

# Medication contributed to pensioner's death, coroner rules

A CORONER has ruled that medication given to an elderly patient at a Hampshire hospital contributed "more than insignificantly" to her death.

David Horsley said that pain relief drugs were a factor in the death of Gladys Richards at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in August 1998.

She had gone there to recuperate following a hip operation after she had a fall.

The 91-year-old then suffered a haematoma, and Mrs Richards, who had been living at a nursing home in Lee-on-



■ Gosport War Memorial Hospital.



■ Gladys Richards.

the-Solent, was given diamorphine administered through a syringe driver. She died four days later on August 21, 1998.

Mrs Richards' family had accused the hospital of "condemning" her to death.

Mr Horsley, coroner for Portsmouth and South East Hampshire, gave a narrative verdict.

He said: "Factors contributing more than insignificantly to her death due to bronchop-

neumonia were: accidental falls which she sustained at Glen Heathers Nursing Home in Lee-on-the-Solent on July 29, 1998, and at Gosport War Memorial Hospital on August 13, 1998; procedures undertaken at Haslar Hospital, Gosport, to treat the injuries she suffered as a result of those falls; her immobility subsequent to those procedures; medication administered to her at Gosport War Memorial Hospital for the control of her pain and agitation; her old age, frailty and end-stage dementia."