

# 'No surprise' as delay in inquest announced

Daughter told more time is needed to find suitable venue

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A DAUGHTER who won the right to have an inquest heard into her mother's death at a hospital has been told the hearing is to be delayed.

After campaigning for 14 years, Gillian MacKenzie was due to attend an inquest into the death of her mother, Gladys Richards, next month.

It was set for December 3, but now will not take place until next year.

The Portsmouth coroner's office told her it needs to find a more suitable venue which has better facilities for the hard of hearing and to cope with the large number of people Mrs MacKenzie says



will be attending.

Mrs MacKenzie said: 'Nothing surprises me anymore.

'I hope I'm still alive when they finalise the date - I have no intention of going anywhere.

'It's been 14-and-a-half years since my mother died, and almost four years since the inquest was granted.

'I will just have to wait a little longer.'

Mrs Richards, 91, died at Gosport War Memorial Hospi-



**INQUEST** Gillian MacKenzie is angry that the inquest into the death of her mother, Gladys Richards, has been delayed

tal in 1998.

Hers was one of a string of deaths there that sparked police investigations.

After relentless campaigning, the then Home Secretary Jack Straw granted an inquest in January 2009.

A pre-inquest hearing is due to take place on December 12, with an announcement of the new inquest date to be given afterwards.

As previously reported in *The News*, Mrs Richards was taken to the Royal Haslar Hospital after she suffered a fall in Glen Heathers care home. After an operation, Mrs Richards was transferred to Gosport War Memorial Hospital, in Bury Road, for rehabilitation. During the course of her treatment she was given painkillers.

She died under the care of Dr Jane Barton.

Following Mrs Richards' death, her daughter approached police with concerns over her mother's care. It was this case that prompted an investigation by Hampshire Constabulary into deaths at the hospital.

Inquests into the deaths of five other patients at the hospital took place in 2009.

A jury ruled that drugs prescribed by Dr Barton contributed to the deaths.