

Air crew take to street



Raising money for Kent Air Ambulance in Fremlin Walk were, from left, Gary Balderstone, Beverley Thorne, Kevin Goddard and Lynn Hyder
Picture: Matthew Walker PD1650422

IT MIGHT have looked like something out of a Carry On film, but an event has helped raise funds for the Kent Air Ambulance.

A team from the Marden-based charity, including a doctor, paramedic and pilot, are on a mission to raise £20,000.

In 2010, they aim to cycle 350km across Cuba, but to get the fundraising off to a slightly comical start, a stretcher was

pushed up and down Fremlin Walk, in Maidstone.

Community fundraiser Lynn Hyder said: "We are about to start a real landmark year and there is no greater way to celebrate than with a challenge involving people from the trust in all areas - medical, fundraising and administration."

To make a donation, visit www.justgiving.com/teamkaatcyclecuba

I was lucky not to lose my eyesight

by Mary Graham
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WAITING for her father-in-law at an opticians' appointment, Susan Stratful began trying on some frames.

It was a simple act which may have saved her sight.

Mrs Stratful visited Kings Hill Opticians in Liberty Square, Kings Hill, with her father-in-law when he went for a sight test.

While he was in for his appointment, she began trying on some frames for size and selected a pair she wanted to buy.

She explained that she didn't have her prescription with her but already visited an opticians near her home in Dartford and had no problems with her vision.

But staff insisted the test was done before letting her leave with the frames. When they did, it showed Mrs Stratful had a detached retina, a rare condition which can lead to blindness.

She said: "I had no problems with my sight at all, but about a week after the test something dropped in my field of vision."

"Just a few days later I had an emergency operation at St Thomas' Hospital in London. The whole thing happened really quickly and it was quite scary."



Kings Hill Opticians staff Kathy Watson, Shatvinder Shoker and Jatinder Gill
Picture: Matthew Walker PD1656970

"My vision is still a little blurry but it is starting to improve. I'd just like to thank everyone involved."

Practice owner Shatvinder Shoker who carried out the test, said people normally notice some symptoms of a detached retina, such as flashing lights, black spots, or shadows in their vision.

Mr Shoker, who is also principal optometrist at Maidstone Hospital, added: "Although

Mrs Stratful had no symptoms, we could see the condition was fresh. It can be quite surprising for patients to be told that after a test, but it is not the first time we have discovered this problem through an eye test.

"If the retina does detach and is left untreated it can lead to blindness."

"The main message is that this does show the importance of having regular and thorough eye tests."

Chlamydia testing advice for young

ADVICE on how to be tested for chlamydia has been sent to people aged 18 to 24 across Tonbridge and Malling by NHS West Kent.

For home testing kits, call 01622 713096 or go to www.whatsinyourpants.co.uk

Help for students

SECONDARY school students have been choosing their next step in education using a website listing hundreds of courses.

Year 11 students can log on to www.kentchoices4u.com to search for college places and apprenticeships.

Lions' good work

MAIDSTONE Lions Club manned the County Gate office car park near the White Rabbit on Saturday, December 19, raising more than £400 for local charitable causes. A collection in Week Street also raised £340 for Kent Air Ambulance and Young Lives Foundation.

Crash closes road

A BUSY route into Maidstone had to be closed after a car collided with a pylon in Sutton Road, near the junction with Plough Wents Road, at 11pm, on Tuesday, December 22. Police reopened the road at 10am the next day.

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