

■ **INQUESTS:** Relative of elderly woman slams treatment she received after admission to hospital

Relative says care was 'inhumane'

by **Clare Semke**
Health reporter

THE care of an elderly woman who died at a hospital was 'inhumane', an inquest has been told.

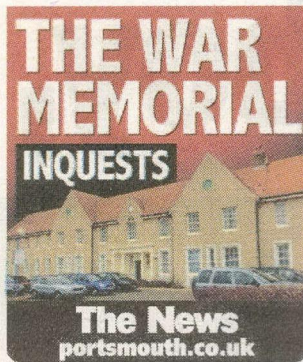
Captain Carl Jewell claims his aunt Enid Spurgeon was treated as a 'useless part of society' by staff on Dryad ward at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

And he told the jury he believed the 92-year-old died because she was given too much diamorphine.

When he visited his aunt for the last time the day before she died Mrs Spurgeon was unconscious.

During evidence yesterday, Mr Jewell said consultant geriatrician Richard Reid had informed him four hours after his arrival that Mrs Spurgeon's state was due to her being given too much diamorphine.

He told the inquest: 'Dr Reid informed me the



only thing wrong with my aunt was that she had been given too much diamorphine. 'He then told me the dose had been reduced.'

Mr Jewell left and later that evening received a phone call to say his aunt had come round.

Three hours later - at about 1.30am on April 13, 1999 - he received a second call to say Mrs Spurgeon had died from a stroke.

Mr Jewell said: 'This I believe was brought on by too



Enid Spurgeon
PICTURE: BBC SOUTH

high a dose of diamorphine.'

He added: 'I would like to know why the treatment of my aunt was so cavalier and would go so far as to say inhumane.

'And I would like to know why [my aunt] was treated as a useless part of society.'

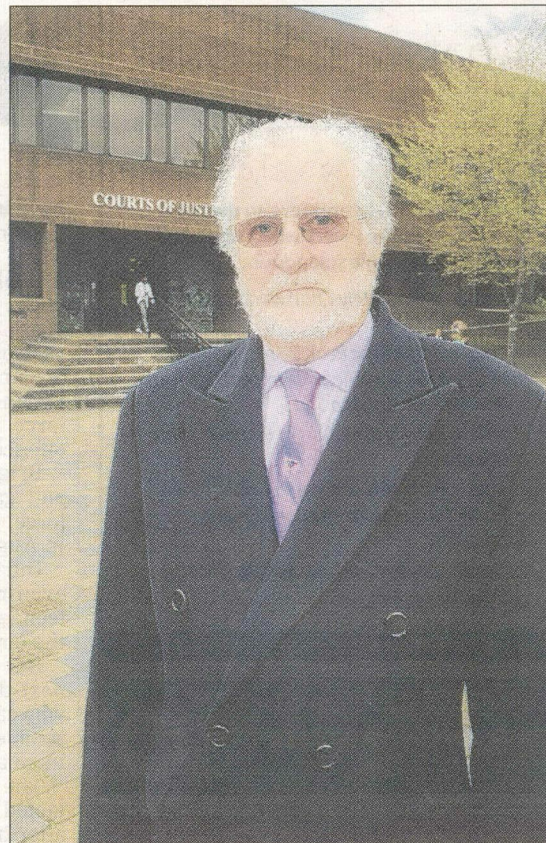
Mr Jewell claims he did not have any contact with Dr Jane Barton - then clinical assistant on the now defunct Dryad and Daedalus wards and at the centre of 10 patients deaths being examined by the inquest.

The other deaths being examined as part of the unprecedented inquest are those of 99-year-old Helena Service, 84-year-old Ruby Lake, 74-year-old Robert Wilson, 66-year-old Geoffrey Packman - known as Mick - 88-year-old Elsie Devine, 91-year-old Sheila Gregory, 82-year-old Leslie Pittock, 88-year-old Elsie Lavender and 79-year-old Arthur Cunningham - known as Brian.

All 10 deaths occurred at the hospital between 1996 and 1999.

(proceeding).

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Captain Carl Jewell, the nephew of Enid Spurgeon

(091185-5)

Doctor was struggling - consultant

THE doctor at the centre of the Gosport War Memorial inquests was 'struggling to give patients enough care', a jury was told.

Consultant geriatrician Richard Reid said Dr Jane Barton - former clinical assistant at the War Memorial - was finding it difficult to sustain her workload at the time he arrived on now defunct Dryad and Daedalus wards in 1999.

He said: 'I think she was struggling to give patients enough care. It was getting very difficult for her to maintain.

'I think it was only by cutting things like note keeping that she was able to see patients and do what she could for them.'

Dr Reid said some people were given 'unrealistic expectations' about relatives' hopes of recovery. He said: 'We certainly came across people who had been set totally unrealistic expectations from other wards.' He said some patients were told: 'We will get you up on your feet in no time at all,' adding, 'in some patients it would be a realistic assessment. In others it wouldn't be.'

However when asked about Dr Barton's pre-prescription of between 20mg and 200mg of diamorphine a day to some patients, he said: 'That would be very unusual and I would expect to see justification for that prescription in the medical notes.'



Richard Reid