



# Jail for thug who slit pet dog's throat

By John Lucas  
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A VIOLENT thug slit a puppy's throat in the street after swinging it around by its neck and headbutting his girlfriend in a "bizarre and horrifying" drug-fuelled rampage.

Dean Popham, of Wallace Road, Grays, killed the young Staffordshire Bull Terrier cross, named Edley, using a kitchen knife taken from the young woman's flat after leaving her with a cut lip.

The unemployed 30-year-old then fought with police officers and bit one on the thumb before they dragged the blood-soaked maniac to the ground.

Loreen Hussain, prosecuting, told Basildon Crown Court the horrific incident in Thames Road, Grays, on September 4, was preceded by vile sexual threats Popham made over text message and Facebook.

He then stormed round to his victim's flat in a rage, forced his way in and began kicking Edley.

She said: "The puppy, not knowing any better, was happy to see the defendant.

"He ran towards him but the defendant started kicking him, so much so that he lost one of his shoes. It was so bad that Edley lost control of his bowels. The young woman was screaming and told Popham to stop.

"He said; 'I don't care, he's lucky I

**Continued on Page 4**

● Man 'went berserk' and stabbed his girlfriend's puppy in sick street attack



■ Violent - Dean Popham



■ Joy - Zara Mastin and Ben Small with baby Noah

## Proud parents receive the perfect Christmas present

A FAMILY received an extra special gift this Christmas - the birth of their baby boy.

Little more than an hour into the day saw new parents Zara Mastin and Ben Small welcome little Noah into their world.

Just one day overdue, Miss Mastin, from Colne, in East Tilbury, said it wasn't a surprise. She said: "I was hoping he would come a week early. We are happy he is healthy, and it is a nice day to be born on.

"We had the name planned for our

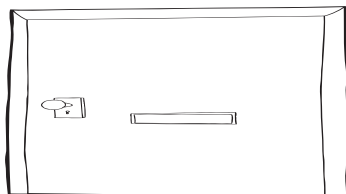
second child but we landed up having a girl so we were pretty set on the name for him.

"It is also a Christian name so it is appropriate with him being born on Christmas Day."

Little Noah was born at Basildon Hospital at 1.17am, weighing seven pounds.

The couple said they hoped to leave the hospital soon to celebrate Christmas with their two daughters who were eager to meet their new brother.

## New Caribbean service is a 'big win' for port, see Page 6



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# Legal action taken against care home over mum's death

THE daughter of a vulnerable woman with dementia who died just weeks after being forced to leave her care home is taking legal action.

Patricia Bunn was issued with a 28-day notice to quit Merrie Loots Farm Residential Home, in Linford, where she had lived in for six years, after disagreements over the care provided.

She died seven weeks later, in December 2015, aged 88.

Daughter Deborah Bunn has now instructed specialist lawyers to launch legal proceedings against the home, citing the Human Rights Act.

She hopes her claim will spark a change in the law, meaning private care homes are no longer being able to remove residents "unreasonably". The Human Rights Act can currently be used to prevent homes seeking to evict vulnerable people whose care is funded by the NHS - but few families are aware.

Miss Bunn, who lives in Lon-



■ Tragic death - Patricia Bunn

don, said: "We simply could not believe that this could happen. Regardless of mum's dementia, she was a long-term resident and one would expect there to be really strong grounds for any move at the final stage of her life. But we were powerless to stop it.

"The move to another care home was very distressing for my mother in those final few weeks of her life."

Alex Rook, a solicitor at Irwin Mitchell, representing the family, said: "Debbie wants to clarify the law to protect vulnerable care home residents in future.

"The Department for Health has recently confirmed to Irwin Mitchell directly that individuals living in a private care home but funded by the NHS can benefit from the protections that the Human Rights Act can bring.

"In relation to Debbie's mother, this could have meant her removal from the care home was prevented."

A spokesman for Carter-Ruck, the legal firm acting on behalf of Merrie Loots, run by Chigwell Homes Limited, said: "All of Deborah Bunn's complaints have already been reviewed by the Health Service Ombudsman and were not upheld.

"We were saddened to hear of Mrs Bunn's death and understand this has caused distress."

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