

# Daughters blame doctor for death of their mother



**HEARING** Gillian Mackenzie outside Portsmouth Guildhall and inset, her mother Gladys Richards

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THE daughters of a pensioner who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital have blamed the doctor treating her for their mother's death.

Gillian Mackenzie, 79, and her sister Lesley O'Brien, spoke on the first day of a two-week inquest into the death of their mother Gladys Richards.

Yesterday, during an hour-long statement at the inquest at Portsmouth Guildhall, Mrs Mackenzie gave her account of details, leading up to the death of her mother.

In it she described how it was revealed her mother had fallen about 17 times in the space of six months at the nursing home she was staying at, how her mother's health improved when coming off an anti-depressant and how she was confused as to why her mother was placed on the painkiller diamorphine.

As previously reported, Mrs Richards, 91, died in Gosport War Memorial Hospital (GWMH), on August 21, 1998.

The court heard how Mrs Richards had been living at the Glen Heathers nursing home, in Lee-on-the-Solent, for around four years.

There she suffered a fall, and Mrs Richards was admitted to the Royal Haslar Hospital, to have an operation.

At the inquest, Mrs Mackenzie said: 'I received a call from my niece which informed me my mother had been admitted to hospital and was about to

## Inquest hears that decision was made to give pain relief to 91-year-old, not to try to heal her

undergo surgery. She had suffered a fall and was going to have an operation to address her hip at the Haslar.

'I have no criticism of the Haslar hospital, the care was professional.

'It was decided she was going to GWMH for rehabilitation for four weeks.'

While at the Haslar, Mrs Richards was taken off the drug trazodone, which is given to treat anxiety disorders and depression.

Mrs Mackenzie said: 'She was more alert than at the nursing home, she seemed to speak more coherently. My mother was eating well and looking well.'

But after arriving at GWMH, Mrs Richards suffered a second fall, and was taken back to the Haslar, where her new, right hip was put back into place.

Then she was taken back to GWMH where she suffered from haematoma — where blood leaks out into tissues.

Mrs Mackenzie said that Dr Jane Barton, whose care Mrs Richards had

been under, decided not to send the 91-year-old to the Haslar.

Mrs Richards was put on to diamorphine, and was told her death was imminent. She lived for a further four days.

Mrs Mackenzie said: 'I believe my mother could have been treated at the Haslar. In my view a consultant should have been sourced.'

'In my opinion, Dr Barton's pure, gross negligence led to the death of my mother.'

And Mrs O'Brien said she couldn't understand why her mother wasn't taken back to Haslar.

She said: 'I told Dr Barton I had been to Haslar and they said they would be able to readmit my mother, so the cause of her pain could be treated, and not just the pain itself.'

'Dr Barton said it was not appropriate for a 91-year-old to go back, after surviving further surgery.'

'I trusted her at the time. It was only in hindsight I found I was wrong.'

(Proceeding)

**In my opinion, Dr Barton's pure, gross negligence led to the death of my mother**

Gillian Mackenzie

## Dr Barton asked to be taken off register



**CENTRE OF INQUIRY** Gosport War Memorial Hospital, and inset Dr Jane Barton

THE doctor at the centre of an inquiry into the death of Gladys Richards asked to be taken off the medical register after she retired.

Dr Jane Barton, who used to practise at the Forton Medical Centre in Gosport, was also a clinical assistant in the former Dryad and Daedalus wards at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Between 1996 and 1999, 12 patients died in her care — including 91-year-old Mrs Richards.

Her daughter Gillian Mackenzie approached police with concerns over her mother's care, which initiated the original investigation by Hampshire Constabulary into the deaths.

Inquests of five other

patients at the hospital took place in 2009, where a jury ruled drugs prescribed by Dr Barton contributed to the deaths.

But Mrs Richards was not included, and had been postponed until yesterday.

In February 2011, Dr Barton applied to the General Medical Council (GMC) to have her name removed from the register, which was accepted. It means she is no longer able to practise as a GP in the UK.

It came after a GMC hearing in 2010, which found Dr Barton had prescribed 'excessive' drugs to elderly patients, but decided not to remove her from the register.

She is due to give evidence at the inquest on Monday.



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