

JULY 8 2002 "NEWS"

HEALTH: Counselling offered to staff but not relatives in hospital probe

Fury over lack of care for bereaved

by Steve Bone
The News

HEALTH bosses under fire over a critical report on a Gosport hospital faced new anger today – for offering counselling to staff but not to relatives.

Families of elderly patients who died at the War Memorial were angered when they read in the Commission for Health Improvement's report that health trust managers had encouraged nurses and doctors to get counselling.

Some staff who had been stressed by the investigations into a series of deaths at the hospital even complained they had not been given enough support.

But relatives were asking today: 'Where was the support for us?'

Emily Yeats, 26, whose grandmother Alice Wilkie, 82, was one of those who died after going to the hospital for rehabilitation, said: 'What have they offered us? They haven't offered us anything. They've thought to offer the staff counselling but they've left us to it.'

Marjorie Bulbeck, 59, of Southbourne near Emsworth,

Watchdog has no remit to look into individual cases

THE WATCHDOG that studied the hospital in the light of the series of complaint has answered criticism over its admission that it was unable to confirm whether too-high drug doses resulted in any

deaths. Commission for Health Improvement spokeswoman Alison Iff said its remit in this or any investigation it carried out was not to look into individual cases.

Instead its role was to look at whether systems at the hospital failed to ensure good patient care. She said it was for other agencies – including police and health officials – to look into individual cases.



From the left is Emily Yeats, 26, her late grandmother Alice Wilkie, 82, Marjorie Bulbeck, and her late mother Dulcie Middleton who died aged 85

whose mother Dulcie Middleton, 85, died in the hospital last September, agreed access to an 'independent ear' might have helped.

'We have had to push for responses from the health people and to hear they seem to have done more for the staff than us is disappointing.'

The fresh criticism of bosses of the now-defunct Portsmouth Healthcare NHS Trust, which ran the community hospital at the time of the

deaths, comes at the end of a week health chiefs will want to forget. The CHI report acknowledged the hospital now had good procedures in place but raised serious concerns over elderly care there in the late 1990s – particularly over drugs being given to rehab patients unchecked.

Ian Piper, chief executive of the Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust which now runs the hospital, said staff would have had access to

counsellors in line with permanent arrangements for NHS staff across the area.

But he said he did not feel it appropriate the issue of counselling for those with complaints against the NHS should be initiated by the trust, as some people might take it the wrong way.

He added: 'If any family raised it with us, we would certainly do everything we could to ensure they had access to counselling.'

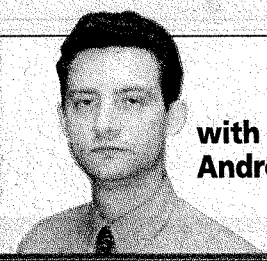
Letter to Editor

Nicholas

Bulbeck

Code A

Streetwise



with Andrew Levy

THE PAGE THAT GETS YOU A BETTER DEAL

Housewife complains of 'tiny little sign, 10 feet up' and a parking space then got clamped



Nicholas Braks
The News Centre
Wales
Plymouth
PO2 954

HEALTH: Doctor and five nurses to go before disciplinary hearings in connection with OAPs' deaths at hospital

Staff face deaths probe

STAFF involved with the treatment of elderly patients who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital will be hauled in front of a disciplinary hearing.

A doctor and five nurses could face charges of misconduct in connection with the deaths of several patients at the hospital.

The proceedings stem from complaints made by relatives of elderly patients who were admitted to the hospital for rehabilitation who were concerned about the excessive levels of pain-killing drugs administered.

by Richard Whitehouse
The News

And now it has been revealed one doctor will face a preliminary proceeding committee hearing by the General Medical Council to decide whether there was serious professional misconduct.

And the five nurses will stand before the Nursing Midwifery Council to see if they will face similar charges.

Both councils called for the hearings after they received letters from relatives.

As part of the GMC's procedure, all

complaints are referred to a screening committee and if the case is strong enough, it is investigated by a case worker who will then take it to the preliminary proceedings committee.

The announcement comes as relatives, who asked the police to investigate, were told that the matter has been referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) again.

Deputy Chief Constable Ian Readhead from Hampshire Police said all the files on the case - including their own initial report on whether their officers dealt with the complaints properly - have been sent to the CPS.

He said the CPS will now consider if the case needs further investigation including the possibility of criminal charges against the hospital staff.

He added if it is revealed officers did not act properly, they will look at the disciplinary matters again. The formal complaints against the police are still under investigation.

But Emily Yeats, whose grandmother Alice Wilkie died at the hospital, said: 'The police should be investigating the allegations first and getting all the evidence before sending it to the CPS to see if they feel a prosecution should take place.'

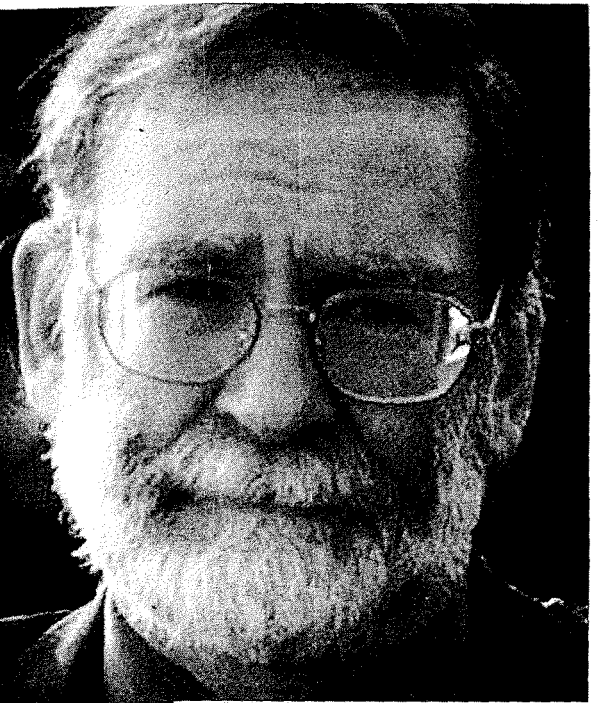
Families' fears

RELATIVES first made complaints about the standard of care at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in 1998.

They were concerned about the deaths of elderly patients who had gone to Daedalus, Dryad and Sultan wards at the hospital for rehabilitation.

Police became involved following a complaint by Gillian Mackenzie, whose mother Gladys Richards died at the hospital in August 1998 after being transferred from Royal Hospital Haslar where she had had a hip operation.

Two more Shipmans on the loose says top pathologist



KILLER: Harold Shipman committed suicide after murdering 215 patients

TWO murderers like Dr Harold Shipman could still be preying on patients, an expert warned last night.

The chilling prediction comes in the wake of the prison suicide of Shipman who killed 215 mainly elderly people.

The warning is highlighted in research conducted by Professor Robert Forrest, a forensic toxicologist and pathologist.

He says that nurses or doctors who deliberately harm their patients were once thought to be one in a million but there are at least six investigations each year into carers suspected of harming patients.

Last night there was an urgent demand for police to catch the two "new Shipmans".

A victim group called for the Government to set up a comprehensive register of complaints for people who have suspicions about their doctor.

Norman Brennan, director of the Victims of Crime Trust said: "We need a central register where people with suspicions against medical professionals can voice their concerns. If several complaints are lodged against the same individual they would then be investigated."

Jude Lang, whose mother Margaret Waldron was killed by Shipman when she was 65, said: "If there's a possibility that there are more killers like Shipman out there, changes need to be made to the

By **Andrea Perry** and **Clare Heal**

way cases are investigated." What little research exists suggests that medical professionals who murder are usually responsible for five to 10 deaths.

Mark Oaten, Lib Dem home affairs spokesman, said: "We mustn't always assume that violent crime will be committed by certain social types but professionals in a position of authority.

"They must always be monitored to make sure Shipman II doesn't happen."

It is thought similar crimes to that of Shipman are under-reported and Prof Forrest urges the use of personality tests to

'The police should not have an atmosphere of total disbelief when the issue is raised'

try to cut down the risk. Police in Greater Manchester faced criticism that they failed to act sooner to catch Shipman.

Prof Forrest came to his conclusions after examining cases including Angel of Death Beverly Allitt, who was found guilty of murdering three babies and an 11-year-old boy in Lincolnshire in 1993.

He said: "I think that what Beverly Allitt and Harold Shipman have done is made it possible for investigators to make sure that suspicions are not dismissed out of hand. No one believes now that doctors and nurses are not capable of killing patients."

Prof Forrest, of the Medico Legal Centre in Sheffield, and the city's deputy assistant coroner, has spent 10 years carrying out the only substantive research in Britain into the topic of "care workers who kill".

The phenomenon - CASK, or Carer Associated Serial Killings - has trademarks. Typically, victims are in vulnerable groups - the very old, the young and adults in intensive care.

He added: "I used to reckon it was one

in a million health care workers per year involved in crimes like this but now I think it must be higher.

"This is partly because we've got better at detecting them and partly because people are more willing to believe it and investigate when alarms are raised. But I don't think there are more than one or two a year. There may be six investigations a year but not all of those will lead to prosecution.

"A bar to investigating has always been the attitude of 'I don't believe it, nurses don't do things like this'.

"But the reality is that people join the ranks of the caring professions for all sorts of reasons. For some, intellectual curiosity about the human body and mind is the paramount reason. Others look for financial security or high esteem. But a few will have more complex reasons, founded in the darker emotions. And their motives differ, from matters of conviction like euthanasia or ethnic cleansing, to thrill-seeking or even being actively psychotic.

"Investigators and the police should not have an atmosphere of disbelief when the issue is first raised.

"Then they need to realise it is going to be a major investigation which is going to consume a lot of resources."

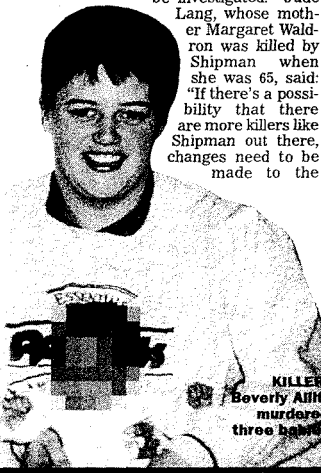
Rick Naylor, vice president of the Chief Superintendents' Association responded: "We are still waiting for the full report of the Shipman inquiry but the whole episode did show us that there were loopholes regarding death certification which need to be tightened. There were also problems with the coroner's reports."

West Yorkshire detectives are still probing the deaths of 18 patients who died at two hospitals in Leeds.

The inquiry was sparked by the death of Ethel Hall, 86, after a post mortem examination revealed that the retired shopkeeper, who was recovering from a hip operation, had an unusually high level of insulin in her blood.

This prompted the exhumation of an 88-year-old woman who was treated on the same ward as Mrs Hall at Leeds General Infirmary.

A male nurse, who is currently suspended, was arrested in connection with Mrs Hall's death and has been released on bail pending further inquiries.



KILLER: Beverly Allitt murdered three babies

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It's official: 'I feel your pain'

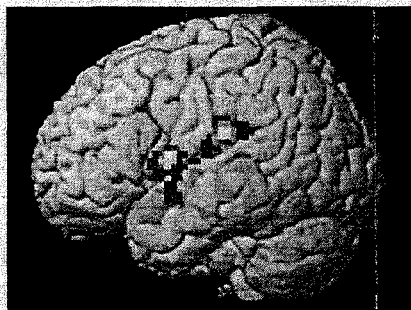
By Nigel Hawkes
Health Editor

YOU really can feel another person's pain, experiments at the Institute of Neurology have shown. Exactly the same regions of the brain are activated by knowing a close friend is experiencing pain as are activated by the pain itself.

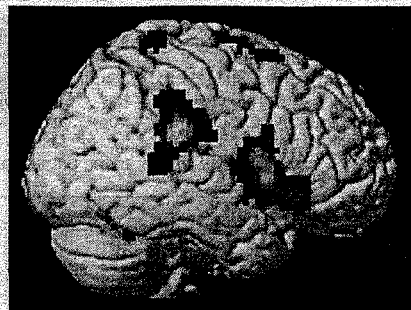
Tania Singer and colleagues at the institute, which is part of University College London, found 16 couples who were romantically involved and willing to take part in the experiment. They put the female partner in a magnetic resonance imaging machine and watched her brain while a one-second electric shock was given either to her or to her partner.

She was not able to see his face but could see from an indicator which of them was going to be shocked and whether it would be a mild shock or a sharp and painful one. The brain scans showed that the same areas of the brain were activated in both cases — with one exception.

In real pain, the anterior cin-



Empathy: the brain reacts similarly to pain



Pain: only one other part of the brain is used

gulate cortex, the insula, the thalamus and the somatosensory cortices were activated, the team reports in *Science*. In imagined pain, the somatosensory cortices were not activated but the other areas were, so while the sensation of pain was not present, the emotional aspects of it were.

This is the basis of empathy, said Dr Singer. When we feel another person's pain, we activate those areas of the brain that are involved with the emotional dimension of pain, not its physical effects, he said. "Proba-

bly, our ability to empathise has evolved from a system for representing our own internal bodily states.

"The significance is that, for the first time, we were able to study empathic processes in vivo in the usually unnatural scanning environment and show that emotional and not cognitive processes are triggered by the mere perception of a symbol indicating that your loved one is in pain. Our human capacity to 'tune in' to others when exposed to their feelings may explain why we do

not always behave selfishly in human interactions but instead engage in 'altruistic, helping behaviour.'

The London team, Dr Singer, Ben Seymour, John O'Doherty, Holger Kaube, Raymond Dolan and Chris Frith, also investigated whether women who were particularly empathetic showed higher brain activity when their partners experienced pain, as one would expect.

They tested the female volunteers using two personality tests designed to measure empathy, the Balanced Emotional Empa-

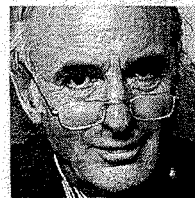
thy Scale and the Empathetic Concern Scale. It showed women who scored highly demonstrated stronger brain responses when their loved ones were given electric shocks. The research, says a news item in *Science*, is part of a growing field of brain research that explores the creation of internal representation of what another individual is thinking or feeling.

■ A second brain-scanning experiment reported in *Science* shows that patients can experience benefit from a drug just by believing that it works.

The "placebo effect" can produce physical changes in the way the brain responds to pain, the researchers said.

Placebos are dummy pills used in trials to test the effectiveness of new treatments. When the participants believed an anti-pain cream had been applied to their arm, they rated the pain as less intense. At the same time, the pain circuits in their brains showed less activity. Those volunteers who reported the greatest falls in pain had significant drops in activity in the pain-sensitive brain regions.

Empathy is not just figment of imagination



DR THOMAS STUTTAFFORD

ties, or was responding to different emotions or sensations.

The pattern of the response, and even the part of the brain which responds, as well as the anatomy of the brain, has been shown to vary with different psychiatric conditions.

Pain is one of the sensory experiences which has been widely studied but now the study has been advanced by an ability to map which part of the

shown that close associates — the other half of a couple who are emotionally involved — are not only able to understand the other person's intentions and beliefs, but also what it feels like when they suffer sadness, happiness and also pain.

Whereas with many emotions a loved one may experience some of the disturbance that their other half is feeling if they are watching them, Tania

be severe and when the shock would be received. When the woman received a shock herself the parts of her brain, which respond to this sort of pain, were activated.

Likewise, even though the woman couldn't see her partner and wasn't herself hurt, her brain reacted as if her body had been subjected to a shock each time she knew that her boyfriend was receiving one.

say they share their wives' birth pains and by mothers taking a child to hospital, who frequently complain that they are living through their child's pain during any procedure that he or she endures just as if they were receiving it themselves.

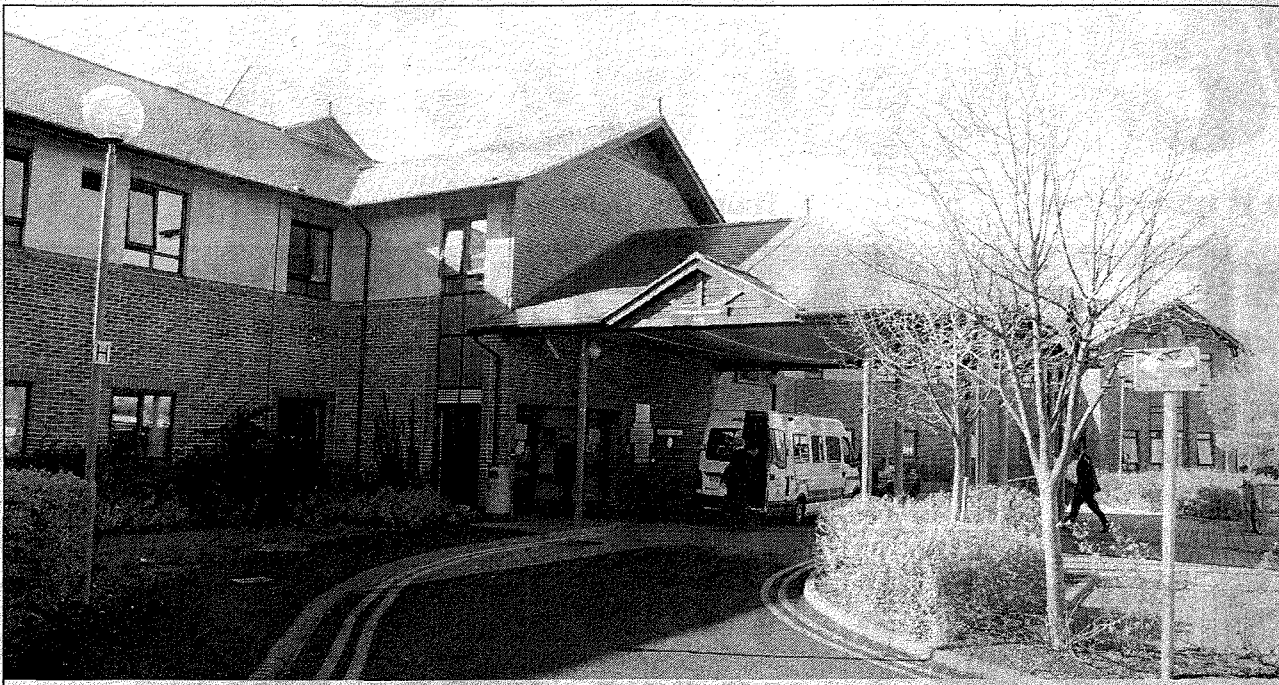
They may even say that they don't have to see their child to experience this, they only have to know it is happening.

Dr Singer's experiment has

Sometimes I actually take on the physical systems as well.

9

HEALTH: Trust vows to keep relatives better informed after independent inquiry



Gosport's War Memorial Hospital, at the centre of controversy over patient information

Hospital's pledge on drugs for pain

by **Rebecca Ellinor**
Health reporter

HEALTH chiefs today admitted failing the relatives of terminally ill patients by not keeping them informed over the pain relief drugs they receive.

They accepted they caused unnecessary distress to relatives by not involving them in decisions to give drugs to dying loved ones.

The announcement followed an independent inquiry into the death of an elderly woman at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

An action plan was drawn up last month by health bosses as a result of the findings of the review called by the dead woman's family.

Portsmouth HealthCare NHS Trust, which runs the

Independent watchdog to investigate care issues

THE news comes as it was announced an independent health watchdog is set to investigate care of elderly patients at the Gosport community hospital.

Officials from the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) have

launched a probe at the hospital which could result in sweeping national changes with the way drugs are given to elderly patients.

Elizabeth Fradd, the director of nursing at the commission, will lead a team of six or more at the inquiry

over 24 weeks. As a result of their findings, to be made public recommendations could be made that may lead to national changes in the NHS.

It will look at administration of drugs, responsibility of patient care and transfer of patients between hospitals.

community hospital in Gosport, said action has already been taken including a policy to keep patients and relatives informed when pain-relieving drugs were first given.

Max Millett, the chief executive of the trust, said the existing procedure was insufficient and had not been followed closely enough by staff.

'We realise we can't rely on individual staff and we now have written guidelines to prevent distress to

families by not being kept informed on how their relatives were being treated.

Relatives will be informed when terminally ill patients are first given pain relief drugs.

They will also be given the chance to question the doctors' decision throughout their stay but it is still up to the doctor responsible.

The hospital's policy has been strengthened and workshops have been held to better train staff how to

communicate with relatives.

'We reviewed the written policy and guidelines for management of pain to build in more contact with relatives.

'We also want to sure the staff are quite clear on how to communicate that', Mr Millett said.

Relatives can object to the administering of pain relief but it is still ultimately up to the doctor responsible for the patient to decide whether drugs are given.

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PULLEN

It's the right time to get things in perspective

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US

on to mouth.co.uk

xtended weather+s and much more...

News

Centre, Hilsea,
Hants PO2 9SX
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...esterday, highlighted how almost 300 women in every 1,000 are subject to domestic violence in the south east each year.

That compares to 174 in London and 92 in the north of England.

And the level of abuse has been blamed as the reason why the violent crime figures are so high in our region.

Hugh Marriage, regional director for crime prevention in the south east, pledged to make tackling abuse in the home a priority.

He said he would be asking councils to make sure they had services in place to help victims of domestic abuse and make it a priority.

And he stressed different organisations would have to work closely with each other to clamp down on domestic violence.

'Hospitals will have to treat the women and can report it, while schools may notice when children are affected by abuse



TV soaps have helped highlight the problem of domestic violence. In this scene from *EastEnders*, Dr Trueman spots the bruises on Little Mo's face after she has been beaten by her husband, Trevor

in the home. They also need to be proactive. The key to this is greater exchange of information.

'I don't have any idea why it should be so high. But I am determined to reduce it.'

Sally Jackson, Portsmouth's domestic violence project co-ordinator, said different agencies were already working together to try to put a stop to abuse and offer extra support for victims.

Bodies such as Victim Support and housing associations are building closer links to target the problem. And more

government money has become available to set up support services for victims.

She added: 'It's not just a police issue, it's something the whole community needs to deal with.'

'But because we are dealing with individuals we are still learning about how to deal with it.'

'The same things don't apply to everyone who suffers domestic abuse.'

A domestic violence group was launched earlier this year in Gosport while Havant police recently appointed a domestic violence co-ordinator.

Soaps help highlight the issue

TV SOAP operas are playing their part in making domestic violence a serious issue which needs to be addressed.

BBC 1's *EastEnders* recently focused on the character Little Mo - a woman caught in an abusive relationship.

And the focus was a good thing for raising the prominence of domestic violence, according to

Sally Jackson.

She said: 'It's actually helped. It has brought the issue out more and makes it easier for people to talk about it.'

'Previously domestic abuse has been very taboo.'

'I think in some cases it's shown people that there are people who will treat it seriously and with compassion.'

Mum feared for children

A MOTHER feared for her children's lives as she made an emotional emergency phone call, a court has heard.

Esther Keet was watching television with her husband David and children David Digger, Esther Ellen and Ricky in their shed when bricks and ball-bearings were thrown through the window. The family heard male voices threatening to set light to the shed at Tynefield Caravan Park in Whiteley at 11pm on January 20.

Portsmouth Crown Court heard how Mrs Keet and her youngest son managed to escape to their adjacent caravan where she lay on the floor and pleaded for police to save her family.

voices of Danny Ray, Noah Kempster and Danny Ray Junior shouting threats.

Noah Kempster, 33, of Denzil Avenue, Netley Abbey and Danny Ray 42, of Osbourne Road, Warsash, pleaded not guilty to charges of arson with intent to endanger life and arson being reckless as to whether life is endangered. They also denied another charge of arson causing damage to a van and a charge of violent disorder.

Danny Ray Junior, 20, and James Kempster, 37, both of Tynefield Caravan Park and Luke Ray, 18, of Osbourne Road, Warsash, pleaded not guilty to a charge of violent disorder.

Patient overdose ruled out

A MAN who fell unconscious after he was given a suspected drug overdose at a Gosport hospital says he will never go back.

But bosses overseeing Gosport War Memorial Hospital, where he was treated, have ruled out the possibility of a morphine overdose.

James Ripley was sent to the hospital in April 2000 for rest after he suffered a severe case of gout and bursitis, where his joints became red, inflamed and painful to the touch.

Shortly after he arrived at the hospital he was given morphine - a strong painkiller - and within days he had fallen unconscious. An

on-call doctor told anxious relatives Mr Ripley, now 78, had suffered a stroke and transferred him to Royal Hospital Haslar.

The following day, Mrs Paule Ripley was told by Haslar doctors her husband had not suffered a stroke but an analgesic overdose.

She complained to bosses of the then Portsmouth HealthCare NHS Trust, who ruled out the possibility of an overdose because Mr Ripley stopped receiving morphine two days before he fell unconscious.

But Max Millett, chief executive of the former trust, said the complaint had highlighted issues that needed action.

were destroyed by fire.

Nearby gas cylinders escaped being caught up in the blaze when flames engulfed the bus and Renault car in a track off Mays Lane.

Fire crews from Fareham and Gosport spent about an hour battling the blaze as smoke billowed through overhead power lines just after 4am today. Firefighters said the blaze was suspicious.

Good impression

HAMBLEDON: An outing to Petworth House to view the Turner exhibition is planned for next Saturday.

Hambledon Arts Society wants to take a party to view the work of the celebrated 19th century painter at Petworth in West Sussex.

Anyone interested should contact Amelia Cazalet on (023) 9263 2732.

Shoppers give cash

FAREHAM: A charity collection in the West Street shopping precinct raised £228 to help fund research by the Alzheimer's Association.

WHAT THEY SAID



'I am pleased to be back home. Thank you to everyone who helped search for me' - Donna Peterson, 15, of Southsea,

who was feared dead after going missing in Portsmouth.

July 15th 2002

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(Proceeding)

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JULY 13TH 2002

War Memorial report is unsatisfactory because it does not bring closure

We are not looking for scapegoats. We do not say the report into deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital is a whitewash. But there is something uncomfortably cosy about it.

Mistakes have been admitted in the provision of drugs to frail old people, yet in no instance, we are told, can we be sure those mistakes were directly to blame for their demise.

To relatives and other laymen, that will be difficult to believe. And it is with

both those groups that we should be primarily concerned now.

Present and future patients are assured that procedures have been changed since the deaths in 1998. But we have to take that on trust, and our trust – both in the system and in individual practitioners – has to be earned afresh.

As for the relatives, they are

The News COMMENT

understandably upset at not having their questions answered in public.

We accept there may be good legal reasons for the Fareham and

Gosport Primary Care Trust's refusal to engage in a direct public confrontation. There may be cases to come before the British Medical Association.

But we must not forget that the

inquiry into the deaths and yesterday's report would never have happened but for the persistence of Gillian Mackenzie, whose mother died at the hospital. We would be happier if the trust had faced allegations more willingly.

And now Mrs Mackenzie says she is still in the dark. So she still cannot draw a line under her personal tragedy.

That is why we say the report is unsatisfactory. It does not achieve closure.

HEALTH: Relatives demand fresh investigation into Gosport war Memorial Hospital

Families blast police over deaths inquiry

by Richard Whitehouse
The News

RELATIVES fighting to find out the truth about the deaths of their parents at a Gosport hospital say the police are still letting them down.

They have already filed complaints to the Hampshire force saying officers did not investigate the deaths properly.

The relatives say their loved ones were given excessive levels of drugs and they want to prosecute medical staff at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

But when none of the cases was pursued by the police they rounded on officers saying they had not done their job properly.

Yesterday 15 relatives from 11 families met with the deputy chief constable of Hampshire police Ian Readhead to discuss what was happening after the police said they were resubmitting the case to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

This will include a report by the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) published earlier this year which criticised the administration of drugs for rehabilitation patients at the hospital when the cases took place.

Relatives hope the independent report will convince the CPS that the police need to investigate the cases further.

The report did not look at individual cases and reported just on the general care at the hospital. It concluded that practices have since changed making the system more effective.

Gillian Mackenzie, whose mother Gladys Richards died at the hospital in 1998, said: 'The CHI report is extremely damn-

Boards check staff

PROFESSIONAL medical boards have also been asked by relatives to look at the conduct of medical staff at Gosport War Memorial Hospital who treated their parents.

The General Medical Council has held a private preliminary hearing about Dr Jane Barton, who is involved in the cases, and is expected to make an announcement soon about whether a public hearing will take place to discuss Dr Barton.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council was also due to hold a private hearing last month about nurses, including Philip Beed, but changed it for later this month as there was too much paperwork to go through.

ing in what it says.

'If the entire report has been sent to the CPS hopefully they will go back to the police and say that more investigation is needed.

But she added: 'The police, as we have said before, still need to interview the relatives and staff and look at medical reports before they can submit any evidence to the CPS.'

Chief Supt Clacher's report gives details of how the police investigated the deaths and comments on the relatives complaints officers did not act properly.

A previous file sent to the CPS did not contain the CHI report or the new report written by Ch Supt Clacher.

That file was sent back by the CPS who said that there was not enough evidence for a prosecution.



Gillian Mackenzie, daughter of Gladys Richards who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital, at Fareham Police Station

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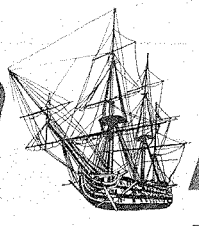
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The News launches the sp

FRESH PROBE INTO WARD DEATHS

War Memorial inquiry team sends updated file to CPS

RELATIVES fighting to find out why their loved ones died at a Gosport hospital hope a new report will see medical staff in court.

They claim their elderly parents were given over-the-top doses of drugs at the Gosport Memorial Hospital.

When the case was first handed to prosecutors they said there was not enough evidence to go to court.

Now a government report has gone to the Crown Prosecution Service – and it highlights concerns about drug doses dished out at the hospital.

FULL STORY • Page 7

OUR COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE

+

Villagers have chance to decide their future

QUESTIONNAIRE: A team of volunteers is aiming at an ambitious 70 per cent response rate for a questionnaire that could decide a village's future.

Bishop's Waltham has raised £20,000 to carry out a village appraisal of the needs and hopes of its inhabitants. It will then be used by planning bodies such as Hampshire county Council and Winchester City Council when deciding on priorities for the village.

Organisers want as many people as possible to have their say so the consultation can accurately reflect people's wishes.

And they are aiming for the 70 per cent return rate their predecessors

achieved for the last appraisal in 1982.

Bishop's Waltham parish councillor Brian Sharp said: 'We want at least a 50 per cent response so that the appraisal is truly representative.'

To hit such a high return rate, the committee of residents and councillors putting together the questionnaire plan to split Bishop's Waltham into small areas, then find volunteers to organise delivery and collection within their neighbourhood.

The questionnaire will cost around £20,000 to complete and will ask the population what they want for their village.

Questionnaires should hit doormats this autumn.



Ben Ainslie

Sailing stars gather at club

A SAILING club is hosting the best sailors in the country for a national dinghy competition.

Olympic gold medalist Ben Ainslie will be one of the competitors at Warsash Sailing Club this weekend for the Finn National Championships.

More than 50 sailors are expected to battle it out on Solent race courses.

This is the first time the Warsash club has hosted the Finn nationals competition, named after a class of dinghy.

Sailing secretary David Wightman said: 'This is a very prestigious competition and we're honoured to have them here.'

Heathland project gets boost

FUNDING: Endangered heathland is to be protected with a £750,000 project to brighten up the countryside.

More than 80 per cent of the heathland in West Sussex has been lost in the last 200 years.

Now county chiefs have secured lottery funding to restore lost heathlands to their former glory and nurture the remaining hillsides.

The project aims to reintroduce sections of heathland across the

north of county around villages including Petersfield, Midhurst and Petworth.

A special walking route called the Serpent Trail will be created by the work and will snake its way through 40 miles of the protected countryside.

Paul Bruce, manager of the heathland project, said: 'Heathland is an internationally important habitat as it supports rare wildlife such as nightjars and Dartford warblers.'

HEALTH: Inquiry looks into the deaths of patients whose relatives fear that their

NEWS. 14-09-2002

Third inquiry

REBECCA ELLINOR reports on a further probe into the deaths of elderly patients at a Gosport hospital



The government's chief medical officer has ordered a third probe into the deaths of elderly patients at a Gosport hospital.

It is only the second time Sir Liam Donaldson has demanded an expert investigation of this kind - the first was in the case of Dr Harold Shipman.

The same expert who scrutinised the circumstantial evidence surrounding the deaths of patients of the Greater Manchester GP will come to Gosport to quiz staff and examine medical records.

However, the Department of Health stresses that while the ordering of an inquiry of this kind is extremely rare, and while the same man - Professor Richard Baker - will conduct it, connections between the two cases ends there.

Health officials say Professor Baker has been called in as he is regarded as the UK's leading expert in this type of inquiry.

It follows continuing concerns over the deaths of elderly patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital which have already been the subject of investigations by the police and the health watchdog the Commission for Health Improvement.

Following the publishing of the CHI report in July this year, no formal plans were made by local health chiefs to investigate the deaths again.

But the Department of Health has now stepped in to make sure no stone is left unturned.

Sir Liam said: 'Even though both previous investigations found no grounds for serious concern, neither was in a position to establish whether trends and patterns of deaths were out of line with what would be expected.'

A department spokeswoman added: 'We're aware of local concerns and those from family members of people who died at that hospital, of course we are.'

'We are having this further investigation to make sure everything is done to satisfy not just ourselves but also people in the Gosport area.'

Professor Baker will draw on medical records, staff rotas, times of death, the amount of drugs given and the condition of each patient who died.

The relatives of patients who died following treatment at Gosport's War

THE OFFICIAL COMPLAINTS



A POLICE inquiry was triggered by a complaint from Gillian Mackenzie, whose 91-year-old mother Gladys Richards died at the hospital in August 1998.

She died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital after being transferred from the Royal Hospital Haslar for rehabilitation following a hip operation.

When *The News* revealed the complaint 17 months ago the police had sent evidence from their investigation to crown prosecutors.

The Crown Prosecution Service scrutinised the police file but decided that there were no grounds for a prosecution.

In the meantime more relatives came forward to complain about the treatment of family members who died at the hospital.

One family asked for an independent review, which was carried out by medical staff from

another organisation on the south coast, others involved the ombudsman - the official NHS watchdog - but nothing substantial came from those.

This caused relatives to lodge official complaints against the police about the way they handled the investigation.

When the complaints were lodged, police held an internal inquiry into how officers had handled the case. A report was compiled by Chief Superintendent Dan Clacher.

Now his report, the report compiled by the Commission for Health Improvement plus reports into four other deaths at the hospital are to be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service.

In the meantime relatives had also complained to the General Medical Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council about the conduct of staff.

Memorial Hospital - among them Gladys Richards, Dulcie Middleton, Edna Purnell, Alice Wilkie, Elsie Devine and Stanley Carby - greeted the decision with delight and relief.

They said they had high hopes some progress would finally be made and answers given.

Gillian Mackenzie, whose mother Mrs Richards died in 1998, said: 'I am absolutely thrilled to hear about this.'

'I hope the police and others will now take it just as seriously. It is a great step forward and I look forward to hearing what happens.'

Ian Piper, chief executive of the Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust, the health group that oversees the running of the War Memorial Hospital, said he also welcomed this third inquiry.

He said: 'I sympathise with the relatives; we want to do everything we can to find some answers for these

families, staff at the hospital and community in Gosport.'

Mr Piper said he wanted to reinforce the point that many changes have already been made to staff numbers and procedures at the hospital since the deaths in 1998.

Hampshire Police Deputy Chief Constable Ian Readhead said: 'We are aware of the appointment of Professor Baker. We will fully support his work in any way we can.'

'I personally met bereaved relatives for two hours on Wednesday at Fareham police station to discuss the current status of our inquiries. I have assured them that I will keep them as fully informed as I can of the progress of our work.'

Professor Baker's investigation is expected to begin within the next few weeks, once he has liaised with Hampshire police. He will submit a report of his findings to Sir Liam.

The News

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Alan Milburn

Families welcome department's statement

FAMILIES who have been fighting for answers about their relatives' deaths at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital welcomed the announcement by the Department of Health.

Gillian Mackenzie, whose mother Gladys Richards died in 1998, said that she hoped it would make other organisations take notice.

She said: 'I am absolutely thrilled to hear

about this. It means the department of health is taking these cases seriously.'

'It is a great step forward and I look forward to hearing what happens.'

Emily Yeats, whose grandmother Alice Wilkie died at the hospital, was also pleased.

She said: 'If this is the case then it is very welcome. I hope that the

police will also look at any report. I also hope that it will make other people as high up as Alan Milburn, the Secretary of State for Health, take notice.'

Marjorie Bulbeck, whose mother Dulcie Middleton died, said: 'We have all written to the General Medical Council and we have all written to ministers and at last something seems to be being done.'

Police probe 13 deaths at hospital

POLICE are investigating the deaths of up to 13 elderly hospital patients who relatives believe were killed with overdoses of powerful drugs, including the painkiller diamorphine.

On Friday Liam Donaldson, the chief medical officer, ordered an audit of the hospital's death rates, which will be carried out by the same expert who analysed mortality among patients of the GP Harold Shipman.

Shipman, who was sentenced to life two years ago, is believed to have killed more than 250 elderly people by giving them overdoses of diamorphine, the pure form of heroin that is used as a painkiller but is lethal in overdose.

All 13 of the Hampshire patients were admitted to Gosport War Memorial hospital between 1997 and 2000 to recover from various operations and treatments. None of their families was told at the time of admission that their relatives were expected to die.

Jane Barton, a GP who was in day-to-day charge of medical care at the hospital until July 2000, was referred to the General Medical Council's professional conduct committee last week. A consultant geriatrician and seven nurses are also the subject of complaints about the dead patients' treatment.

However, there is no suggestion that Barton, who has refused to comment, or any of the others who worked on the wards deliberately caused harm to any patient.

Among the cases being probed are the deaths of:

□ Elsie Devine, 88, who was admitted to the hospital to recover from a kidney infection. Her relatives were urged to leave the hospital shortly before she died. They were stunned to discover she had been given large doses of diamorphine.

□ Leonard Graham, 75, who was recovering from pneumonia. His wife was "told" to ring her daughter while a drug dose was administered. He died shortly afterwards.

□ Betty Rogers, 67, who was recovering from a chest infection. Her daughter was urged to go home having been told her mother was not near death. Fifteen minutes later she received a call saying she had died.

Other deaths under investigation include Stanley Carby, 65, Eva Page, 88, and Dulcie Middleton, 85.

Among those who are helping the police with their inquiries is Jim Ripley, a 76-year-old gout sufferer who was admitted to Gosport War Memorial hospital in April 2000. He narrowly escaped death after falling into a painkiller-induced coma on one of the three wards

Lois Rogers
Medical Correspondent

five hours for an emergency doctor to arrive after he lost consciousness at hospital. He was transferred to the nearby Haslar hospital where staff soon established he had not had a stroke, as was first suspected, but was in an "analgesic coma".

A number of families were advised to take holidays during their relatives' last hours. "Why did they tell me to go on holiday? Surely they knew he was going to die," said Dorie Graham, whose husband Leonard died in 2000. She complained to the police more than a year ago.

Edna Purnell, 91, entered the hospital for rehabilitation after a hip replacement. She was put in a darkened room and heavily sedated, according to Mike Wilson, her son. Wilson consulted a solicitor and tried to get her moved to a private hospital. He was then himself rushed into hospital after a heart attack and while he was there she died.

The medical notes of Alice Wilkie, 88, record her as having died twice on the same day. Her granddaughter Emily Yeats believes this is because her files were mixed with those of Gladys Richards, 91, who died hours later. Both received cocktails of painkillers that investigations by the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) revealed should not have been used together.

A CHI report into the hospital's practice, published in July, criticised the use of diamorphine combined with a strong anaesthetic, and another drug usually used to treat schizophrenia. This combination, the report said, "could carry a risk of excessive sedation and respiratory depression in older patients, leading to death".

The CHI was originally asked to investigate the hospital by the police, who had begun a criminal investigation into the 1998 death of Richards, after her family alleged she had been unlawfully killed.

Although the CHI report said it could not look at any particular death, it found doses of up to 200 milligrams a day of morphine were being administered through pumps into patients' bloodstreams. Prescriptions for morphine and other potent drugs were regularly written in advance, so that nurses could administer them unsupervised.

Ian Piper, the chief executive of the Gosport and Fareham primary care trust, which now administers the hospital, said he could not comment on individual cases. The trust has just sent its first draft of proposals to meet the 22 recommendations for change in the CHI report.

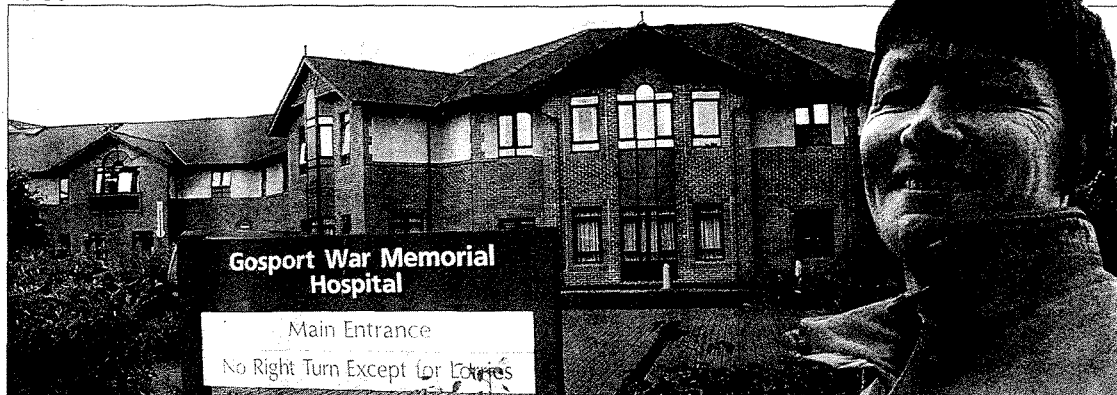
had improved, said Piper.

Families of 10 of the dead patients attended a meeting called by Ian Readhead, deputy chief constable of Hampshire, last week. Police said a file on the affair will be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service this month. The Nursing and Midwifery Council said it was investigating disciplinary proceedings against several nurses.

Donaldson has commissioned Richard Baker, professor of clinical governance at Leicester University, to repeat the statistical analysis he conducted into Shipman's practice.

Donaldson said previous inquiries into patient concerns at Gosport had not established whether patterns of death were "out of line with what would be expected". Baker will seek to answer the question fully.

Mike Walker



Overdose inquiry: Jane Barton is among the medics facing an investigation of the deaths of patients, some pictured top, at Gosport War Memorial hospital

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14-09-2002

treatment at Gosport War Memorial Hospital was not all it should have been

into OAPs' deaths



Gosport War Memorial hospital, where the deaths of some elderly patients are to be investigated again

THE EXPERT

PROFESSOR Richard Baker is a member of the Clinical Governance and Research Development Unit based at the University of Leicester.

He has been called in to carry out a clinical audit which will look at any trends and patterns in the deaths of former Gosport War Memorial Hospital patients.

He has only been called upon by the government's health department once before: in the case of Dr Harold Shipman, following his conviction.

Professor Baker was called in because he is the country's leading authority



Professor Richard Baker

on this type of audit which will include an examination of issues including medical records, staff rotas, times of death and drugs doses.

A spokeswoman for the

Department of Health said: 'We've chosen Professor Baker to carry out this audit because he is the premier national expert.'

'We are aware his involvement will raise queries but it was important we had the best.'

'It's important to keep an open mind about the outcome of this investigation,' she added.

While Professor Baker has no formal powers, the health spokeswoman said it would be 'unthinkable' for anyone to refuse to help him with his investigation.

The health spokeswoman added: 'It's a priority that

we ensure a thorough and rigorous methodology is used for this sort of thing. Every single aspect of the deaths will be explored.'

In the case of Shipman, who was convicted of the murder of 15 patients,

Professor Baker discovered the GP had probably killed 236 of his patients and may have killed more than 300.

Raw statistics suggested that at the extreme there were 345 extra deaths when Shipman's records were compared with normal practice at similar surgeries.

However, a more detailed analysis of the circumstances surrounding

each death showed a probable figure to be 236, because these were patients who died at home.

Factors such as the time of death and whether relatives of Shipman himself were present were taken into account.

Many of Shipman's patients also appeared to have died in the afternoon, which is considered unusual.

Professor Baker presented the government's chief medical officer with the circumstantial evidence he found and highlighted any cases where he thought there was reason for concern.

Watchdog was asked to see how elderly patients were treated

HEALTH watchdog the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) was called in last year to scrutinise the way elderly people were treated at Gosport's War Memorial Hospital.

It was particularly asked to look at arrangements for the administering of drugs, responsibility of patient care and the transfer of patients between the War Memorial and

other hospitals. The inquiry at the Gosport community hospital was only the seventh special investigation CHI had been involved with.

The CHI found:

- Serious concerns regarding prescribing of medicines to older people.
- Not possible to say whether high dosages of drugs led to any deaths.

- Welcomed introduction of new policies governing drugs.
- No significant concerns about the standard of nursing care now.
- Health bosses should have responded quicker to concerns over sedation levels.
- Complaints led to changes like improved levels of staffing and better communication with relatives.

Main conclusions of the CHI study were that there were:

- Insufficient guidelines on the prescribing of powerful drugs.
- A lack of checking of data led to high-dosage prescribing going unchallenged.
- Poor prescribing practice not noticed.
- A lack of thorough assessments of patients' needs on admission.

Many changes have been

made to procedures at the hospital since the time of the deaths in 1998.

The CHI praised the changes but asked the hospital to make further improvements reviewing its guidelines on drug prescribing, how it handles complaints, staff training and leadership.

A draft action plan was sent to the CHI by Gosport health bosses this week.

HEALTH: Relatives of patients who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital angered by new revelations

Care standard worries surfaced a decade ago

by Richard Whitehouse
The News

RELATIVES fighting to find the truth about loved ones' deaths at a hospital said they were shocked to discover concerns about the standard of care there were raised more than 10 years ago.

Health bosses have revealed an internal management document from 1991 highlighting fears about drug prescribing practices at Gosport War Memorial Hospital has been handed to police.

And Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust chief executive Ian Piper, and Tony Horner - chief executive of

HEALTH bosses have set up a helpline for any people concerned about their relatives' care at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

The information line has been set up to stop concerned relatives flooding other lines with calls or going into GP surgeries with questions.

East Hampshire Primary Care Trust - who were involved in management decisions at the time, have temporarily stepped down from their positions.

It is the latest development in the long-running investigation into the death of several

Health authority spokesman Adrian Osborne said: 'We don't really know how many people might come forward and that is why it has been set up.

'We don't want people to be going into GP surgeries and asking questions when they will be redirected to us. 'There will be people who

elderly patients at the hospital.

And today relatives who complained about treatment at the hospital before their parents and grandparents died said the announcement confirmed their worst fears.

Gillian Mackenzie, whose

haven't previously come forward and may be concerned with the news of these documents.

'We want them to come forward with whatever information they may have so that we can pass it on to the relevant authorities.'

The information line is 0845 6024116.

mother Gladys Richards died at the hospital in 1998, said that she always believed that there could have been other cases before hers.

She added: 'But I never even imagined that it could date back to 1991. If there are concerns in the report then it

has to be asked why these were not acted upon.'

Health authority spokesman Adrian Osborne said today both Mr Piper and Mr Horne had been involved at the hospital during 1991.

And he said that to ensure any investigation was fully independent, both had agreed to temporarily step down.

Alan Pickering has been appointed acting chief executive at Fareham and Gosport PCT and Paula Turvey acting chief executive at East Hampshire PCT while investigations continue.

In a joint statement Mr Horne and Mr Piper said: 'We recognise that this review must command the trust of local people.'

DOGGED CAMPAIGNER ●

Chief Medical Officer orders major inquiry into patient deaths at Gosport hospital to finally answer the question:

WHY DID THEY DIE?

A NEW probe has been ordered into the deaths of elderly hospital patients.

In a rare move, the country's top health boss has stepped in to order a third inquiry into deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

It will be carried out by the same expert who said Manchester GP Harold Shipman may have killed more than 230 of his patients.

The new study will look at any patterns in the deaths and health chiefs stress Professor Richard Baker was only called in because he is the UK's leading expert in this type of analysis.

COMMENT ● Page 4
FULL STORY ● Page 8 & 9



Gladys Richards



Alice Wilkie



Elsie Devine



Edna Purnell



Stanley Carby



Marjorie Bulbecks

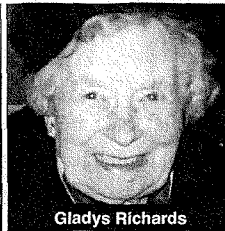
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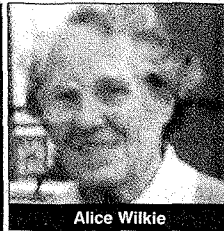
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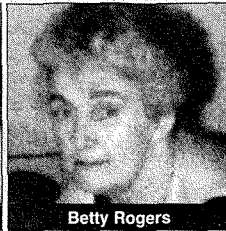
Gladys Richards



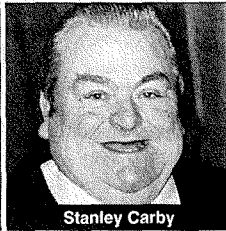
Alice Wilkie



Elsie Devine



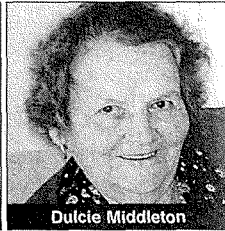
Betty Rogers



Stanley Carby



Eva Page



Dulcie Middleton

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Lois Rogers Medical Correspondent

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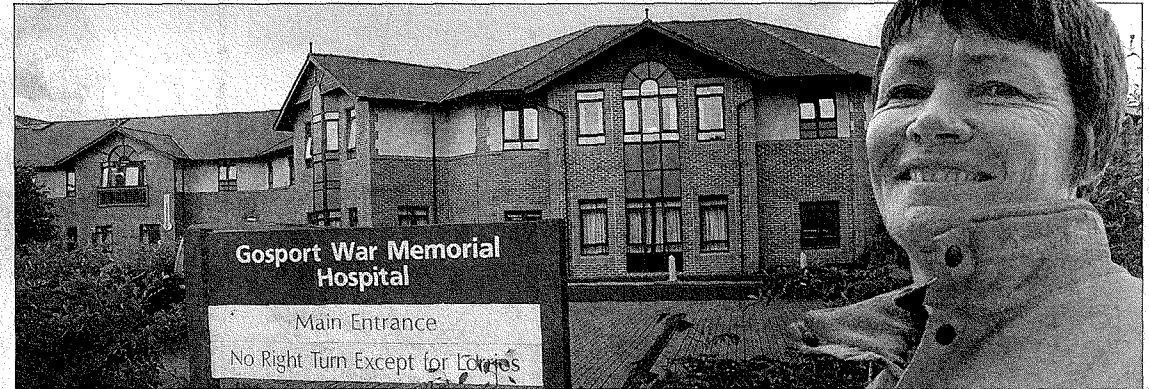
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Donaldson said previous inquiries into patient concerns at Gosport had not established whether patterns of death were "out of line with what would be expected". Baker will seek to answer the question fully.

Mike Walker



Overdose inquiry: Jane Barton is among the medics facing an investigation of the deaths of patients, some pictured top, at Gosport War Memorial hospital

Arabian nights. Parisian nights. Free nights

lethal in overdose.

All 13 of the Hampshire patients were admitted to Gosport War Memorial hospital between 1997 and 2000 to recover from various operations and treatments. None of their families was told at the time of admission that their relatives were expected to die.

Jane Barton, a GP who was in day-to-day charge of medical care at the hospital until July 2000, was referred to the General Medical Council's professional conduct committee last week. A consultant geriatrician and seven nurses are also the subject of complaints about the dead patients' treatment.

However, there is no suggestion that Barton, who has refused to comment, or any of the others who worked on the wards deliberately caused harm to any patient.

Among the cases being probed are the deaths of:

□ Elsie Devine, 88, who was admitted to the hospital to recover from a kidney infection. Her relatives were urged to leave the hospital shortly before she died. They were stunned to discover she had been given large doses of diamorphine.

□ Leonard Graham, 75, who was recovering from pneumonia. His wife was "told" to ring her daughter while a drug dose was administered. He died shortly afterwards.

□ Betty Rogers, 67, who was recovering from a chest infection. Her daughter was urged to go home having been told her mother was not near death. Fifteen minutes later she received a call saying she had died.

Other deaths under investigation include Stanley Carby, 65, Eva Page, 88, and Dulcie Middleton, 85.

Among those who are helping the police with their inquiries is Jim Ripley, a 76-year-old gout sufferer who was admitted to Gosport War Memorial hospital in April 2000. He narrowly escaped death after falling into a painkiller-induced coma on one of the three wards now under investigation. It took

Edna Purnell, 91, entered the hospital for rehabilitation after a hip replacement. She was put in a darkened room and heavily sedated, according to Mike Wilson, her son. Wilson consulted a solicitor and tried to get her moved to a private hospital. He was then himself rushed into hospital after a heart attack and while he was there she died.

The medical notes of Alice Wilkie, 88, record her as having died twice on the same day. Her granddaughter Emily Yeats believes this is because her files were mixed with those of Gladys Richards, 91, who died hours later. Both received cocktails of painkillers that investigations by the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) revealed should not have been used together.

A CHI report into the hospital's practice, published in July, criticised the use of diamorphine combined with a strong anaesthetic, and another drug usually used to treat schizophrenia. This combination, the report said, "could carry a risk of excessive sedation and respiratory depression in older patients, leading to death".

The CHI was originally asked to investigate the hospital by the police, who had begun a criminal investigation into the 1998 death of Richards, after her family alleged she had been unlawfully killed.

Although the CHI report said it could not look at any particular death, it found doses of up to 200 milligrams a day of morphine were being administered through pumps into patients' bloodstreams. Prescriptions for morphine and other potent drugs were regularly written in advance, so that nurses could administer them unsupervised.

Ian Piper, the chief executive of the Gosport and Fareham primary care trust, which now administers the hospital, said he could not comment on individual cases. The trust has just sent its first draft of proposals to meet the 22 recommendations for change in the CHI report. Standards of care at the hospital

Gosport had not established whether patterns of death were "out of line with what would be expected". Baker will seek to answer the question fully.

Overdose inquiry: Jane Barton

Arab Paris Free

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against former Gosport War Memorial Hospital doctor

inquiry leads conduct charge

by Rebecca Ellinor
Health reporter

A DOCTOR involved in an inquiry into deaths of patients at a Gosport hospital is to be accused of serious professional misconduct.

Dr Jane Barton, who was in day-to-day charge of medical care at Gosport War Memorial Hospital until she left in July 2000, is being investigated by the General Medical Council.

The GMC, which regulates doctors, is looking at the way she performed her duties as a doctor after it received complaints about her.

An investigation by health watchdog the Commission for Health Improvement, which published its report in July, concluded that the use of pain relief at Gosport War Memorial Hospital was excessive and regularly put patients at risk.

Dr Barton was the clinical assistant at the hospital in 1998 when a number of elderly patients - who had gone to the hospital for rehabilitation - died.

However, there is no suggestion Dr Barton or any of the other staff who worked on the wards, who are also being investigated by regulatory bodies, deliberately caused harm to any patient and no criminal charges have been brought against anyone.

Dr Barton performed the role while carrying out other duties as a Gosport family doctor and would have only visited the hospital briefly, seeing patients in between house calls or surgery appointments.

Ian Piper, chief executive

Expert will review rates

THE government's chief medical officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, last week announced he is sending an expert to review death rates at Gosport's War Memorial Hospital.

As reported in *The News* on Saturday, the review will be conducted by Professor Richard Baker, who looked

into the case of Greater Manchester GP Harold Shipman, who was convicted of murder.

Relatives of patients who died following treatment at the hospital have greeted the decision with delight and relief after months of pressing for a further examination of their complaints.

of Gosport Primary Care Trust (PCT) which oversees GPs in the town and runs the War Memorial Hospital, said: 'We're aware the GMC has decided to take Jane Barton's case to the next stage - a professional conduct committee.'

'The PCT and the health authority now need to reflect on that.'

The GMC met to discuss complaints made against Dr Barton at a private meeting earlier this month, after which they decided to refer her case to the conduct committee.

But although the PCT has admitted her case has been referred, the GMC will not confirm it.

A spokeswoman for the GMC said: 'We are aware of her and are currently considering what action, if any, needs to be taken.'

All doctors referred to the committee are charged with serious professional misconduct when they appear at a hearing.

Dr Barton will have been told the basis of the complaint and what allegations have been levelled against her.

However, she will not hear the full details until she appears before the conduct committee.

It is expected it will not be heard until next year because the cases of about 100 other UK doctors are already booked to be heard ahead of hers.

In the meantime, further inquiries may eventually rule out the referral to the conduct committee, which would mean the investigation would cease and allegations would be dropped.

Under new powers, health bosses in Hampshire can suspend Dr Barton if they think it necessary in order to protect members of the public or if they believe it is in the public interest.

However, no action is currently planned.

Dr Barton has not responded to direct inquiries from *The News* made at her home address and the doctor's practice where she works in Crossways in Gosport.

She is off sick from work, as of last week, with a condition that pre-dates a hearing by the GMC, according to Mr Piper.



STARS OF THE WORLD

Something blew...
ZETA SAYS 'DRY DO'

ONLY IN
Sunday

Suicide man shuts the M1

DRIVERS were gridlocked as 18 miles of the M1 were shut both ways for EIGHT HOURS yesterday because a man was threatening to jump off a bridge.

Thousands were caught in tailbacks and resulting chaos on side roads near Leicester. The man was talked down by police.

New old folks death probe

THE professor who investigated serial killer Dr Harold Shipman is to head a probe into hospital deaths.

Richard Barker will lead the third inquiry into the deaths of at least eight elderly patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital, Hants.





The news was crushing, but it was only the beginning...

By Debra King, 47, from Hyde, Manchester

nuzzled into his neck. Kissed the silver hair above it.

There was nowhere else in the world I'd rather be than here, lying next to my new husband.

'Ouch, that hurts,' he moaned, rubbing the base of his back.

'Back to the doctor's, and no arguments,' I said, frowning.

He'd been back and forth to the doctor for a while because of a bladder infection. We went to the surgery that day.

'Ah yes,' the doctor frowned. 'I've had your test results back.'

Jim had had some blood tests done a few weeks before.

'I'm afraid they show you have cancer of the urethra.'

The words bore

into my head like a drill. We'd only been married a week. Just one week. And now this.

I'd given up my life in America for Jim. I couldn't resist his English accent, and he was the sweetest, kindest man I'd ever met. When he'd asked me to marry him and move to England, I hadn't hesitated. My love for him meant I would have gone anywhere. I couldn't bear to think about him being taken from me.

First things first, he needed three months of chemotherapy and morphine.

Numb from shock, we stumbled out of the surgery, collapsed in floods of tears.

'Always remember I'm your wife. I love you, and nothing will change that,' I said.

But of course everything changed. The chemo sessions sapped every ounce of his strength. Made him violently sick. It tore me apart to see the man I loved in so much pain.

One night, screams crept into my dreams. 'Aaaaaaaghhhh.' I sat bolt upright.

'Get off me!' he yelled. It was Jim, quivering at the bottom of the bed. He clutched the sheet round his neck, tears streamed from his bloodshot eyes.

'Jim, you're scaring me,' I said, reaching out to him.

'Snakes... coming out of the wall,' he wailed, face contorted in fear. He was hallucinating.

It had to be the morphine.

All I could do was hold him until he wore himself out, and drifted into a fitful sleep.

The doses of morphine were so high, Jim was permanently out of it. Half the time he didn't

The clutter died



It's painful to look at photos of Jim's dad, above with us on our wedding day

have a clue who I was, or who he was.

One day, he wandered out and stood in the middle of the road. I bundled him back inside, shaking, thinking of what could have happened. He was out of control.

I'd stare at Jim's vacant eyes and try not to cry. Where was the strong, intelligent, dynamic man I married? Would he ever come back?

I hated this evil illness, and the evil drugs that had taken him away.

The only thing that kept me going were visits from Jim's doctor. He was a bit scruffy and eccentric-looking, but a nice enough man, so reassuring. He told us he'd do everything he could to help.

One afternoon, he arrived with a grave look on his face.

'Jim,' he said quietly. 'The treatment isn't working out.'

We both knew what was coming.

'I'm so sorry, but there's

nothing more we can try.' My poor Jim had 18 months to live.

To have it spell out, a limit on how long we had together was crucifying. My world was blown to bits. Jim was 55, too young for this.

'You gave up everything for me, and now you'll be alone,' Jim sobbed.

'We have to be positive,' I whispered.

I refused to give up on the man I loved.

Things went from bad to worse. Jim lost his job as an electrician, our

house was repossessed, we were put in a council house. But all I cared about was being with my Jim, however long we had.

For Jim, it was crushing. All his life he'd been a provider. Now he was dependent on me.

One evening, we were watching TV and Jim went to the loo.

He's taking an age...

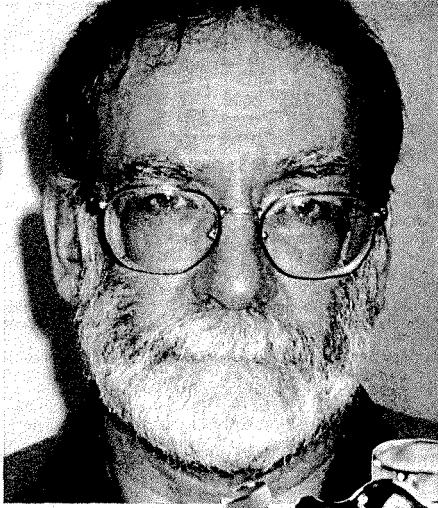
Then I heard it. The car engine. Panic raced

The only thing that kept me going were visits from the doctor

It's a drug addict's paradise, my bag, said the doctor

DEBRA'S HORRENDOUS TRUE STORY

ches of with



He was a bit scruffy-looking, but he was so reassuring

Mr King some questions about his father, who died under the care of Dr Shipman,' they said. It looked like Shipman had killed Jim's dad with a lethal injection. And what about Jim's Aunt Irene, and Aunt Molly who'd died the other year? 'Why?' Jim cried over and over. And then, 'How close was I?' That was the worst of it. Knowing Shipman was probably planning to kill Jim, too.

We went to watch Shipman's trial. Sat with relatives of Shipman's other victims - there were so many. The evil doctor sat with eyes cold and steely. I kept thinking, *It could have been Jim.* It turned out Shipman had written huge morphine prescriptions for Jim, so he could stash away the extra amounts for his victims. The hospital had sent Shipman a letter saying Jim didn't have cancer. But he hadn't told us. Continued poisoning him.

I stared down at the monster in the dock, the man who'd put us through hell, driven Jim to attempt suicide. Shipman was found, guilty of 15 murders, and sentenced to life. But we'll never know how many people he killed. My husband is a broken man, not the person I married. The morphine's affected his memory. We'd only been married a week when Shipman told Jim he was dying. There were times when I wondered if our marriage would be strong enough to survive. But it did. And we both feel so lucky that Jim's still here to tell the tale. Because so many innocent patients of Dr Shipman aren't.

When I told Jim, his silence said more than words could. He, and his whole family, had trusted the doctor. Was he really a killer? We were still in shock when the police came round the next day. 'We want to ask

the doctor they were talking about. Jim's doctor, Dr Harold Shipman. I didn't stop to pick up the tins off the floor, got home as quick as I could. Visions of Shipman's evil syringe and the morphine he wanted to give Jim fixed in my head. He'd been trying to kill my husband. When I told Jim, his silence said more than words could. He, and his whole family, had trusted the doctor. Was he really a killer? We were still in shock when the police came round the next day. 'We want to ask

through me, lodged in my throat. I ran to the garage. Jim was in the car. A hosepipe trailed from the exhaust in through the window. I tugged at the door, dragged him out, and collapsed on the floor with him. He'd tried to kill himself. 'Jim,' I cried. 'Please don't. I love you. We'll fight this.'

He just looked at me blankly, all hope gone. I felt like I was cracking up. What kind of hell must he be going through? Still Jim got sicker. Came down with a nasty chest infection. I sat by his bedside night and day, hung onto each breath, hoping it wasn't his last. But he was dying in front of my eyes. I could see the life leaving him.

Desperate, I rang the doctor. He was round in minutes. He stared at Jim, then opened his big, black leather bag, took out a huge syringe. And a bottle of morphine. 'It's a drug addicts' paradise, my bag,' he said, sucking up the drug with his syringe. A prickling sensation spread over my flesh.

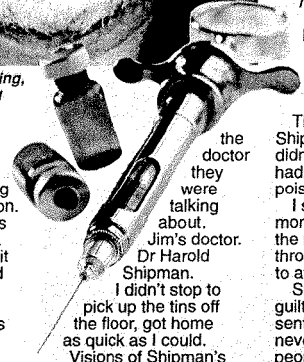
Please not more morphine, there must be another way... Maybe some antibiotics? Anything. I asked the doctor what he thought. He held my gaze for a few seconds, and slowly put the syringe back in his bag, wrote out a prescription for antibiotics and left. I was glad. That doctor was beginning to give me the creeps. I didn't care if he'd treated Jim and his family for years,

there was something about him... The chest infection cleared up, but he was still dependent on morphine. Worse for him, the chemo had left him impotent. We went to see a consultant, to see if something could be done. He looked at Jim's notes, frowned. 'Mr King, I don't know how to say this, but, you don't have cancer. You're not dying!' he said. It was like a rug had been pulled from beneath me. We'd been shot into uncertainty. My mind was flailing around. Who was telling the truth? I know who I wanted to believe...

Jim looked blank - was he dying or not? Too numb with shock to dare to start hoping, we went to see another doctor. 'Looks like you've won the Lottery,' he said after reading Jim's notes. 'The hospital made a mistake with the results. I'd find yourself a good lawyer!' It was like bright sunshine bursting out from behind the darkest of clouds. No cancer, Jim was going to live! We hugged each other tight, still not quite believing our second chance. Jim was still hooked on morphine and, with his body ravaged by chemo, he hardly felt like celebrating. I persuaded him to switch to a doctor who would get him off morphine. Jim went cold turkey. Spent days curled up in a ball, or writhing around in spasms. He lashed out like a madman when I went near him. For three weeks, I listened

to his chilling screams. It was hell. That Christmas was terrible. Jim's 83-year-old dad died after coming down with an ear infection. Early in the New Year his aunt Irene passed away. She was in her 70s, but it was still sudden. I hoped the bad news wouldn't affect Jim's recovery. A few days later, I was in the supermarket when I heard two women nattering. 'Have you heard... that doctor's been arrested... They say he killed his patient.' The basket slipped out of my hands, crashed to the floor, spilling tins and packets everywhere. Then I caught sight of the front page of the paper, and started to shake. Familiar cold eyes stared back at me. It was

Please not more morphine, there must be another way...



With Jim: It could have been him

Chat 5

As told to Lisa Bookman and Joe Cusack. Photos: Manchester Evening News/Patricia Bank/Corbis Stockmarket/PA Images Bank

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HEALTH: GMC to examine complaints against former Gosport War Memorial Hospital doctor

Hospital inquiry leads to misconduct charge



Dr Jane Barton is to face a charge of serious professional misconduct from the General Medical Council

by Rebecca Ellinor
Health reporter

A DOCTOR involved in an inquiry into deaths of patients at a Gosport hospital is to be accused of serious professional misconduct.

Dr Jane Barton, who was in day-to-day charge of medical care at Gosport War Memorial Hospital until she left in July 2000, is being investigated by the General Medical Council.

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Ian Piper, chief executive

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of Gosport Primary Care Trust (PCT) which oversees GPs in the town and runs the War Memorial Hospital, said:

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HOSPITAL: Authority announces action in light of investigation

20-09-2002

Health chiefs are to be moved on

by **Richard Whitehouse**
The News

GOSPORT'S health boss has today been moved to another job after police were handed a new file about the use of drugs at the town's War Memorial Hospital.

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Health Authority today announced Ian Piper, the chief executive of the Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust, has been temporarily redeployed.

The health authority has also asked Tony Horne, chief executive of East Hampshire Primary Care Trust, which is responsible for the health of people in Havant, to step down from his top role for the time being.

The startling development in the long-running War Memorial saga came as the health authority revealed it had passed to police management documents expressing concern about drug use at the hospital as long ago as 1991 – seven years earlier than inquiries have so far concentrated on.

Police will look at the new information in reference to deaths of several elderly patients at the War Memorial Hospital.

The health authority said Mr Piper and Mr



Care trust chief executives Ian Piper, left, and Tony Horne, are on the move

Police hand statements to prosecutors

GOSPORT's War Memorial Hospital is currently being investigated by police and professional regulatory bodies are also looking at the actions of staff at the hospital.

Police say they are handing new statements from relatives to the Crown

Prosecution Service to review.

Last week the government's chief medical officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, commissioned an audit of the hospital's death rates.

Expert Professor Richard Baker will carry this out.

Horne have been redeployed to other duties because they are understood to have been involved in management decisions at the hospital at the time.

In a statement Gareth Cruddance, chief executive of the health authority, said: 'This will ensure the ongoing investigation is, and is seen to be, fully independent and able to com-

mand the trust of local people.'

Health authority spokesman Adrian Osborne said the documents had come into their possession 'very recently' but he did not know what was in them.

Mr Osborne said: 'The information that has come out previously has focused on the period around 1998 and this new document

highlights concerns made in 1991 and this may present concerns for people who have been treated at the hospital.'

An information line has been set up inpatients or relatives on 0845 602 4116.

Mr Osborne said the Primary Care Trust would look at the issue of who would take over from Mr Piper and Mr Horne.

21-09-2002

Inside: Complete guide to the best TV viewing for Saturday and Sunday

weekend

Saturday, September 21, 2002



Why did my mother die?

The OAP who won't stop fighting until she's found the truth

PLUS



Mike Gilson on the trouble with term-time



Ron Brown on the old time bakery round

The News



GILSON on Saturday

What do they think of term so far? Rubbish!

SO THEY'RE back at school and the days of crazed summer high-jinks around the house, tying the hamster to the skateboard and tearing up the flowerbeds with ferocious games of football, are gone.

Instead, an incredible transformation has overcome the boys. Now they slouch around the place in their newly-scuffed school shoes, grunting and staring at the telly, the whole effort of five-and-a-half hours at school clearly too much for them.

The sounds of summer, arguing the toss for the sake of it and making 'hilarious' burping noises, are no more, and where once we couldn't get them to shut up, now we have no chance of anything approaching intelligent conversation.

A sample from the other night. Me: What are your new classes like? Them: OK

What about the new teachers? All right.

Have you learnt anything today? No.

What, nothing? Yeah, nothing. What was the best part of the day? Lunch.

All right, the next best then? Break.

What about the after-school club? Rubbish.

Rubbish, (ie, that meal was rubbish or your guitar playing is rubbish) is a word used with incredible regularity at the moment. It's nice to see some of the old words coming back, replacing pants and naff, I suppose.

The truth is that when we later attend parents' evening we will actually find out that that day they each wrote a novel, starred in the school production of the Passion Plays and sailed across the Channel in a boat they made from loo rolls and bed linen while dressed in full Tudor costume.

It's just that they don't seem to be able to summon up the energy to tell us about it.

Having said that, last night they turned the tables on me. Coming in from a long, tiring day they pounced.

What did you do at work today? Nothing.

What was the best part? Coming home.

You must have learnt something? Yeah, stop asking rubbish questions of people who have had long hard days at work or school.

I've got the ocean blues

EVERY now and then, I get a bit worried about the environment. Usually it is sparked by the strangest things.

Take the poster on the wall of my local fish and chip shop showing the sea in which all sorts of creatures swim. Alongside are explanations of the number of them now caught and served up on the nation's plates. It makes frightening reading I can tell you.

For what it suggests is that we are only a few cod away from regularly serving up John Dory with the chips and mushy peas.

Anyone who's ever seen what a John Dory looks like will know that no amount of batter will hide the hideous nature of this creature.

We always read that the stocks of cod and haddock are rapidly declining and that fishing companies are being forced to go deeper into the murky blackness of the oceans to find something for us to eat. Reaching the bottom

feeders cannot be far away.

Which brings me back to that poster. For the John Dory is actually quite a handsome creature compared to some of those who crawl along the bottom. So dark is it down there that most of the fish have had to develop eyes the size of saucers just so they don't bump into each other.

Add a tail and a couple of nasty antennae, feeler-type things and that's about the make-up of the fish of the future.

What kind of life do these things have? At least your average cod and haddock can gambol in the warmer reaches of the upper seas chasing around with their mates until the big net in the sky comes calling.

Surely bottom feeders who lead lonely, miserable, cold lives are not going to be able to rouse themselves to taste nice without a barrow-load of tartare sauce.

Anyone for saveloy?

INSIDE WEEKEND

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COVER STORY

They saw an OAP, a lady on her own. But I'm very determined



Families are fighting for answers about their elderly relatives' deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. One of the doughtiest campaigners is Gillian Mackenzie, whose mother died in 1998. **SIMON TOFT** reports.

WHEN Gillian Mackenzie was a pupil at top girls' school Roedean in Brighton after the war, her house motto translated as 'grit, guts and determination'.

That was 50 years ago, but today she says: 'I have lived up to that ever since.'

It's a tenacity that has served her well as she continues a four-year fight to get what she believes is justice over the death of her 91-year-old mother at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Behind the grey hair and the pearls is a woman who's not afraid to make waves.

She says: 'At Roedean I was always encouraged to question things. I can be an extremely obstinate lady. When I think something is wrong I will go all out to put it right.'

It was Mrs Mackenzie's original complaint about drugs given to her mother, Gladys Richards, in 1998 that ended up triggering one internal and three external inquiries into the treatment of patients, the latest of which has been ordered by the government's chief medical officer.



Gosport War Memorial Hospital

It will be carried out by the professor who scrutinised evidence surrounding the deaths of patients of convicted serial killer Dr Harold Shipman. As a result, other families are now fighting for answers about their elderly relatives' deaths at the Gosport hospital.

When 68-year-old Mrs Mackenzie decided to challenge medical procedures, she knew she had to prepare thoroughly to be taken seriously.

When she first went to Gosport CID with her complaints over her mother's death, she was armed with photocopies from old law books she'd studied.

She says: 'I didn't go to

the police because my mother had died. I went because I thought the law had been broken. I was convinced of that then and I remain just as convinced today.'

When the police initially ruled there were insufficient grounds for any prosecution of hospital staff, it only made Mrs Mackenzie more determined.

She claims: 'I was totally underestimated. They saw an OAP, a woman on her own. But I'm a very determined lady and I still have my marbles.'

Last year she even went back to college to study for an A-level in law. She was forced to give it up in March before sitting the

exam because she had to have eye surgery.

There have been other health problems. In April she was rushed to hospital and diagnosed with kidney stones. She is still receiving treatment. In July, she had to have more surgery on her other eye.

But Mrs Mackenzie is not easily deterred.

She says: 'I have always fought. Every time you do it makes you stronger for the next time.'

'I think for myself and that makes life difficult for other people. People can find me abrasive, but if you keep on submitting and submerging your personality you will end up with more problems than if you speak out.'

She was married to Hamish, a tea planter, and lived with him in Sri Lanka before coming back to Britain in 1967. They had to start from scratch and lived wherever Hamish could get a job. Twenty-five years ago, they arrived in the genteel resort of Eastbourne and a modest detached house three miles from the seafront.

Mrs Mackenzie, who has two children, lost Hamish in 1986. He was in remission from cancer, but succumbed to leukaemia. She says: 'He was a fighter too.'

COVER STORY



'I didn't go to the police because my mother had died. I went because I thought the law had been broken'

THE STORY SO FAR

GILLIAN Mackenzie complained to police after her mother, Gladys Richards, died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in August 1998. She had been admitted for rehabilitation after a hip operation at the Royal Hospital Haslar and doctors put her on a mixture of powerful drugs including heroin-based diamorphine.

Mrs Mackenzie believes they crossed the line between treating a patient for pain and contributing to her death. Her official complaint sparked a police inquiry, but the Crown Prosecution Service examined the file and said there was not enough evidence to secure any convictions.

When she protested to the Police Complaints Authority about the way she was dealt with, it upheld her complaint and disciplinary action was taken against two officers.

An internal hospital inquiry was also carried out, but no staff were disciplined as a result.

Another inquiry was conducted by the Commission for Health Improvement, an independent watchdog set up by the Department of Health.

The CHI found there was systematic failure to provide good care, including insufficient guidelines on prescribing painkillers and sedatives, inadequate review of prescribing for older people and lack of supervision.

A draft action plan was sent to the CHI by Gosport health bosses earlier this month.

The government's chief medical officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, has now launched a further inquiry.

Hampshire police has also said it is to resubmit its file on Gosport War Memorial Hospital, complete with the CHI findings, to the CPS.

Mrs Mackenzie and relatives of about a dozen other patients who died at the hospital hope it will convince the CPS that their cases should be investigated further.

This week *The News* revealed that Dr Jane Barton, who was in day-to-day charge of medical care at the hospital until July 2000, is facing a charge of serious professional misconduct by the General Medical Council.

Officialdom and battling against authority doesn't worry her. Last month she wrote to the Attorney-General setting out her views on how her case had been handled by the police and had previously fired off a missive to the Director of Public Prosecutions and several to the Chief Constable of Hampshire. Copies have gone to Tony Blair.

She says: 'I am not in awe of anybody. I have always been a great admirer of Rumpole of the Bailey (a barrister created by John Mortimer and played by Leo McKern), but I always say I take after his wife, who he called "she who must be obeyed".'

She believes more people should complain if they're not happy with how they've been treated.

'I think we have the NHS we deserve because we treat doctors as Gods. They are normal human beings who don't know it all.'

Mrs Mackenzie is an active

member of the University of the Third Age, getting involved in current affairs and music groups. Her interests include psychology and philosophy and she says she never stops learning.

'I find relaxation in the reference library. I'm always discovering something new.'

She has 'a hell of a lot' of paperwork, neatly kept in files in a spare bedroom. She also has her own mini legal library, complete with police training manuals that she has scrutinised to pursue her claims that officers did not properly investigate her initial complaint.

She says of the police and the medical authorities: 'I would have thought they'd realised by now that I'm not going to go away. This is going to take me years, but that doesn't worry me in the slightest.'

'I'm still facing a lot of obstacles. I know it's far from over. But nothing deters me because I believe I'm right.'

Above: Gillian Mackenzie with her mother Gladys Richards
Below: Mrs Mackenzie asking some tough questions to members of the hospital board during a meeting at Fareham Civic Offices



HEALTH: Lawyer who helped relatives of serial killer's victims joins Gosport families' battle for inquiry

Shipman solicitor to probe hospital deaths

THE solicitor who represented relatives of Harold Shipman's patients has been hired to help families of elderly patients who died at a Gosport hospital.

Relatives contacted high-profile lawyer Ann Alexander, who won court action forcing the government to hold an inquiry in public into the deaths of Shipman's patients.

The senior partner at Alexander Harris Solicitors today criticised the police and health groups involved in investigating deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital for their apparent lack of action.

Miss Alexander said: 'It is of particular concern to learn that yet again serious questions must be raised about the conduct of health care professionals and the failure of the police to carry out a sufficient-

by Saxon East
The News

ly thorough investigation.

'These are families who have also raised their concerns with several administrative bodies including the health authority and government ministers over the past five years and yet it is only now that the authorities seem to be taking note.

'We have seen in the case of Harold Shipman how delays resulted in the worst possible circumstances. Urgent change is required to prevent similar situations happening again and to restore and maintain confidence in the National Health Service.'

Miss Alexander met with relatives for the first time over the weekend and will now sift through all the information they have compiled before deciding how to proceed.



Ann Alexander

Families won case for public inquiry

ALEXANDER Harris Solicitors was contacted by the relatives of the patients who died under the care of Dr Harold Shipman.

After Shipman was convicted of killing 15 of his patients, the government was going to hold an inquiry in private.

But Alexander Harris Solicitors won court action which forced the government to hold the

inquiry in public.

That inquiry looked at how many patients died under Shipman's care and the circumstances surrounding their death.

The next stage of the inquiry – which will not be heard until 2003 – will look at what the authorities did to stop Shipman killing his patients.

The new development comes just days after health bosses revealed an internal management document highlighted fears about drug prescribing practices at the hospital in 1991 – seven years earlier than inquiries so far have concentrated on.

Relatives who hired Miss Alexander believe the deaths of

a number of patients could have been down to the wrong level of drugs being administered.

As reported, Dr Jane Barton – who was in day-to-day charge of the treatment of some elderly patients until she left in July 2000 – looks set to be charged with serious professional misconduct by

doctors' regulatory body the General Medical Council.

There is no suggestion that Dr Barton, or any other member of staff at the hospital, deliberately harmed any patient.

Once solicitors from Alexander Harris have reviewed the evidence, options could include putting pressure on the government to set up an inquiry.

NEWS
IN BRIEF

Fire-ravage leaves hark

PORTSMOUTH: A fire ship brought into Port after her cargo caught has left harbour – taking hazardous cargo with

Fire crews from Portsmouth Havant and Waterlooville braved thick smoke and searing temperatures as they clambered inside container vessel West after the fire started.

Arsonists sus

GOSPORT: Arsonists suspected of starting fire which destroyed a house last night.

Fire crews from Gosport the blaze which occurred in the area of underground Brown-down on Ports Road at 7.45pm yesterday.

The firefighters spent more than an hour putting out the fire. Police are investigating the cause of the blaze.

Huge coffee

FAREHAM: A school is part in a national event to raise £3.5 million for cancer

Have your say on way leisure services run

by Bill Young The News

PEOPLE have the chance to air their views on plans to transform leisure services in Fareham.

Council chiefs are holding a series of public meetings and are inviting opinion on proposals to hand over sports halls, swimming pools, community centres and theatres to a charity.

The first such meeting proved a success with more than 40 people attending.

In June a draft plan to radically change how leisure services are run in Fareham was unveiled in a bid to cut costs and provide more modern facilities.

The council faces a £5.8m bill in the next 20 years to bring facilities up to scratch and the proposals would put the running of leisure centres into the hand of a charitable trust.

The council's executive member for leisure Connie Lockley said: 'There was a lot of interest and some good questions and we didn't get any negative vibes.'

There will be another meeting next Tuesday, starting at 7pm in Ferneham Hall.

HEALTH: Doctor being scrutinised by General Medical Council returns to work at surgery

Colleagues support GP



by Rebecca Ellinor Health reporter

A DOCTOR being investigated for her conduct while employed at a Gosport community hospital is back at work.

Dr Jane Barton, who works as a GP at The Surgery, Forton Road, Gosport, was on sick leave when the General Medical Council (GMC), which regulates doctors, said it was looking into her past conduct.

Dr Barton was in day-to-day charge of medical care at Gosport War Memorial Hospital until she left in July 2000.

It is the way she performed her duties there that is now being scrutinised by the GMC, which received complaints about her from relatives of some elderly patients she treated.

But *The News* understands the GMC, which has only ever formally confirmed it is 'aware' of Dr Barton, has decided she is not a danger to patients and is fit to continue working.

The GMC refused to verify it was happy for Dr Barton to continue to work while she waited for a date for a possible conduct committee hearing - where peers will decide if she should have her doctor status revoked.

However, Adrian Osborne from Hampshire's strategic health authority, which oversees doctors in our communities, said it was content to allow her to continue to practice.

Colleagues and patients have voiced their backing for Dr Jane Barton

No criminal charges have been brought

AN INVESTIGATION by health watchdog the Commission for Health Improvement, published earlier this year, revealed the use of pain relief at Gosport War Memorial Hospital was excessive and regularly put patients at risk.

Dr Jane Barton was the clinical assistant at the hospital in 1998 when a number of elderly patients - who had gone to the hospital for rehabilitation - died.

She is now being investigated by her peers at the General Medical Council, who will decide if they think she has done anything wrong.

There is no suggestion that Dr Barton or any of the other staff who



Gosport War Memorial Hospital

worked on the wards of the community hospital, who are also being investigated by regulatory bodies, deliberately caused harm to any patient and no criminal charges have been brought against anyone.

He said: 'The GMC is the statutory body that considers the performance of doctors and advises the NHS if it thinks there are circumstances in which they believe a doctor is unfit to practice.'

'The GMC has not advised the strategic health authority of any grounds on which they believe it would be appropriate to prevent Dr Barton from working in general practice. On this basis, we believe it appropriate for her to continue.'

Dr Barton's colleagues and patients have backed her too.

Doctors Knapman, Beasley, Peters, Brigg and Brook, who work at the

same practice, said: 'Having known Dr Barton's high professional standards over many years, we have no doubt about her abilities and this view is shared by her colleagues in other Gosport practices.'

'Numerous patients have also contacted the surgery to express their unreserved support for Dr Barton.'

One patient, Mona Ballard, of South Street, Gosport, has been under Dr Barton's care for the past decade and sees her every two months.

She said: 'Dr Jane Barton is the most caring and conscientious doctor that I have ever had in my 81 years.'

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The News TOMORROW: ALMOST 200,000 PEOPLE WILL READ THIS...

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HEALTH: Relatives of those who died at hospital come forward

Families call for new ward deaths probe

by Richard Whitehouse
The News

TEN more families have asked police and health officials to look into the deaths of their relatives at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Police and health chiefs are already investigating the complaints of 13 families about the care and treatment their loved ones received before they died.

Many of the cases concern the administration of sedative drugs, such as diamorphine.

Now more families have come forward after a document dating from 1991 was uncovered by the health authority about prescribing practices at the hospital.

The health authority set up an information line for anyone with any concerns and 10 families contacted it and have had their details passed onto the police.

A police spokeswoman said: 'After the last announcements about the report the health authority set up an information line through NHS Direct.

Ten relatives contacted the line and expressed concerns about deaths at the hospital.

INQUIRIES

- Investigations into deaths of patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital sparked in 1998 after Gillian Mackenzie raised concerns about the death of her mother Gladys Richards.
- Police sent information on Mrs Richard's death, together with that concerning a dozen other patients, to the Crown Prosecution Service which said it did not contain enough evidence to convict anyone.
- A report published by health watchdog the Commission for Health Improvement criticised the use of powerful drugs at the hospital.
- Professor Richard Baker, who worked on the Harold Shipman case, is now conducting a death audit.
- An internal management document, which raised concerns about the use of drugs in 1991, handed to police.

'That information has been passed on to the health authority and also on to us. We have written to them all and have said that we will be in touch shortly.'

Other relatives have previously complained about the action taken by police in investigating their cases.

Police have recently sent a file on some of the other cases to the Crown Prosecution Service.

This includes a report published by the Commission for Health Improvement, independent medical reports on five of the people who died at the hospital and a report by Chief

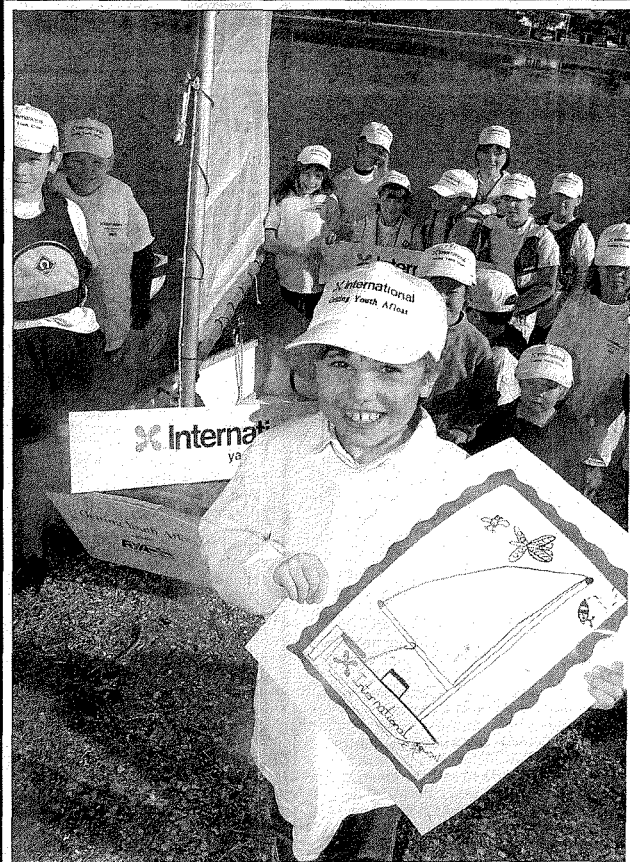
Superintendent Dan Clacher into formal complaints made against the police.

When a previous file was sent to the CPS it was returned and police were told there was not enough evidence for a prosecution.

One of the relatives, Gillian Mackenzie, whose mother Gladys Richards died in 1998, has now written to the prime minister asking him to look into the actions of the police.

She received a reply which said her letter had been passed to the Home Office which said it would be kept on file and her comments noted.

Winning a dinghy was just plain sailing



Sophie Bishop and friends check out their new sailing dinghy PICTURE: STEVE

SAILING enthusiast Sophie Bishop could not believe her luck when messing about in boats landed her a big prize.

The eight-year-old from Alverstoke, Gosport, has just won a new training dinghy after answering a few simple questions about her favourite hobby.

The prize, which was presented by the Royal Yachting Association magazine and International Coatings' UK, was offered to encourage more young people to try boating and couldn't have come at a better time for the Alverstoke Junior School pupil.

Sophie, a member of the Alverstoke Sailing Club, was joined by her friends to receive the prize and try some of the club's activities themselves, at the Clayhall Road, on the Gosport peninsula. For more information contact the club call (023) 2636760.

Con artists crackdown intensifies

ANTI-CRIME officials in Portsmouth today vowed to clamp down on doorstep con artists after a national survey showed bogus callers targeted 16 times as many people than previously thought.

The poll showed there were almost 100,000 older people targeted in the

south-east last year - a third of the national total.

Bogus callers raided the homes of three pensioners in one day in Portsmouth last week. Ian Freeston, a crime reduction officer at Fratton police station, said: 'It's a hideous crime.'

David Caddick, of Portsmouth Social Services,

said: 'There are lots of practical responses which we will continue to develop.' Help the Aged senior safety manager Lysa Ralph said: 'We need to prevent these despicable criminals who target the most vulnerable people in our society from getting away with it.'

Girl Guides fund Christmas

TRAINEE Girl Guide leaders have raised nearly £100 to help fund a Christmas tea party for the elderly.

On Sunday eight young leaders, aged 14 to 18-years-old, organised a beetle drive and raffle for the Gosport Abbeyfield Society, which supports the Tamar care home.

The event proved very popu-

by Claire Port
The News

lar and has helped the teenagers pass the community service section of their training.

A leader for Gosport North and South divisions, Marion Fisher said the beetle drive was a great success. 'They did very well,' she said, 'And they

will now have to go to organise this in the future.'

'The money made by the girls goes for their Christmas cause for the girl'

For information contact (01329) 236760

EXPLOSION SCARE: Town centre chaos as disposal experts deal with suspicious package

Patient's parcel sparks bomb alert at hospital

by Sirkka Huish
The News

THE centre of Gosport was brought to a standstill for more than three hours as a bomb scare caused chaos.

The drama began when a member of staff at the War Memorial Hospital found a large suspicious package inside the building yesterday morning.

Police and firefighters immediately evacuated more than 200 patients and staff, as well as people from neighbouring houses and shops.

Royal Navy bomb disposal experts moved in to dismantle what was thought to be an explosive - while Gosport's fire and ambulance crews remained on standby.

Nurses were forced to care for patients in the car park as the team dismantled the package in a hospital corridor.

But the explosive ordnance team of two from Southern Diving Unit 2 at Horsea Island discovered the package was nothing more than a battery-operated syringe driver, which electronically injects syringes.

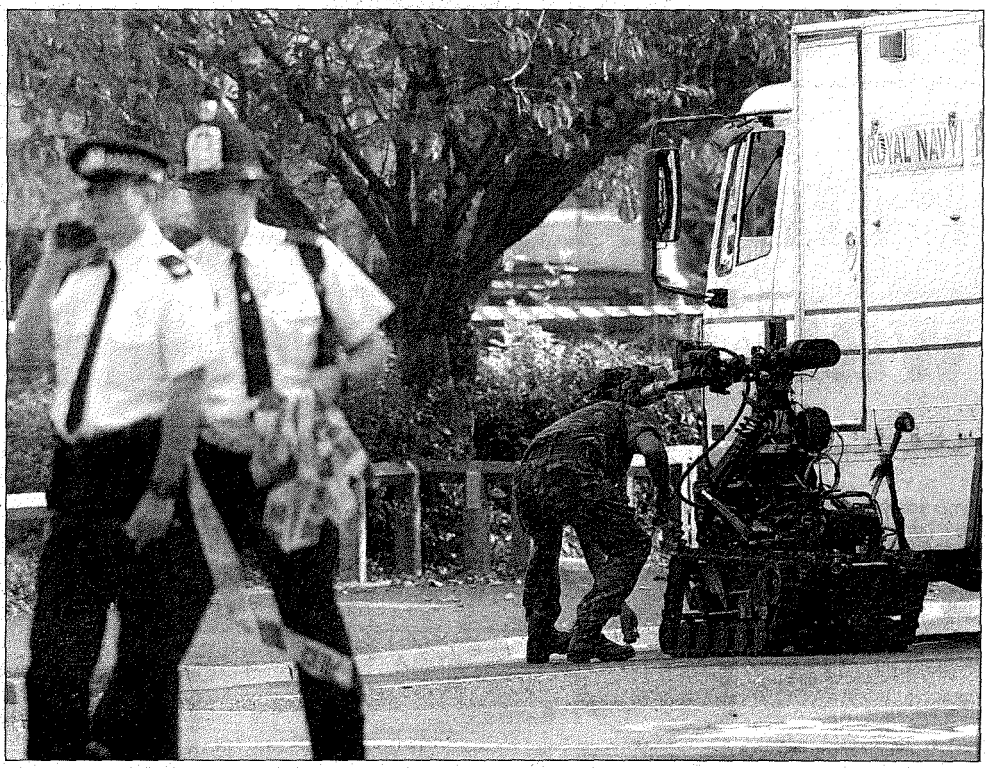
The medical equipment had been left at the post room, then transferred to the records department, where its address raised suspicions.

The address simply read: 'The staff, Gosport War Memorial Hospital.'

Police sealed off the area and traffic and pedestrians were turned away from Bury Road, Privett Road, Anns Hill Road, The Avenue and Jelliecoe Road.

The roads were gridlocked while passers-by milled around behind the police cordon waiting to find out what was going on.

Alan Pickering, acting chief executive of Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust, said: 'It is thought an elderly patient dropped the syringe driver off at the hospital, but



Police cordon off the area as the bomb disposal robot moves in to examine the suspect package PICTURE: STEVE REID (025003-63)

it raised concern because things wouldn't normally be addressed in that way.

'This was a very serious incident which was handled extremely well by all the services.

'The hospital staff coped admirably throughout this incident and as always their utmost concerns have been to ensure the safety and care of patients.'

Leading firefighter Jim Buck from Gosport fire station said: 'Many of the pa-

tients were elderly and very ill, but they coped extremely well with what was happening and were very co-operative.'

The package was discovered at 10.30am and cars began to trickle through the roads in the area again as the cordons were removed at about 1pm.

A police spokesman said: 'We had to take all the necessary precautions when the package was dismantled and that unfortunately caused disruption.'

Police evacuate nearby homes

POLICE evacuated homes opposite the hospital and by the time the road was reopened around 30 people had gathered at the edge of the cordoned-off area.

One nurse waiting to get to work at the hospital said she had only known of one similar incident before.

The woman, who didn't want to be named, said: 'I

have only been working here for two years and it happened last year - but nothing like this.

'They usually turn out to be false alarms.

'Last time they just evacuated the front part of the hospital, but this time they have done the whole thing - they must be taking it very seriously.'

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Help improve hospitals

A HEALTH group which wants to improve Portsmouth hospitals is looking for people from our communities to help it in its task.

The Commission for Health Improvement wants to hear from people who want to talk about their experiences at Queen Alexandra Hospital at Cosham, Royal Hospital Haslar in Gosport and St Mary's Hospital at Milton.

The organisation is holding meetings on Monday and Tuesday and again the following Monday, October 22, to give people the chance to

speak. All information can be treated anonymously and in strict confidence.

CHI chief executive Peter Homa said: 'We expect a great deal of learning to emerge from the experience and want as many people as possible to contribute their views.'

The CHI will use the information when it carries out a routine assessment of Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust. Trust staff, patients and managers will also be consulted.

■ To arrange an appointment, send comments or for information contact 0845 6013012.

Code A

Parents must ensure trick-or-treat is known for nothing other than fun

At first sight it might look a disturbing figure: 65 calls in an hour to Hampshire police from people concerned about trick-or-treaters. But let's not get the problem out of proportion. Across the county, hundreds or even thousands of youngsters will have played the game introduced from the United States 10 years ago. The vast majority of them will have done so in a spirit of exuberance, and

they must not be made to suffer for the more malevolent antics of the few.

In any social activity, there will always be that handful who overstep the mark and cause trouble - especially among young people who are still learning what is and is not acceptable in a civilised society.

If trick-or-treat presents a particular

The News COMMENT

problem, that is precisely because it is such a relatively new phenomenon in Britain.

Vast numbers of older people did not engage in it as children and do not understand it.

So they have less tolerance for it than they would, for example, for the older-established penny-for-the-guy

tradition. That is nothing less than street begging, which would normally be considered beyond the social pale.

So while we have every sympathy with people genuinely alarmed or damaged by trick-or-treaters last night, we don't believe youngsters should be denied legitimate fun.

We simply have to accept parental responsibility for ensuring they know what is acceptable. We don't have to be killjoys.

Nostalgia with Ron Brown

School 'boffins' are ready for reunion

Former pupils of Portsmouth Grammar School who have pursued careers in science and medicine are being invited to a reunion on November 23. One 'old boy', Professor Andrew Lyne, director of Jodrell Bank, will give a talk at the lunch and there will be an informal workshop.

Anyone eligible and wanting to renew links with former classmates and revisit old haunts should contact Jan Webber on (023) 668 1392.

From one city seat of learning to another Binstead Road School. Former teacher David Roch was delighted to see himself in photo of the junior football team in our 'ay We Were' feature on October 7. He is the ill lad at the back with a moustache!

David tells me he joined the school in 1950 and took over the football team when Jack all became headteacher.

In those days the lads played in ordinary clothes, but he was allowed to buy 12 red-and-amber quartered shirts with white collars and black, gold-ringed socks for £15 (£15.20).

David says they were a great little team on a great little school - with no kissing, sitting or manhandling!

10 YEARS AGO: Pupils and staff at St Athelstan Primary School, near Petersfield, were given the day off when the school hall of collapsed overnight.

10 YEARS AGO: Power cuts caused havoc in the south, knocking out traffic lights and forcing the fire brigade onto emergency duty.

10 YEARS AGO: A policeman was attacked by two men with an iron bar and brick after he disturbed them on a routine check of a coal warehouse.

YOUR LETTERS

Hospital care

Having just read J Stephens's account (*Rather be dead than in hospital*) of life as a patient in Queen Alexandra Hospital, I can only say that they were most fortunate not to have been a patient on George Ward, Elderly Medicine.

Here, despite the fact that you would be deemed to be extremely frail and highly dependent, life is grim.

You would have to have a strong constitution or have lost your sense of smell as there is a constant and all-pervasive stench of urine or faeces.

In order to maintain a healthy balanced diet and adequate fluid intake you need to have dedicated relatives or friends who will spend time feeding you, checking that food appears and that it is palatable.

So that your own personal levels of hygiene and dignity are maintained even to basic standards it is necessary for your relatives to insist on a bath at least every seven to 10 days.

J Stephens would need to have highly vocal representatives daily challenging staff to maintain dignified levels of cleanliness and not left in soiled and smelly clothing.

You would also have to have highly observant relatives monitoring whether your medication is administered and taken.

I should know! I've been a daily visiting relative for nearly eight years and I, too, feel many of the patients would echo, if they could, J Stephens in saying 'I would rather die than go back in there.'

Dr Michael Bunton
Delphi Way, Waterlooville

... I, too, was dismayed and angered when Alan Bedford (chief executive of Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust) failed to mention that because of illness in QA and St Mary's Hospitals, they would be encouraging patients to come to Haslar hospital in Gosport.

LETTER OF THE WEEK: Tall Ships extravaganza

City should continue to host prestigious events

I found correspondent Paul J Edney's letter regarding the Tall Ships spectacular to be personally insulting.

The overall income to Portsmouth for this prestigious event was approximately £10m, a figure that all the experts had predicted.

I had one hour early one morning to commit it to Portsmouth or lose the event to another port in another country.

Knowing the benefit this event would be to Portsmouth, now and in the future, I did not hesitate and neither did the leaders of the Labour and Liberal groups when I discussed it with them.

Mr Edney says 'let local business and tourism fork out for the event.'

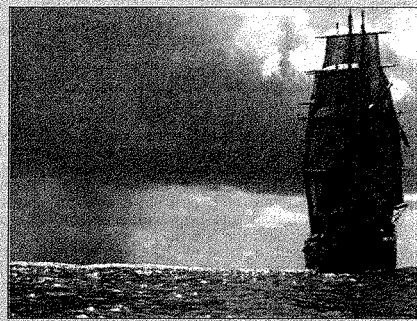
I can assure him that they do. Each year they contribute approximately £58.2m towards the council tax.

The visitor satisfaction with this event was probably the highest that I have known for any event

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The Tall Ship Lord Nelson

PICTURE: MAX MUDIE

in recent years. If we want to keep Portsmouth with the highest possible profile, which many other cities envy, we must continue to support such events. They promote a strong economy and create more jobs. Incidentally, I also committed Portsmouth to host the start and finish of the Tour de France (another 'first' for Portsmouth) in the

late-1980s without knowing the final cost - but I did know that the international coverage on television and in the press was worth a fortune to Portsmouth.

I am sure that if you had invested £300,000 on the Stock Exchange and seen it rise to £10m within two years, there would have been no complaints. I have no regrets.

Ian G Gibson
Havant Road, Drayton

He said on the TV news that patients should use 'other' hospitals.

As for the statement by trust spokeswoman Pat Forsyth that 'people would be told within the department to go to Haslar', it's a bit late by then, isn't it?

Apart from probably spreading the virus from one hospital to another, if I was really ill and had struggled through horrendous traffic to get to QA or St Mary's Hospitals, all I would need was to be told to go back the way I had just come!

The way I see it is that

it's good enough for Gosport, Lee-on-the-Solent and Fareham patients to have to go all the way to QA and St Mary's but people in Portsmouth have no intention of travelling the reverse journey to Haslar!

I badly hurt my leg a month ago.

I was in and out of Haslar in 15 minutes. The treatment was excellent and courteous.

Please use it, or lose it!

Cllr Julia Salter (Lib Dem)
St Ann's Crescent, Gosport

... I also have spent time

in both hospitals named by J Stephens, not once but on several occasions, and never once have I had reason to moan or complain.

I wonder why J Stephens did not ask for, or find, a toilet roll to replace the one missing?

And regarding seeing different doctors, did you think your doctor should have been a personal fixture just for you?

Also, I have never had a request for anything ignored.

All people who work in our hospitals are wonderful, dedicated people, and

the nurses are as near angels as they come.

By the way, how old is J Stephens? Not as old as me, I bet.

I am 83 next April and still thankful that, because of our wonderful hospital workers, I'm still able to admire and thank them all.

Raymond E Shore
(Ex-St John Ambulance Brigade Sgt)
Salcombe Avenue, Copnor

... I attended the head and neck unit and ward 39 at the QA recently for an ear operation.

I was treated with privacy and dignity at all times by Mr Johnstone's team in theatre and all the nurses and staff.

The food was also very good and hot.

Everything was clean and comfortable.

A big thank-you to everyone.

Primrose Holman (Mrs)
The Crescent, Southbourne

... I have recently spent two very unpleasant periods in Queen Alexandra Hospital at Cosham.

During both of these I was moved from ward to ward on more occasions than I am able to remember.

On the rare occasion that I did see a doctor I did not see the same one twice, and their instructions were often not recorded, which precluded follow-up treatment and other staff from sharing in the information.

Because of the constant moves the nurses never seemed to know what treatment I should be receiving.

There was a considerable lack of communication between the staff and, more importantly, the patients on what was happening.

There appears to be a lot of problems at Queen Alexandra Hospital, not so much with the dedicated doctors and nurses, who are doing their very best, but with incompetent management.

I wrote to QA and lodged an official complaint two months ago following my first stay.

Needless to say, I have yet to receive a response.

I am advised that they are not able to keep up with all of the outstanding complaints.

Geoff O'Neill
Walton Road
Gosport

DREDGE'S DAY



'Any comment, Adam?'

TO THE POINT

NOVEL: Graham Hurley professes to love Portsmouth, warts and all (as I do), but is more than happy to paint it blacker than black to make a living. Why not balance it

with a more optimistic novel?

Having lived in 10 towns or cities in the UK and worked in three times that number, I can assert that there are many more

aggressive and less friendly places than Pompey. I have sensed more aggression in 'genteel' Bath on weekend evenings - and the people there are frequently very

cold and snobby!

And it's rare to get shot on the streets here - unlike Manchester!

D Griffiths
French Street
Old Portsmouth

WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL: Authorities given last chance to investigate deaths

NEWS 4-11-2002

Hospital families vow to call for public probe

FAMILIES today vowed to demand a public inquiry into the deaths of patients at a Gosport hospital as it was revealed a total of 57 deaths could be under investigation.

Solicitors for the relatives of patients who died at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital have demanded a proper and full investigation from police chiefs and health bosses.

Their call came on the same day as they revealed there could be as many as 57 deaths involved in the case.

Ann Alexander, a leading clinical negligence solicitor, is now leading the families' hunt for the truth and said today she was calling for new investigations by all the agencies who have received complaints from families.

And she said that if the probes were not carried out she would demand a public inquiry.

Families have been demanding answers from health chiefs ever since they raised fears four years ago about the deaths of their elderly relatives at the hospital.

Many of them have never been interviewed by the police and have since made formal complaints over the way the investigations were carried out.

Ms Alexander revealed eight families came forward at a meeting last night concerned about their loved ones' deaths while another 30 relatives of patients who died at the hospital have contacted police.

She said: 'We want there to be new investigations by all of the agencies involved and for

by **Richard Whitehouse**
The News

them to speak to all the families who have come forward.'

'I will be asking police to explain to me everything that has been going on in their investigation up until now.'

'Many of the families are dissatisfied with what the police and the health authorities have done and we would like to see a full investigation opened into these cases.'

'If it is appropriate that a public inquiry is needed, then we will call for one.'

Ann Reeves, whose mother Elsie Devine died at the hospital in 1999, said she was pleased with what Ms Alexander had said.

She said: 'I have been fighting for three years and am now delighted that we all have the support of Alexander Harris Solicitors.'

'Since April when we formed the Gosport War Memorial Hospital Action Group we have been supporting each other so that we can get the answers we want.'

'Although we are interested in our own individual cases, we also want answers for everybody else affected.'



Rita Carby, whose husband Stanley died at the War Memorial Hospital, and her daughter Debbie McKay during the press conference

PICTURE: IAN HARGREAVES (025520-5)

BACKGROUND TO INQUIRY



Ann Alexander -pledge

THE Gosport War Memorial Hospital was first investigated by the police in 1998 when Gillian Mackenzie raised concerns about her mother Gladys Richards' death.

Since then, families have formed the Gosport War Memorial Action Group and there are investigations by

the General Medical Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council into staff involved.

In September, the chief medical officer ordered a clinical audit to be carried out at the hospital.

Also in September, a 1991 report came to light which raised concerns about

prescribing practices at the hospital. This summer, the Commission for Health Improvement published a report which criticised prescribing practices at the hospital.

The CPS is currently deciding whether staff at the hospital could be prosecuted for their role in their deaths.

Thursday 11

THE

SOE

LIBRARY

Bobby V

WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL: Four years after fears were raised relatives will finally be heard

Police are to interview hospital deaths families

by Richard Whitehouse
The News

POLICE today finally agreed to interview relatives of elderly patients who died at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital – four years after an investigation was launched.

In a dramatic turnabout, police said they would now speak to all relatives who were concerned about the level of care received at the hospital.

The move comes 24 hours after a solicitor involved in the Harold Shipman case called for a proper investigation. Yesterday Ann Alexander told a press conference there could be as many as 57 deaths under investigation in the probe.

Fears about the care received by elderly patients at the War Memorial Hospital were first brought to light when Gillian Mackenzie raised concerns about the death of her elderly mother Gladys Richards in 1998.

Another six families also raised their worries over the prescription of drugs at the hospital and although police said they had investigated the complaints, none of their relatives were ever interviewed.

But now, following a call by Ann Alexander – the solicitor who successfully called for a public enquiry into the Harold Shipman case – for a full-



Relatives – Ann Reeves, left, and Lesley Richards at yesterday's press conference

er probe into their claims, police have announced they will finally interview relatives.

Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Watts, who is heading the investigation, said: 'This is an on-going investigation.'

And a spokeswoman for Hampshire police confirmed: 'We are still collating evidence relating to the cases but we will be talking to all the relatives who have come for-

ward about their individual cases.'

Ann Alexander said today: 'We are delighted to hear that the police have decided to interview all the relatives.'

'There was great concern expressed at a meeting on Sunday night that a number of relatives who had previously complained to the police felt ignored and fobbed off.'

'If there is a pattern to these tragic and unexpected

deaths it seems, sensible that the police should examine as many of the cases as they can.'

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Health Authority said it would try and help any investigations being carried out and would continue its own investigations.

Mrs Mackenzie said: 'I am delighted that we are now pressing for a full investigation.'

HISTORY

■ August 1998: Gillian Mackenzie raises concerns about the drugs prescribed to her mother, Gladys Richards, who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

■ 1998-1999: Police investigate her death and send a file to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). It returns it saying there is not enough evidence for a prosecution.

■ 2001: More families contact police, concerned about their own relatives' deaths at the hospital.

■ 2002: Several of the families write to Hampshire Constabulary to make formal complaints about the investigation.

■ July 2002: The Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) publishes a report criticising procedures.

■ September 2002: Deputy Chief Constable Ian Readhead says a file containing details of five of the cases would be sent to the CPS for consideration.

■ Sept 2002: Ann Alexander, who has represented hundreds of families in the Harold Shipman case, announces she has been asked to look into the cases of the Gosport War Memorial Hospital Action Group.

Relatives today say they cannot wait to give their evidence

RELATIVES who have been fighting for years to tell their stories to the police today said they cannot wait to give their side of the tale.

Gillian Mackenzie and Ann Reeves have waited since 1998 to be interviewed.

Today they said they

by Sirikka Huish
The News

finally have the chance to tell police what they fear happened to loved ones.

Mrs Mackenzie's 91-year-old mother Gladys Richards died suddenly at the hospital while recuperating.

'I will be telling the police exactly what happened to my mother and that's it,' Mrs Mackenzie said.

'I will be giving them the story in great detail including all the bits they don't want to hear.'

'My mother was given high levels of sedative

drugs and police will be given the hard evidence and hard facts.'

Ann Reeves's mother Elsie Devine died in November 1999 after being sent to the hospital for rest care. But after a month there, doctors said her condition had deteriorated.

Mrs Reeves said: 'We will

tell police about what we think was over-prescription and a cocktail of drugs given to her in less than 24 hours without the prior knowledge of her family. 'She had so many drugs given to her that any fit person would have suffered. It is quite horrifying.'

FAREHAM *The* News & GOSPORT

The We Can Do It newspaper

Tuesday, November 5, 2002

FINAL

Last month this woman was a man. Today she reveals how she went from John to Jenni - and finally found inner peace

WOMAN - PAGES 20-21

FAMILIES WIN U-TURN OVER HOSPITAL DEATHS

Police agree to interview War Memorial relatives after top lawyer steps in



FULL STORY • Page 5

Lawyer Ann Alexander called for a full police investigation

OUR COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE

WWW.PORTSMOUTH.CO.UK

HEALTH CARE: Gosport War Memorial Hospital Action Group swells its ranks

More families speak over mystery deaths

by Richard Whitehouse
The News

A FAMILY has spoken for the first time about how their relative died at the Gosport hospital at the centre of a police investigation.

Debbie McKay, daughter of Stanley Carby who died at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital in 1999, and her mother Rita Carby told how they were shocked by the sudden death.

They have now joined the Gosport War Memorial Hospital Action Group which is fighting to get 27 deaths fully investigated by the police and other bodies.

The group is being represented by leading solicitor Ann Alexander who is also currently representing hundreds of relatives in the Harold Shipman case.

Mrs McKay has told how her Dad was able to walk into an ambulance which took him from Royal Hospital Haslar to the war memorial for rehabilitation after a stroke.

She and her family had been told by doctors that Stanley, 65, was expected to make a full recovery but needed rest.

Just over 24 hours later Stanley died with his family around him. They believe it was due to excessive sedative drugs and still do not know why they were given to him.

Mrs McKay said: 'Dad was transferred to the war memorial for rehab following his stroke.

'Doctors told us that it wasn't life threatening and that he just needed rehabilitation and treatment to get the side of his body affected functioning.



A distraught Rita Carby and her daughter Debbie McKay want answers about the passing of Rita's husband Stanley, who died aged just 65 while receiving treatment at Gosport War Memorial Hospital

PICTURE: IAN HARGREAVES (025620-5)

SHIPMAN CASE SOLICITOR WILL REPRESENT GROUP

POLICE first started looking into Gosport War Memorial Hospital deaths when Gillian Mackenzie raised concerns about her mother Gladys Richards's death in 1998.

Mrs Mackenzie told police that she believes that excessive levels of sedative drugs contributed to her mother's death.

'An investigation was carried out and a file sent to

the Crown Prosecution Service which was returned because of a lack of evidence.

When Mrs Mackenzie spoke about her mother's case to *The News* early in 2001, more families came forward with similar cases and asked police to investigate.

Earlier this year the Commission for Health

Improvement published a report criticising previous prescribing practices at the hospital.

Ann Alexander, who represented hundreds of families in the Harold Shipman case, announced she would represent the Gosport War Memorial Hospital Action Group. This week she called for a full and proper investigation.

'My younger brother asked doctors if Dad was going to die. They said that it was very unlikely.'

Mrs McKay visited her father at the hospital and told

staff that if ever there was any change in his condition, no matter what time of day or night, they should contact her.

She said: 'We were with

him at 4.45pm on April 26. He even asked me to put a bet on for him - he was fine, just his normal self.

'My brother saw him at 6pm and the last people who

saw him that day left at 9pm.

'They had got there at 7.30pm and said he had been moved to a little room. They said he looked dopey. We didn't get any phone call about this.

'We got a phone call at 10.20am the following day and we got to the hospital at 10.30am. He was unconscious and didn't even know we were there. It was unbelievable. I kept asking if we should get the rest of the family in and was told not to by the staff. We got as many as we could anyway, but by 1pm he was dead.'

Mrs McKay said: 'He was only 65 - this should never have happened.'

'Mum's medication for heart condition was stopped'

BARNEY Page first raised concerns about his mother Eva Page's death at Gosport War Memorial Hospital after reading about the deaths there in *The News*.

Eva Page was 88 when she was transferred from Queen

Alexandra Hospital to the war memorial on February 27 1998.

She had been in QA for almost two weeks with depression, dementia, suspected cancer of the bronchus and heart disease.

Mr Page, of Alverstoke, said: 'On arrival at the hospital she was given morphine and remained under its influence until she died on Dryad ward on March 3. I was told that she had been in pain and that is why

she was given the morphine.

'But since getting her medical notes and studying them it clearly states that she was not and, worse still, all the normal medication for her heart condition had been stopped on her admission.'



Barney Page

HEALTH: Accident unit at the Royal Hospital Haslar remains under threat of closure as casualty unit has to turn patients away

Unit ignored as QA swamped

by **Rebecca Ellinor**
Health reporter

PORTSMOUTH health bosses have been accused of ignoring a top treatment unit in Gosport while demand for casualty services in the city hits disastrous levels.

Queen Alexandra Hospital has closed its casualty department twice in the past three weeks because it couldn't cope with the number of patients who needed beds.

Ambulance crews were told to di-

vert to Southampton and Chichester hospital between 2pm and 4pm on Saturday. And three weeks ago, four patients were taken to Southampton General Hospital because the Cosham hospital ran out of beds.

But while Portsmouth hospital

bosses pleaded with the public to consult their GP, pharmacist or nurse-led helpline NHS Direct before going to QA's casualty department, no mention was made of the minor injuries unit at the Royal Hospital Haslar in Gosport.

Pat Forsyth, spokeswoman for the trust that runs QA, St Mary's and the majority of Haslar, said bosses feared it could have led to large number of people descending on the hospital, leaving it unable to manage.

But Save Haslar Task Force

spokesman Councillor Peter Edgar labelled the explanation as 'ridiculous'.

'There's no excuse,' he said, 'We've got a modern treatment centre with highly-trained staff and spare capacity at Haslar and they were happy to divert people to surgeries and pharmacists.'

As reported, Alan Bedford, chief executive of Portsmouth Hospitals, said not enough people were using the accident centre at night. He threatened to close the unit overnight unless demand for it increased.

He made it clear no decision has yet been taken about keeping the minor injuries unit open at night.

TREATMENT AT HASLAR

ACCIDENT and emergency services were downgraded at Haslar to minor injuries from August 1, 2000.

The unit is staffed 24-hours-a-day,

365-days-a-year by highly-trained and experienced nurses, but no doctors are based there.

Things the centre can deal with include:

- stitching or cleaning wounds
- minor burns
- plastering limbs
- removal of foreign bodies

- health promotion
 - treatment of eye injuries
- If the injury is serious people should dial 999 for an ambulance, which will take them to QA casualty.

One suspects if it is built by Thales it will no doubt have a European name and when it becomes part of the European Defence Force one assumes it will

I would like to write and tell about the wonderful treatment I had in Haslar hospital's E6 Ward.

I cannot thank the staff enough for all the attention. I think it will be a great shame if they close Haslar.

I am 80 years old and had a fall in February this year, breaking my leg in two places, and my wrist. I was in QA Hospital and the treatment there was dreadful.

My wrist injury was not discovered until after I was discharged and went for a follow-up appointment at Haslar.

Once they discovered my wrist injury I was admitted to Haslar for an operation to mend the tendons. What a difference in care and cleanliness of the hospital.

They are an example of what good nursing care should be and I can't thank them enough.

Enid Cheeseman
Harris Road, Bridgeman

4-1-2002

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The News
The News Centre, Hilsa,
Portsmouth, Hants PO2 9SX
Tel: (023) 9266 4488
www.portsmouth.co.uk

- Editor: Mike Gilson
- Deputy editor: Mark Acheson
- News editor: Colin McNeill
- Features editor: John Millard
- Sports editor: Colin Channon

DISTRICT OFFICES
Havant - 023 9249 2444
7 West Street, Havant PO9 1EH
Fareham - 01329 822528
88 West Street, Fareham PO16 0EP
Gosport - 02392 510610
42 High Street, Gosport PO12 1QF
Portsmouth - 023 9229 6111
2-4 Lake Road, Portsmouth PO1 4EZ

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■ We strive to ensure all the news we report is fair and accurate. However, if you have a complaint, please write to the editor. All complaints will be answered.

HOSPITAL: New moves in War Memorial inquiry

Experts to join probe into deaths

by Sirkka Huish and Rebecca Ellinor
The News

DETECTIVES revealed today they will be bringing in drug experts as part of their investigation into the deaths of patients at a Gosport hospital.

After a dramatic turnabout, police have now pledged to speak to the families of elderly people who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

After a meeting with the families' solicitor, officers in the case said experts in prescribing painkillers would be involved in the inquiry.

Earlier this week, police announced they would interview all the families of the patients who were concerned about the prescription of drugs at the 180-bed hospital. The move came nearly four years after fears were first raised over the deaths. It is thought as many as 57 deaths could be under investigation.

Yesterday, Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Watts, who is heading the investigation, travelled to Altrincham in Manchester, with senior officers, to meet with solicitor Ann Alexander - who successfully called for a public inquiry into the Harold Shipman case.

Det Ch Supt Watts said they discussed how the team of 11 officers would probe the level of care received at the hospital.

'It's going to be a lengthy, very complex investigation as there are a lot of issues. It will be done professionally to make sure we cover everything.'

'I am aware of how the Shipman investigation progressed and what came out of it. It will be incorporated into our investigation. A number of experts in the field of drugs will be consulted in relation to the investigation.'

He did not know how long the investigation would take but said his officers would speak to any relatives who wanted to speak to him.

Ann Alexander said: 'The meeting was very, very productive. It was agreed that we would be bringing in experts - including those in the field of the use of pain-killing drugs - and that the police would interview all those involved.'

'I have absolutely every confidence they will do everything they can to get to the bottom of this.'

Fears about the care were first brought to light when Gillian Mackenzie raised concerns about the death of her elderly mother, Gladys Richards in 1998 and since then 27 families have come forward, raising similar fears. It was revealed on Monday that another 30 people have contacted police.

Patient claims: 'I'm the only survivor'

IT WAS revealed today that a Gosport man who survived an alleged morphine overdose is also part of the Ann Alexander case.

Jim Ripley, 78, calls himself 'the only survivor' after alleging he fell into an analgesic coma because of over-prescription of the deadly painkiller.

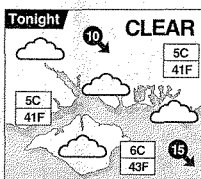
The former dockyard worker was in the War Memorial Hospital

in April 2000 to recuperate from arthritis and bursitis. He was told he only needed bed-rest.

But he started hallucinating and became unconscious at 8.30am on April 8. He was not seen by a doctor until about 3pm.

Mr Ripley of Cunningham Drive said: 'Someone at that hospital has to be held responsible for giving me the overdose.'

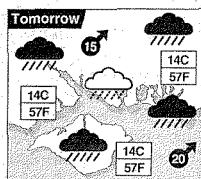
SOUTH COAST WEATHER



Starting dry with occasional clear spells. Rain approaching from the west towards the end of the night. Min 5C (41F).

Statistics

Southsea (24 hours to 5pm)	
Min temp	13C (55F)
Max temp	14C (57F)
Rainfall	0.34 ins.
Sunshine	0.0 hrs.

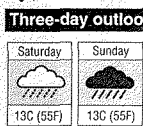


Prolonged and heavy rain will reach all parts through the morning. Becoming drier towards the evening. Max 14C (57F).

Light times

Portsmouth	
4.25pm to 7.08am	
Sun rises	7.08am
Sun sets	4.28pm
Moon rises	11.42am
Moon sets	7.07pm

CLICK

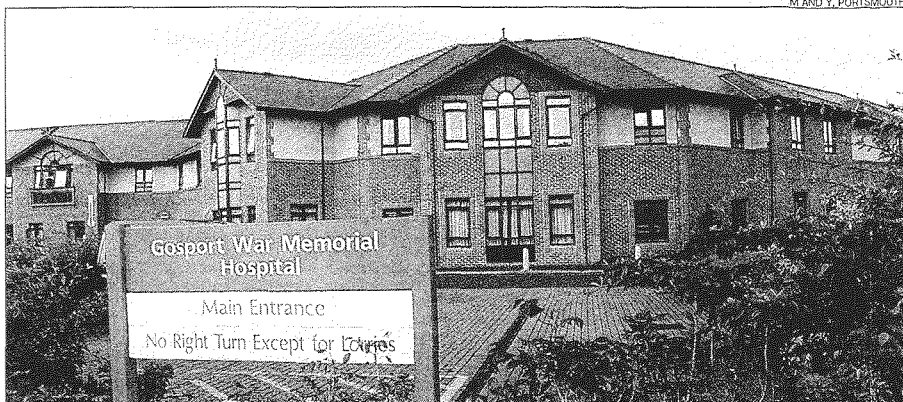


At sea
Sailing forecast
West to southwest forc
Rain, heavy at times, will
to poor visibility. Moderate

Channel crossings: Cho
High and low tides ton
Portsmouth 1.05am (4.0.8m), 1.22pm (4.8m), 5. Chichester 1.13am (4.0.9m), 1.31pm (4.9m), 6. Warsash 12.46am (4.0.8m), 1.04pm (4.8m), 6

All times in GMT

Shipman experts aid inquiry into 50 hospital deaths



The 180-bed Gosport War Memorial Hospital: 50 deaths considered suspicious are being investigated

By Michael Horsnell and Russell Jenkins

The 'victims'

AN EXPERT in the use of the heroin-based painkiller diamorphine is to be appointed by police conducting an investigation into the deaths of more than 50 elderly patients at a community hospital.

Relatives allege that the drug, used by Harold Shipman to kill many of his patients, was overprescribed at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital in Hampshire.

Detectives are preparing to interview relatives of those who died at the 180-bed hospital amid claims of unlawful killing. Many patients died while receiving recuperative care under a regime in which prescriptions for morphine and other potent drugs, it is claimed, were regularly written in advance so that nurses could administer them unsupervised.

Ann Alexander, a solicitor who represented more than 300 families in the Shipman inquiry, had a two-hour meeting with Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Watts of Hampshire police, and his deputy, Nigel Neven, yesterday.

She said: "It was a very productive meeting. They have completely reassured me about their intentions to do whatever they can to get to the bottom of whatever has been going on at this hospital."

After complaints by relatives that police had failed to respond fully to initial concerns, it was disclosed that of-



Betty Rogers: died February 1997



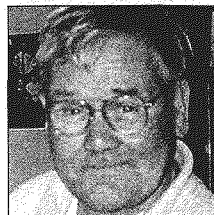
Eva Page: died March 1998



Gladys Richards: died July 1998



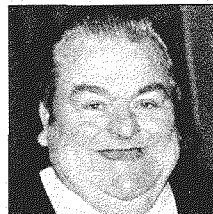
Alice Wilkie: died August 1998



Robert Wilson: died October 1998



Edna Purnell: died December 1998



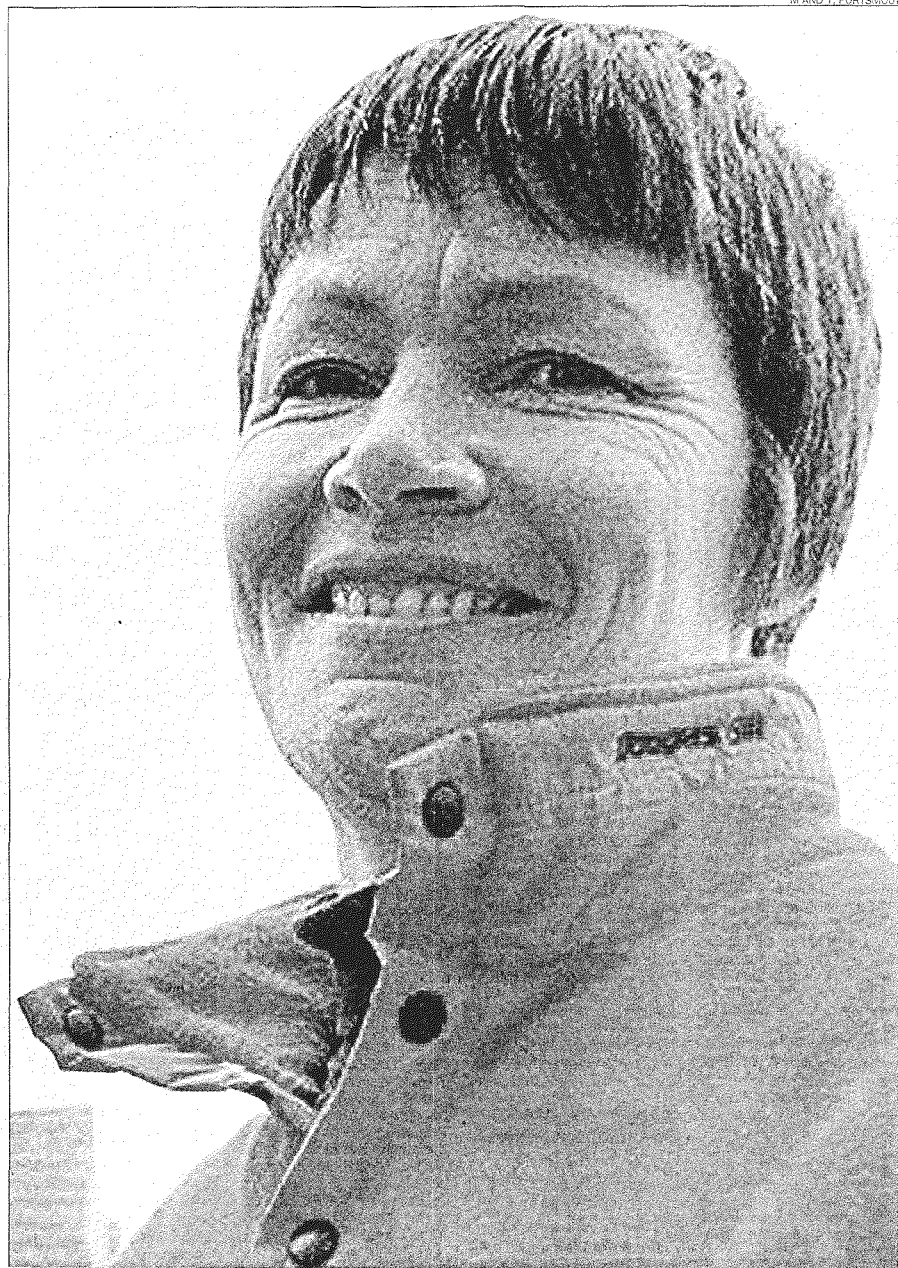
Gladys Clarke



Elsie Denton



Dulcie Middleton



...of capital witnesses his Alexander said: "The police want to see every single family that wishes to see them. They are hoping that anyone who has not been in touch and who has concerns should come forward."

The meeting, at her office in Altrincham, near Manchester, came after worried families contacted a helpline set up by health managers. A total of 57 people attended a public meeting held by Alexander Harris, a firm of solicitors, on Sunday to hear concerns about treatment at the hospital dating back to the early 1990s.

The firm represents relatives of 27 elderly patients who died at the hospital and one who survived, but there are believed to be at least as many again whom detectives want to contact. Among the cases under investigation are those of Leonard Graham, 75, who was recovering from pneumonia. Another, Betty Rogers, 67, was recovering from a chest infection. The patient's daughter was urged to go home, having been told that she was not near death. Fifteen minutes later she received a call to say that her mother had died.

Other deaths under investigation include those of Stanley

Cobby, 63, Eva Page, 88, and Dulcie Middleton, 85.

The hospital has already been the subject of an investigation by the Commission for Health Improvement, which criticised its prescribing practices. Although a commission report said that it could not look at any particular death, it found that doses of up to 200

milligrams a day of morphine were being administered by pumps.

In September, the Government's Chief Medical Officer commissioned a clinical audit. Professor Richard Baker, who worked on the Shipman inquiry, was appointed to examine death rates at the hospital. In the same month the chief

executives responsible for managing the hospital at the time of the deaths were suspended. Ian Piper, of Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust, and Tony Horne, of East Hampshire Primary Care Trust, were redeployed to other duties. The suspensions were prompted after internal documents from 1991 — before the deaths

— were uncovered which highlighted concerns about prescribing practices at the hospital.

It has sought to reassure its present patients by appointing a senior nurse from another area to oversee and review patient care.

Jane Barton, who was in charge of the day-to-day treat-

ment of some elderly patients at the hospital until July 2000, was referred to the General Medical Council in September.

A consultant geriatrician and seven nurses are also the subject of complaints about the dead patients' treatment.

There is no suggestion that Dr Barton, who has refused to comment, or any of the others

who worked at the hospital, deliberately caused harm.

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Health Authority said: "It is important to note that, while the [Commission for Health Improvement] investigation had some serious concerns about services in the past, it concluded that policies and procedures are now in

place to ensure safe standards of care at the hospital."

Hampshire police acknowledged that a meeting between Detective Watts and Alexander Harris, representing the families of people who died at the Gosport hospital, had taken place, and that senior members of his investigating team were present.

Relatives tell of their anguish

The Elderly Widow

Anne Reeves would have looked after her mother at her home in Fareham, Hampshire, after the elderly widow completed successful treatment for a kidney infection at Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth. But her own husband was also in hospital, having a bone marrow transplant for leukaemia. So it seemed a good idea for Elsie Devine, 88, to recuperate at the War Memorial Hospital in Gosport. She died on November 21, 1999.

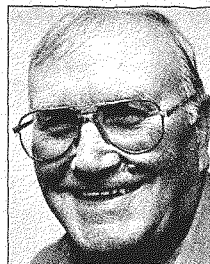
Mrs Reeves said: "She had been doing very well. Then on November 19 my brother Harry visited and was met by

Jane Barton who said mother was in kidney failure and had 36 hours to live.

"She couldn't speak and couldn't open her eyes. She was just lying there." Mrs Reeves, who has obtained her mother's drug charts, added: "She had been put on a cocktail of sedatives and, in the end, it killed her. I don't know why, because she wasn't in pain."

The Dockyard Worker

A former dockyard worker, Jim Ripley, 78, went into the hospital for recuperation from arthritis and bursitis in April 2000, but after a couple of days he started hallucinating. On the morning



Ripley: "I want to know why"

of April 8 he became unconscious and, despite calls by his wife Paule at 8.30am for a doctor to see him, he was not seen until

after 3pm. The doctor originally suspected that he had suffered a stroke, but, after he was transferred to another hospital, a diagnosis of analgesic coma caused by over-prescription of morphine was made, according to Mrs Ripley. She said: "I am extremely angry, but very lucky that my husband is alive and so very, very sorry for everyone else that lost their family. My husband had turned from being a strong elderly man to a frightened old man." Mr Ripley, from Gosport, said: "Somebody should be held responsible. What I want to know is why they gave me so much morphine."

Beckham's wife spooked by book

By Simon Barnes

EVERY great man has his disciples — and it's always Judas who writes the biography. It seems that Victoria Beckham has the same view as Oscar Wilde. Or perhaps she sees the ghost-writer for David Beckham's latest autobiography as the reincarnate spirit of Helen of Troy.

Is this the face that launched a million books (plus serial rights)? Over my dead body, says Posh. The publisher, HarperCollins, has done the deal with Beckham, but at the last minute his wife scuppered it, for she believed that the ghost was female. The book will not be written unless a male ghost can be found.

Mrs Beckham does not want Mr Beckham, a notoriously uxorious man, it must be said, "spending every minute of his time having nice, long chats with a seductive blonde".

Actually, it's not the seductive nature of the blonde but the seductive nature of their conversation that might enthral Beckham. A woman

who only wants you to talk about yourself — "No, honestly, David, I want to hear more about the metatarsal, really I do" — is the sort of woman that men for some reason find irresistible. Mrs Beckham is no mug at basic psychology, it seems.

The "mystery" blonde who worries Mrs Beckham so much is in fact Alison Kervin, chief sports feature writer of *The Times*. Mrs Beckham need not have been so troubled, for Ms Kervin was a long way from committed to the project.

HarperCollins will issue a statement, presumably with a ghost acceptable to Mrs Beckham, later this week.

The relationship between biographer and subject, or ghost and subject, is often difficult and complex, as James Boswell would have been the first to tell you. I once wrote a biography of the cricketer Phil Edmonds and he never once tried to seduce me — though he once grasped me affectionately by the throat.

Mrs Beckham is right: literature is a dangerous business.

Macbeth's descendants feud over family castle

By Gillian Harris

Scotland Correspondent

ONE of Scotland's most distinguished families became embroiled in a courtroom feud yesterday when a dowager countess tried to evict her stepson from her castle.

Lady Angelika, the Dowager Countess of Cawdor, whose family boasts a lineage dating back to Macbeth, went to court to have the 7th Earl of Cawdor removed from the family's castle.

The dowager countess told the Court of Session in Edinburgh that her stepson and his family, who moved in a week ago when she was on holiday, were endangering the castle and its store of priceless heirlooms.

Craig Sandison, the dowager countess's lawyer, told the court that a burglar alarm system, installed by the dowager countess, had not been activated since the earl moved in on November 1.

"The security of the castle has been endangered by the failure to activate the intruder

alarm system. The castle is full of valuable, indeed priceless, items of furniture and art, a substantial proportion of which belong to the dowager countess personally," Mr Sandison said.

He told the court that last Saturday a fire was lit in a blocked fireplace in one of the castle drawing rooms. The room filled with smoke, setting off a fire alarm, and police were called to the scene.

"It is not known whether any of the contents of the drawing room have been damaged," Mr Sandison told the court. "She is greatly and genuinely apprehensive that if she is obliged to wait there is a very substantial risk that the property will suffer from burglary, fire or general damage because of the unsuitable use."

He said that when the 6th Earl of Cawdor died in 1993 he left his Czech-born second wife the family seat, Cawdor Castle.

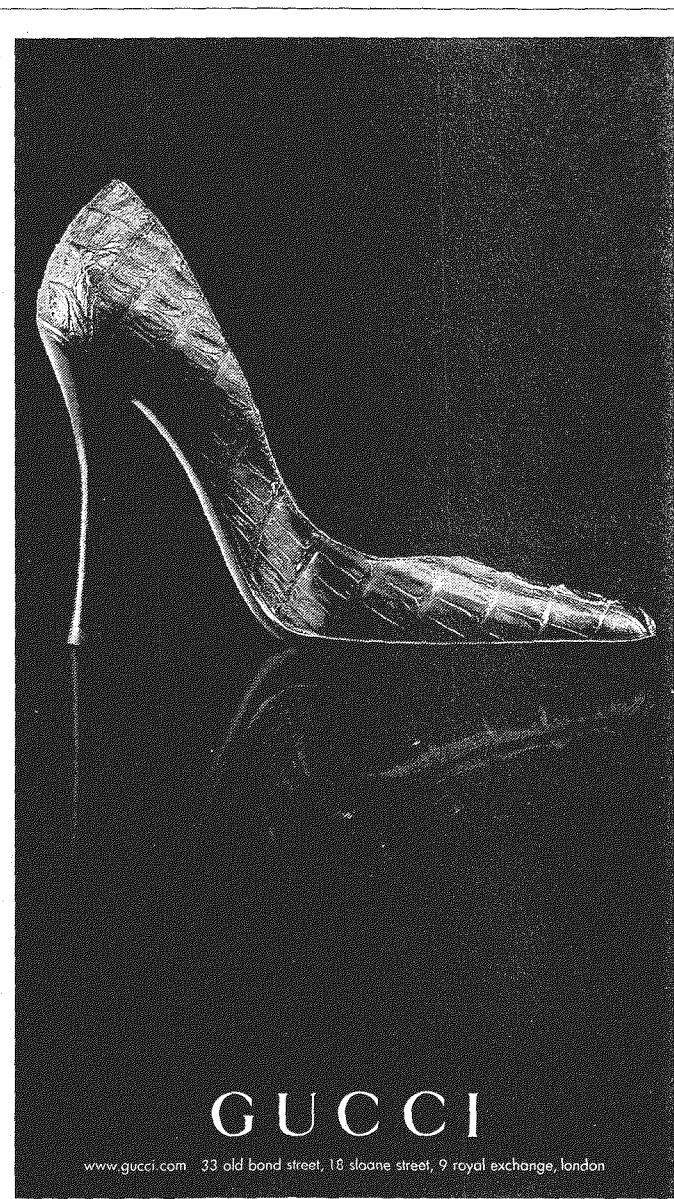
During the summer, the castle near Nairn was run as a tourist attraction and the dowager duchess lived in a cottage

on the estate. For the remainder of the year she lived in the castle's private apartments.

Mr Sandison said that on October 23, after the tourist season was over, the dowager duchess went on holiday to America. Once she was gone, the Earl of Cawdor, his wife and their three young children moved in. When the dowager countess learnt of the occupation she ordered her lawyers to raise an action.

But Sir Crispin Agnew, QC, for the earl, said that the dispute was part of an ongoing battle between a stepmother and the son of her late husband. He said that the dowager countess was a director of the company that ran the castle until she resigned six months ago after arguing with her stepson, who was also a company director.

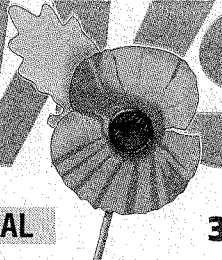
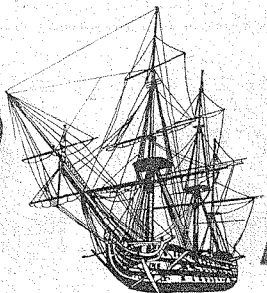
She gave six months' notice that the lease granted to the company would expire next May. Sir Crispin argued that under the terms of lease there was an obligation for a director to live in the castle during the winter months.




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FAREHAM & GOSPORT **The News**



Just how good is Harry's new one? **The Guide**




The We Can Do It newspaper

Friday, November 8, 2002

FINAL

32p



She's fought some of the biggest cases in the land. Now she's helping grieving families find out what really happened at Gosport's War Memorial Hospital

WHAT MOTIVATES TOP SOLICITOR ANN ALEXANDER? PAGES 8-9

a wave of her regal hand and I managed to bow an impressive 15 times while walking backwards as I removed my inconsequential self from her glorious presence.

What do you mean I'm making it up? If you are prepared to believe that shifty little Burrell, surely you can take the word of a humble columnist? Either way, the Queen's not going to deny it is she?

Someone once said words to the effect those who pursue power are the worst possible people in whom it should be invested.

I feel the same about people like Burrell. There is something intrinsically peculiar and untrustworthy about people who, from an early age, set out to be professional lickspittles.

Who on earth deliberately places themselves at the beck and call of the rich and famous unless they have an ulterior motive, which could simply be a rather sad ambition to achieve glamour by association, or a compelling need to grovel?





FRIDAY'S AGENDA

As police re-open investigations into up to 57 deaths of patients at

From butler to doormat

I was talking to the Queen the other day and she said: 'Keith, you are probably as close to my family as any of my other 60 million subjects, so there is something I have to tell you.'

She looked me right in the eye to ensure that I was prepared to take the knowledge she was about to impart with the utmost seriousness.

She had no need to be concerned, of course, because I have always prided myself on being the soul of discretion.

Glancing each way to make sure we would not be overheard, she whispered: 'There are powers at work in this country about which we have no knowledge.'

I said: 'Don't worry ma'am. The rest of us know all about mortgages, council tax, social services and clamping firms.'

She looked immensely relieved, dismissed me with a wave of her regal hand and I managed to bow an impressive 15 times while walking backwards as I removed my inconsequential self from her glorious presence.

What do you mean I'm making it up? If you are prepared to believe that shifty little Burrell, surely you can take the word of a humble columnist? Either way, the Queen's not going to deny it is she?

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Who on earth deliberately places themselves at the beck and call of the rich and famous unless they have an ulterior motive, which could simply be a rather sad ambition to achieve glamour by association, or a compelling need to grovel?

There can be little doubt that the way in which Burrell has confessed to having conducted himself went far beyond mere duty or service. He set out to make himself indispensable and ended up turning himself into a doormat.

It is not he who deserves our admiration or respect, but his long-suffering wife. There were, after all, three people in her marriage.

Mum's always the word

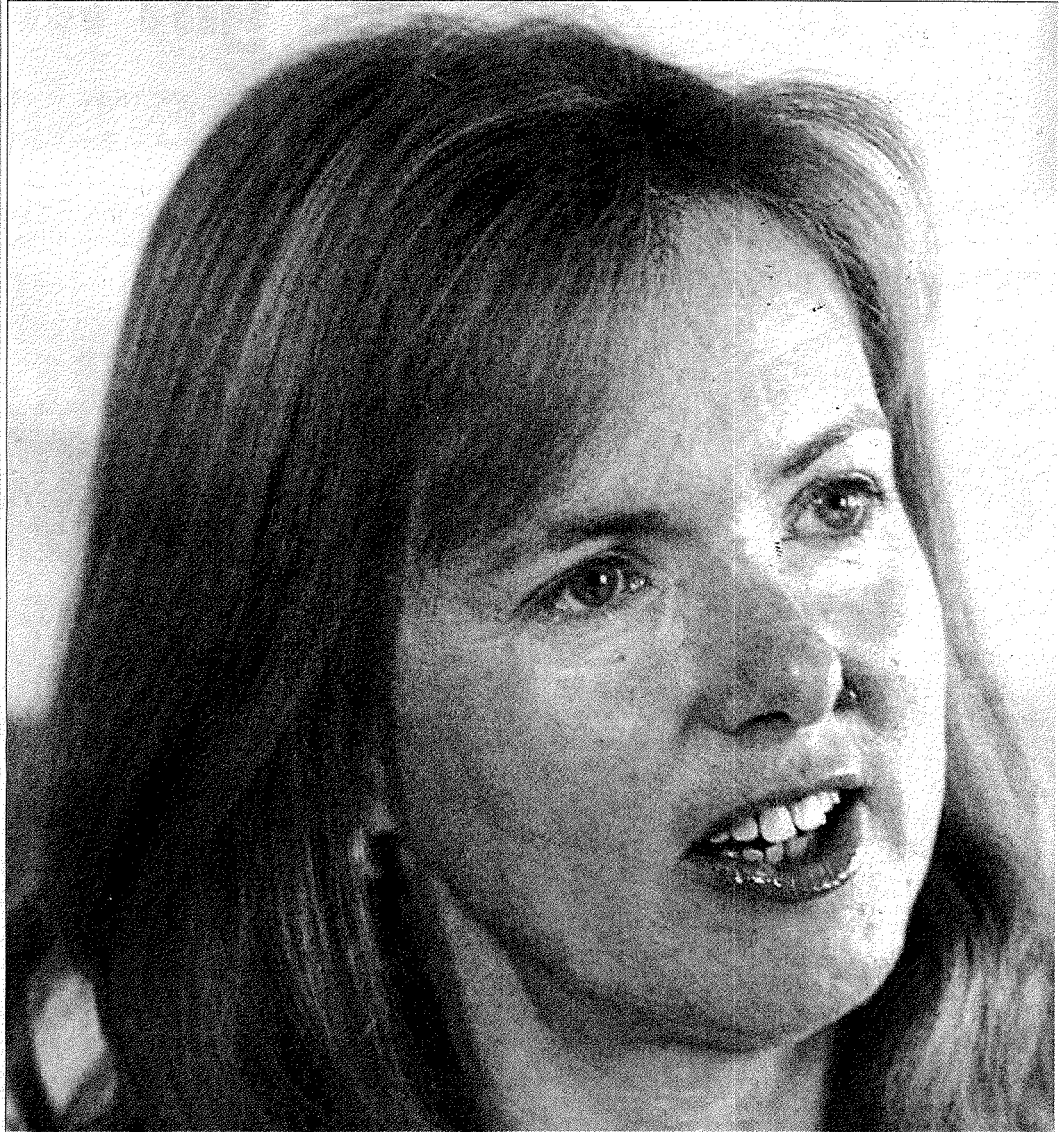
You can always rely on your mother to show you up. When mine read about my memories of the BBC test trailer that was shown every morning during the 1950s, she couldn't resist having the last word.

'You were five at the time, and home from school with the measles. I can see your spotty little face now as you sat on the settee every morning watching that programme.'

'In the end you were reciting the words along with the actors and commentators, and as you got better you used to try to copy some of the accents. Old Doctor Sim was fascinated and we both used to sit there laughing at you.'

Yes, thank you mother....

keith.newbery@chiobserver.co.uk



Awake enough to feel the surgeon's blade but not able to scream, Margaret Ackers was in agonising pain throughout a 75-minute Caesarean operation.



Relatives of patients who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital have spent the past four years battling to have their voices heard. Now top lawyer Ann Alexander is leading their fight. **REBECCA ELLINOR** finds out who she is and what drives her.

Twenty-one years ago, nobody but her family believed her claim that she'd not been given enough general anaesthetic at Billinge Hospital in Wigan.

Nobody, that was, until she met solicitor Ann Alexander. She listened to the awful tale and now admits she wasn't even sure she believed it herself at first.

But four years later Ann won a landmark legal victory against the hospital authorities involved. It was the inspiration for her to concentrate on medical negligence cases and pioneer for patients' rights.

She set about taking cases that would lead to changes in the law and medical practice and make doctors accountable for their actions.

She has acted as a powerful voice for families in the Harold Shipman and Beverly Allitt murder cases.

And now she is representing relatives of loved ones at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Just weeks after the clinical negligence lawyer was appointed, police have finally

agreed to speak to all those involved. As many as 57 deaths could be under investigation.

Her involvement in the Shipman case in particular gave her a high profile. But she insists she's not some 'big-name' lawyer intent on making a career on the back of other people's tragedies.

'I don't accept that label,' she says.

'I make no apologies for taking on these cases. Bringing about changes in the law or to medical practice for the benefit of patients - that's what drives me.'

'Before the Caesarean case I was just an ordinary, common-or-garden solicitor, I used to do all sorts of things.'

'The most important thing to me in that case was proving it could happen, looking at how and bringing about changes to try to stop it happening again.'

The 48-year-old divorcee, who has a son,

21, and a daughter, 19, who are both at university in London, says she tries to keep at a professional distance from those she helps.

She has no personal experience of medical negligence and says she works hard to 'empathise and not sympathise' with her clients.

'You do have to be careful. Even after a case is over you still try to remain professional with them,' she says.

Ann is now representing one former Gosport War Memorial Hospital patient, Jim Ripley, and 27 families whose relatives died while being treated there.

The deaths of more than 50 elderly patients at the community hospital from 1990 onwards will now be subject to a full police investigation. In particular, possible excessive use of the powerful pain-killing drug diamorphine is being examined.

It happened today

- 1886:** Fred Archer, English champion jockey who won the Derby five times, shot himself, aged 27.
- 1895:** Wilhelm Rontgen discovered X-rays.
- 1920:** The first Rupert Bear cartoon appeared in the *Daily Express*.
- 1932:** Franklin D Roosevelt swept into the

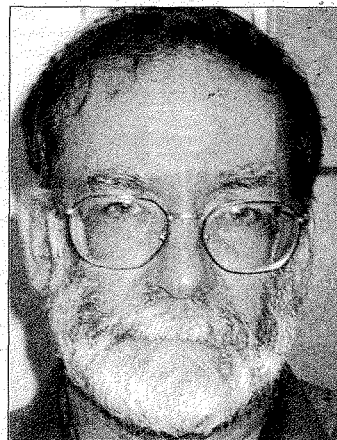
- White House on a landslide in the US presidential election.
- 1966:** Edward Brooke became America's first black senator.
- 1987:** An IRA bomb exploded shortly before a Remembrance Day service at Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, killing 11 people.



Gosport War Memorial Hospital, families are delighted to have a top lawyer on their side

Why this woman is fighting for the patients who died

The headline-grabbing cases that made Ann Alexander's reputation



HAROLD SHIPMAN

In January 2000, Greater Manchester GP Harold Shipman was given 15 life sentences for murdering patients with lethal injections of diamorphine.

Ann Alexander is acting for more than 200 families representing 100 victims and alleged victims of Shipman.

She campaigned for their rights in overturning decisions made by authorities, particularly the government's decision to hold the Shipman Inquiry in private.

The inquiry is ongoing and the issue of compensation to victims' relatives has not been decided.

BEVERLY ALLITT

In May 1993, nurse Beverly Allitt was given 13 life sentences for murder and attempted murder of children at Grantham Hospital.

Ann Alexander represented families whose children were attacked by Allitt and campaigned for a public inquiry into how a murderer could be at large on a hospital ward.

Katie Phillips, a child left permanently brain damaged by Allitt, was awarded £2.125m in 1999 by the Lincolnshire Health Authority - which employed Allitt - following an eight-year battle by her parents.

Katie was two months old when Allitt injected her with insulin and potassium in 1991.



GROUND-BREAKING RESULTS OF LEGAL SPECIALIST

SOLICITOR Ann Alexander is one half of the Alexander Harris partnership and specialises in clinical negligence cases.

She is managing partner and co-founder of the firm with David Harris and one of the first lawyers to specialise in this field. She got her law degree from the University

College of London in 1974 and then went to Nottingham Law School, where she obtained an MBA in Legal Practice.

She is an assessor to the Law Society's Clinical Negligence Panel, chairman of the North West Legal Services Commission Committee and an executive

board member on the Birth Trauma Litigation Group Association of Trial Lawyers.

She has achieved some ground-breaking results on behalf of her clients and is considered a leading expert on the law affecting brain-damaged babies, anaesthetic awareness, general surgery and judicial review.

Ann says that progress in the Gosport case has been made not solely because of her high profile, but because relatives of those who died finally started to work together.

'It is something to do with our clout - although I don't like that word,' she says.

'This firm takes on serious cases and doesn't run with those that don't have any merit on the face of it. But the other reason there have been so many developments is that in the early days the families were working on their own, as individuals.

'They were making complaints but I don't

think they appreciated that those agencies - the police, General Medical Council, MPs and hospital - don't talk to each other. Since our involvement, the arrangements are all co-ordinated.'

Ann, who lives in Aitrincham, Cheshire, got involved with the Gosport case after one of the relatives, Ann Reeves, rang her and invited her to a meeting of some of the families involved at her home in Fareham.

But since that meeting more families have contacted her firm, including three more approaches which were made on Wednesday.

'There may not be just a handful of incidents but a lot of them, and families could have moved away from the local area,' she says.

Relatives were at first concerned they may be prevented from speaking out once a law firm took over. But now that a deal is signed and sealed, they're happy they can still act as they wish.

They say compensation is not their aim - they simply want to know if their relatives died unnecessarily and, if so, want those responsible to be held accountable.

Gillian Mackenzie, who has been fighting for a full investigation into the death of her mother Gladys Richards in July 1998 and has acted as the central focus for other families, says she is relieved to hand over the reins.

'I am absolutely delighted Ann Alexander has taken over.'

Another relative, Emily Yeats, whose grandmother Alice Wilkie, 82, died after being admitted to hospital for an infection, says: 'I think Ann Alexander is absolutely brilliant. I'm really pleased we've got her and I'm confident she will help us get the answers.'

Relatives may be happy they may continue to speak publicly about cases without Ann's say-so. But secrecy surrounds the issue of payment.

Neither Ann's law firm, Alexander Harris, nor the relatives, will reveal any such details.

According to local legal experts in clinical negligence, it is possible that the families have won public funding.

This can be granted on grounds of merit rather than ability to pay. For some high-profile cases that have implications for government policy, such financial aid can be available for group actions.

This is rare but more likely for large groups.

Another possibility is that the relatives are paying a 'private client retainer' - where they get charged at an hourly rate which could then be split between all the families.

But few in the profession seem to doubt that Ann is worth her fees.

Mervyn Fudge, of Bristol law firm Clarke, Willmott & Clarke, whose work includes a public inquiry into children's heart surgery at Bristol Royal Infirmary, says: 'She's an extremely able lawyer.'

'She has recently run the Shipman inquiry to great effect and I've no doubt she's the right person to run the inquiry in Gosport. She's hard-working, bright and will make sure it goes in the direction her clients want.'

REGULARS

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The News Centre, Hilsa,
 Portsmouth, Hants PO2 9SX
 Tel: (023) 9266 4488
 www.portsmouth.co.uk

- Editor: **Mike Gilson**
- Deputy editor: **Mark Acheson**
- News editor: **Colin McNeill**
- Features editor: **John Millard**
- Sports editor: **Colin Channon**

DISTRICT OFFICES

Havant – 023 9249 2444
 7 West Street, Havant PO9 1EH

Fareham – 01329 822528
 88 West Street, Fareham PO16 0EP

Gosport – 02392 510610
 42 High Street, Gosport PO12 1QF

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■ We strive to ensure all the news we report is fair and accurate. However, if you have a complaint, please write to the editor. All complaints will be answered.

Nurses in certain wards at Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham, have been issued with whistles to summon help in emergencies

PICTURE: MICHAEL SCADDAN (025672_0016)

It's a patient merry-go-round on wards

STAFF and patients at Queen Alexandra Hospital are being shifted to different wards because the service is under immense pressure for beds and health bosses are working on new ways to improve the system. This has meant, for example, patients with blood-cancer problems moving to a joint-and-muscles ward because it has individual cubicles that

help to stop cross-infections. However, this led patients with breathing problems to be moved to the blood-cancer ward and joint-and-muscle patients to be shifted to an old ward in the south block. But that ward, Dickens, currently has a mixture of patients – medical and rheumatology – as staff struggle to cope with the demand for beds.

tell your colleagues where you are. Blowing a whistle won't help, not to mention the health and safety implications of wearing a whistle around your neck and cross-infection when you have to hand it to someone else at the end of a shift. It's embarrassing, degrading and unnecessary.'

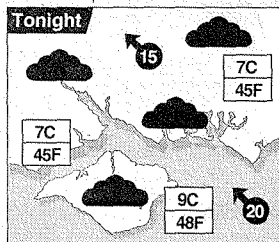
But health bosses at Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs QA, defended the move, saying it was only a temporary measure.

Pat Forsyth, spokeswoman for Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, said staff were able to wash them.

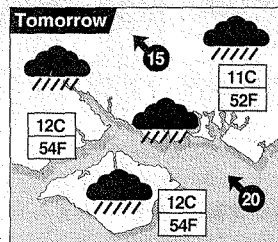
'Staff were concerned their voices wouldn't carry so they chose to use whistles instead.'

The move was made necessary after nurses on the modern D16 rheumatology ward were moved to Dickens, an older ward in south block. On modern wards, staff can alert each other by pressing a button by the patient's bed.

SOUTH COAST WEATHER



This evening will be dry but thickening cloud will bring some heavy rain to all parts overnight. Min 7C (45F).



After a wet and windy morning, the afternoon will become dry with some sunny spells. Max 12C (54F).

Statistics

Southsea
 (24 hours to 5pm)
 Min temp5C (41F)
 Max temp11C (52F)
 Rainfall.....0.00 ins.
 Sunshine4.9 hrs.

Light times

Portsmouth
 4.12pm to 7.28am
 Sun rises7.28am
 Sun sets4.11pm
 Moon rises4.28pm
 Moon sets7.45am

CLICK www.portsmouth.co.uk for full marine forecast. Click on NEWS

Three-day outlook

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12C (54F)	12C (54F)	11C (52F)

At sea

Sailing forecast
 Wind will be southeasterly force 5. Cloudy with rain at times, mainly moderate visibility. Moderate seas.

Channel crossings: Moderate.

High and low tides tomorrow

Portsmouth4.24am (1.1m), 11.26am (4.6m), 4.42pm (1.1m), 11.42pm (4.5m)
 Chichester.....4.29am (1.2m), 11.29am (4.7m), 4.47pm (1.2m), 11.48pm (4.5m)
 Warsash.....4.20am (1.1m), 11.08am (4.5m), 4.39pm (1.0m), 11.24pm (4.4m)
 All times in GMT

World temperatures

	°C	°F
Algarve	Sunny	17 63
Amsterdam	Fair	10 50
Bordeaux	Fair	13 55
Brussels	Fair	8 46
Corfu	Sunny	21 70
Costa del Sol	Sunny	18 64
Cyprus	Sunny	24 75
Geneva	Fair	9 48
Hong Kong	Cloudy	22 72
Jersey	Sunny	10 50
Los Angeles	Sunny	23 73
Majorca	Sunny	17 63
Miami	Sunny	21 70
New York	Sunny	8 46
Nice	Rain	14 57
Paris	Fair	8 46
Rome	Thunder	15 59
Sydney	Fair	26 79
Tenerife	Sunny	23 73
Tokyo	Sunny	16 61
Venice	Rain	16 61



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Morale remains high at hospital involved in inquiry into deaths

MORALE remains high at a hospital which is at the centre of a police investigation.

Police are in the process of interviewing all the families of the patients challenging health bosses about the prescription of painkillers at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

It is thought as many as 57 deaths could be under investigation.

Gosport Tory MP Peter Viggers has visited the 180-bed hospital in Bury Road to meet patients and staff and show his support.

The Conservative MP said: 'In light of the bad publicity the hospital has been receiv-

by **Sirkka Huish**
The News

20-11-2002

ing, I wanted to walk through the hospital to say "Hello" to patients and staff and to wish them well.

'All the staff were cheerful and friendly and more than happy for me to walk around.

'The patients were more than happy to tell me about the high standard of care they were receiving.'

He added: 'One relative rushed after me along the corridor to praise the work that they did.

'They are doing a great job.'
The hospital's League of

Friends also continues to receive thank-you letters praising the patient care at the hospital.

The league's chairwoman, Mary Tyrerrell, said: 'Staff in every department are treating patients to the high standards that they always have done.

'They obviously aren't happy with the way it's being cast.

'But they are getting on the best way they can.

'The hospital has always had a great name for the caring and sympathetic hospital it is.

'There's a very happy atmosphere with a dedicated and professional team of staff.'

Pressure for fresh blood is still high

THE National Blood Service on the lookout for donors.

On Monday the blood van will come to Portchester community centre in Westlands Grove.

On Tuesday it travels to Havant Leisure Centre in Civic Centre Road and then on Friday of next week to

Emsworth community centre in Church Path.

On December 3 the team arrives at Waterlooville community centre in Swiss Road and on December 5 they are in Gosport's Thorngate Halls in Bury Road.

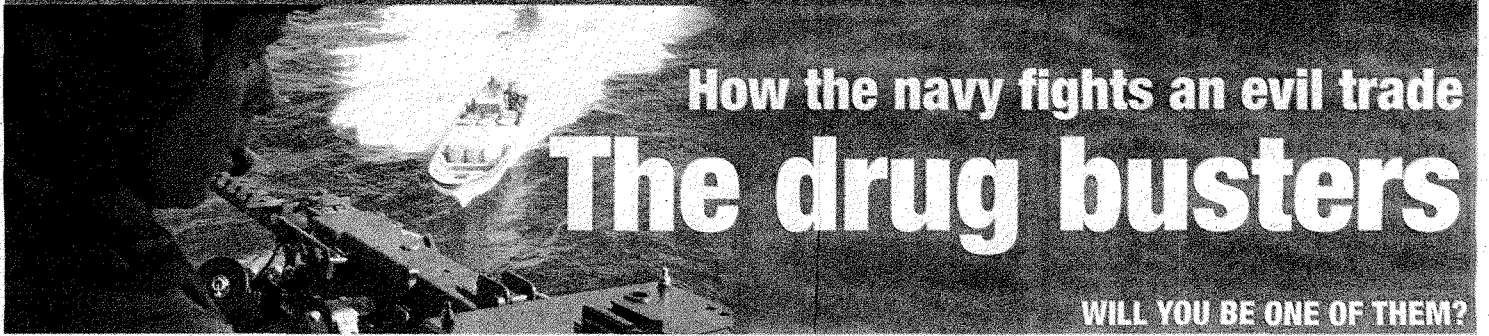
On December 6 they will be pulling up in Cosham com-

munity centre in Wotton Street before moving on to Whiteley Meadowside Centre in Whiteley Way on December 11.

Most sessions run from 1pm-3.25pm and then 4.30-6.15pm, or 7.15pm.

For more information call 0845 7711 711.

The News TOMORROW: ALMOST 200,000 PEOPLE WILL READ THIS...



How the navy fights an evil trade The drug busters

WILL YOU BE ONE OF THEM?

HEALTH: Accident treatment centre forced to send away people with life-threatening conditions

Confusion as patients go to wrong hospital

by Richard Whitehouse
The News

DESPERATELY sick people are being turned away from a hospital because it cannot deal with their life-threatening conditions.

Staff at the Accident Treatment Centre at Royal Hospital Haslar in Gosport have seen a rise in the number of patients with serious conditions.

But they have been sent packing because they should go to the emergency department at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham, Portsmouth.

Members of the Save Haslar Task Force visited the centre to praise staff for the work they have been doing but also to promote better usage of the centre.

However staff revealed that in the last month 72 people had gone there with conditions that could not be treated at Haslar.

Senior nurse Penny Daniels said: 'We don't know why there has been an increase in the number of people coming here with inappropriate conditions.'

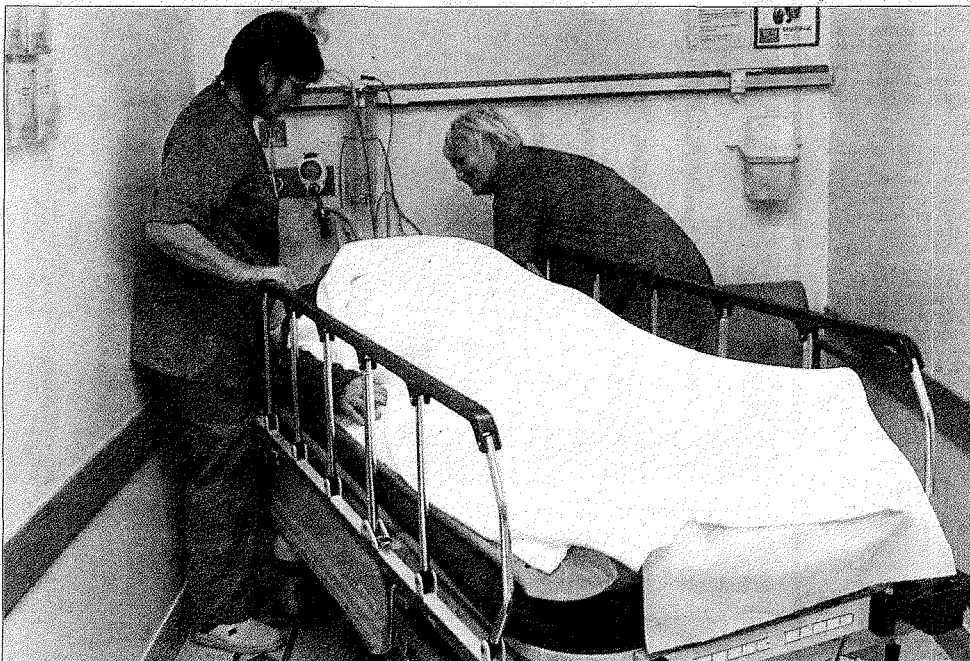
'We want to stress to people that we are here to deal with injuries. If they have an illness or life threatening condition they should call 999.'

The centre can only deal with injuries, including sprains, broken bones, bruising, minor burns and cuts.

They have asked people not to go there if they have conditions such as chest pains, breathing problems, they have collapsed or are suffering abdominal pains.

Task force spokesman Peter Edgar said confusion also meant some patients who could be treated at Haslar went instead to the Queen Alexandra Hospital. He said: 'We are constantly contacted by a confused public about the Accident Treatment Centre.'

'We do get a lot of queries about what is provided here.'



A patient with whiplash injuries is treated in the Accident and Emergency Unit at Royal Hospital Haslar by staff nurse Mary Hopkins, left, and emergency nurse practitioner Anita Cummings.

PICTURE: MATT SCOTT-JOYNT (025879-48)

HASLAR ACCIDENT TREATMENT CENTRE: THE FACTS



Task force spokesman Peter Edgar

■ The Accident Treatment Centre at the Royal Hospital Haslar replaced the former casualty department on August 1 2000.

■ It is staffed round-the-clock by a team of nurse practitioners and experienced accident and emergency nurses who undertook special training and an additional qualification before taking up the role.

■ On average, the centre sees 40 patients over a typical 24-hour period and that figure can reach as high as 70 patients.

■ The percentage of patients treated within an hour of their arrival has increased from an initial 76 per cent to 98 per cent in just over two years.

Woman fined for attack on stranger who bit her mum

by Michael Short
The News

A YOUNG woman 'flipped' when a drunk bit her mother on the finger in a brawl outside a nightclub.

Kelly Jevons punched and kicked the stranger who had attacked her mother while other people fought around them.

The 24-year-old single mum was involved in a mass fight outside a seafood nightclub in Southsea.

She admitted assaulting a blonde woman who has never been traced by police.

At Portsmouth Crown Court, prosecutor Susan Holmes said: 'A number of people became involved in that incident. There was a point where the mother of the defendant was having her finger held in the mouth of the blonde woman.'

Jevons, of Drayton Road, North End, Portsmouth, later told police she only became involved when she saw blood on her mother's hand, adding 'I just flipped'. She admitted to police she went over the top when she punched and kicked the stranger.

Jevons, who had never been in trouble with the police before, was given a £250 fine and told to pay £50 costs.

Sentencing her, Judge Roger Jarvis said: 'The court has become far too familiar with this sort of disgraceful behaviour taking place outside pubs and clubs.'

Plenty to buy at festive sale

A CHRISTMAS bazaar is to offer a range of goods for sale including groceries, books, crafts, refreshments, cakes and decorations.

There will also be a grand draw with prizes on offer including bric-a-brac, toys, bottle stall and tombola at the St Joseph's Church bazaar in Havant.

Entrance will cost 20p for adults, and children will be allowed in free. The bazaar will take place at the church in West Street, from midday to 3pm on Saturday.

dockyard man, in this case aged 55, because of asbestos exposure.

However, the coroner's comments that the dangers of asbestos were not known in the mid-60s is erroneous and seriously misleading.

Asbestos was known to be a dangerous material with high level risks but no protection from asbestos dust was given which was a wilful neglect of workers' health.

The coroner's complacency leads only to play down the criminal negligence of the dockyard authorities and the MoD which has so decimated the dockyard intake of youngsters during the 1950s and 60s.

The Ministry of Defence must ascertain the extent of the problem in order that positive help for victims both medically and financially can be given at an early stage.

Former dockyard workers deserve better.

T Woodsford
Rareridge Lane
Bishop's Waltham

With reference to the article in *The News* concerning Gosport Tory MP Peter Viggers and the League of Friends for the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, I would endorse the view that the Daedalus and Dryad Wards at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital are probably the safest in any national health service hospital in the United Kingdom - now.

They certainly were not in 1998 and I wonder if Mr Peter Viggers and Mary Tyrerell who is the League's chairwoman has read the Commission for Health Improvement's report published on July 3 2002 which is in the public domain?

If they do not read the report before they give their opinion they are totally ignorant of the situation.

The findings on page 19 of the report under Key Findings: 'CHI has serious concerns regarding the

me, there must be some

quantity combination lack of review and anticipatory prescribing of medicines prescribed to older people on Dryad and Daedalus Wards in 1998. A protocol existed in 1998 for palliative care prescribing (the Wessex Guidelines) but this was inappropriately applied to patients admitted for rehabilitation.'

The rest of the report is just as damning.

The staff, with the exception of two who dealt with my mother, are no longer employed at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Gillian MacKenzie
Eastbourne
East Sussex

... I have had three operations at the QA Hospital and all staff, from surgeons to cleaners, were wonder-

ful. The food was excellent and a wonderful choice of 'post-op sandwich' was organised at a time when food is the last thing to worry about!

Thanks for having me, QA.

All my five stays with you were happy experiences.

Valerie Stamp (Mrs)
Toronto Road
Buckland

... I am delighted you continue to print so many letters praising our doctors and nurses.

Haslar hospital (and the staff) could outshine any proposed 'super hospital' but it is deliberately not allowed to utilise the facilities or the experienced personnel.

It has a huge disadvan-

tage in not having complete control of the Royal Navy.

It would appear that orders have been issued not to use Haslar (except when Portsmouth health services get in a mess) so that when the super hospital finally arrives it can be claimed Haslar is obviously not needed.

Haslar will *always* be vital to the community.

NHS bureaucrats show despicable behaviour towards patients and our doctors and nurses who prove themselves to be so much more worthy than their superiors.

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... We would like to express our gratitude to the

TO THE POINT

RESPECT: Reader A Barlow criticises Tory MP David Willetts for being thrust upon us as a Conservative candidate

during Margaret Thatcher's reign. David Willetts, over the years as the local MP for an area covering Havant and Leigh Park,

has proved to be a hard-working politician respected by the many people he has helped and for his work in the

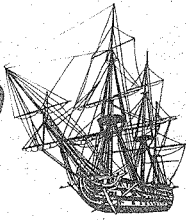
community. It's not where you come from, it's where your heart is!
Paula Carter
High Lawn Way, Leigh Park

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FAREHAM

& GOSPORT

The News



Merse:
I could
quit
BACK PAGE



The We Can Do It newspaper

Wednesday, November 27, 2002

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32p

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ALL THIS AND MORE IN OUR 40-PAGE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING GUIDE - INSIDE

The News TODAY

Father's new hope over son's killers

GOSPORT father Terry Jeans believes he is a step closer to seeing his son's killers behind bars.

Mr Jeans is planning a further visit to Croatia where his soldier son, Simon, 26, was beaten to death as he served his country on foreign soil in September 1996.

FULL STORY ● Page 7

'Prison' regime fear

AUTHORITIES at Haslar Immigration Removal Centre are under-fire for the prison-like regime imposed on asylum seekers.

AGENDA ● Pages 8 & 9

Fire traps warning

GREEN Goddess crews are being warned by striking firefighters that jobs could be setting traps for them.

FULL STORY ● Page 3

STANDSTILL AT THE QA



Ambulances stack up with patients on board as hospital fills to overflowing

LINED up but going nowhere, ambulances form an instant treatment centre outside the QA hospital.

The 999 vehicles were effectively taken off the road because crews were unable to discharge their

patients at the Queen Alexandra, where all 583 beds were full. Some ambulances were stuck at

QA for hours as bosses at the Cosham hospital sought to ease the crisis.

FULL STORY ● Page 5

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HEALTH: 'Freak' beds crisis means health chiefs have nowhere for sick patients to go

Hospital patients have to wait in ambulances

by Chris Owen and Rebecca Ellinor
The News

PATIENTS were forced to wait in ambulances outside an emergency department when a hospital ran out of beds.

Five ambulances were kept waiting for up to three hours before they could leave their patients at the A&E department at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham.

More people had to wait inside A&E and hospital chiefs were forced to ask about 10 people to stay at home - and wait for a bed.

Today health bosses said the situation was a 'freak' and blamed a combination of factors, including bed-blocking and a bed crisis at other nearby hospitals.

The ambulances stacked up yesterday morning when the hospital refused to accept any more patients because all its wards were full and all 583 beds were taken. At one point there were 22 people sitting in casualty who had been admitted but were waiting for one of the hospital's beds.

As the crisis worsened, other patients referred to the hospital by their GPs were told to wait at home until beds became available.

And today 10 patients were in the hospital's casualty department waiting for a hospital bed and two were at home. One patient had been on arolley since 4.15am.

In addition, 21 patients who expected to go to hospital for an operation or treatment that required them to need a bed were still hoping to be admitted some time today.

Portsmouth Hospitals' NHS Trust spokeswoman Pat Forsyth said: 'It was a freak day and I can only apologise to patients, some of them very sick, who were left in ambulances for so long.'

All those waiting were eventually admitted last night to QA, St Mary's Hospital, Milton or St Richard's Hospital, Chichester. They were mainly elderly patients.

Alan Bedford, the chief executive of the trust, said: 'We are not the only hospital in difficulty. Southampton is currently unable to help and they in turn have had to turn away requests from three other nearby hospitals.'

At the peak of the crisis one paramedic contacted *The News* and said he had a man in his 50s in an ambulance who was suffering breathing problems. They had been waiting for an hour to be admitted. The paramedic, who wished to remain anonymous said: 'It's a joke. There is no patient here at all.'

Woman suffers three-hour delay in pain



by Saxon East
The News

AS Merlene Hickman felt the shooting pains round her hips and stomach, she consoled herself that it wouldn't be long before she reached hospital.

For the 64-year-old had suffered sharp abdomen pains for almost ten days and her family had arranged with the doctor for an ambulance pick up from her Clanfield home.

But Mrs Hickman spent three hours in the ambulance as staff at Queen Alexandra Hospital struggled to find her a bed.

The fiasco has angered her daughter, Heather Jennings, 39, who lives a few doors away from her mother in South Lane.

Mrs Jennings said: 'If this is happening now what is it going to be like when the winter finally kicks in? How many people will be queuing up then? Although they would be in an ambulance, if you leave somebody out there long enough there could be a death.'

As they waited, unhappy ambulance staff said this winter they had already been through one 45-minute ambulance wait, but this was the worst crisis yet.

Mrs Hickman said: 'It is all very well saying, "This ward is shut and nobody is taking anybody", but something has to be done. We had a particularly good hospital down the road in Haslar, but it does not have the staff around it any more.'

PICTURED: Heather Jennings comforts her mother Merlene Hickman in hospital

PICTURE: STEVE REID (025938-43)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Missing girl, 14, is 'safe and well'

FAREHAM: A 14-year-old girl has been found safe and well after sparking a police search when she went missing on Sunday.

Amy Evans took most of her belongings and some food, leaving only a note asking for someone to look after her two pet chinchillas.

She was last seen by another child at around 7pm on Sunday at a terraced house off Bishopstield Road, Fareham.

After several police inquiries she was found at an address in Southsea at about 5pm yesterday. She has now been taken into the care of social services and the police will make no arrests.

Bazaar for charities

DENMEAD: The All Saints Christmas Bazaar will be held from 10am to 12.30pm on Saturday.

Each year the bazaar tries to raise about £1,500 for two charities - one at home and one abroad.

One highlight of the bazaar at the hall in Hambledon Road is the Church Flower Club laden with Christmas arrangements.

Extension planned

HORNDEAN: Plans for a first floor extension at 213 Catherington Lane will go before East Hampshire District Council planners.

WHAT THEY SAID



'I won't be going to that park again,' - Kimberley Lewis, 22, who was punched in the face after being confronted by youths wanting to take her bike.

youths wanting to take her bike.

Ageing population and nursing home closures add pressure

QUEEN Alexandra hospital has been beset with overcrowding for the past five weeks and has closed its casualty department twice in an attempt to cope.

One of the main problems is 'bed-blocking' - people taking up hospital beds when they no longer need them.

This happens when a patient has finished being treated, is waiting to

be moved elsewhere for different treatment, waiting for medication to take home, for a doctor to discharge them, or for social services to equip their home with specialist apparatus.

The biggest problem is elderly patients waiting to be discharged to a nursing or residential home.

The hospital expects to have about 30 patients at any in its beds who are ready to leave. It currently has 80

such patients and there are 173 beds in the NHS across Portsmouth and south east Hampshire with patients whose discharge is delayed.

Portsmouth hospitals' spokeswoman Pat Forsyth said: 'There is an ageing population - people are living longer and many nursing homes have closed, which all puts extra pressure on us and we simply do not have enough beds.'

Rush-hour chaos as cars and bike collide

Traffic BACKS stretched for more than a mile following a rush-hour smash on the A1027 today.

The crash followed a four-vehicle smash on the motorway in rush-hour last night. The driver of an articulated Scania lorry did not see a Ford Escort van breaking in lane one of the east-

bound carriageway. The lorry crashed into the back of the van shortly before 6pm, just before junction 9 at Whiteley.

The Ford van then hit a Honda Legend, which crashed into the back of a Proton Compact car.

A 27-year-old man in the Ford Escort was taken to

Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham with injuries which were not life-threatening.

Tailbacks were caused until about 7.20pm when the road was fully reopened.

Anyone with information about the accidents should contact traffic police on 0845 0454545.

Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham with injuries which were not life-threatening.

Tailbacks were caused until about 7.20pm when the road was fully reopened.

Anyone with information about the accidents should contact traffic police on 0845 0454545.

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Stud muffin will pay for my carpet burns
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The News
The News Centre, Hillea, Portsmouth, Hants PO2 9SX
Tel: (023) 9266 4488
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Editor: Mike Gilson
Deputy editor: Mark Acheson
News editor: Colin McNeill
Features editor: John Millard
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We strive to ensure all the news we report is fair and accurate. However, if you have a complaint, please write to the editor. All complaints will be answered.

PATIENTS IN PERIL: New system for treating emergencies backfires adding to problems

We got it wrong says boss of city hospitals in crisis

by Rebecca Ellinor and Chris Owen
The News

PORTSMOUTH hospitals boss Alan Bedford has admitted a new system for treating emergency patients had backfired and said: 'We got it wrong.'

He said the system, brought in last month was playing a major part in a new crisis at Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham.

It has led to queues of ambulances with patients on board sitting outside casualty for hours waiting for beds. Accident and emergency has been forced to shut twice and ill people have lined the corridors on trolleys.

The new system was supposed to speed up emergency admissions by putting a team of specialists under one roof at QA instead of spreading them between there and St Mary's Hospital, Milton.

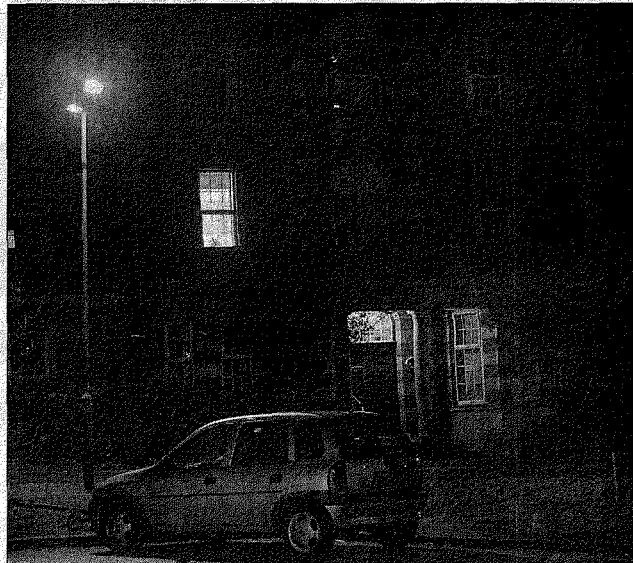
But Mr Bedford said it had caused a bottleneck at QA and helped spark a crisis which he says he can see no end to.

He said: 'This is a very serious situation which I am trying to solve as quickly as possible, but there is no easy solution.'

He has brought in Department of Health officials but so far no quick fix has been found. The problem has been made worse by a big increase in patient referrals by GPs and beds being blocked by people ready to be discharged.

Today the city's MPs called on the health ministers in charge of emergency care to sort out problems. Southsea Liberal Democrat MP Mike Hancock said: 'It's a diabolical situation. The only thing that will stop it is if the Department of Health steps in to give the hospital the resources it needs.'

Portsmouth North MP Syd Rapson said: 'I will press health secre-



Office lights blaze late into the night during the crisis at De La Court House, the Queen Alexandra Hospital administration block PICTURE: JONATHAN BRADY (025959-99)

tary Alan Milburn to show as much sympathy as possible.

David Laimy, the health minister in charge of emergency care, refused to speak about the QA situation which he said was a local problem.

Save Haslar Taskforce spokesman Peter Edgar today renewed criticism of Portsmouth Hospitals bosses for not making more use of Royal Hospital Haslar in Gosport.

But Mr Bedford said 1,000 more operations had been carried out there in the past year than in the year before.

CARING CURE? ● Pages 12/13

Rural areas cover 'is disastrously inadequate'

PEOPLE in Hampshire's towns and villages have to wait longer for ambulances than those in cities.

Union bosses say there is a postcode lottery caused by the county's ambulance service concentrating efforts on urban areas to meet response times. They say this risks rural residents' lives.

Unions met county ambulance chiefs yesterday to demand the same level of service across the county.

The service is forced to play a life-or-death juggling act as the number of 999 calls has increased by more than a third - ambulance totals are the same.

On Tuesday five ambulances were taken off the road for up to three hours when they were unable to discharge patients at QA, where all 583 beds were full.

Jim Barnett, the chairman of Hampshire Ambulance Trust's joint shop stewards committee, said: 'Ambulance cover is inadequate in rural areas. There are not enough ambulances or crews to cover the county properly.'

'Patients are at risk. How long an ambulance takes to get to you is all down to your address.'

The ambulance trust acting director of operations, Chris Smith, said: 'We focus efforts on cities because that's where the greatest demands are'

STEPS TAKEN TO EASE PATIENT BACKLOG

Sept 17 - Health chiefs urged nurses to do extra shifts to help them cope with staffing crisis.

Bosses at Queen Alexandra and St Mary's hospitals, Portsmouth, forced to cancel routine surgery.

Oct 9 - Emergency medical patients now sent to Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham, instead of being split between QA and St Mary's to speed up admissions.

Oct 15/16 - Four people have to go to another hospital as Portsmouth

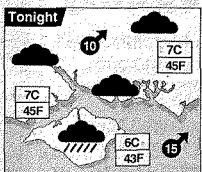
runs out of room. Bosses at QA hospital urged people to stay away from casualty.

Nov 2 - QA closes casualty for two hours to try to clear backlog of waiting patients.

Nov 5 - Health bosses accused of ignoring Gosport unit at Royal Hospital Haslar, while demand for casualty services in city hits crisis.

Nov 26 - Ambulances unable to offload patients - no more room at QA Hospital.

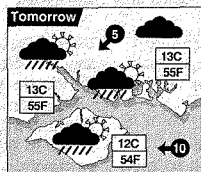
SOUTH COAST WEATHER



Cloudy on the mainland but staying dry. Some showers are likely over the Isle of Wight. Lowest temperature 6C (43F).

Statistics

Southsea (24 hours to 5pm)	
Min temp	.....9C (48F)
Max temp	.....13C (55F)
Rainfall	.....0.01 ins
Sunshine	.....1.5 hrs



A day of scattered showers in many places, drier further inland. Winds generally light and variable. Maximum temperatures 13C (55F).

Light times

Portsmouth	4.04pm to 7.42am
Sun rises	.....7.42am
Sun sets	.....4.03pm
Moon rises	.....12.48am
Moon sets	.....12.03pm

CLICK www.portsmouth.co.uk for full marine forecast. Click on NEWS

Three-day outlook

Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Variable force 5, gusts 30kt around blustery scattered showers. Visibility good but moderate in showers. Seas moderate.	Variable force 5, gusts 30kt around blustery scattered showers. Visibility good but moderate in showers. Seas moderate.	Variable force 5, gusts 30kt around blustery scattered showers. Visibility good but moderate in showers. Seas moderate.
10C (50F)	12C (54F)	10C (50F)

At sea

Sailing forecast

Variable force 5, gusts 30kt around blustery scattered showers. Visibility good but moderate in showers. Seas moderate.

Channel crossings: Moderate.

High and low tides tomorrow

Portsmouth	.....12.02am (1.8m), 6.39am (4.2m), 7.00pm (4.1m)
Chichester	.....12.07am (1.7m), 6.27am (4.3m), 6.51pm (4.2m)
Wareham	.....11.49am (1.8m), 6.23am (4.0m), 6.43pm (3.9m)

World temperatures

Algarve	.....Rain	.....16 61
Amsterdam	.....Fair	.....9 48
Bordeaux	.....Sunny	.....13 55
Brussels	.....Sunny	.....9 48
Corfu	.....Fair	.....20 68
Costa del Sol	.....Sunny	.....20 68
Cyprus	.....Fair	.....20 68
Geneva	.....Fair	.....9 48
Hong Kong	.....Fair	.....21 70
Jersey	.....Fair	.....10 50
Los Angeles	.....Cloudy	.....21 70
Majorca	.....Sunny	.....19 66
Miami	.....Fair	.....26 79
New York	.....Sunny	.....2 36
Nice	.....Sunny	.....17 63
Paris	.....Fog	.....4 39
Rome	.....Fair	.....18 64
SydneySunny21 70
TenerifeCloudy22 72
TokyoSunny14 57
VeniceRain15 59



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THE WE CAN DO IT FACTFILE

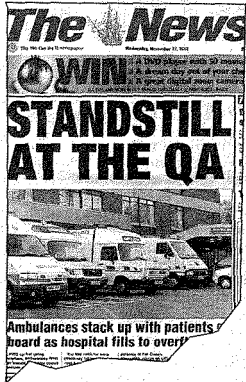
Senior ratings from HMS Sultan in Gosport ran 26 miles around Berlin to raise £1,000 for seriously ill youngsters to help their dreams come true.

A giant coffee morning at HMS Collingwood in Fareham raised £912 for cancer relief charity Macmillan.

If you want to help out with the We Can Do It campaign, contact Khushwant Sachdev on 023 9262 2140 or e-mail her at k.sachdev@the-news.co.uk. To reach us on the internet go to www.portsmouth.co.uk and click on the sun.

SPECIAL REPORT / HEALTH SERVICE CRISIS

Caring cure a calamity



How *The News* highlighted the beds crisis at QA yesterday

A new system heralded as a panacea for emergency patients has turned into chaos. **REBECCA ELLINOR and CHRIS OWEN** report on the latest crisis to hit Portsmouth hospitals.

It was meant to be the grand master plan that would be the answer to problems at Portsmouth's principal hospital. But instead of being the solution to the immense demand for beds at city hospitals, the decision to direct all emergency patients to Queen Alexandra Hospital at Cosham - instead of splitting them between QA and St Mary's Hospital at Milton - has ended in the disaster GPs say they predicted.

On Tuesday patients in five ambulances were forced

to wait outside casualty when QA ran out of beds. More people had to wait inside A&E and hospital chiefs were forced to ask about 10 people to stay at home - and wait for a bed. Health bosses said the situation was a 'freak' and 'blamed a combination of factors, including bed blocking and a bed crisis at other nearby hospitals. But today Alan Bedford, the chief executive of Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs QA hospital, admitted it could happen again.

He conceded it was a crisis situation he did not know how to resolve.

'We've been under real pressure for some time and I can't say when it's going to end,' he said.

Paulsgrove GP Dr Stephen McKenning said: 'As a GP the problem is they just don't have enough beds, they can dress it up anyway they like, but that's the problem.'

He said he had had patients waiting more than 24 hours to get a bed at the hospital in the past few weeks.

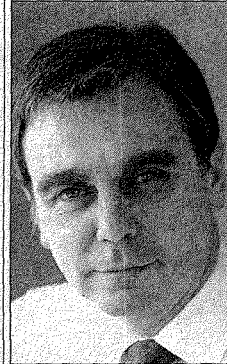
Dr Julian Neal, a Crookhorn GP and representative of the British Medical Association, said: 'It worries me that a highly paid chief executive of a hospital trust doesn't know what to do. He should know and he should have his plan in place.'

'We knew this new system wasn't going to be more efficient. It was a hair-brained scheme, which sees patients admitted to one ward then discharged and re-admitted to another. As soon as patients are remotely stable they are discharged.'

Ambulance staff admitted it was poor to have patients waiting in ambulances parked outside a hospital because until they could safely discharge them from their care, they could not collect other people who needed them.

Under the Health Services Act of 1974, every ambulance crew has a duty of care which means they cannot discharge a patient until they are safely in the hands of someone else.

Chris Smith from Hampshire Ambulance described the situation as



Dr Stephen McKenning

frustrating but said there was nothing else they could do. In such situations, ambulances from other areas can be called upon to help cover.

Mr Bedford has held fortnightly meetings with colleagues in social services, those from the strategic health authority and staff who work for primary care trusts in Havant, Gosport, Fareham and Portsmouth, to work out a way of dealing with delayed discharges - patients occupying hospital beds who no longer need them.

Hampshire County Council's social services department will open an extra 26 beds at residential homes in Havant and Lee-on-the-Solent in the next 10 days to try to clear some of the 44 patients they're responsible for at Portsmouth hospitals who are waiting to leave.

Portsmouth City Council's social services said a task-force made daily calls to

all the homes in the area to check where and when beds become available.

Mr Bedford also said he had appealed to bosses in London for help.

He said: 'I'm having top-level discussions with the Department of Health and strategic health authority about what additional support we might get to help us through these very difficult times.'

Dr Neal said health chiefs were obsessing over waiting times and waiting lists at the expense of urgent patients and suggested Mr Bedford cancel planned operations until the demand for beds subsides.

'I've been a GP here for 20 years and Portsmouth hospitals has never offered a worse service ever before,' he said.

Tom Shepherd, from Age Concern Portsmouth, said he was worried about the effect problems were having on elderly patients - the majority of those being admitted.

'The logistics have gone wrong somewhere haven't they?'

'People have to be moved to other hospitals, which if they're elderly, puts more stress upon them.'

Dr Neal added: 'I believe patients have almost got lost in the system and haven't seen a doctor for two or three days sometimes because they keep being moved around.'

Dr McKenning added: 'Patients in this district are certainly not getting the best care - if they are desperately ill they get superb care but if they're not well enough to stay at home but not desperately immediately in need they will sometimes get the run around.'

'Staff are marvellous but it's bedlam in there,' reveals daughter of one patient

The News was not allowed to see for itself the chaos inside Queen Alexandra Hospital.

Even though we were given permission to go into the hospital on Tuesday, we were refused entry yesterday.

Alan Bedford, the chief executive of Portsmouth Hospitals' NHS Trust, said: 'It would be grossly inappropriate to let you in at the moment.'

It is understood that doctors and nurses are reaching breaking point inside the Cosham hospital trying to deal with the influx of patients.

So, outside the hospital, *The News* spoke to some of those affected by the crisis.

Julie Brewer, 31, of Devonshire Avenue, Southsea, had just left her

58-year-old mother who had been admitted with breathing problems.

She said: 'She was referred by her GP and waited in an ambulance for nearly an hour before she was admitted.'

'I felt that was disgraceful.'

'We just couldn't understand why it was happening, but I suppose if they haven't got any beds there's not much else we could do.'

'I wouldn't have wanted her to go to Southampton or Chichester because she would have been too far away.'

'It's pandemonium in there at the moment.'

'The doctors and nurses are literally worked off their feet. They've been marvellous - the same as

the ambulance crew who brought us here, but you have to wonder about a system that operates like this.'

A female nurse, who was going off duty and who asked not to be named, said: 'It's crazy in there. You try not to let it show but the patients aren't daft. They know there's a big problem.'

'Everyone is very stressed and working flat out to try to admit as many people as possible.'

'But when so many nursing and residential homes are closing there is nowhere for many of the elderly people to go.'

'We just have to keep them. Before, they would have been discharged and the beds would have been freed up.'

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RÉNERGIE anti-wrinkle and firming cream, 15 ml

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for health chief



Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust chief executive Alan Bedford

PICTURE: STEVE REID (025942-1)

'We're under pressure, I can't say when it will end'

The man in charge of Portsmouth's hospitals today revealed that a new system for admitting emergency patients had backfired.

Alan Bedford said it was playing a major role in the latest crisis to hit the city's main hospital - Queen Alexandra at Cosham.

He also blamed an unusually high number of emergency referrals of patients from their GPs to his hospitals on the problems.

And he pointed to bed blocking as the third cause of the crisis - the increasing difficulty of getting recovering patients into nursing or residential homes when they are fit enough to leave hospital.

Mr Bedford, the chief executive of Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, confessed he did not know how to resolve the immediate crisis.

And when asked what would happen if the hospitals were suddenly inundated with flu victims he said: 'At the moment I don't know. It would be a big problem.'

As reported in *The News*, five ambulances with patients on board were forced to wait for hours on Tuesday outside casualty because of an acute shortage of beds.

One woman had to wait more than three hours in an ambulance before she could be admitted.

In between emergency meetings to resolve the crisis yesterday Mr Bedford said: 'This is a very serious situation which I am trying to solve as quickly as possible, but there is no easy solution.'

'For some reason the number of medical admissions (referrals from GPs) has gone up dramatically this year and we don't yet know why.'

'The second thing is that the number of people who are

delayed from being discharged has increased by about 50 per cent in this financial year.'

But it was the new system for admitting emergency patients which worried Mr Bedford most.

From October 9 all medical emergency cases have been taken to QA instead of being split between the Cosham hospital and St Mary's at Milton.

At QA a 46-bed medical unit has been set up and run by a team of specialists to assess them and fast-track tests such as x-rays and blood tests.

Mr Bedford added: 'It would have had teething problems on the best of days, but because of the bed blocking and the rise in referrals it has not been a nice, smooth 21st century transfer and has been giving us all these problems.'

'As a result patients are having to be moved around inside the hospital which is far from ideal.'

'It's causing a lot of stress and many people are having to wait on trolleys.'

'We are trying to improve the internal process within the hospital to make sure no one is delayed unnecessarily - such as having to wait for the results of blood tests.'

Mr Bedford added: 'On Monday and Tuesday every hospital in Hampshire was in the same position.'

'Everyone was asking for help.'

'We have been under real pressure for some time and I can't say when it's going to end.'

He said doctors and nurses were under immense pressure and were working 'flat out' to ease the waiting times.

'I want to pay tribute to the superhuman efforts being put in by doctors, nurses and managers to try to get through this crisis.'

'I must also apologise to patients,' added Mr Bedford.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

■ What is bed blocking?

Bed blocking is when people continue to use a hospital bed when a doctor has decided they should be discharged from hospital.

This can mean they are waiting for medication, an assessment from social services, equipment to be installed in their home so it's safe for them to leave or a place in a nursing or residential home, or community hospital bed where they will receive rehabilitative treatment.

■ Why does bed blocking happen?

Often it's a question of resources. Few doctors which means they have limited time to do rounds to see who can be discharged, time of social workers to assess what patients need, lack of places in nursing or residential homes - some 147 in Portsmouth alone since the beginning of the year.

■ What's going to be done about it?

Plans to build 500 nursing homes beds for the county's older people were given the go ahead at Hampshire County Council's cabinet meeting on October 28. The initiative is estimated to cost around £60m and the beds will be built at up to 15 yet to be decided sites spread across the county. The first beds are expected to be ready for use in 2004.

In the short term, the county council is freeing up an extra 26 beds in the next 10 days at residential homes in Havant and Lee-on-the-Solent. Refurbishments to Malmesbury Lawn in Havant will be put back until after the winter to help ease the pressure and six respite care beds at Pier House in Lee-on-the-Solent will be given to ex-hospital patients for possibly the next three months.

■ Why else is the hospital so busy?

Alan Bedford, chief executive of Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham, identified three main causes.

He said a huge increase in the number of patients referred to hospital from GPs and a plan to make things run more smoothly which has backfired - together with bed-blocking - were causing the problem.

■ What was the plan that backfired?

A change in the way emergency medical patients are admitted to the city hospitals took effect from October 9 this year.

The plan was to send all emergencies to QA's casualty department instead of splitting them between QA and St Mary's Hospital in Milton.

The majority of emergency patients already went straight to QA's A&E, however some patients, who are also considered 'medical emergencies' such as those with breathing or heart problems, could have previously been sent to St Mary's instead by their GP.

But now everyone is referred direct to QA and anyone who doesn't go through A&E will be sent straight to the department next door, the 46-bed medical assessment unit (MAU).

The idea was to base all the doctors with general medical expertise on the same site so patients could be more quickly assessed, have essential tests - x-rays and blood tests - fast-tracked and be sent to the correct department more quickly. And sometimes that correct department may be at St Mary's.

Health bosses hope the knock-on effect will be to reduce pressure for beds across the whole hospital because patients will be in and out more quickly, having seen the right person earlier on but currently the opposite is happening.

■ What else is causing problems?

Most GPs maintain the other significant problem is a lack of beds and staff. The population is increasingly becoming older, people are living longer and when things do go wrong with their health there's more and more doctors can do.

That's good news, but it does mean there's more people out there putting a demand on stretched NHS services.

Things get particularly tight during the winter when the cold weather brings on chest and breathing problems in many people. A lot of elderly patients have numerous conditions which means they may endure a longer hospital stay.

And all the while doctors say there are not enough beds to cope with these increases, which can mean planned operations getting cancelled.

In addition, even if the hospital has the space or available beds, often it doesn't have the staff to safely run them.

One of the reasons for this is the high cost of living in the south east which is driving health service workers on low pay to other areas.

No talks on Haslar until new hospital is complete

by **Rebecca Ellinor**

Health reporter

THE Ministry of Defence says it will not discuss the long-term future of Haslar until the super-hospital is built in Portsmouth.

Gosport MP Peter Viggers quizzed the secretary of state for defence about what discussions the MoD had had with the town's council about the long-term use of the site of the Royal Hospital Haslar.

Junior defence minister Dr Lewis Moonie said the MoD's plans to withdraw from the Haslar site were tied to the Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust's development of Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham.

Support services will continue at Haslar until the super-hospital in Cosham is finished in 2007.

After that, the use of the site is uncertain.

Dr Moonie said: 'It would be premature for the MoD to enter into formal discussions with Gosport Borough Council until the timescale for the completion of that development is more definite.

'However, informal discussions take place periodically with the leader of the council to apprise him of progress.

'MoD officials met council officers on one occasion in 1999, prior to a review of MoD estates in the Gosport and Portsmouth area and after the decision to close Haslar as an MoD site had been taken.

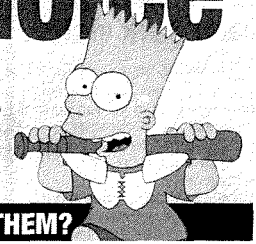
'At that stage, the local authority - which will ultimately be responsible for determining the future of the site - was reviewing its plans.'

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...WILL YOU BE ONE OF THEM?

Health chiefs come up with a cure for this ...

OAP hands over £400 savings to trickster

by Jeff Reines
The News

A CONMAN pushed his way past a 91-year-old widower before convincing him to hand over his savings.

The thief claimed the pensioner owed him money when he approached his Fareham home before he charged through the door.

The trickster, who was aged around 50, then persuaded the homeowner to hand over £400.

The victim had been to a bank in Fareham town centre a few hours before the crook knocked on his Coombe Farm Avenue house between 4.30pm and 5.30pm on Tuesday.

Detective Constable Martin Allen, of Fareham CID, said: "This approach was slightly unusual in that it was perpetrated by one person on his own."

"But it was a despicable crime by someone who obviously set out to prey on a vulnerable elderly person living alone."

Anyone with any information should contact Fareham police on 0845 045 4545.



Patients had to wait in ambulances at the A&E department at Queen Alexandra Hospital at Cosham because of a shortage of beds

(025913-0004)

Eight-point plan aims to solve hospital beds crisis

by Rebecca Ellinor
Health reporter

HEALTH bosses have unveiled their plan for solving the beds crisis that has rocked Portsmouth hospitals.

Five ambulances were parked outside the A&E department of Queen Alexandra Hospital on Tuesday because there was no space for new patients.

At one point 80 beds were being used by patients who no longer needed them but were either waiting for medication, a bed at a home or at a community hospital.

But today Alan Bedford, the chief executive of Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust which runs QA, revealed an eight-point plan he and health colleagues had devised to free-up beds at the over-stretched Cosham hospital.

Measures being carried out or considered are:

Bed blocking, more patients and busy neighbouring units blamed

ON TUESDAY, patients were forced to be treated in ambulances as there was not enough beds for them in Queen Alexandra Hospital.

But how could this crisis happen?

The chief executive of Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham, Alan Bedford, identified three main causes

for the lack of hospital beds.

■ **Bed blocking** – instead of having about 30 patients at any one time who are fit to leave but waiting on medication or a nursing home place – they had 80

■ **Bosses identified a huge increase in the number of patients coming to A&E** – about 250 additional patients a month

■ **Neighbouring hospitals in Southampton and Chichester were also busy and could do little to help.**

A plan to make things run more smoothly – sending all medical emergencies to QA instead of being split between QA and St Mary's Hospital, Milton – led to another 100 patients a week attending QA's A&E.

■ **More care home beds:** Hampshire County Council's social services department is paying to open an extra 26 beds at residential homes in Havant and Lee-on-the-Solent

■ **Doctors to carry out extra ward rounds to see and discharge patients**

■ **Hospital pharmacy to be open more on evenings and weekends to get patients ready to go their medication**

■ **Diagnostic unit which carries out X-rays and scans to be open for longer so patients**

can have tests and possibly be discharged. The extra beds should be available by the end of next week and the other measures being considered should be put in place before Christmas.

■ **Moving more surgery to Royal Hospital Haslar in Gosport**

■ **Increase use of Haslar treatment centre to see if it could manage more patients with minor injuries**

■ **Open another 10 to 12 beds at the 46-bed medical assess-**

ment unit next to A&E which helps fast-track patients

■ **Work with GPs and ambulance crews to reduce the number of patients being sent to casualty**

Ambulance paramedics could be asked to see and treat more people who call 999 rather than taking them to hospital.

Although they currently do this with some asthma and epileptic attacks or if someone has fallen out of bed, the plan could see them being

asked to do it more often.

Mr Bedford said he could not guarantee no patient would be left in an ambulance awaiting treatment next week but said he hoped everything was being done to avoid it. "There is no more important thing for us at the moment than solving this," he said.

He said he expected the cost of all the additional measures would run into six figures but added: "Emergency care comes first."

Warning after puppy worth £300 stolen

A DOG lover today warned other pet owners to beware of thieves after a King Charles Spaniel puppy was taken from his house.

Lesley Walton said the £300 puppy was stolen while his back was turned for just minutes.

And he appealed for the public's help to get his eight-week-old dog back.

Mr Walton, a bus driver for First Provincial, said: "My dog has just had five puppies and I put them in my conservatory at my front door."

"A couple came round to look at a dog and we went inside. When I came back out there were only four puppies."

Mr Walton, of Tipner Road, Tipner, added: "They are £300 each and I could have sold each one 10 times over."

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HEALTH: Review to examine whether minor injury treatment centre can relieve pressure on overcrowded hospital

QA crisis gives Haslar hope

by Rebecca Ellinor
Health reporter

HASLAR'S accident treatment centre came under the microscope today as health chiefs launched a major review to see if enough people were using it.

The study, which will last for three weeks, has been ordered by the boss of Portsmouth hospitals trust which runs the unit at the Gosport hospital.

Alan Bedford set up the review after members of the Save Haslar Task Force criticised him for not making proper use of its facilities and accused him of trying to run it down.

The campaigners believe Haslar is needed more now than ever, in the wake of the crisis at Queen Alexandra Hospital that left five patients waiting in ambulances outside casualty last week because there was not enough room.

Mr Bedford, chief executive of Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, said the review was not being carried out with a view to closing the 24-hour centre overnight - something he had threatened in the past.

He said: 'The project is to see if the accident treatment centre is being used to the right effect.'

'It's to bring some objectivity to the emotive current position. It's not with a view to closing overnight, but to see whether it can be used more to relieve Queen Alexandra Hospital - although it cannot take seriously ill people.'

The accident treatment centre is now part of a plan by health bosses, revealed by Mr Bedford last



Council leader Peter Edgar, above, welcomed the news that a review is to be undertaken of the capability of Haslar's accident treatment centre to ease the pressure on the QA. Left: ENP Poppy Codd treats a patient in the accident unit at Haslar

week, to ease pressure for beds at QA.

Staff at the centre only deal with injuries including sprains, broken bones, bruising, minor burns and cuts. And under the action plan, health chiefs will review services at the centre and see if it could manage more patients with such minor injuries, relieving pressure on QA.

Councillor Peter Edgar, spokesman for the Save Haslar Task

Force, which has criticised Mr Bedford's stance on the centre, welcomed the news.

He said: 'We are more than happy with the review. We feel it's a positive move.'

'It's very encouraging that we are being listened to as we want to work with Alan Bedford.'

'We feel the review will show more people should be treated at Haslar to take the pressure off A&E at the Queen Alexandra.'

Treatment centre replaced casualty unit

THE accident treatment centre at Royal Hospital Haslar replaced the former casualty department on August 1 2000.

It is staffed round-the-clock by a team of nurse practitioners and experienced accident and emergency nurses who undertook special training and an additional

qualification before taking up the role. On average, the centre sees 40 patients over a typical 24-hour period and that figure can reach as high as 70 patients.

The percentage of patients treated within an hour of their arrival has increased from an initial 76 per cent to 98 per cent in just over two years.

Dangerous allotments

GARDENERS are warning youngsters to stay clear of allotments during the winter months following a spate of vandalism.

Allotment holders in Gosport say that they have found their crops and property have been damaged by vandals going onto the sites.

Now they have warned of the many dangers around the plots which any uninvited guests may not be aware of.

David Gattrell, chairman of Gosport Allotment Holders and Gardeners Association, said: 'Tall weed growth can hide a range of hazards such as metal spikes, deep holes, broken glass and rusty iron sheeting can cause serious injury.'

'The allotment holders said youngsters are able to get onto the sites because of holes in fences bordering the sites and gaps under gates.'

Robbers attack pair

ROBBERS broke a man's cheekbone in three places and stole his partner's diamond bracelet as the couple walked home after a night out.

The couple were attacked by three men as they walked along The Hard to get the Gosport ferry at around 1am yesterday.

The man was punched in the face and the woman had hair pulled out.

The couple were taken to Royal Hospital Haslar, Gosport.

by Richard Whitehouse
The News

Sergeant Martin Gilholm of Portsmouth Police said: 'There were a number of people in the area at this time but no-one came to their aid.'

'We would urge anyone who witnessed what happened to come forward and help us with our inquiries.'

Anyone with information should contact Sgt Gilholm at Portsmouth Central station on 0845 045 45 45.

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HEALTH: Bereaved woman criticises member of parliament's comments on inquiry into deaths

MP sparks hospital row



Peter Viggers MP – wants 'a measure of finality'

A ROW has erupted after MP Peter Viggers criticised the cost and time being spent on an inquiry into deaths at a Gosport hospital.

He says the on-going investigations are damaging staff morale at the War Memorial Hospital and costing thousands of pounds.

He wants to see the matter brought to a close without affecting the reputation of the hospital any further.

He claims the investigations have dragged on since Gillian Mackenzie complained excessive drugs led to the death of her mother, Gladys Richards, in 1998.

Mr Viggers said: 'The Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) report cost, I believe, £100,000 and there have been several police reports that Mrs Mackenzie has found unsatisfactory.'

'What I am pleading for is a measure of finality in this; recognition that at the end of the day we need facts exposed and opinions expressed, then we need to move on.'

'Eight inquiries into one hospital is a very large number of expensive and time-consuming investigations.'

Speaking in the House of Commons, he said: 'The

by Richard Whitehouse
The News

House can imagine the cost, and the effect on management of all those inquires. I only hope that they all conclude quickly.'

Police continue to look into deaths at the hospital between 1991 and 2001 as relatives claim their loved ones died because of excessive doses of sedative drugs.

It has led to eight different inquiries by groups including the General Medical Council (GMC) and the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI).

Mrs Mackenzie said: 'Mr Viggers should be doing more research before making comments like this. The police called in the GMC and they backed the case going to the Crown Prosecution Service.'

'He has never had the courtesy to reply to my letters, or those of others who have written to him.'

Richard Follis, a partner at Alexander Harris solicitors who is representing the families, said: 'Far from the matter being closed, the appropriate authorities have confirmed that they are continuing with their enquiries in relation to information from several families.'

PROBES INTO FATALITIES

AS MANY as 57 deaths are under investigation at Gosport's War Memorial Hospital.

Those at the forefront of the investigation asking for answers about how their loved ones died at the 180-bed hospital include:



■ Ann Reeves, whose mother

Gillian Mackenzie

Elsie Devine was admitted in November 1999 and was expected to stay for six weeks for respite care. Doctors suddenly said she had 36 hours to live.

■ Mike Wilson, whose mother Edna Purnell, 91, was transferred to the hospital from Royal Hospital Haslar in October 1998 after a hip operation. Her family say she was given sedative drugs such as diamorphine within hours of arriving on November 12, 1998. She died on December 3.

HEALTH: Bereaved woman criticises member of parliament's comments on inquiry into deaths

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Chiefs halt hospital death probe at police request

HEALTH chiefs have postponed an investigation into care of patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital after a request by police.

An NHS probe into excessive use of painkilling drugs for patients in the 1990s has ceased while police continue their probe.

A statement from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority - the body carrying out the NHS inquiry - read: 'We have

received advice from Hampshire Constabulary that the continuation of NHS investigations into in-patient care and treatment in the past at Gosport War Memorial Hospital could potentially compromise the on-going police investigation.'

The health authority was carrying out the internal investigation into a 1991 report, which related to management decisions about

the prescribing of drugs.

Two health bosses at organisations in Gosport and Havant, who were suspended from their posts during the internal inquiry, were yesterday reinstated.

Ian Piper, chief executive of Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust, and Tony Horne, chief executive of East Hampshire PCT, will resume normal duties in March.

Dozens of families claim loved ones died at the Gosport community hospital because of poor care and the administration of excessive doses of sedative drugs, including diamorphine.

It is believed police have asked the NHS to stop their investigation because they fear it could cross over with their own inquiries into deaths around the 1991 period.



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FEB 18th 2003

HEALTH: Staff sent on retraining course after elderly man given 10 times too much of blood-thinning drug

Elderly hospital patient in rat poison horror

by Rebecca Ellinor
Health reporter

A DOCTOR and nurse who mistakenly gave a patient a 10-times overdose of a blood-thinning drug are back at work.

The medical staff were working on an elderly ward in Queen Alexandra Hospital's South Block when the error was made.

The doctor incorrectly wrote 70mg of the drug warfarin on a prescription instead of 7mg.

A nurse then read the warfarin - which is the same as rat poison - prescription on the chart and the pensioner was given about 20 tablets instead of his usual three one evening before Christmas.

The blunder was not picked up until 10 hours later when another medical team was on

its rounds and saw the error on the chart.

Hospital bosses said the doctor and nurse involved, together with the patient, were immediately informed of the error.

The patient, who regularly takes a small amount of the drug to stop his blood clotting and giving him a heart attack or stroke, was then given vitamin K which helps the blood to clot.

An internal investigation was held and it was decided

it doesn't have the same effect on humans unless a huge dose is given.

Mrs Alldrige said exactly how much damage it caused depended on the patient's weight and other medical problems.

the doctor and nurse involved - who have not been named - should get some retraining.

Pat Forsyth, spokeswoman for Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust which runs the Cosham hospital, confirmed the incident which happened just before Christmas.

She said: 'A mistake was made and a patient was given too much of a drug. It was discovered by the morning staff at about 8am the next day.

Mrs Alldrige said if the problem was corrected quickly no long-term damage would be caused. She felt 10 hours was quite quick and would mean there were no long-term complications for the patient.

'The patient was immediately given a medical examination - including a blood check to see how well their blood was clotting - and everyone including the patient was informed.'

Mrs Forsyth insisted the mistake did not threaten the life of the patient, who was aged over 65, and added that he had not suffered any medical problems as a result of it.

'It did not reach a life-threatening stage and he is now

back at home,' she said.

The female registered nurse and doctor involved have had some retraining.

Mrs Forsyth added: 'Any incident like this is looked at very carefully. The normal procedure for any staff involved with any error is a review of their actions and re-training if required.'

She said the training would have covered the basic areas of how to give certain drugs and how much to give.



Pat Forsyth

NEWS IN BRIEF

Chip shop fryer catches light

SOUTHSEA: A faulty temperature gauge in a deep-fat fryer caused a fire at a Southsea fish and chip shop.

Fire crews from Southsea were called to the King Fryer fish and chip shop in Albert Road about 10.50am on Saturday.

Police were on the scene for about 35 minutes to ensure traffic flowed past the shop.

Arson suspected

PAULSGROVE: A car was badly damaged when suspected arsonists set light to one of its front seats.

Fire crews from Cosham tackled the blaze in Tankerton Close after residents raised the alarm about 10.30pm on Saturday.

Anyone with any information about the suspected arson should contact Cosham police on 0845 0454545.

Shunt sparks delay

COPNOR: Traffic was delayed for about an hour when two cars collided on Eastern Road.

Drivers on the northbound



GILSON on Saturday

A view from the sidelines

I couldn't help myself even though I had made a promise not to interfere. Just go along to watch, my wife had said, they've got a good coach anyway.

Fast forward 24 hours and I am on the touchline running up and down like a man possessed, gesticulating like an idiot and barking out unintelligible instructions.

The lads' school team is playing the posh school down the road and, finding myself with a free afternoon, I have gone along to watch.

Trouble is they're already three down, the alleged coach is playing my boys out of position and seems to be under the mistaken impression that it should all be undertaken for fun as part of developing rounded character in eight to 11-year-olds.

Clearly the posh school has a different philosophy and only the laws of libel prevent me from questioning the age of their centre back, whose four o'clock shadow might suggest he's on a season loan from the local comprehensive.

Of course I have no proof so can't possibly suggest any foul play.

I also can't help thinking the posh school's co-ordinated red and white strip creates more team spirit than our lot's motley collection of Pompey, Barcelona and white singlet ensembles, but there you are.

At first I'm pretty cool. Being the coach of a Saturday club side, I'm just there to casually run my eye over potential talent, but when our lot slice another clearance into the next-door field I become agitated.

The boys look on bemused as I start doing all those crazy Glenn Hoddle-style three-finger pointing movements to indicate tactics.

Hoddle's Spurs did a good job totally ignoring him this season and so do these lads although one team-mate did tell one of the boys

later he thought I was going in for a game of impromptu charades on the touchline.

Half-time comes and our school has got a goal back via a shin and a backside but it gives us a glimmer.

I strain to catch the half-time team talk and don't like what I hear.

No tea-cups are thrown and the centre-forward, far from being pulled up for missing a hatful of chances, is being asked if he's 'enjoying it'.

Second half and the lads start a bit better, occasionally putting more than one pass together.

An imbecile on the sidelines starts sending out messages such as 'stretch the play', 'go narrow' and 'come on'.

Thankfully the lads ignore me again, otherwise they would have been performing bizarre piroettes all over the pitch.

Another goal goes in for our side and then with a minute to go my two lads combine to put the younger through on goal. A cool chip and we're level.

Suddenly there are people on the pitch, they think it's all over but I'm quickly ushered off by the coach, who frankly has contributed nothing to this remarkable comeback.

The posh school kick off with seconds remaining, realise they have been idling for the second half, and promptly storm up the pitch and win a corner.

Sooner than you can say FA inquiry, Lurkio their centre-half has nodded in the ball before one of our defenders can get out the stepladder to challenge him.

They walk off triumphantly while protests are made to the referee about the huge amount of injury time he played. Again I am ignored.

How did you get on, my wife asks the boys later? We lost but it was far, far worse than that, they answer, directing what I perceive to be resentful glances at me.

'I strain to catch the half-time team talk and don't like what I hear'

COVER STORY

Haslar's early prostitution,

The Royal Hospital Haslar is now a hi-tech hospital relied upon by countless military personnel and fiercely defended by local people. Its staff once more showed their professionalism in the Iraqi conflict. But the early days of the 250-year-old institution were marked by scandal, as **MIKE ALLEN** reports.



Scurvy and smuggling, prostitution and pioneering, horrors and heroism. All have their place in the 250-year saga of Royal Hospital Haslar and its staff.

Scurvy was the dreaded disease for which a doctor closely associated with the Gosport establishment promoted treatment.

Horrors were in the treatment – or lack of it – that sailors had to endure.

Heroism is highlighted in the story of a surgeon who won Britain's highest military honour, the Victoria Cross.

Smuggling and prostitution were the depths to which harshly-treated nurses had to stoop in the hospital's early days.

When Haslar was established it was decreed that the nurses 'shall be the most sober, careful and diligent that can be had'. But it didn't quite work out like that.

Reports of their sexual activities recur in minutes of the hospital council.

One complaint in 1756 was against a Nurse Jane Brown 'for going to bed to four or five patients and infecting one of them with the foul disease'.

It seems to have been prostitution, impure and simple. Nurses were even more badly paid then than now, and for food they were 'served with the scraps left by the seamen'.

Many of them lived outside the hospital, in Portsmouth or Gosport, and allowed patients to exploit that fact too.

Large quantities of gin were taken into Haslar – tied around the nurses' waist and under their stays in pig bladders, a

gate-porter said. He reported that he regularly seized two or three gallons of gin a month, and sometimes six.

The nurses could also be bribed to help escape attempts by patients. Many of them had been press-ganged into service and were desperate to get away.

They often used large brick-built culverts running through the hospital grounds into Haslar creek.

These culverts, nearly 6ft high in places, were also used in the other direction for importing illicit alcohol.

It is now 250 years since Haslar hospital opened, but recognition that the navy should do something about its large numbers of injured or diseased men had come as early as the 12th century.

Eventually, an early form of public-private partnership resulted in the provision of beds in civilian hospitals.

But as they became overwhelmed by demand in the first Dutch war of the 17th century, the system ran into a crisis.

With Portsmouth dockyard quickly expanding and patients arriving in their thousands, the young Dr Daniel Whistler was appointed by the Admiralty Board to review the problem.

He took over responsibility for all naval patients in the area and recommended the establishment of a special hospital.

In 1653 he tentatively suggested Portchester Castle as a site, but when the war ended and the



Treatment for all in the

Military medics work not only at Haslar but at Queen Alexandra and St Mary's hospitals in Portsmouth.

The Ministry of Defence has first call on their services, and more than 260 were called away to the Iraqi war, led by

Haslar commanding officer Surgeon Captain Lionel Jarvis, 47 (pictured).

Most served aboard RFA Argus in the northern Arabian Gulf but he spent a month in Kuwait before moving north with 34 Field

need diminished, the idea was forgotten.

So it was nearly another 100 years before action was taken – and it was a Gosport crisis that

prompted the breakthrough.

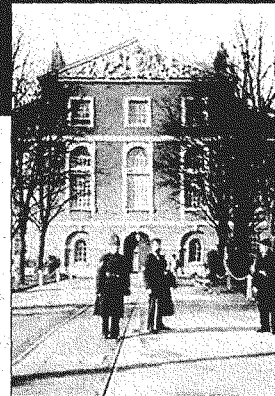
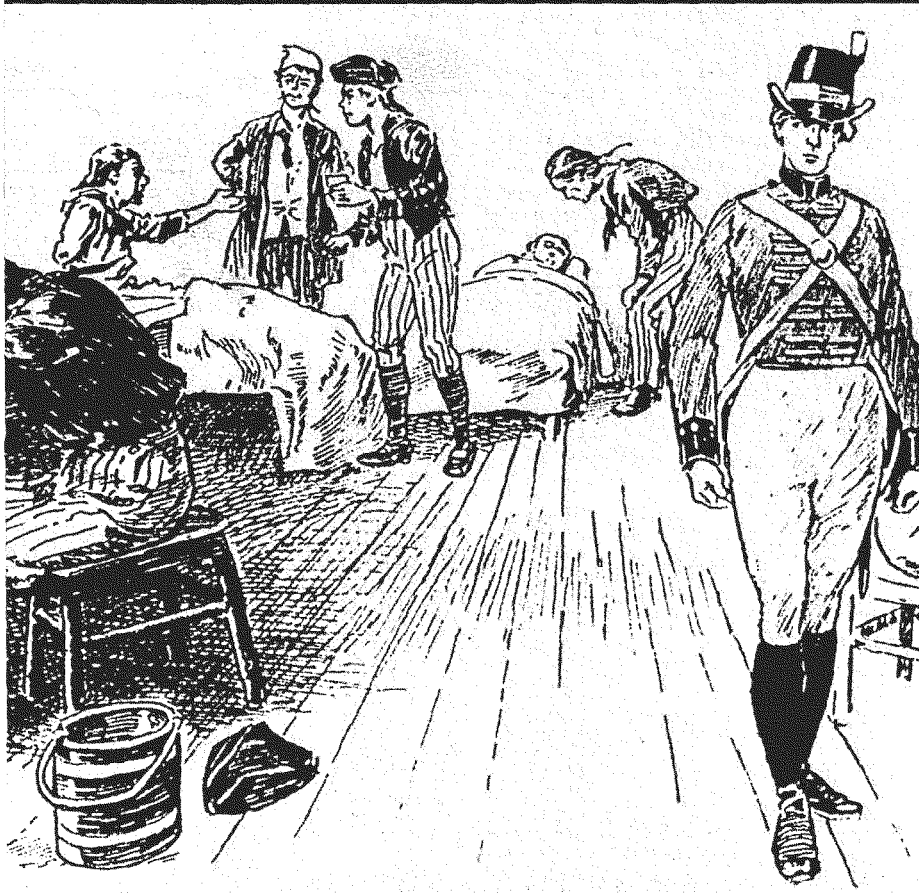
There is reference to a Fortune (or Forton) Hospital, consisting of wooden huts and

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Nurses 'shall be the most sober, careful

COVER STORY

days were witness to smuggling and horror



From the hospital's first days, patients were conveyed from Haslar jetty by rail ambulance on the tramway. This photograph was taken in 1910



The main gate at Haslar in 1907



The Royal Hospital Haslar as it is today – a hi-tech facility

Gosport keeps up the pressure

It's not just naval personnel who hold Haslar in high regard. Gosport people have fought hard to preserve its service.

With the birth of the National Health Service in 1948, Haslar increased its commitment to providing care for civilians.

After a series of reviews in the 1980s and 90s, it was announced that Haslar was to be the home of Britain's single tri-service hospital.

But a further strategy document in 1998 said it was to be closed and replaced by a Centre of Defence Medicine in Birmingham with an additional military wing in Portsmouth.

It was argued that such units had operational and financial advantages, and that Haslar suffered from declining patient volume and was geographically isolated and expensive to maintain.

But although a Save Haslar campaign has had little or no impact on the Ministry of Defence, hopes are high that the hospital will remain in some form.

It might be only a local provider of minor services. Or it might be something bigger.

After all, the military wing in Portsmouth will come into being only with the completion of a new super-hospital on the Queen Alexandra site at Cosham.

And who knows when – or if – that will happen?

iraqi conflict

Hospital to Basra, the Iraqi city taken by the British. He saw missiles and gunfire and treated both coalition and Iraqi casualties, including children and elderly people.



temporary buildings on marshy land where today Lees Lane meets Whitworth Road.

The hospital was owned by a Gosport merchant

called Nathaniel Jackson who recruited disreputable staff on low pay, and the Admiralty demanded an investigation into 'the very great abuse in the management'.

In 1744, the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, wrote to George II highlighting the scandal of poor nursing and drunkenness, and proposing a royal hospital in Portsmouth for 1,500 people.

Conversion of Portchester Castle was again considered, but in 1745 it was agreed a new building would be preferable.

The chosen site, on the western side of Portsmouth Harbour between

Alverstoke Lake and the sea, was known as Haslar Farm and was convenient at the time because most patients arrived by water.

Foundations were laid the following year for what was to be the largest brick building in Europe, and 16 years later, after many problems, it was complete.

Among diseases that were rife in the 18th century navy were not only scurvy but smallpox, typhus, venereal disease and leprosy.

Treatment for leprosy included bathing in the blood of sea turtles. But it wasn't all bad news for the sick. Wine, beer and cider were also tried as cures.

An illustration of life on a ward at Haslar in 1805

Twenty-five years before Haslar hospital opened, it was suggested patients might like to try 'a German dish known as Sour Kraut, which is nothing but cabbage cut small, pressed down and preserved in a manner so as to keep it a long time'.

The advice continued: 'This dish is esteemed by His Majesty, and it would surely be no hardship upon the sailors to be obliged to eat with their meat whatever the Sovereign esteems a delicacy.'

Continued overleaf

and diligent that can be had'. But it didn't quite work out like that

NURSE 'TRIED TO KILL FIVE OF HER PATIENTS'



SCENE: Nurse worked at Leighton Hospital

A NURSE appeared in court yesterday accused of trying to kill five elderly patients.

Barbara Salisbury, 47, was suspended a year ago after colleagues alerted staff and a police investigation began.

A team of 14 detectives spent months checking records at the hospital going back more than 10 years, particularly notes about drugs prescribed and administered.

Mrs Salisbury was second in charge of a general medical ward but because of staff shortages became responsible for its day-

By PATRICK MULCHRONE

to-day running. The experienced sister was sent home on full pay from 700-bed Leighton Hospital in Crewe, Cheshire, when she returned from holiday last May. She appeared before South Cheshire magistrates in Crewe charged with the attempted murders of James Byrne, 76, in 1999, and Reuben Thompson, 81, Frances May Taylor, 88, Frank Owen, 92, and Bertram David Madeley, 76, all in 2002. They have all since died.

Her solicitor Michael Mackey said after the brief hearing: "All I can say at the moment is that these charges are strenuously denied and will be contested."

Mid-Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust said: "The trust understands that, following a police investigation which began in May 2002, a member of staff at Leighton Hospital has now been charged with serious offences."

The hospital has more than 3,000 staff and serves a population of more than 250,000 people.

Last August, it came seventh from bottom in a league table of deaths in English hospitals.

A trust with an average performance was rated as having an index of 100 - Leighton's figure was 114, meaning eight patients died there for every seven in average hospitals.

At the time, the health trust's chief executive said he had total confidence in the clinical staff.

He added that the figures did not take into account a large number of gravely ill patients they dealt with, many in the later stages of cancer.

Mrs Salisbury has two daughters and a granddaughter.

She is believed to have worked for a printing company after leaving school and trained as a nurse in the WRAF.

p.mulchrone@mirror.co.uk

'SO SOLID DNA LINK IS FAULTY'

THE DNA test linking So Solid Crew star Jason Phillips to an illegal gun, may have been faulty, a court heard yesterday.

Phillips - known as G Man - allegedly threw the loaded handgun away in a police chase in London.

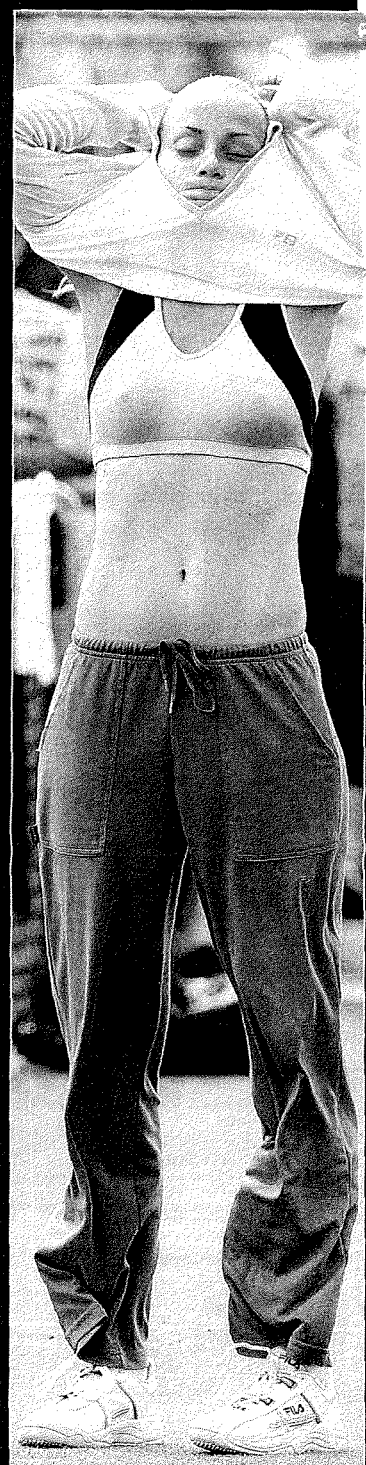
John Riley, defending, asked if it was possible Phillips' DNA could have landed on the gun if he had thrown down a cannabis reefer which was then picked up by another man who then handled the weapon himself.

Forensic scientist Linda Groombridge admitted it was "possible".

Phillips, 24, denies illegal possession of a gun and ammunition and the trial at Southwark Crown Court continues.

RARE CHICK DIES

ONE of two osprey chicks hatched at Bassenthwaite Lake, Cumbria, last week has died. There is only one other nest site in England.

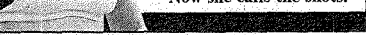


FLIRTY-ALL: Jelena strips off to play yesterday

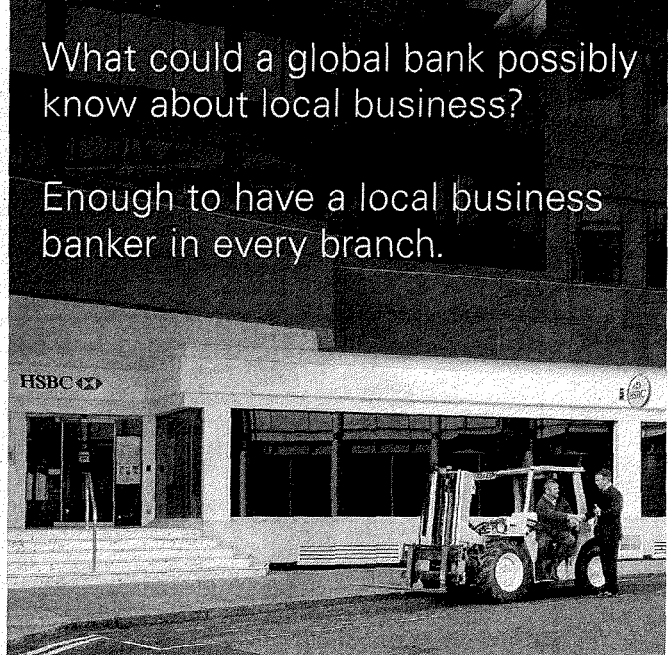
Match points

TENNIS stunner Jelena Dokic showed she was on top form yesterday - and that was before she even hit a ball. The 20-year-old Serbian star peeled off to win more than a few passing glances at a tournament in Eastbourne.

Jelena, seeded 10th for next week's Wimbledon, used to clash with her father and former coach Damir. Now she calls the shots.



*Calls may be monitored or recorded for quality purposes. Lines are open 8.00am to 10.00pm every day (except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day).



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MIRROR

INVESTIGATION: Relatives of loved ones who died hit out at 'appalling state of affairs'

More pain for families as probe into hospital deaths grinds to a halt

A PROBE into the police investigation looking at the deaths of elderly people in Gosport War Memorial Hospital has been dramatically put on hold.

Families of a number of patients who died at the hospital in the late 1990s claim a Hampshire Police investigation was not thorough enough.

In April 2002 the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) launched its own investigation into the families' claims.

But it has now called a halt to its inquiry.

The PCA said that it has requested more information from Hampshire Police into the investigation but that information will not be available for some time and until it does arrive the PCA cannot move its investigation forward.

The lack of action has angered the families, who are desperate to know what happened to their loved ones.

Relatives of those who died in the hospital claim that their loved ones were expected to recover fully and leave hospital, but were instead put on strong painkillers and later died.

The original police investigation, led by Detective Superintendent John James, was slammed by the families as totally inadequate, prompting the complaints to the PCA.

The delay is the latest twist

by **Nicholas Brooks**
Health reporter

in a long-running saga which now involves police examining 61 deaths at the hospital.

Gillian MacKenzie, whose mother Gladys Richards died at the hospital following a hip operation in 1998, said: 'They are dragging it out.'

'This is an appalling state of affairs for us - a complaint should be dealt with more quickly than this.'

Ann Reeves, whose mother Elsie died in 1999, said: 'We have fought like hell to eventually get the cases reopened, that is the most important thing.'

'The PCA has told us that it will take longer than anticipated, so what can we do?'

PCA spokesman Mike Delaney admitted that he could not say when the investigation - being carried out by the Professional Standards Department of the Hampshire force - would be complete.

'Our members have written to the complainants explaining that there has been a delay,' he said.

'We know this has been going on for some time but we need to have more information from the force,' he said.

'It is a very complicated investigation because of the number of people who are involved in it.'



The hospital is at the hub of the police investigation into deaths

Drugs policy changed after inspectors' report

ALTHOUGH there have not been any criminal charges, Gosport War Memorial Hospital has already changed the way it works.

Police inquiries sparked an NHS investigation by the Commission for Health Improvement into how drugs were given out to patients.

The inspectors found that there was a

lack of effective monitoring of the drugs given out, and that drugs were given to patients before individual assessments had been made. Problems had now been put right, they stressed.

The report concluded that it could not confirm whether people had died because of these past failings, but that 'patients were regularly put at risk'.

THE DEATHS THAT SPARKED POLICE INVESTIGATION



Gladys Richards



Elsie Devine



Edna Purnell



Stanley Carby



Alice Wilkie



Dulcie Middleton

August 1998: Gladys Richards, who was 91, dies at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

December 1998: Edna Purnell, 91, dies at the hospital.

November 1999: Elsie Devine admitted to hospital - she later dies.

Autumn 2000: An investigation launched by

Hampshire Police into Gladys Richards' death.

March 2001: Files sent to Crown Prosecution Service to consider whether to take case to court.

July 2001: CPS said there was not enough evidence to prosecute any doctor.

July 2002: Commission for Health Improvement publishes report that lists

a catalogue of failings at the hospital, allowing CHI report and other claims from nine worried families, police launch a fresh investigation into the deaths.

Late 2002: The families recruit Ann Alexander, the solicitor who represented families in the Harold Shipman murder cases, to

press their case.

April 2002: Police Complaints Authority agrees to look at the original police investigation following a complaint from the families.

May 2003: Police reveal they are investigating 61 deaths including Gladys Richards, Elsie Devine,

Edna Purnell, Stanley Carby, Alice Wilkie and Dulcie Middleton.

July 2003: Police Complaints Authority says its investigation has been put on hold while Hampshire Police provide more information.

September 2003: Families to get progress report.

MP hits out at Tories over local pharmacies

by **David Maddox**
Political editor

PORTSMOUTH North Labour MP Syd Rapson has rounded on his Tory critics over a recent vote in Parliament where he was accused of making a U-turn on saving local pharmacies.

Mr Rapson was caught out by a vote on an opposition day when the Tories called for a Commons notice of motion, signed by him and many other Labour MPs.

The same tactic has also been used to unsettle Labour backbenchers like Mr Rapson on post offices and tuition fees to force them to vote against the government or make an apparent U-turn.

'It was an opposition day and there is no way I would support the Tories,' said Mr Rapson. 'This is not a case of making a U-turn, these votes do not matter. Really they are a waste of time.'

'The important votes come when the government puts forward its policy, then we have some serious thinking to do. I am still very supportive of local pharmacies.'

But Mr Rapson and other Labour backbenchers were warned they are going to have to put their money where their mouth is or sign fewer early day motions, which until now have been a safe way to show mild dissent against the government.

Fareham Tory MP Mark Hoban said: 'Labour MPs have been signing lots of motions to promote themselves in their constituencies.'

'But we now asking them to vote and they will have to think again about what they sign.'

Girl injured as gangs of youths clash

by **Paul Foster**
The News

POLICE are appealing for witnesses to a brawl involving up to 30 teenagers in two gangs.

Police were called to Gresson Avenue in Bridgemary, Gosport, after the fight broke out between gangs of youths aged between 15 and 18 around 11.30pm on Saturday.

It is believed the older gang of about 20 girls and boys attacked the younger group of seven teenagers outside the row of shops.

A young girl suffered cuts, bruises and swelling in the fight and required treatment from paramedics at the scene.

Other teenagers also suffered minor injuries.

Anyone with any information about the incident is asked to contact PC Steve Missetbrook at Gosport police station on 0845 0454545.

The blunder 'cure'

Shake-up of all NHS negligence claims to stem soaring payouts

By **Tim Utton**
and **Michael Seamark**

THE medical negligence claims system is to be radically overhauled in a bid to stop the multi-million pound compensation drain on the NHS.

The cost of settling medical blunders is now a staggering £477million a year, six times the 1991 level.

The health service expects to allocate another £3.25billion – almost a tenth of the annual NHS budget – over the next decade to cover outstanding claims.

The average claim takes over five years to settle and, in many cases, lawyers' fees are bigger than awards to patients.

The Government now plans to introduce a streamlined scheme which will slash millions from the bill by speeding up the process and excluding lawyers.

Most payments would be capped at £30,000 and settled within six months.

The new NHS Redress Scheme will set up a national body, employing panels of medical and legal experts to:

- Investigate the incident alleged to have caused harm, and the extent of the harm.

- Explain to the patient and look at what will be done to prevent a repetition.

- Recommend treatment, therapy and continuing care where needed.

- Approve payments for pain and suffering.

Ministers believe it will produce more consistency in awards for similar cases and reduce the 'blame culture' which deters doctors from admitting or reporting mistakes.

Patients who do not want to use the new system can still go through the courts but those who accept a Redress Scheme settlement would not then be able to sue.

Chief Medical Officer Professor Sir Liam Donaldson, outlining the proposals in a report called Making Amends, said the current system was surrounded by 'a climate of blame, acrimony and confrontation' while a culture of blame and retribution had grown greatly. He said: 'The spectre of a culture of heavy litigation of the kind in the U.S. is something we want to avoid in this country.'

'We know that many cases take too long to settle and that many complainants are left fundamentally dissatisfied.'

'For many it is not the size of any compensation that matters so much as an apology, an explanation and, vitally, evidence that something is being done to minimise the risk of a similar problem in the future.'

'There will be a separate 'no fault' scheme covering brain-damaged

babies, including those with severe cerebral palsy.

Their families will not have to prove negligence and there will be a maximum £100,000 a year payout with other possible packages including £50,000 for adapting a house.

The campaign group Action for Victims of Medical Accidents welcomed the report but said it feared some worst-affected patients might lose out under a compensation cap. Chief execu-

tive Peter Walsh said it wanted to ensure claimants could still receive independent medical and legal advice. He added: 'The best way to reduce the cost of compensation is to prevent negligent treatment in the first place.'

Dr Evan Harris, Liberal Democrat shadow health secre-

tary, called the proposals a 'cop-out' and added: 'In the majority of serious cases, lawyers will still get the lion's share.'

A no-fault scheme has not been adopted for the most serious cases, so a culture of blame will still exist.'

The British Medical Association called on the Government to set up a no-fault compensation scheme for all cases, with maximum financial limits.

Dr Michael Wills, chairman of

the BMA's medico-legal committee said: 'The report represents a much needed review of clinical negligence, but in our view will do little to address the blame culture that discourages doctors from reporting accidents.'

Scope, the cerebral palsy charity, welcomed the report but warned that difficulties in establishing the cause of the condition could create a two-tier system of care.

t.utton@daily mail.co.uk

The dancer who won a record £7m payout



Kerstin Parkin and her

husband Mark were world-renowned dancers

A TALENTED Latin American dancer received a record compensation payout after suffering brain damage during childbirth.

Kerstin Parkin was awarded a £7million lump sum plus £250,000-a-year for life. Her dreams of becoming a leading choreographer were shattered when a series of hospital blunders left her paralysed and in a wheelchair.

The 35-year-old had a heart attack while in labour with her first child, Dylan, at Farnborough Hospital in Kent.

The High Court heard that staff failed to take basic steps to prevent brain damage and a cardiac team was unable to reach her because they did not know the security code to enter the labour ward.

The ensuing legal battle lasted six years before a settlement was reached.

With her husband and dance partner Mark, Mrs Parkin was once among the world's best Latin American dancers but now depends on 24-hour care.

Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust admitted liability for the injuries. After initially arguing that Mrs Parkin should live in a nursing home, it agreed she should be cared for at her home in Surrey.

Mrs Parkin's condition has improved under the constant care and therapy she has received at home. Now she can use her limited movements to communicate, control a computer and a wheelchair.

The GPs who failed to spot malaria

THREE doctors failed to diagnose the disease which claimed Lesley Hennessey's life.

Their failure to realise she had caught malaria prompted a five-year legal battle and a compensation payout of more than £70,000 for medical negligence.

Mrs Hennessey, 52, a bank worker, contracted the disease on holiday in West Africa with her husband John.

On returning to the UK, she fell ill with the symptoms of malaria – vomiting, diarrhoea and profuse sweating.

Two doctors diagnosed an upset stomach and a third prescribed a rehydrating drink before she was taken to the Royal Liverpool Hospital intensive care unit. By then, it was too late to save her.

Targets turning doctor's into 'bean counters'

THE leader of Britain's doctors yesterday accused the Government of turning medics into 'bean counters' and ignoring the needs of patients.

British Medical Association chairman Dr Ian Bogle said the NHS was being permanently damaged by 'production-line values' and Whitehall interference.

Dr Bogle, who is retiring after five years as chairman, used his final speech to the Association's annual conference in Torquay to deliver a ferocious attack on the Government's health policies.

He said: 'We now have a health-care system driven not by the needs of patients but by spreadsheets and tick boxes.'

'The paranoid centralism which has characterised this and previ-

Catalogue of hospital 'dirty tricks' on waiting times

DR BOGLE highlighted the ruses used by managers to meet Government waiting time targets. They include:

- Keeping patients in ambulances because waiting times are calculated from when they enter A&E.
- 'Warehousing' patients in the A&E because of a lack of in-patient beds.
- Classifying patients on trolleys as having been

'admitted' to hospital and putting patients on reserve waiting lists so they don't appear on the waiting list proper.

- Admitting patients who are near the waiting time limit at the expense of patients whose need is greater but who haven't been waiting as long.
- Finding out when patients will be on holiday and offering them an operation during that period.

ous Governments' handling of the NHS will not lead to improvements in patient care.

'It will turn professionals into bean counters answerable not to their patients but to politicians, auditors, commissioners and managers under pressure to deliver on targets.' Dr Bogle

described the NHS as 'the most centralised public service in the free world' and said that politically-motivated aims had driven a wedge between doctors and managers, who are 'bullied' and risk losing their jobs should they fail to meet their targets.

But instead of distancing itself

from corrupt practices like the fiddling of waiting lists, the Government has been triumphalist about its 'achievements', he claimed.

'The Government's official definition of a bed is, "A device that may be used to permit a patient to lie down"', added Dr Bogle.

'This means trolleys and exami-

nation couches can be counted as beds for statistical purposes. But why stop there?

'Why not put up hammocks in hospital car parks? Why not ask patients to bring sun loungers and sleeping bags from home?'

Dr Bogle, who received a standing ovation, also used his speech to launch a stinging assault on former Health Secretary Alan Milburn, who resigned to spend more time with his family.

He said: 'Mr Milburn may not have noticed, but consultants have families too.'

'It is a pity he was not able to appreciate their predicament when he was trying to force them to work evenings and weekends.'

Back for nostalgia'

Neil attracts out the leisure s belated praise gia it provided in id of last month. as billed as *Hits of re* was a generous id Frank Sinatra. s from more aba and Tom

ers who crowded encouragement to their thing' in the in brilliant

l by the fabulous , and the three e male, were ap was ra numbers. nglsey was also ion of recorded delight of his 1 his Wednesday e Pier. singalong time, s paying tribute d to a wonderful

spect set to stand e county after

l five-year-old girl 1 a bank on to a l, had a lucky hood on the live

of youth clubs of talent in the avalcade that o the Rotary

WERE ● Page 36

DAY



test Jefferey y the hours..'

English pride

How sad to learn that the St George flag has been put on the Spinnaker Tower 'for fun'.

I sincerely hope that on completion of the tower a really big flag will be flying there to show everyone how proud we are to be 'English'.

Let's learn from the Scots, Irish and Welsh - yes, and even the Americans - and take the opportunity to fly our flag with pride.

June Colston

Inhurst Avenue, Waterlooville

Top service

More than a year ago I asked the proprietor of the excellent Adelphi bookshop in Albert Road, Southsea, to look out for a somewhat obscure African romance by Sir Henry Rider Haggard.

She and Allan is one of his last books and the one that brought together his two most famous characters: 'She who must be obeyed' and white hunter Allan Quatermain (the latter soon to be portrayed by Sean Connery in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*).

I then forgot all about it. He didn't, though, and so now I have a copy to read again after a gap of more than 40 years and to pass on to my son, latterly also a fan of the author of *King Solomon's Mines*.

That's what I call service - and for the modest asking price of £6.

Bravo, Macumazahn (Quatermain's Kafir name, 'He who keeps his eyes open').

Jim Allaway
Editor, Navy News
HMS Nelson

Rodent rip-off

I am a small, local residential landlord who has gambled in the 'Buy to Let' market to provide myself with a respectable pension. I am a member of the

TALKING POINT: Health care 21-07-2003

What's all the fuss over 'breast move' to Haslar?

The people of Gosport have been fighting to keep Haslar hospital open for use by the people of Gosport, Fareham, Stubbington and many others that come from as far away as Petersfield.

The reasons for retaining this great hospital are many, but include the fact that the journey to the QA is so horrendous by road with major traffic problems and the journey can also cost lives in the time it takes to get there.

For those with no car the cost of travelling back and forth by taxi, either for treatment or visiting loved ones, is horrendous and for many older residents public transport is not appropriate.

Yet at the first sign of the movement of the breast clinic service to Haslar, the staff of QA and residents of Portsmouth are up in arms saying it's



The QA, Cosham

'inconvenient' and would force thousands of women into long journeys for treatment.

Strange, that's what Gosport residents have been saying all along about closing Haslar and making us have to travel to QA.

At least Haslar is quite close to the ferry for people coming by public transport; that's more than can be said for QA, where even the buses can't get to the hospital, let alone the patients.

Brenda Brooker
Brockhurst Road, Gosport

Portsmouth and District Landlords' Association and a partner in a small local business.

As a landlord, if I contact the Environmental health department because I have a pest problem in my own home there, quite rightly, is no charge.

If my tenants or I contact the department concerning a pest control problem there is a charge to myself in excess of an £80 call-out fee and then £50 per hour thereafter.

This is absolutely outrageous.

Most professional pest control companies in the phone book only charge

about £50 complete until the pests are disposed of.

A number of less responsible landlords would be inclined to leave the pests, increasing the danger to the health of the tenants (and adjoining residents) in the property.

I pay an outrageous £1,000 council tax per year, my tenants also pay council tax, and I am disgusted that when I need to see some results of the 20 per cent council tax hike I get charged more than I would be in the private sector.

The council must have a duty of care to protect the interests of all residents and visitors to Portsmouth

and prioritising health and Safety and environmental protection measures and, if this is the case, these totally irresponsible and outrageous charges must be abolished immediately or at least brought into line with the private sector.

Let's see a little return for the expensive council tax that has been imposed on us.

David Heard
Redlands Grove, Milton

Degree mockery

I see the round of honorary degrees is off again, giving kudos to so-called celebrities who are well paid for what they do.

TO THE POINT

SUPPORT: I am writing to show my full support for the bus drivers of First Hampshire.

As an ex-driver with the company I totally understand why the drivers feel that they had to strike

because of the disgraceful rate of pay they have to work for.

When I was with the company I had to always do overtime just to bring home £200 before tax.

The poor drivers work

seven days a week, 363 days a year for an average £5.84p an hour, not forgetting the rude passengers they have to deal with.

So, come on Mr Soper, isn't it time you put your

hand in your pocket, or maybe you'd like to work for the same pay you are offering the drivers?

I think not!

Colin Campbell
Buckingham Street
Landport



Flight of the week

Fly to Bari in the heel of Italy for just £145 and be perfectly placed for the beautiful region of Puglia with its historic towns and fabulous coastline on the Ionian and Adriatic seas. The Sunday Times, in co-operation with Alitalia, has secured thousands of return tickets at an unbeatable price – the usual fare is £233.

For details and a guide to where to visit and stay, see **Travel page 5**

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Source: Pulp & Paper Information Centre

Police probe into 62 deaths at hospital

Lois Rogers
Medical Editor

POLICE are investigating the "suspicious" deaths of 62 patients in a single hospital, the biggest inquiry of its kind in Britain.

Relatives of the patients who died at Gosport War Memorial hospital in Hampshire believe they were given unnecessarily high doses of morphine and other powerful drugs which led to their deaths.

Many of the families cannot understand why relatives, who in some cases were expected to leave hospital within days, were instead fitted with syringe drivers — automatic injection systems that can deliver regular heavy shots of painkillers. They believe that a policy of heavily sedating people was practised at the hospital.

Police sources confirmed this weekend that officers were investigating 62 deaths over four years. Dozens of nursing and medical staff are being interviewed.

Alarm about drug cocktails administered at the hospital was first raised after the death of Gladys Richards in 1998. Her family alleged she had been unlawfully killed but a police inquiry petered out.

Ten other families came forward with similar complaints and the Commission for Health Improvement reported last July: "It is clear that had adequate checking mechanisms existed ... this level of prescribing would have been questioned."

Last autumn Liam Donaldson, the chief medical officer, announced that Richard Baker, professor of clinical governance at Leicester University, was to investigate trends and patterns in the deaths at Gosport. Baker also investigated statistical patterns in the practice of Harold Shipman, the GP now serving life imprisonment for the deaths of at least 236 elderly patients.

Last week the Gosport families were invited to a meeting later this summer to update them on the progress of the inquiry. Many are angry that the police and health authorities have persistently failed to investigate their complaints fully.

Ann Reeves, whose mother Elsie Devine died in suspicious circumstances at Gosport at the same time as Richards, said the

police had originally told her it was "not in the public interest" to investigate.

Last week she said: "We do all hope this criminal investigation is now going somewhere and that we will get some answers. It has been a nightmare for the families."

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority said it had already introduced changes in procedures at Gosport. There is no suggestion that any doctor or nurse currently working at the hospital was involved in wrongdoing.

It is acknowledged that securing convictions in such circumstances is difficult. In recent years there have been six police investigations into misuse of medication in institutions caring for the elderly, but only one has led to a conviction.

Two years ago Phillip Reed, 43, a nurse, was convicted of administering poison with intent to endanger life while working in a care home and a hospital in south Wales. Like Shipman, Reed was accused in court of being "fascinated" by the power of life and death.

Ann Alexander, the solicitor representing the Gosport families, said: "The Gosport patients were all people who were meant to be getting better, not dying. A lot of the time people do not notice patterns of behaviour among clinical staff, there is a lack of scrutiny of untoward incidents in hospital, and we believe this is part of a widespread problem."

Since the case came to light, dozens of families from elsewhere in the country have come forward with fears that the sudden deaths of their elderly relatives in hospitals and nursing homes may have been the result of deliberate drug overdosing.

The charity Action on Elder Abuse (AEA), which receives thousands of calls to its helpline, believes up to 20% of old people in nursing or hospital care are being drugged or sedated for no medical reason.

Lack of controls in systems for giving powerful drugs to old people mean that huge doses can be administered without raising questions, according to AEA.

"There is no national awareness of this issue," said Gary Fitzgerald, its chief executive. "When someone goes into a caring environment, you cannot assume they are automatically going into a safe environment."

Hadow

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Power blackout hits communities

CLANFIELD: Hundreds of residents in Clanfield and Horndean found they were without electricity early this morning.

About 500 houses were left without power from 5.15am when a cable fault blew a fuse.

Local engineers were expected to have fixed the technical fault by about 10am.

Southern Electric spokesman Dennis Kerby said: 'We apologise to our customers who were affected this morning and for the inconvenience caused.'

Man badly injured

DRAYTON: One man was taken to hospital with serious injuries when a car crashed into a lamppost.

The Vauxhall Astra crashed in Down End Road, at about 2.30am today. The injured man was taken to Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham. A second man in the car was arrested at the scene by police.

Anyone with information should contact Fareham Police on 0845 045 4545.

Number plate gone

GOSPORT: Thieves stole the rear number plate of a Ford Escort parked in Harding Road, Brockhurst.

SETBACK: Police say probe into hospital deaths may go on for many more months

Extra anguish for bereaved relatives

by **Nicholas Brooks**
Health reporter

A POLICE investigation into dozens of deaths at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital could drag on for many more months, families have been told.

The setback for relatives came just as they were beginning to hope that the end of their ordeal could be in sight.

Currently, 61 deaths are being looked into by Hampshire police, and expectations had been growing that the families would soon be told which cases, if any, would be taken to court.

However, after a tense meeting on Thursday between more than 100 relatives of the dead and Hampshire's Deputy Chief Constable, Ian Readhead, those hopes appear to have been dashed.

Relatives were told that more investigation into the circumstances of the deaths was needed before a decision on each case was possible.

Audit professor investigated Shipman tragedies

RESEARCH looking into the numbers of deaths recorded at Gosport War Memorial Hospital is almost complete but could remain secret for months or even years.

The work was ordered by the government exactly one year ago, but the results are likely to remain under wraps until Hampshire police finish

their current probe.

The 'clinical audit' of the hospital has been carried out by Professor Richard Baker, the man who investigated the death rates among patients of notorious serial killer Dr Harold Shipman.

The Leicester University professor told *The News*: 'I cannot give a publication

date as yet, although I hope that this can be soon. Some final checks are being carried out.'

A Department of Health spokeswoman said: 'Decisions will soon be made about publication and its timing in the light of the continuing police investigation.'

One family member said: 'We have been told it might take months and months and months before they are going to be able to do anything.'

'I just can't believe it. I am so angry it is taking this long.'

Another added: 'We did not expect them to tell us which cases would go ahead when we were all there in a big group, but we thought that we would be getting letters within a few weeks.'

'It was a very traumatic evening, very upsetting for every-

body, but we know that the police have only got one chance to take this to court, so we have no choice but to wait.'

The families have hired Ann Alexander, the solicitor who represented the relatives of the victims of notorious killer Dr Harold Shipman.

Concern focuses on whether elderly patients were given inappropriate treatment, including high doses of morphine, that led to their premature deaths.

An earlier police probe

found nothing wrong but is the subject of an investigation by the Police Complaints Authority, and in July last year a Commission for Health Improvement report found serious problems with past drug prescribing at the hospital.

A police spokeswoman said: 'This is a very complex investigation, and we would anticipate it going on for some time.'

'The purpose of the meeting was to update the families on the progress of the investigation.'

Siva Ravisangar of Chidham Stores, Chidham Drive, Havant, has 27 stitches in his face

PICTURE: MICHAEL SCADDAN (035007-0009)



Security in store is beefed up

AS a result of the threat from gangs of youths outside his shop Mr Ravisangar has installed a new security system.

A total of 16 CCTV cameras have been set up in and around the store to record and monitor everything that goes on. Most of

the cameras are hidden.

Voice recorders have also been installed so that any racial abuse can be recorded and handed to the police.

The shop's alarm system and the panic button are connected to the local police station.

'I don't feel safe here at the moment and my son has not been himself since the attack. Sahil saw me covered in blood and when I came home he was too scared to even hug me,' he added.

Police have released a

CCTV picture of a youth they wish to question in relation to the incident.

PC Sue Burns, from Havant Police, said: 'Mr Ravisangar is a well-respected businessman within the community and it is regrettable that

he should be subjected to verbal abuse from local youths simply because he is Asian.'

Anyone with any information should contact PC Sue Burns at Havant on 0845 045 4545 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111

injury MP to raise hospital inquiry

ny is alleged to be the woman had the baby when she died.

heard the baby was born at the hospital after his mother died.

the court the youngster had a double bed.

an Miss Lamb was given to Dr Se-dive. That's all, because that someone who it?

replied: 'Yes.' said: 'And that at you said?' replied: 'No.'

(Proceeding)

THE long-running controversy over dozens of deaths at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital is set to be raised in parliament.

Tory MP Nigel Waterson, whose Eastbourne constituents include the daughter of an elderly woman whose death is being investigated by Hampshire police, will ask questions about the length of the police investigation.

Families have privately expressed frustration about the police inquiry, after being told they might have months more to wait before finding out which cases, if any, will go to court. Officers began their current probe last year.

Gillian MacKenzie, whose mother Gladys Richards died at

the Gosport hospital in August 1998, has pressed Nigel Waterson to take up the case.

'There have now been seven expert medical opinions obtained by the police in my case at the tax payers' expense but I am not to be told of the outcome for a considerable time,' she said.

'The police should be relieving stress, not causing it.'

Officers are currently looking into 61 cases where families have complained that their relatives were treated badly at the hospital.

Mr Waterson confirmed that he hoped to raise the matter in the House of Commons next week, after the party conferences were over.

minutes looking the blaze which was reported by neighbours who saw children running from the area behind the Bishopsfield Road campus at about 3.30pm on Monday.

Jobs uproot trees

EASTLEIGH: A pair of conifer trees were uprooted and snapped in a Valley Road garden.

Another two trees in the garden were also damaged in the attack between 8pm on Saturday and 9am on Sunday.

Anyone with information should call Eastleigh police station on 0845 0454545.

Ramblers to stroll

BISHOP'S WALTHAM:

Ramblers have organised two walks next week.

Next Wednesday there will be a five-mile walk around Meonstoke. Meet at the Meonstoke village hall car park at 10am and call (01489) 877739 for details.

Next Thursday there will be a six-mile stroll around Alresford. Meet outside the Horse and Groom pub in Broad Street, Alresford at 10am. Call (01329) 832500.

WHAT THEY SAID



'You know they can get into your home, but you would think they might have a bit of respect for the church' -

Pensioner Nellie Barret whose bag was stolen as she took Holy Communion.

By Nicholas Brooks

The News

A TOP detective from Somerset will probe complaints about a police investigation into a series of deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Avon and Somerset police have been called in by the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) to review an investigation carried out by then Detective Superintendent John James between April 2001 and February 2002.

During that time 11 families voiced concerns about the deaths of their elderly relatives to the police, but formal statements were never taken, they said.

They complained that their suspicions about deaths at the hospital were not treated seriously, and were rejected without proper investigation.

Angry at what they saw as the failure of Gosport police to take their fears seriously, six families went to

COMPLEX CASE HAS EXTENDED PROBE



John James

The Police Complaints Authority was set up in 1985 in the wake of the Brixton riots, when complaints about the police could only be handled by the force itself.

Members – who have never served with the police – sit in judgment when accusations are made against officers. Typical cases might involve deaths of pedestrians during police chases, or shootings by officers.

Judgments are usually made within 128 days, but the Gosport case has taken far longer because it involves dozens of people, and is spread over five years.

When the investigation is over, the complainants are told of the verdict and disciplinary action can be taken against officers.

Cases involving possible crimes by officers can go to the Crown Prosecution Service.

the PCA last year.

Now, 18 months later, Avon and Somerset CID chief Dave Johnson has been drafted in 'to review the investigation'.

This probe is unrelated to a new police investigation into claims of suspicious deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital, which involve 62 families.

Alison MacDougall of the PCA, in charge of the allegations, said: 'At the time, be-



fore the Harold Shipman case, there weren't well-established rules for handling cases like these,' she said.

'This is a complex and sensitive case which does not arise very often, so judging how it was handled needs a level of professional expertise only the police can provide.'

Gill MacKenzie, whose mother Gladys Richards died at the Gosport hospital

in 1998, welcomed the move.

'I have no intention of giving up the fight for my case to be fully exposed, and I hope that this is in court,' she said.

She added that officers carrying out the new police probe had still not taken a statement from her.

Another family member, who did not wish to be named, said: 'I am very pleased somebody has been brought in because it shows it is being treated seriously.'

*nicholas.brooks@
thenews.co.uk*

Families' five-year battle over death claims

- Suspicions about deaths at the hospital were first raised in 1998 by one family, and Gosport CID was approached in October that year.
- The police decided there was no case to answer, but after complaints another investigation began. In February 1999 it was again declared that there was no case.
- Complaints about the police approach were made to the PCA in April 1999 – and two years later upheld.
- The next police probe lasted from October 1999 to December 2000, but in

July the following year the Crown Prosecution Service threw out the case.

- Detective Superintendent John James took charge of the case from May 2001 to February 2002 – during which time 11 families expressed fears about their relatives' deaths.
- In February 2002 these families were told that no further investigation was planned.
- In April 2002 these families went back to the PCA to complain about what they saw as police inactivity.
- In July 2002 government health

inspectors published a report slamming the hospital's failure to monitor drugs given to patients properly. Patients were put at risk, it concluded.

- In September 2002 Professor Richard Baker called in the Chief Medical Officer to examine the cases. His finished report has not yet been published.
- In December 2002 a new police investigation was launched, which is still going on. There are now 62 families involved.



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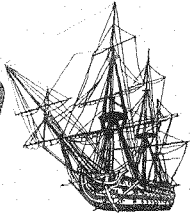
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FAREHAM & GOSPORT **The News**



48-page
Property
Guide



The We Can Do It newspaper

Wednesday, January 7, 2004

FINAL

34p



We will survive

Why Pompey are upbeat despite freak defeat

DEATH PROBE: WE DEMAND TO BE HEARD

The News TODAY

OAPs live in fear as commens strikers

AN ELDERLY Fareham couple say they are living in fear after they were tricked out of hundreds of pounds by commens who knocked at the door claiming to be wa officials.

FULL STORY ● Page

Fight to save home

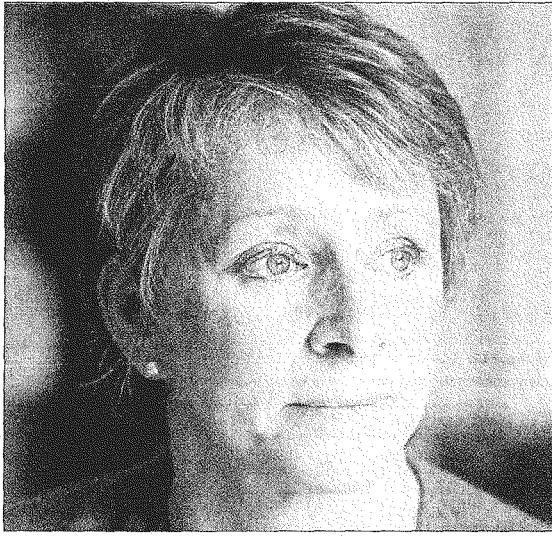
CAMPAIGNERS at Lee-on-the-Solent battling to save an historic house in a c servation area which a developer wants turn into flats.

FULL STORY ● Page

Hospital bill shock

THE COST of a planned 'superhospital' Portsmouth has risen by £64m in the years and the project is now expected cost at least £192m.

FULL STORY ● Page



Ann Reeves, left, and Gillian Mackenzie are among relatives criticising police over the inquiry into 62 deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital

Relatives of hospital dead furious as police tell them: We may not even interview you

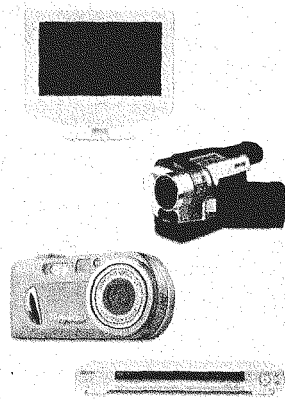
FULL STORY ● Page 3

COMMENT ● Page 6

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Sensitivity, reassurance and a proper explanation are needed over deaths

Two differing sentiments stand out in the welter of comments today on disquiet surrounding the progress – or lack of it – of police investigations into the deaths of scores of elderly people at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

The first is from the police officer in charge of the inquiry. 'The families must be confident that there has been a thorough investigation,' he says.

The other is a woman whose mother

died at the hospital five years ago. 'I have very little confidence in what is going on at present,' she says.

Therein lies a gulf that must be bridged – and the driving force for that should logically be the police. Of course, an inquiry into the deaths of more than 60 people will have to be laboriously painstaking. It cannot, it must not, be rushed.

The News COMMENT

As senior officers point out, it draws in experts who cannot shelve everything else at the drop of a hat to give immediate opinion on potential evidence

presented by police investigators.

But a need for sensitivity is writ large here. Police are dealing with relatives who have lost loved ones and are desperately seeking answers. The fact is

that, in this case, the inquiry is following an earlier unsuccessful probe, the efficiency of which is now subject to official investigation.

No-one has voiced to *The News* any fear that antagonism over that might have led to a strain in relations between police and families. But the time is ripe for senior officers to offer reassurance and an explanation acceptable to relatives who seek only the full truth about what happened to a loved one.

Nostalgia  with **Ron Brown**

YOUR LETTERS

- Write to: The News Centre, Hilsea, Portsmouth, PO2 9SX
- Ring: (023) 9266 4488 (from 10am to midday or 2-4pm)
- Fax: (023) 9267 3363
- E-mail: letters@thenews.co.uk

Herr A Hitler had his

Merry Christmess

TALKING POINT: City redevelopment

has given a very one-sided view.

Dennis Ans

Ernest Road, Bedhampt

INQUIRY: Relatives claim they have little confidence in 13-month investigation at hospital

Families pile pressure on police over deaths

by **Nicholas Brooks**
Health reporter

THE families of dozens of people who died at Gosport War Memorial hospital have slammed the police investigation into the deaths.

Speaking out for the first time since the police probe into 62 deaths was launched 13 months ago, the relatives claim their cases are being mishandled so badly that they might be dropped.

But Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Watts, leading the investigation, has insisted no stone will be left unturned in the inquiry.

Questions about care at the hospital first surfaced in 1998, with allegations that patients were needlessly given large doses of powerful painkillers.

In 2002 government inspectors confirmed supervision over the use of drugs had been lax, and patients had been put at risk.

Despite being 13 months into the latest investigation – a previous inquiry was condemned by the Police Complaints Authority as inadequate – officers have still not taken statements from families.

Relatives also fear key sections of medical files sent to experts were missing, meaning officers could be wrongly advised that there is no case to answer.

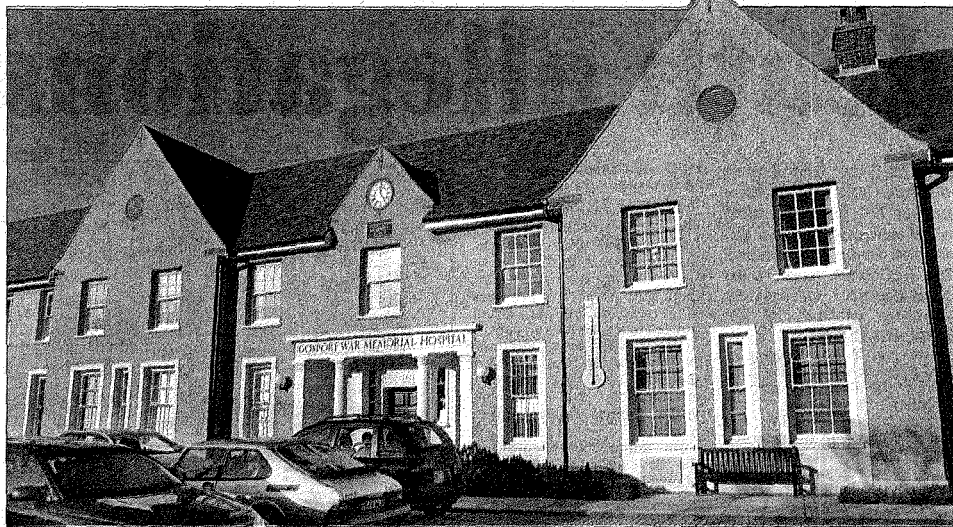
Families have so far remained silent but now their patience has snapped.

Gillian Mackenzie, the first to complain after the death of her mother Gladys Richards in 1998, said: 'I have very little confidence in what is going on.'

'My mother's notes from Haslar hospital, saying she would only need rehabilitation care for a matter of weeks, are missing.'

'I am also aware of crucial medical evidence and eye-witness accounts from nursing staff which have not been sent to medical experts.'

'How can anyone give an expert opinion if they don't



Gladys Richards



Elsie Devine



Dulcie Middleton

know exactly what happened?

Marjorie Bulbeck, whose mother Dulcie Middleton is among the dead, added: 'We are just going round and round without getting anywhere. We want justice, and must keep going.'

Ann Reeves, whose mother Elsie Devine also died while a patient at Gosport, said: 'We have just had enough. We have been patient but we are sick of it.'

'Whether my mother died of natural causes or not I am entitled to make a formal

statement, but so far I haven't been given the chance.

'We know that evidence was not sent to the experts – if we don't speak up now they will just say "case closed" and that will be it.'

Ian Wilson, whose father died in 1998, added: 'They just want to brush it under the carpet – they have to take our statements because if they don't know the facts how can they act properly?'

But Det Ch Supt Watts said: 'It is not at all unusual not to have taken statements yet – information is only re-

corded when it is clear the case might need to go before a court. There is no guarantee they will be interviewed.'

'This is a full investigation and we want to be absolutely sure we get it right.'

'Evidence has been sent to experts, who are very, very busy people – it may seem to be dragging on but you have to proceed with painstaking detail.' He insisted all available medical information had been sent to the experts checking the files.

COMMENT ● Page 6
nicholas.brooks@thenews.co.uk

Inspection led to criticism

CONCERNS about Gosport War Memorial Hospital, pictured above, sparked a probe by government inspectors, the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI).

Reporting in July 2002, CHI officials accepted past faults had been put right, but condemned the hospital practice from the late 1990s.

Strong painkillers and sedatives were given out in excessive doses, and the use of such drugs was poorly monitored, inspectors found. They also reported that drugs were given out without a full assessment of patient needs.

Inspectors concluded that they were unable to confirm whether any patients died as a direct result, but can confirm that patients were regularly put at risk.

Man stabbed hours after breaking fight in pub

A MAN was today rec in hospital after stabbed hours after b up a fight in a Gosport. Matthew Diaper, 27, tacked at the Green pub in Rowner Road port.

The unemployed man from the town was ing in the pub with when he stepped i broke up a fight betw men.

Hours later Mr Diap stabbed in the left side abdomen. He was today ering at the Queen Ale: Hospital in Cosham, mouth.

Mr Diaper's friend, w not want to be namec he was putting on a face after the stabbin about 9.10pm on Monda

He said: 'Matt was ha few drinks. By the there was a little scuff tween two guys. Matt w his way to the toile broke up the fight.'

'They sat down and c on drinking and Matt c on drinking.'

Detective Constable Peet, of Gosport CID, sa lice had recovered a and had spoken to witne

She said: 'It was a potly nasty incident and nately Matthew was OK.'

Anyone with any infi tion should call Gospor lice on 0845 0454545.

Kevin Stephen Dumb from Gosport has charged with wounding intent. He has been bail appear at Fareham n trates on January 15.

New jobs as business park ready to open

A £7m purpose-built indi estate is to be opene Havant and will bring more than 200 new jobs to the area.

The news comes one year after more than 400 workers were sacked from Procto Gamble based in Leigh when the firm decided to move to Eastern Europe.

Today business leaders politicians hailed the launch of the Southmoor Business Park in Penner Road, a turning point for the town. The park contains 11 units, 10 of which have already been snapped up.

Although the names of new firms have not yet been revealed it is understood the companies will include parcel distribution firm as well as engineering, manufacturing and IT businesses.

Havant Tory MP David Llets said: 'This site has been waiting for development about 10 years and I'm glad that it has finally been turned into a business centre.'

Construction of the park will be officially complete within the next month.

HOW EVENTS HAVE UNFOLDED

■ **October 1998:** Gosport CID are approached about the death of Gillian Mackenzie's mother Gladys Richards at the War Memorial Hospital.

■ **October 1998:** Family are told by officers that there was no case to answer.

■ **February 1999:** After making a complaint, the family were again told there was no case to answer.

■ **April 2001:** After protests by the family the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) agrees the investigation was not good enough.

■ **July 2001:** After yet another police probe, the Crown Prosecution Service said there was insufficient evidence to take a case to court.

■ **February 2002:** Ten more families come forward but police, who do not take statements, again tell them there is no case to answer.

■ **April 2002:** More complaints about the police spark another PCA investigation, which is close to delivering a verdict.

■ **July 2002:** Government inspectors publicly expose potentially dangerous

practices in giving out drugs at the War Memorial.

■ **September 2002:** The government's chief medical officer Sir Liam Donaldson sets up a medical inquiry into the deaths – the probe is complete but still unpublished.

■ **November 2002:** The latest Hampshire police probe is launched under Det Ch Supt Steve Watts, this time into 62 cases.

■ **January 2004:** Police investigation ongoing, PCA probe into earlier inquiries still unfinished, and medical inquiry results still unpublished.



Det Ch Supt Watts

NEWS IN BRIEF

Computer taken from car boot

LOCKS HEATH: A computer worth £2,800 and a £350 digital camera were stolen from the boot of a Citroen Saxo parked in Heath Road.

The Apple Mac G4 computer, Sony camera, computer case plus 24 CDs were taken after thieves smashed the rear window between 4pm on Friday and 9.30am on Saturday. The total of items stolen was more than £3,500.

Information to Fareham police on 0845 0454545.

Bicycles stolen

EASTLEIGH: Two mountain bikes were stolen from outside shops in Shakespeare Road.

The childrens' bikes, one orange and the other red and black, were taken on Sunday between 3.25pm and 3.35pm.

Anyone with information should call Eastleigh police station on 0845 0454545.

Talk about Dickens

PORTSMOUTH: The world of Charles Dickens will be brought to life with a talk about the author, his family and work at the City Museum & Records Office in Museum Road on January 25. Call (023) 9282 6722 for more information.

HEALTH: Cost of building new Queen Alexandra facility goes up by £64m in three years

Superhospital bill keeps on rocketing

by Nicholas Brooks
Health reporter

THE cost of building the new Queen Alexandra 'superhospital' has shot up by £64m in three years – and it could go on soaring.

Health chiefs who drew up a business case for the redevelopment of the Cosham hospital put the cost at £128m in November 2000. But that figure has rocketed to £192m and is still climbing.

The costs were revealed as health chiefs and private consortium The Hospital Company, which will build and run the hospital, prepared to sign their final contract to seal the project's future.

The vast majority of the extra bill – £48m – is down to sharply rising costs in the building trade.

Another £14m has been added by new government demands for patients to have

Maximum possible cost is secret

HEALTH chiefs have to keep the cost of the QA project within a top secret 'affordability envelope' – the maximum possible cost before it is judged too expensive to go ahead.

The figure must remain secret so the private companies bidding for the giant contract won't increase

their prices. Hospital bosses and the primary care trusts (PCTs) who fund the deal have agreed that the current bill of about £30m a year is acceptable – but only just. If the demands of city council planning officers produce a big cost increase, then managers will have to look at the mats again.

more space and bigger beds and windows. The remaining £2m is swallowed up by improvements to the proposed maternity services. Health bosses fear the price could rise further still if redesign work demanded by city council planners proves costly.

The local NHS will not have to pay the money up front, but will sign a 30-year deal with The Hospital Company to repay building costs.

It will also pay an annual 'rent' for use of the site and cover running costs.

The total bill over the 30-year contract is likely to hit £1bn.

Before the contract is finally signed and sealed it must be approved by the Department of Health as giving value for money for the taxpayer.

Helen Masters, project director at Portsmouth Hospitals

NHS Trust, said: 'We have to demonstrate that we haven't lost grip between the outline business case and the full business case.'

'Most of the increase is related to the inflation of building costs.'

She added that some hard talking was ahead to decide whether the NHS or The Hospital Company paid the bulk of the extra bill.

'There will have to be robust discussions on where the risk sits, but in theory it rests with The Hospital Company.'

Holly Ellicott of the National Federation of Builders said: 'That rise would not surprise me, because the industry has been hit by massive cost increases in recent years.'

'Insurance costs have leapt by up to 400 per cent in some cases and some cheaper materials are not allowed under new health and safety rules.'

'This price is probably more realistic.'

nicholas.brooks@thenews.co.uk

European ruling may delay courts martial

by Jon Rosamond
Defence correspondent

DEFENCE minister Ivor Caplin has warned Royal Navy courts martial could be delayed after a shake-up ordered by the European Court of Human Rights.

The court ruled the conviction of a sailor four years ago was unfair because the judge advocate in the case was a uniformed naval officer.

The Devonport-based rating was jailed for three years, reduced in rank, dismissed from the service and ordered to pay £700 compensation when he was convicted of wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm.

He took the case to the European court arguing that the use of a naval officer as judge advocate was a breach of his rights.

The court agreed that the practice violated the rules.

Mr Caplin told the House of Commons yesterday: 'It is clearly welcome that the European Court has ruled that, as a whole, the service courts martial system with its safeguards to guarantee its independence and impartiality is compliant with the European Court of Human Rights.'

But he said it was disappointing the Court concluded there had been no breach of

Line dancers celebrate – but without any yeehah!

DEATHS: Police accused of not taking inquiry seriously as man leading hospital deaths probe goes on a course

Relatives hit out as death inquiry chief goes part time

FAMILIES of 62 patients who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital are furious after learning that the detective leading the case will only be working part time.

by **Nicholas Brooks**
Health reporter

Gillian Mackenzie, who voiced fears over the death of her mother Gladys Richards in 1998, fumed: 'Going on a course? It's a pity the officers haven't been on a course to learn how to carry out an investigation.'

'Bearing in mind that nothing seems to be happening anyway, I'm not sure if anyone will notice the difference.'

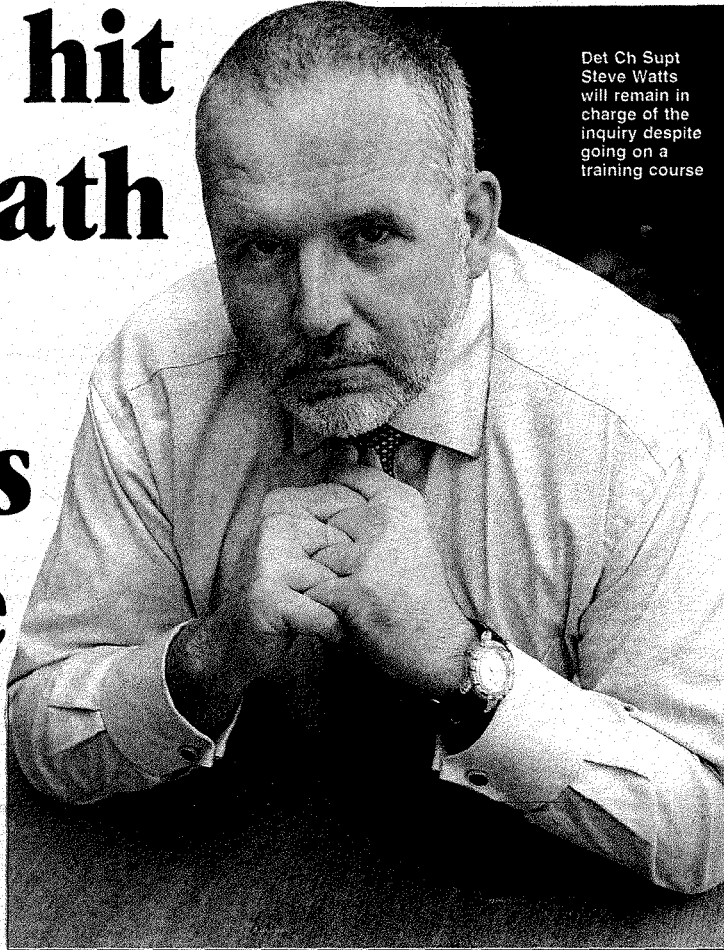
Ann Reeves, who lost her mother Elsie Devine at the hospital, added: 'I think that this might push more people to come forward and kick up a fuss.'

'He says he is going through the case in painstaking detail but there is precious little evidence of that, and now he's going on a course.'

Det Ch Supt Watts said: 'I will be attending modules and exercises to provide training - that will allow me to remain in command of Operation Rochester. I am certainly not leaving the case.'

'Somebody will be doing the job as head of CID but I will be maintaining involvement and responsibility for the operation - there will be no change.'

nicholas.brooks@thenews.co.uk



Det Ch Supt Steve Watts will remain in charge of the inquiry despite going on a training course

Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Watts, leading Operation Rochester, which is probing the deaths, has announced that he will be carrying out a training course until October.

Passing the part-time Strategic Command course paves the way for promotion.

Det Ch Supt Watts will temporarily step aside from his role as head of Hampshire CID, but has insisted the move will not stop his work on the Gosport case.

But families see the move as another example of the police not taking their concerns seriously.

The current police probe into deaths at the Gosport hospital is more than a year old, and is the latest chapter in a saga already stretching back five years.

Families have claimed that elderly patients were unnecessarily given high doses of strong pain-killing drugs, but officers have still not taken statements from them.

Families awaiting results of three investigations



Gillian Mackenzie

THE families of the dead are currently waiting for the outcomes of three separate probes.

The main police investigation, begun in November 2002, is ongoing, although officers have told relatives not to expect any news before April at the earliest.

In September 2002 England's chief medical officer Sir Liam Donaldson ordered a probe into death rates at the hospital.

The work is finished, but still unpublished.



Ann Reeves

There is also another probe by the Police Complaints Authority into the previous police investigation under John James. A verdict is expected soon.

'There's no question of this being swept under the carpet'

HAMPSHIRE police have flatly denied claims that they are covering up details surrounding the deaths of 62 people at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Watts, in charge of the case, has dismissed the allegations and insisted that the probe is one of the force's top priorities.

Suspicion among relatives of the 62 dead have grown during the 13

months of the current police probe.

They are still waiting to see if they will be allowed to give formal statements, and fear that key medical files have papers missing.

Previous investigations by Gosport CID were slammed as inadequate by the Police Complaints Authority (PCA), while the 2001 investigation is the subject of yet another probe by the PCA.

DCS Watts said: 'There is no question of this

being swept under the carpet either by us or because of any drive by any outside agency.'

'It is one of the most critical investigations for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight force.'

'I am responsible for criminal investigations and I will act with determination,' he stressed.

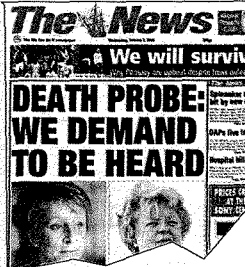
However Ian Wilson, whose father died at the hospital in October 1998, said: 'The police just

want this over and done with as quickly as possible, but we will not just go away.'

'They are hell-bent on making sure that they don't get the blame for anything.'

Another relative, who did not wish to be named, added: 'It is being brushed under the carpet, that is what they want.'

'Everybody just wants to get away with holding an inquiry, not a criminal trial.'



The News yesterday

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gas safety tips for students

PORTSMOUTH: Students have been warned to remember gas safety advice as they return to university for a new term of study.

Transco, the gas emergency service provider, says students must telephone for help if they smell gas.

Steve Featherstone, head of operations for Transco's South of England network, said: 'Because fewer than 20 per cent of students living in rented accommodation know who to call if they suspect a gas escape, they are a vulnerable group which we need to target.'

In an emergency residents should call 0800 111 999.

WHAT THEY SAID

'Everybody can't wait for me to fail, because I am supposed to have this perfect life, which is complete nonsense. And then you feel like the tides are turning and it's pick-on-Gwyneth time. I'm just a girl, so that can really get to me' -

Actress Gwyneth Paltrow.



Bookworms wanted

HAMPSHIRE: Bookworms with a few hours to spare each week are being asked to use their passion for reading to help youngsters.

The Volunteer Reading Help group is looking to recruit people to give children some extra encouragement with reading.

For more information contact Jane Thickness or Kirsty Rogers on (023) 8065 3237.

Talk for art's sake

PORTSMOUTH: Businesses who want to learn more about using the arts to increase their competitiveness are invited to a lecture at the University of Portsmouth.

Lecturer Lesley Wake will speak about the relationship between arts and businesses on January 21.

Admission is free. For details call (023) 9284 2718.

Piano up for grabs

GOSPORT: A new home is being sought for a piano which was donated to the Harbourside Active Citizens Project.

Unfortunately the group has no need for the instrument but is keen to give it to a community group.

If you would like to enquire about the piano contact the project on (023) 9282 7110.



The News TOMORROW: ALMOST 200,000 PEOPLE WILL READ THIS...

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INQUIRY: Families told some deaths are 'cause for serious concern' – but they are not told what category their loved ones fall in

Police admission over deaths adds to relatives' worry

by Nicholas Brooks
Health reporter

AT LEAST some of the 62 deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital being investigated by the police are a cause of 'serious concern', it has emerged.

The news was broken to families at a meeting called by Hampshire police to update relatives on progress in the year-long investigation.

After four previous police probes into the deaths were called off without ever getting to court, this is the first time officers have given the families hope that at least some cases could go forward.

Families of the dead were told their cases had been split into three groups: some deaths were simply down to natural causes and needed no further action, some needed further investigation and others caused serious concern.

But officers did not reveal which cases fell into which category, leaving families furious at being left in the dark about whether their loved ones died peacefully or not.

Head of Hampshire CID Steve Watts, who is leading Operation Rochester looking into the deaths, refused to comment on aspects of the investigation.

He said: 'I can't confirm that issue, but as soon as it is possible to inform the families about the status of how their loved ones came to die we will do so.'

However, Ian Wilson, whose father, Robert, died at the hospital, said: 'From what the police have said, many families haven't got to worry, and we should be allowed to know that.'

'This is very difficult for us, and those who don't have to worry should be told straight



The deaths of 62 patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital, above, are being investigated

away.' Ann Reeves, whose mother, Elsie Devine, died, said: 'It is appalling to tell us that. Now when we speak to officers involved in the case, all the time they know how our cases are being viewed but can't tell us.'

Mike Wilson, whose mother, Edna Purnell, was also among the dead, said: 'I think they should pull their fingers out and tell people that some of the 62 cases have no basis and that they are putting them aside and concentrating on the good cases.'

Solicitor Ann Alexander, hired by some of the families, has written to them to say she is still pushing for the police to take formal statements, 13 months after the probe began.

'I continue to press the police in relation to the issue of statements,' she wrote.

'I am very firmly of the view that they ought to be taking statements from all of the relevant witnesses.'

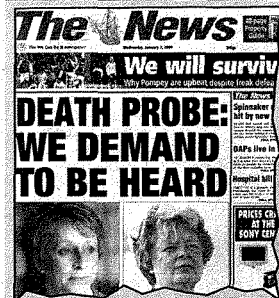
However, she added: 'There is little further that I can do.'

nicholas.brooks@theneews.co.uk



Ann Alexander

'FLAWS' IN PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS



THIS is the fifth police probe into deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in the late-1990s.

Two previous investigations were slammed by the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) as being seriously flawed.

Another PCA verdict on the 2001 investigation, led by John James, saw officers from the Avon and Somerset force called in to judge whether officers did a good enough job. A verdict is expected soon.

Families are also waiting to hear the results of a 'clinical audit' by Professor Robert Baker, looking at the number of deaths at the hospital.

How The News has reported the story this week – yesterday, right, and on Wednesday, above

Relatives hit out as death inquiry chief goes part time

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JUBILEE HALL, LITTLE SHORE LANE, BISHOPS WALTHAM
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THORNGATE HALL, GOSPORT COMMUNITY CENTRE, BURY STREET, GOSPORT on **WEDNESDAY 14th JANUARY**

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Senior officer leaps to defend death probe

FOLLOWING stinging criticisms of Hampshire police, the county's second most senior officer has strongly defended the investigation into deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Deputy Chief Constable Ian Readhead spoke out after relatives of the dead broke their silence over the police handling of the case, which is now 13 months old.

The current probe is looking at 62 deaths at the Gosport hospital in the late 1990s, after families alleged elderly patients were unnecessarily

given large doses of powerful painkilling drugs.

In recent days relatives have attacked top officers for not taking formal statements from them, and voiced fears that key pieces of medical evidence have gone missing.

Relatives have also reacted angrily after CID chief Steve Watts, leading the inquiry, said he will soon begin a part-time course designed as a fast-track to promotion.

Mr Readhead insisted it was 'absurd' to suggest that Steve Watts would be distracted by the Strategic Command

Course, and the officers on the case were an 'excellent and experienced team'.

'If and when it becomes necessary to take statements this will be carried out,' he said.

He added that despite huge efforts some medical records could be missing, but that experts had assured him that there was 'nothing sinister' about this.

Mr Readhead also stressed that officers were always ready to listen.

He said they constantly kept families updated about the case through meetings,

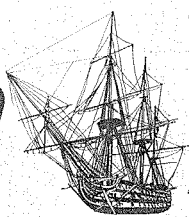
newsletters, and contact with their solicitor. However Ann Reeves, whose mother Elsie Devine died at the hospital, dismissed this claim.

She claims she wrote to case deputy Detective Inspector Nigel Niven expressing her fears about the case on November 12 last year, and despite recently writing again has still not had a reply.

'They say they are talking to us, but haven't even been bothered to reply to a letter within two months - what does that say about their attitude?' she said.

Jan. 10th. 2004

FAREHAM & GOSPORT The News



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PAGE 4



The Do It newspaper

Tuesday, January 20, 2004

FINAL

34p



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20-PAGE BUSINESSWEEK SPECIAL INSIDE

HOW COULD IT HAPPEN YET AGAIN?



Patient given morphine overdose at hospital

STUNNED relatives today expressed disbelief over another death at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Campaigners said they were shocked that an 84-year-old cancer patient was mistakenly given a

huge overdose of morphine - despite tighter controls on drug administration which were introduced during the

investigation into 62 suspect deaths at the hospital, pictured above.
FULL STORY ● Page 3

The News TODAY

Traders' fury over car parking fees

OWNERS of seafront cafes at Stokes Bay fear they may have to leave after Gosport council decided to extend car parking fees. Visitors used to have to pay at weekends, bank holidays and school holidays but will now be charged every day between April 1 and September 30.
FULL STORY ● Page 1

Jobs are halted

A CRACKDOWN on thugs who vandalise children's playgrounds at Fareham has been hailed a success. Vandalism in playground areas cost the council £50,000 last year.
FULL STORY ● Page 1



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HEALTH: Police to check how nurse gave patient entire day's dose of morphine in one go

Patient given overdose at death-probe hospital

by Guy Walker
The News

A HOSPITAL under investigation over a string of deaths is at the centre of fresh controversy as it emerged a nurse gave a pensioner a massive overdose of painkilling drugs.

A police investigation was launched into the death of 84-year-old Alfred Hickman in October after staff at Gosport War Memorial Hospital admitted giving him a day's worth of diamorphine in one go.

The blunder came even though government inspectors, who visited the hospital in 2002, had recommended measures to stop overdoses being administered. The Commission for Health Improve-

Monitoring safety measures to be toughened up

IAN Piper, chief executive of Gosport Primary Care Trust, said the hospital had obeyed recommendations laid down by the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI). But still a nurse managed to give an elderly patient eight times more

diamorphine than he was supposed to have had. The CHI reviewer, carried out in 2002, recommended that a clinical pharmacist should be appointed to watch over staff who give out drugs more closely. In the wake of the Alfred

Hickman case, staff have promised to introduce even more measures. These include making drugs charts easier to read, and carrying out more staff training. And an additional worker will be appointed to monitor drugs being given out.

ment inspection concluded the hospital's use of diamorphine may have been excessive.

An inquest heard how Mr Hickman, of South Street, Gosport, was being treated at the hospital for terminal prostate cancer.

On the morning of October 22 last year, a nurse who had been given a day's dose for Mr Hickman injected the

whole lot in one go. This meant he was given 40mg of morphine - when he was only supposed to get around 5mg at a time.

Doctors offered to give Mr Hickman, a retired insurance agent, an antidote. But his family decided against this because Mr Hickman was in so much pain.

He died a few hours later.

Detective Inspector David Crouch told an inquest into his death: 'The nurse was interviewed and fully admitted the mistake. She had only been working at the hospital for a couple of weeks and had not administered diamorphine for a considerable time.'

A post-mortem examination found that the overdose had not caused the pensioner's

death. Recording a verdict of death by natural causes, Portsmouth coroner David Horsley said: 'With the history of this hospital this man's death had to be treated very seriously.'

Ann Reeves, whose mother Elsie Divine died at the hospital after an alleged overdose, said: 'I can't believe someone has now been given an overdose. This is a total, total shock - how can this happen?'

Ian Piper, chief executive of Gosport Primary Care Trust, said the incident was 'regrettable'.

He said: 'We immediately launched a critical incident review, which highlighted the need for further training and support for all staff. Action has been taken to ensure staff members concerned will be supervised, and if necessary undertake retraining.'

guy.walker@thenews.co.uk

Family's suspicions over death led to string of investigations

THE long-running controversy around Gosport War Memorial Hospital began in October 1998, when elderly patient Gladys Richards died.

Her family was suspicious about the care she received, and the amounts of morphine given to her, and asked the police to step in. Officers quickly declared

nothing was wrong, but the relatives never gave up pressing.

Hampshire police are currently more than a year into a fifth probe, called Operation Rochester, under CID chief Steve Watts.

As time has moved on more families have raised their concerns - and police are now dealing with 62

families who are worried that their elderly relatives were mistreated.

Two earlier investigations have been branded inadequate by the Police Complaints Authority, and another report from the PCA is expected soon.

Families have now been told that at least some of their cases are of 'serious

concern' to officers, while some almost certainly died of natural causes.

Officers have sent medical records to experts to judge whether criminal proceedings might go ahead, and the government's chief medical officer Sir Liam Donaldson has ordered a top academic to look at whether the

number of deaths at the Gosport hospital was out of the ordinary.

However, families have still not been allowed to give formal statements to the police, and are pressing for officers to speed up their investigation.

Officers are expected to give relatives an update on their progress in April.

Father risks life to save children's hamster and rats from fire

A FATHER risked his life to save his children's beloved pet hamster and rats when he returned from work to find the family flat on fire.

Groundworker Arthur Mitchell returned to the two-bedroom second-floor flat in Hillsley Road, Paulsgrove, about 2.30pm yesterday to find smoke coming from his children's bedroom.

No-one else was in the flat at the time.

The father-of-three grabbed the cage containing the pets before fleeing the building and calling the fire and rescue service.

Within minutes the blaze engulfed the room, and the smoke spread into the corridor of the three-storey block and down the stairwell.

Four fire engines arrived to tackle the blaze and the firefighters managed to get it under control within 20 minutes before it could spread to other flats.

Mr Mitchell, 37, said: 'I am in shock at the moment. I don't know what caused the fire.'

'The fire wasn't that bad at first, but then within a couple of minutes of me getting out of the building the whole room just went up and there was thick black smoke everywhere.'

John Bonney, deputy chief fire officer at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, said: 'The flat is so badly damaged the family will have to be rehoused.'



Firefighters arrive on the scene at Hillsley Road, Paulsgrove, where a father went back into the burning property to rescue his children's pet hamster and rats

PICTURE: MICHAEL SCADDAN (040298-10)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Copnor bridge correction

A STORY in Saturday's *New* mistakenly said that Copnor Bridge in Portsmouth would have to be raised by one inch to meet new safety standards.

City engineer Peter King has stressed that, when the bridge eventually had to be raised to meet Rail Safety and Standards Board specifications, it would in fact be by one metre.

We are sorry for a misunderstanding that led us to publish the incorrect figure

£2,000 arcade rai

PORTSMOUTH: Thieves escaped with more than £2,000 in cash after holding up an amusement arcade.

The Tivolino arcade, in Edinburgh Road, Landport, was about to be closed at 9.50pm last Friday when two men walked in and demanded money. A 27-year-old worker was threatened with a knife.

The crooks were described as Asian, 25 to 35 and both wearing black leather jackets. Information to Southsea CID on 0845 045 4545.

USEFUL NUMBERS

- NHS Direct (0845) 4647.
- Portsmouth City PCT (023) 9283 5020.
- Fareham & Gosport Primary Care Trust (01329) 233447.
- East Hampshire Primary Care Trust (023) 9224 8800.
- Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust (023) 9228 6000.
- St Richard's Hospital (01243) 788122.

Dryer caught fire

NORTH END: A room above hairdressers was damaged by smoke after a tumble dryer caught alight.

Firefighters from Cosham and Copnor fire stations spent about half an hour tackling the blaze after they were called to the blaze at Hair OTT in London Road, North End, at 2.15pm yesterday.

The tumble dryer, which is used by staff at the hairdressers to dry items such as towels, was wrecked and the smoke damaged the room

Van blaze tackled

COSHAM: Firefighters had to be called after the engine of a van caught light.

The crew from Cosham Fire Station were called to the van in Western Road, Cosham, at around 8am yesterday.

They spent 15 minutes putting out the blaze.

INQUIRY: Police close to announcing decisions over deaths at War Memorial

Relatives to hear hospital outcome

by **Nicholas Brooks**
Health reporter

RELATIVES of 62 people who died at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital are about to hear whether the police feel the deaths could have been suspicious.

Police are investigating whether the elderly patients were given excessive doses of powerful painkillers by hospital staff.

Solicitor Ann Alexander, who is acting for about half of the relatives in the case, has written to her clients telling them to expect news soon.

They will each be told whether their relatives' deaths are being labelled by police as 'natural causes', 'needing further investigation', or causing 'serious concern'.

The families were told by officers last September that the dead had been split up into these three groups, but were not told which category

Probe into 62 deaths since 1998

THE latest police probe relates to 62 deaths over a three-year period beginning in 1998.

Officers led by Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Watts, began the current investigation in November 2002 after four previous inquiries petered out.

The new inquiry was sparked by a report by government inspectors who found that patients had been

put at risk by slack controls over prescription drugs.

Officers have now called in nationally-respected medical experts to decide whether any of the deaths appear to be unnecessary.

Families are also waiting to hear the verdict of a Police Complaints Authority probe into one of the previous police investigations, and the result of a study into death rates at the Gosport hospital.

their relative was in. Relatives were not expecting to hear any updates until April, but will now hear the categorisation after they have confirmed to officers whether they want to be told in person or by letter.

Ms Alexander said: 'I have had a meeting with the police, and I have been greatly reassured - the position is that the police are going to notify

the families in the near future as to what their views are in each case.'

Many families are worried that formal statements have still not been taken. Ms Alexander stressed that no final decisions had been reached.

'The views that are being expressed are not final views, but based on the evidence available to them at the time,' she said.

Gillian Mackenzie, whose mother Gladys Richards died at the hospital in August 1998, said: 'I think they are finally getting a move on because of the publicity surrounding the case.'

'It is good news that we are going to be told about our cases, but this is causing stress to people by keeping them hanging on - those people whose cases are "natural causes" should have been told back in September.'

Marjorie Bulbeck, who lost her mother Dulcie Middleton, added: 'It sounds like good news, like we are getting somewhere, but every time we seem to be getting somewhere we go backwards again.'

Detective Inspector Nigel Niven refused to comment on the case.

'We are dealing with a number of family members, and at this moment in time it is a private matter between ourselves and the relatives,' he said.

nicholas.brooks@thenews.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Disgusting Dahl' entertains kids

FAREHAM: Children will be able to enjoy story and craft activities based on Roald Dahl's popular book *The Twits* this month.

The Disgusting Dahl activities will be run at Fareham Library in Osborn Road from 11am to midday on February 18. The event is for children aged 5 to 10 years. Tickets are available from the library on (01329) 282715.

Art goes on display

PORTSMOUTH: An exhibition of art by asylum seekers in Portsmouth will be held at Friendship House in Elm Grove. The display is the result of an eight-week art workshop supported by the Pallant House Gallery in Chichester.

READ ON...

'It is a nightmare for managers but there isn't a lot you can do about it' -

Hawks manager
Dave Leworthy



INQUIRY: Relatives still have no idea when they will know the truth about the loss of loved ones

Death-probe families face wait for answers

by Nicholas Brooks
Health reporter

RELATIVES of people whose deaths at Gosport's War Memorial Hospital are being probed by police fear they may never find out the truth.

Their concerns came after police split the 62 deaths under investigation into three categories and told families which they were in.

The deaths are classed as serious concerns, need more investigation or natural causes.

Officers will look into the apparently strongest cases first, but are refusing to reveal how many deaths are in each category - leaving families with no idea when police will look into each case.

Gillian Mackenzie, whose mother Gladys Richards died at the War Memorial in 1998 and whose case has been classified as 'needs more investigation', said: 'I am still convinced there is a case, but the incompetence continues.'

Mike Wilson, whose mum Edna Purnell also died, added: 'My letter said further investigation was needed, but I know the medical experts were not sent files.'

'I know some documents have gone missing, and the longer this goes on the more you think we will never know what happened.'

One relative, who did not wish to be named, was furious to learn her case was being treated as simply 'natural causes'.

'I am not happy with this, really disappointed,' she said. 'They are telling me nothing was wrong but they haven't heard my version yet - I will carry on.'

The deaths in question happened between 1998 and 2002, with families claiming relatives wrongly received high doses of strong painkillers.

After taking evidence from a team of five medical experts, officers have finally told each family which category their case was in.

CASES SPLIT UP

RELATIVES of the dead were first told they had been split into three categories last September - but officers would not tell them which group they had been placed in. Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Watts gave the families the news at a meeting called by officers to give an update on their inquiries.

The conclusion was based on the findings of the five-strong medical panel, led by Professor Robert Forrest, a national authority on poisoning.

Since then these findings have been pored over by lawyers specialising in medical cases to guarantee that the conclusions are watertight.

They will now bring in more experts, in a new phase of the investigation which may last until the end of the year. Others will have to wait their turn.

Gosport MP Peter Viggers was furious the waiting will go on.

He said: 'Nobody has got the guts to reach a decision - I am mortified that it is still going on.'

Mrs Mackenzie added: 'There is crucial, hard evidence that has never been sent to the experts, so how are they supposed to make the right decision?'

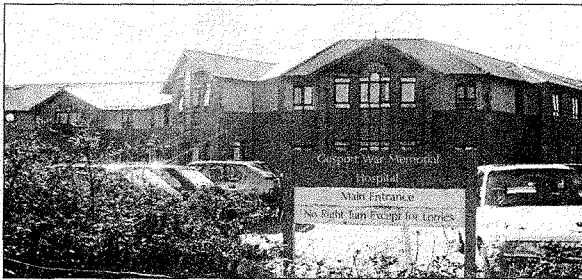
CID chief Steve Watts, leading the investigation, said: 'We have come to the end of a significant phase in this inquiry and we are now moving into a new phase of even more detailed investigations into a number of these cases, which will involve appointing experts to further examine details.'

Police spokesman Kevin Briscoe added that no announcements on how many people fell into each category would be made until officers were 'cast-iron' certain their assessment would not change.

nicholas.brooks@thenews.co.uk



Gillian Mackenzie has vowed to continue her battle for answers over why her mother, Gladys Richards, died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital, below



Threatened authority safe after poll result

SOUTHSEA Town Council has been given a reprieve after a narrow Tory victory in a crucial by-election.

Tory pro-town council candidate Jackie Ciccarone beat Independent anti-town council candidate Jennifer Evens by only 16 votes.

The council was evenly split between seven Tory councillors wanting it to continue and seven opposition candidates wanting it abolished.

If Mrs Evens had won, the council's opponents would have had the chance to sell the council's property, make staff redundant and set a zero precept - effectively abolishing the council.

But the turnout of 27 per cent was far higher than expected, compared with the eight per cent turnout in the last town council by-election in the Craneswater ward.

Tory councillors and supporters cheered as the result was read out at 10.20pm at St Jude's Church, Kent Road, Southsea, after a vote and recount which took more than an hour.

Councillor Ciccarone said: 'I am delighted with the result. I think the turnout shows people have taken an interest in the future of the council, though I wish more would take an interest.'

The election has been shrouded in controversy as the bitter rivals both accused each other of using dirty tactics during the election.

Investigation has grown as more families demand answers



Ann Reeves, left, whose mother Elsie Devine died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital, and Mike Wilson are waiting for answers



THE current investigation is already more than a year old, having begun in November 2002.

Gillian Mackenzie first complained about treatment of her mother before she died in 1998, and the numbers involved have since grown.

By late 2001 there were 10 families in touch with the police, eventually growing to 62.

It has now evolved into one of the biggest investigations in the history of Hampshire police.

It is the fourth time that Hampshire police have looked into the deaths. Two earlier investigations have been attacked as inadequate by the Police Complaints Authority, and another PCA verdict is expected imminently.

Families have consistently complained that formal statements

have never been taken, although officers insist relatives have always had the chance to raise their fears.

Relatives kept up their campaign despite earlier inquiries petering out, and questions over events at the hospital gathered pace again in 2002 after government inspectors voiced their alarm over the slack controls over staff giving out morphine to patients.

They warned that they were 'unable to confirm whether any patients died as a direct result, but can confirm that patients were regularly put at risk'.

The government's chief medical officer Sir Liam Donaldson then ordered a probe into the number of deaths at the Gosport hospital - that report was finished several months ago but is still unpublished.

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Mitrons Audio Visual

cue station put out of action as equipment wrecked and stolen

Vandals ransack coastguard base



Dangerous rocket flares and smoke canisters similar to those shown here by HM Coastguard Portsmouth sector manager Veronica Newman were stolen during the vandalism attack

PICTURE: MICHAEL SCADDAN (040749-0068)

MP demands answers over deaths probe at hospital

GOSPORT MP Peter Viggers is demanding answers from the government over police investigations into 62 deaths at the local hospital.

The Tory fired off an angry letter to Health Secretary John Reid after learning that the cloud of suspicion hanging over Gosport War Memorial Hospital will not be lifted for months – or even years.

All relatives of the dead have now been told by officers whether their cases are viewed as causing ‘serious concern’, needing further investigation or were simply natural causes.

Those decisions were based on advice from a five-strong panel of medical experts, but police will now send the files still under consideration to another set of medical experts.

The deaths all occurred between 1998 and 2002. The controversy centres on whether elderly patients were wrongly given high doses of strong painkillers.

Mr Viggers said: ‘This is just monstrous. When will these people be satisfied? When will this be allowed to end?’

‘Can you imagine the stress this is causing in this area?’

Dorrie Graham, whose husband, Leonard, died at the hospital, said: ‘I am very angry, and very frustrated. The police always promised that they would listen to our side of the story but have ignored us.’

Paula Ripley, whose husband, Jim, survived an alleged morphine overdose, said: ‘It is frustrating, because we all just want it sorted out once and for all, but we are the lucky ones.’

COMMENT ● Page 4

Lifeguards forced to spend £1,000 on stronger door

THIS is the second time in two years that the coastguard station on Hayling Island has been targeted by yobs. In October 2002, vandals

smashed down the door of the station and ransacked the building.

They caused extensive damage inside and stole night-vision goggles,

binoculars and other equipment. Hayling lifeguards were forced to fork out nearly £1,000 to install a new metal-backed door with two deadlocks.

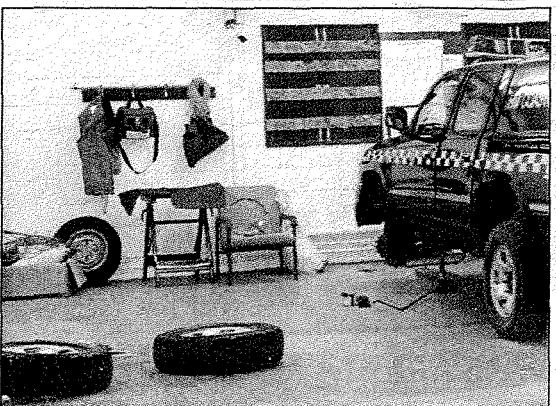
lice said: ‘This is just mindless vandalism.’

‘If the flares that have been stolen are let off they are so powerful that they are able to take someone’s head off.’

‘We need anyone who saw anything at all to get in touch with us so we can track down the people who did this.’

Anyone with any information should call PC Smith at Havant police on 0845 045 4545 or call Crimestoppers in confidence on 0800 555 111.

simon.jones@thenews.co.uk



Two of the jeep tyres that were slashed and pierced and a window boarded up after being smashed in

(040749-0089)

Judge rejects liberty plea

A MENTALLY-ILL woman was denied her liberty after a judge overruled her wish to be released from custody.

Shirley Agar was remanded after being convicted of arson and failing to surrender to custody.

Agar, 49, of Privett Road, Fareham, appeared before

French may ease cost of carriers

Family in new row over lost valuables

A YOUNG family who had their valuables removed and dumped by mistake from their shed have been asked to provide proof of the contents.

Council contractor Mitie Property Services has told Portsmouth City Council's legal team that what it removed did not tally with resident Anmarie McLaren's list.

Ms McLaren and her four children returned from holiday in June to find her family's shed at Balchin Court, in Bishop Street, Portsea, had had its locks changed.

When she finally got into the shed she found all their property had been mistakenly thrown out by council workers, who believed the shed did not belong to any residents.

Ms McLaren, 30, claims £8,000-worth of bikes, toys and camping equipment was dumped on the council tip.

The family has been given a £1,000 interim payment until the matter is settled.

Ms McLaren said: 'I am not a liar - I'm the victim here. I have got pictures of my kids on these bikes and my neighbours are going to make statements to support me.'

Gordon Barratt, the head of common law for Portsmouth

■ **PROBE:** No evidence to suspend hospital workers, say bosses

Deaths probe: NHS staff stay in jobs

NHS STAFF at the centre of the police probe into dozens of deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital will not face suspension, health chiefs insist.

Despite the latest police investigation looking into the deaths of 90 elderly people at the hospital between 1996 and 1999, there are said to be no grounds for stopping people working.

Alan Pickering, the local NHS finance boss with responsibility for handling the inquiry, said there was no evidence for staff suspensions.

Some of the staff involved still work at the hospital, while others now work elsewhere in the NHS.

Previous police inquiries, which were criticised by the Police Complaints Authority, have not resulted in any charges, but the latest probe is the biggest yet.

by **Nicholas Brooks**
Health reporter

Officers began the current investigation in October 2002 and have already spoken to 153 NHS staff. Another 260 are set to be approached between now and October.

Of the 90 case files, officers stress only 'a small percentage' are going to be probed further to see whether criminal charges could be brought.

Mr Pickering said: 'Nobody has been found guilty of anything, and there is no evidence for suspensions.'

'You would not expect your boss to suspend you just because you have been talking to the police. To suspend someone we would need evidence of gross misconduct.'

He added: 'If people were being charged with something while they were in our employment that would put a different light on it.'

Mr Pickering said that the hospital staff were keen to

Series of investigations held

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Yet another study, ordered by the government's top doctor, into the numbers of the deaths at the hospital is still unpublished.

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'We reckon now that Gosport War Memorial Hospital is the safest place in Hampshire bar none, because it has been investigated.'

But many relatives of the dead are furious no suspensions are in the pipeline.

One woman, who did not wish to be named, said: 'They suspended a brain surgeon in

the Midlands for not paying for croutons in his soup, but these people are still working - it's unbelievable.'

As well as interviewing NHS staff, the 12 police officers working full-time on the inquiry are sending medical notes to five national medical experts to judge the standard of care given by staff.

nicholas.brooks@thenews.co.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

Explore river and wetlands

■ **GOSPORT:** A family nature ramble exploring the natural areas of the Alver Valley taking in the Wildgrounds Nature Reserve as well as the local meadows and wetlands will take place tomorrow.

Organisers are also inviting families to bring picnics along for the walk, which will take place between 11am and 3pm.

For more information, contact Grange Farm on (023) 9258 8666.

Taking on Blues

■ **GOSPORT:** A football club is set to celebrate its 60th anniversary in style with a pre-season knockabout with Pompey.

Gosport Football Club is playing a reserve team from the Premiership side at Privett Park, in Privett Road, on July 27.

Tickets are available from the club or by calling (023) 9250 1042.

READ ON...

'When they've been



■ **TRAGEDY:** Care bosses say they cannot drop home severely criticised by inspectors

Home in shock report won't be blacklisted

by **Andy Kates**
The News

COUNCIL bosses today refused to take a care home which was slammed in a scathing report off its list of possible homes for pensioners.

The Kent Dale Rest Home in Bedhampton was heavily criticised after an inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI).

It revealed how pensioners have been involved in a shocking 67 falls at the Hulbert Road home in the past 12 months.

The report also criticised the fact that no staff, including manager and proprietor Patricia Noy, have social care qualifications and said not enough care assistants were on duty.

The investigation was sparked by a complaint made by the family of Kathleen Bastable, who died after an accident on the stairs.

Another pensioner fell while climbing off a stairlift unsupervised and crashed into Mrs Bastable.



Kathleen Bastable

The pair ended up in a heap at the bottom of the stairs and Mrs Bastable died of head and spinal injuries.

The CSCI - which has the power to strip homes of their operating licences - has already told the

£367-a-week home to clean up its act.

But Hampshire County Council social services chiefs said they could not take it off the list of care homes in the area because it was still registered with the CSCI.

Cllr David Gillett, who sits on Hampshire County Council's social care policy review committee, said: 'I am concerned by what I have read about the home so far. But in a way our hands are tied because we can't order people not to choose this home because it's the job of the CSCI as an independent body to decide what places are suitable.'

Head of social services for Havant Tony Warnes refused to speak to *The News* about the Kent Dale Rest Home.

But his spokeswoman Tracey Buckland said officers would continue to assess the needs of each individual regularly and report concerns to the CSCI.

Mrs Noy said the accident that killed Mrs Bastable was 'tragic' but refused to speak to *The News*.

andy.kates@thenews.co.uk
COMMENT • Page 6

NEED MORE?

For details about the Commission for Social Care Inspection or to look at reports on care homes visit the website at www.csci.org.uk or contact the regional branch at Southampton on (023) 8082 1300.



Beatrice Buckle fell and broke her hip while staying at Kent Dale Rest Home

Report confirmed our worst fears, says family

THE family of another pensioner who died after an accident at the Kent Dale Rest Home said the shocking report confirmed their 'worst nightmare'.

Beatrice Buckle was a resident at the Bedhampton home when she complained of a sore on her knee in December 1999.

After an examination by nurses the sore was found to be a bone sticking out of the 78-year-old's leg.

She was admitted to hospital and died weeks later of bronchial pneumonia due to a fractured left femur.

A post mortem examination later revealed that Mrs Buckle had

suffered a fall in September 1999 when she sustained a broken hip.

The accident was recorded in the home's accident log book, where it was noted that no treatment was necessary.

That means Mrs Buckle struggled with a broken hip for almost four months.

It wasn't until the split in her bone reached her knee that anyone noticed how serious her injury was.

The news shocked the family of Mrs Buckle, including her daughter-in-law Avril Buckle, 58, from Chalton near Clanfield.

She said: 'We nearly died when we heard what had happened.'

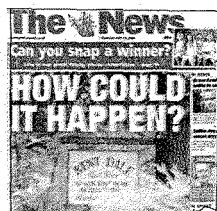
'We simply could not understand how she had this injury for so long. It was extremely upsetting for the whole family.'

'We went through the ordeal of an inquest and the coroner recorded an open verdict because no-one could tell us how the fall happened.'

'It was hard but we thought that at least something like this would never happen again. When we heard about Mrs Bastable we were stunned.'

'And the report confirmed our worst fears.'

'There are problems at this home and they have to be sorted for the residents' sake.'



The News yesterday

Bosses will be hit by random checks

THE Kent Dale Rest Home has already been handed a list of orders by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

They were given to the home after an initial unannounced inspection last month.

Inspectors will check that they have been carried out at future unannounced visits.

They included fixing a stairlift which did not reach the top of the

stairs. Until recently residents had to climb the last step on their own.

Although no-one saw the accident which killed Kathleen Bastable, it is thought that another pensioner lost her balance while dismounting the stairlift.

Bosses have also been told to start carrying out risk assessments on all residents to minimise accidents around the home and make sure enough staff are on duty at all times.

■ **PROBE:** No evidence to suspend hospital workers, say bosses

Deaths probe: NHS staff stay in jobs

NHS STAFF at the centre of the police probe into dozens of deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital will not face suspension, health chiefs insist.

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nicholas.brooks@thenews.co.uk

17, 2004

■ **HEALTH:** Consultant suspended after five of seven operations had complications

Surgery problems spark new inquiry

by **Nicholas Brooks**
Health reporter

A SECOND probe into operations performed by foreign doctors at Haslar has been ordered by Hampshire's NHS chiefs.

The inquiry will look at orthopaedic surgery carried out by the South African private healthcare company Netcare, funded with £5m from the Department of Health.

The project was part of the government push to buy in more overseas firms to help slash waiting times.

Altogether Netcare carried out 1,000 orthopaedic operations at Haslar, with almost two-thirds of them on patients waiting for treatment at Portsmouth hospitals.

One Netcare consultant has been suspended by the firm after concerns were raised about his work in Gosport.

■ NETCARE is one of Africa's largest private health firms and has already won other contracts from the UK government to help cut NHS waiting lists
■ The company carried out

1,200 ear, nose and throat operations in London, 900 cataract operations in Morecombe Bay, and 340 hip operations in Southport
■ It is now bidding to run a chain of eye clinics across

the north of England, and to manage a treatment centre in Manchester
■ Netcare has 18,000 employees, and already runs 45 hospitals and 55 primary care centres across Africa.

NETCARE FACTS

He is being investigated because five of the seven patients he performed hip replacements on suffered serious problems, with two people needing to have the entire operation redone.

Now the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority (SHA) has also decided to see what went wrong.

Only six of the 24 surgeons flown in to Gosport last October were on the UK's 'specialist register' - effectively a guarantee of expertise.

The surgeon being investigated was not on the register, which means he could only

work under 'supervision' - with Portsmouth NHS staff allowed 24-hour-a-day access to him and his patients to check everything was OK.

SHA consultant in public health Jenifer Smith said: 'This is about some problems we have encountered following the contract with Netcare.'

'Following the surgery a higher number of patients than expected required further surgery.'

'We felt it was important to investigate the circumstances in case we run into a similar situation in the future.'

The SHA's director of pub-

lic health Dr Simon Tanner added that the qualifications of the medical staff and the vetting process would be included in the review.

Netcare medical director Edward Lotz promised to co-operate with the review but defended the company's actions.

'The surgeon in question is no less qualified or experienced than an NHS specialist consultant.'

The SHA probe is expected to take about four months, and the findings will be published.

*nicholas.brooks@
thenews.co.uk*

■ **HEALTH:** NHS chiefs announce series of meetings at start of three-month formal consultation

Countdown to Haslar D-Day has now begun

by **Nicholas Brooks**
Health reporter

THE three-month countdown to decide on the fate of Haslar Hospital in Gosport has begun.

Health chiefs in Fareham and Gosport have announced the launch of the formal consultation – called ‘Working Together For Our Future Health’ – following a series of 15 informal meetings in the last few months.

The in-depth discussion on the future of health services across the district marks what campaigners believe is the most crucial stage in the fight for Haslar’s survival.

In September and October four public meetings will be held, under an independent chairman, and then the decision must be made by local NHS chiefs.

Bosses at the Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust (PCT) have narrowed the field down to two options.

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON HOSPITAL

PUBLIC meetings will be held at:

- Ferneham Hall, Fareham, 9.30am - 11.30am on September 27
- Thorngate Hall, Gosport, 7pm - 9pm on September 27
- Thorngate Hall, Gosport, 9.30am - 11.30am on October 4
- Ferneham Hall, Fareham, 7pm - 9pm on October 4.

Senior NHS managers will be available to answer questions and hear views from groups.

The service can be requested via email on fandgservices@ports.nhs.uk, via the website at www.farehamandgosportpct.nhs.uk, or by calling the PCT offices on 01329 226120.

They will either use Haslar’s Cross Link building as a community hospital, or extend Gosport War Memorial Hospital as a community hospital alongside other health centres in the district.

Peter Edgar of the Save Haslar Taskforce said: ‘They have opened the door for us by keeping the Haslar option, and I would say that these meetings are absolutely crucial.’

‘People must be listened to at these meetings. What is the point of calling

them if you are not going to listen?’

As well as the four public meetings, PCT chiefs have called in accounting giants Ernst & Young to judge which option offers the best value healthcare for the next decade.

Early indications suggest that the cost of adapting Haslar’s Cross Link could top £9m.

Health bosses will also speak to councils, staff and patient groups to gauge opinion.

PCT strategic development direc-

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



Write with your views to the editor at The News Centre, Hilsa, Portsmouth, PO2 9SX or e-mail letters@thenews.co.uk. Please include your full name, address and a daytime phone number

tor Inge Hebden said: ‘We understand people’s concerns about the changes and we are determined to ensure that we have the best possible health care services close to where they are needed.’

PCT finance boss Alan Pickering added: ‘It is not about asking the public for a vote – the board will vote on it, but after taking particular account of what people are saying.’

nicholas.brooks@thenews.co.uk

+

INQUIRY: Detectives probing deaths of more than 90 patients will now question doctors

Police quiz 153 nurses in hospital deaths case

by **Nicholas Brooks**
Health reporter

MORE than 150 nurses have been interviewed in a huge police probe into deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Officers are investigating the deaths of more than 90 people between 1996 and 1999 after relatives raised the alarm about treatment at the hospital.

So far detectives from Operation Rochester have spoken to 153 nurses who might have been witnesses to events at the hospital during that time.

And police, who say the operation has become 'proactive', say they have 260 more medical staff to question, including doctors and consultants.

Officers say the mammoth task of interviewing staff will take at least until October - meaning more waiting for anxious families who have already seen the cases drag on for six years.

A full-time team of 12 officers are working on the £240,000 operation, including three PCs and a sergeant added over the past few months. They are drawn from Hampshire's Major Crime Investigation Team, which looks at serious crime in the county.

As well as the massive round of interviews, the medical notes of the cases causing officers most alarm have been sent to a second panel of experts.

Leading authorities in geriatric and palliative care, toxicology, nursing and general practice will judge whether they think the elderly patients were cared for properly.

Detective Chief Inspector Dave Williams, in charge of the day-to-day running of Operation Rochester, said most of the 90 deaths were not being viewed as possible criminal cases.

He said: 'A small percentage of those cases are to be subject to closer investigation to establish whether or not any criminal offences have been committed,' he said.



Dulcie Middleton



Alice Wilkie



Elsie Devine



Gladys Richards



Stanley Carby



Edna Purnell

Families believe morphine was given when not necessary

THE police probes centre on morphine - the strong painkilling drug often given to terminally-ill patients in their final days.
The families believe that their relatives were given the drug when it

was not needed, or were given high doses.
Hospital chiefs stress that procedures have now changed, and that Gosport War Memorial Hospital today is safe.

Drugs such as morphine can now only be given under supervision, there are tighter rules on documenting which drugs have been given out, and more training programmes are provided.

'So far 153 nurses have been interviewed, that process is ongoing, and we are currently interviewing as witnesses doctors and consultants as well as nursing staff.'

Concerns about the hospital were first raised in 1998 when Gillian MacKenzie com-

plained about the treatment of her mother Gladys Richards, who died in October of that year.

By the beginning of this year there were concerns raised about 62 deaths - and that number has risen to 90 as more families, solicitors and professional health care

organisations came forward.

The deaths of Elsie Devine, Dulcie Middleton, Edna Purnell, Alice Wilkie and Stanley Carby are among those being investigated. Mrs MacKenzie said she was pleased that officers appeared to be stepping up their inquiries.

But she feared deaths

might be written off by the police without them seeing all the evidence.

'The police have told us that things are being speeded up at the moment,' she said.

'But there are still witnesses who haven't been spoken to, after all this time.'

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Fourth investigation is expected to take rest of the year

SINCE the first concerns were raised in October 1998, there have been several long-running inquiries into Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

By late 2001 there were 10 families involved in the inquiry, eventually growing to 62, and now rising to 90.

The current police probe is the fourth, after a previous three were all dropped.

The first investigation was slammed as inadequate by the Police Complaints Authority, and another is also being looked at to see whether officers fully investigated

the cases. The pressure on officers to crank up their efforts grew in 2002 when the health watchdog the Commission for Health Improvement published a damning report into drug prescribing at the hospital.

The authors concluded that although they could not definitely say patients died because of the drug regime at Gosport, they were 'regularly put at risk'.

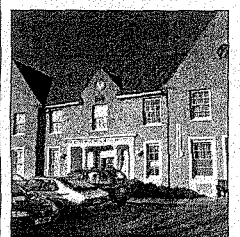
Following that an audit of death rates at the hospital was undertaken. The report is now complete, but is unlikely to be pub-

lished while inquiries go on.

As part of the current probe, begun in October 2003, national expert Robert Forest was called in to lead a team of experts.

As a result of his findings the families were split into three categories - deaths by 'natural causes', those 'needing more investigation', and those 'causing serious concern'. Police have refused to say how many deaths fall into each category.

Police sources believe that the inquiry will continue until at least the end of the year.



Gosport War Memorial Hospital

2

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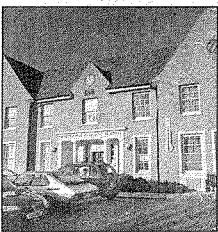
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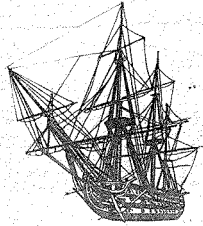
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Gosport War Memorial Hospital

FAREHAM & GOSPORT The News



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Tuesday, July 13, 2004


FINAL

34p



My magical makeover

Mum Melanie's new look Win a luxury break See LifeStyle, inside



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...and still grim inquiry goes on at hospital

FULL STORY PAGE 3

NEWS

Chancellor fuels fears over jobs

CHANCELLOR Gordon Brown's plans to free up more cash for education, health and policing have fuelled fears that jobs could be axed at the Office for National Statistics in Titchfield.



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'Superhospital' concern grows

THE new 'superhospital' for our communities could be too small to cope with demand from a soaring population, it is feared.

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TRUE LIFE



Rachel Dunn is not your average sea captain - and she's used to all the jokes about reverse parking...

LIFESTYLE PAGE 22


SPORT

Fulham £3m bid doubt over Andy

ANDY Faye's future with Pompey was thrown into doubt today after Fulham made a £3m bid for the midfielder.




BACK PAGE



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INQUIRY: Detectives probing deaths of more than 90 patients will now question doctors

Police quiz 153 nurses in hospital deaths case

by Nicholas Brooks
Health reporter

MORE than 150 nurses have been interviewed in a huge police probe into deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Officers are investigating the deaths of more than 90 people between 1996 and 1999 after relatives raised the alarm about treatment at the hospital.

So far detectives from Operation Rochester have spoken to 153 nurses who might have been witnesses to events at the hospital during that time.

And police, who say the operation has become 'proactive', say they have 260 more medical staff to question, including doctors and consultants.

Officers say the mammoth task of interviewing staff will take at least until October – meaning more waiting for anxious families who have already seen the cases drag on for six years.

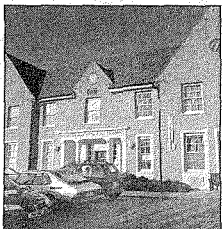
A full-time team of 12 officers are working on the £240,000 operation, including three PCs and a sergeant added over the past few months. They are drawn from Hampshire's Major Crime Investigation Team, which looks at serious crime in the county.

As well as the massive round of interviews, the medical notes of the cases causing officers most alarm have been sent to a second panel of experts.

Leading authorities in geriatric and palliative care, toxicology, nursing and general practice will judge whether they think the elderly patients were cared for properly.

Detective Chief Inspector Dave Williams, in charge of the day-to-day running of Operation Rochester, said most of the 90 deaths were not being viewed as possible criminal cases.

He said: 'A small percentage of those cases are to be subject to closer investigation to establish whether or not any criminal offences have been committed,' he said.



Gosport War Memorial Hospital



Dulcie Middleton



Alice Wilkie



Elsie Devine



Gladys Richards



Stanley Carby



Edna Purnell

Families believe morphine was given when not necessary

THE police probes centre on morphine – the strong painkilling drug often given to terminally-ill patients in their final days.

The families believe that their relatives were given the drug when it

was not needed, or were given high doses.

Hospital chiefs stress that procedures have now changed, and that Gosport War Memorial Hospital today is safe.

Drugs such as morphine can now only be given under supervision, there are tighter rules on documenting which drugs have been given out, and more training programmes are provided.

'So far 153 nurses have been interviewed, that process is ongoing, and we are currently interviewing as witnesses doctors and consultants as well as nursing staff.'

Concerns about the hospital were first raised in 1998 when Gillian MacKenzie com-

plained about the treatment of her mother Gladys Richards, who died in October of that year.

By the beginning of this year there were concerns raised about 62 deaths – and that number has risen to 90 as more families, solicitors and professional health care

organisations came forward.

The deaths of Elsie Devine, Dulcie Middleton, Edna Purnell, Alice Wilkie and Stanley Carby are among those being investigated. Mrs MacKenzie said she was pleased that officers appeared to be stepping up their inquiries.

But she feared deaths

might be written off by the police without them seeing all the evidence.

'The police have told us that things are being speeded up at the moment,' she said. 'But there are still witnesses who haven't been spoken to, after all this time.'

nicholas.brooks@thenews.co.uk

Fourth investigation is expected to take rest of the year

SINCE the first concerns were raised in October 1998, there have been several long-running inquiries into Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

By late 2001 there were 10 families involved in the inquiry, eventually growing to 62, and now rising to 90.

The current police probe is the fourth, after a previous three were all dropped.

The first investigation was slammed as inadequate by the Police Complaints Authority, and another is also being looked at to see whether officers fully investigated

the cases. The pressure on officers to crank up their efforts grew in 2002 when the health watchdog the Commission for Health Improvement published a damning report into drug prescribing at the hospital.

The authors concluded that although they could not definitely say patients died because of the drug regime at Gosport, they were 'regularly put at risk'.

Following that an audit of death rates at the hospital was undertaken. The report is now complete, but is unlikely to be pub-

lished while inquiries go on.

As part of the current probe, begun in October 2003, national expert Robert Forrest was called in to lead a team of experts.

As a result of his findings the families were split into three categories – deaths by 'natural causes', those 'needing more investigation', and those 'causing serious concern'. Police have refused to say how many deaths fall into each category.

Police sources believe that the inquiry will continue until at least the end of the year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Two-way traffic as lights fail

PORTSMOUTH: The one-way Copnor Bridge became two-way yesterday when the lights controlling the traffic flow in each direction failed.

Cones were placed in the road to separate the lines of traffic as engineers worked to solve the problem, said to be caused by a computer glitch.

Nursery opens

CHICHESTER: A new 66-place nursery for NHS workers at St Richard's Hospital opened today.

The Little Richard's nursery already has half of the subsidised spaces taken up, with another 12 unborn babies on the waiting list.

The nursery, looking after children from 12 weeks to five years old, cost £750,000 – £450,000 from the hospital trust itself, and the rest from the Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority.

Party at palace

PORTSMOUTH: The new Lord Mayor of Portsmouth was today due to meet the Queen.

Labour city councillor for the Nelson ward Jason Fazackerley is to attend a royal garden party at Buckingham Palace.

USEFUL NUMBERS

■ **Police**
Hampshire Constabulary
0845 045 4545; Sussex
Police 0845 607 0999

■ **Fire**
Hampshire Fire and Rescue
Service (023) 8064 4000;
West Sussex Fire and
Rescue Service (01243)
786211
(In emergencies, always dial
999.)

■ **Samaritans**
Portsmouth area (023) 9269
1313; Chichester area
(01243) 826333

■ **Gas**
Transco emergency line
0800 111 999

■ **Electric**
Southern Electric
emergency line 0845 770
8090 or 0845 744 4555

■ **Water**
Portsmouth Water (023)
9247 7999 or (023) 9249
9888; Southern Water 0845
278 0845 or leaks line 0800
820 999; South-East Water
0845 602 1724 or 0845 301
0845; Floodline 0845 988
1188

Bid to break in

GOSPORT: A would-be thief used a tool to try and force open windows to a flat.

Police say the front and rear windows of the property in Magennis Close at Rowner were targeted between July 4 and July 7.