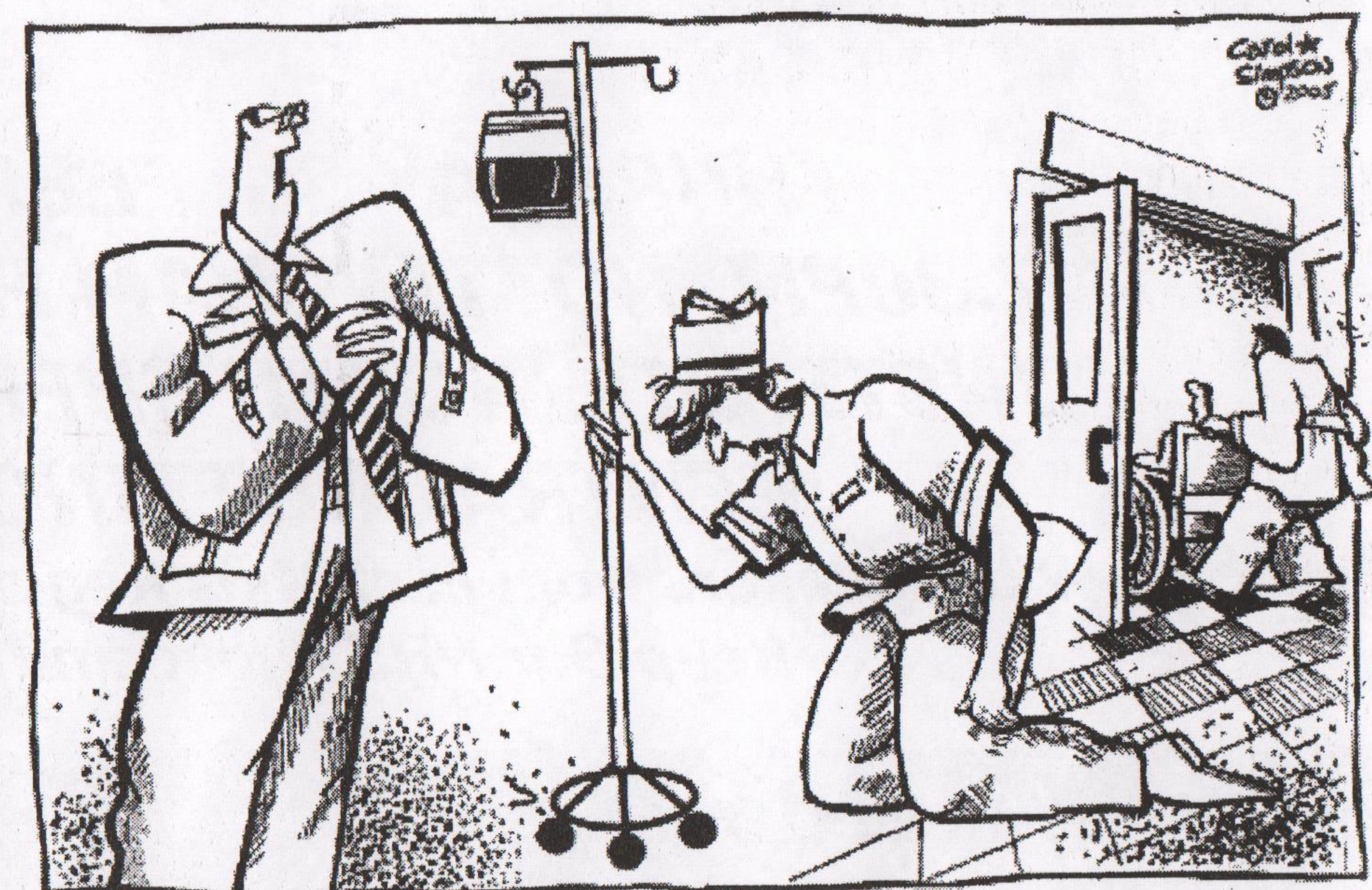
Keep Our NHS Public (KONHSP) is a national campaign of local community and health worker groups organised to oppose the current round of attacks on the NHS.

KONHSP will hold a national conference on Saturday 20th January from 11am at Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd, Central London.

For more information visit:
www.keepournhspublic.com

JOB CUTS WILL CRANK UP WORKLOAD

Workload for nurses, doctors and other health workers increases day-by-day, year-by-year. Targets, monitoring, restructuring and new 'management' strategies all add to the pressures felt by the people on the front line of the service. Most days you don't get a decent break, leave late, carry out tasks that you wouldn't normally do but there's nobody else to do them. And now management propose to cut the numbers of staff! What will this mean? Well, you don't have to be a brain surgeon to work it out—MORE WORK FOR NO MORE PAY. If you think you won't be effected by the sackings, if you think you're in the clear then think again. Fewer health workers means more work for those left. Fight the sackings, fight the cuts.



"You're in a hospital, Nurse Hill. If you collapse from exhaustion, the emergency room is just down the hall."

SOLIDARITY CAN WIN - JOIN A UNION

HELP THEM FIGHT TO SAVE THE NHS