

**IN THE SURREY CORONER’S COURT**

**BEFORE HM CORONER FOR SURREY, MR RICHARD TRAVERS**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE GUILDFORD PUB BOMBINGS 1974**

**AND IN THE MATTER OF THE INQUESTS TOUCHING AND CONCERNING THE DEATHS OF:**

**(1) MR PAUL CRAIG (DECEASED)**

**(2) GUARDSMAN WILLIAM FORSYTH (DECEASED)**

**(3) PRIVATE ANN HAMILTON (DECEASED)**

**(4) GUARDSMAN JOHN HUNTER (DECEASED)**

**(5) PRIVATE CAROLINE SLATER (DECEASED)**

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**JUNIOR COUNSEL NOTE OF PRE-INQUEST REVIEW**

**20<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

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**1. Abbreviations**

1.1 The following abbreviations may be used herein:

“CSR”	Current Situation Report
“CTI”	Leading counsel to the inquests, Oliver Sanders QC
“HMC”	HM Coroner for Surrey, Mr Richard Travers
“IP”	Interested Person
“MOD”	Ministry of Defence
“MPS”	Metropolitan Police Service

## **2. Attendance**

- 2.1 The hearing proceeded with HMC sitting in court, and other participants attending remotely.
- 2.2 HMC began the Pre-Inquest Review by welcoming participants and inviting those attending remotely to introduce themselves to the court. In attendance was:
  - 2.2.1 Wendy Hutchinson, sister of Private Caroline Slater (Deceased);
  - 2.2.2 Fiona Barton QC, leading counsel for Surrey Police;
  - 2.2.3 James Berry, counsel for the Metropolitan Police Service;
  - 2.2.4 Edward Pleeth, counsel for the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office;
  - 2.2.5 Oliver Sanders QC and Matthew Flinn, respectively leading and junior counsel to the inquests.
- 2.3 Although not an IP, Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust (“the Trust”) was represented by Emma Galland from Hill Dickinson, in light of recent correspondence between the Trust and HMC. Members of the press from the BBC and the Press Association were also in attendance.

## **3. Summary note of hearing**

- 3.1. HMC invited CTI to address the court on developments in the investigation.
- 3.2. CTI summarised progress since the last Pre-Inquest Review of 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 by reference to various IPs and entities engaging with the investigation process:
  - 3.2.1. Surrey Police:

- a) CTI noted that junior counsel to the inquest had met with Surrey Police representatives on 31<sup>st</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020, and that a further meeting was to take place immediately after the Pre-Inquest Review.
- b) Surrey Police were aiming to provide HMC's counsel team with a first tranche of material in the week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The tranche consisted of 134 witness statements, and an additional schedule summarising the contents of 712 statements (including the previously-mentioned 134 statements).
- c) The documents were to be reviewed by the counsel team in the first instance, and CTI noted that the schedule would assist them in identifying documents which did not require further follow-up for the purposes of the inquests.
- d) CTI confirmed that once the tranche was received, the counsel team would be able to begin its work in earnest, whilst Surrey Police would continue with their work in processing the documentation they had gathered, with a view to providing HMC with further statements, exhibits and messages in future tranches.
- e) CTI expressed the gratitude of HMC and the counsel team that Surrey Police had been able to continue their work despite the restrictions and challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that lockdown restrictions had been imposed from around one month after the previous Pre-Inquest Review of 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

### 3.2.2. Metropolitan Police Service:

- a) CTI noted that MPS had provided to HMC a disclosure report dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020. In brief summary, the headline points were that the searches

and review initiated by the MPS were now complete, and that everything which it had identified as potentially relevant to HMC's enquiries was now in the possession of Surrey Police. It was confirmed that a lot of material had been duplicative in any event.

- b) There had been some correspondence regarding the need to contact a potential MPS witness, DS Lewis. CTI confirmed that it was not the view of the counsel team that he needed to be asked to provide additional information at this time.

#### 3.2.3. Ministry of Defence:

- a) The MOD was continuing to engage with Surrey Police regarding document searches and disclosure. CTI noted that there had recently been correspondence with MOD following up on some scientists who had worked for or with MOD around the time of the bombings (to establish whether they are alive and traceable), and those enquiries were being pursued by the Defence Inquests Unit.

#### 3.2.4. Other participants:

- a) The Home Office, whilst not an IP and not seeking that status, had recently instructed the Government Legal Department to facilitate work with HMC in respect of these inquests (the Home Office had been liaising with HMC as custodians of the Sir John May Inquiry archive). It had written a letter to HMC dated 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 confirming its intention to provide archive documents requested by HMC (as a result of the review carried out by junior counsel) but that there was some delay due to lockdown.

- b) On 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 HMC circulated directions to South East Coast Ambulance Service seeking confirmation about documentation they may hold relevant to the investigation. On 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 they replied confirming that they did not have any health records dating back to 1974. CTI indicated that the counsel team would follow up on that correspondence to establish whether or not any other categories of documentation may still exist.
- c) The same directions had been sent to Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust. It was suggested that Ms Galland, who was in attendance for the Trust, could provide an update.

3.3. Finally, CTI noted that KRW Law, which had been assisting the family of Private Ann Hamilton (Deceased) and sent a representative and/or written submissions to previous Pre-Inquest Review hearings, had confirmed that it would not be participating in the present hearing due to lack of legal aid funding.

3.4. Pursuant to CTI's indication, HMC invited Ms Galland to provide an update:

3.4.1. Ms Galland confirmed that Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust had initiated enquiries into the existence of documentation relevant to HMC's investigation.

3.4.2. It was felt unlikely that any relevant medical records were still in existence, although some records for an individual with a name similar to Caroline Slater (Deceased) had been identified. They had been recalled from storage in order to establish their relevance.

3.4.3. Ms Galland confirmed that enquiries had been initiated in respect of all potentially relevant records (not just medical records) but it was not possible at the present time to give an indication of whether any other documentation might exist.

- 3.4.4. It was confirmed that the Trust was not seeking IP status at the present time.
- 3.5. HMC then invited submissions from representatives of any other IPs who wished to address the court:
- 3.5.1. Mr Pleeth confirmed that the MOD was continuing to work with Surrey Police and anticipated being able to provide a more detailed written update in advance of the next Pre-Inquest Review. He noted that, further to correspondence with CTI, MOD had initiated tracing enquiries in respect of four individuals and would keep the court updated. In respect of the Home Office, he confirmed that provision of the requested documents from the Sir John May Inquiry archive would be facilitated as lockdown restrictions eased.
- 3.5.2. Mr Berry for MPS confirmed that it had now secured all potentially relevant documents for the purposes of the inquests and the enquiries being undertaken by Surrey Police. The material had been scheduled, and the schedules had been shared with Surrey Police for de-duplication purposes. From that process, only a small number of documents were identified as being in the possession of MPS but not Surrey police, and that residual category of material was then provided to Surrey Police. Mr Berry confirmed that all documentation located by MPS was also retained by MPS, although he suggested that it be left to Surrey Police to provide all the material to HMC together, again to avoid duplication. HMC endorsed that proposal as being a more organised and efficient approach. Mr Berry sought to emphasise, however, that if HMC ever had any concerns about receiving full disclosure of MPS material, he could approach MPS directly to request it.
- 3.5.3. Ms Barton QC for Surrey Police:
- a) The situation as to collation and processing of documents was as set out in the monthly CSRs, which were provided to HMC by Surrey Police

and then circulated by the court. The team at Surrey Police had been continuing its work despite the imposition of lockdown restrictions.

- b) She noted that Surrey Police had been liaising closely with MPS and the MOD, and endorsed the suggestion that all documentation first be provided to Surrey Police by those other bodies, and then provided by Surrey Police to HMC. This was because it enabled a more efficient de-duplication exercise to take place, and to date this method had meant that only a very small number of additional documents had needed to be provided to Surrey Police by the MPS (the remaining documentation being duplicates).
- c) As mentioned by CTI, the first tranche of material processed by Surrey Police (134 witness statements) was going to be provided to HMC in the week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020, along with a schedule. It was hoped that the schedule, in which over 700 witness statements had been comprehensively summarised, would prove particularly useful. It should enable the identification of material which is (a) not relevant and/or (b) does not need to be worked on further from the perspective of HMC/CTI.
- d) Surrey Police would then continue their work, focussing on preparing a second tranche of material. This second tranche would be looking at emergency services, transport to hospital, post-mortem examinations, scene and mortuary photographs, and continuity statements. It was anticipated that this next tranche would be ready by the end of August.
- e) It was not possible to say how many tranches there would be beyond that. There would be at least three, but it was impossible to be more certain at the present time.

- 3.6. HMC expressed his thanks for the work that had been done despite the lockdown. It was positive that the first tranche of material was about to reach CTI for review, as it was a significant step towards onwards disclosure of the material to other IPs. He stated that the timeline indicated by Ms Barton for provision of tranche two did not appear to be unreasonable.
- 3.7. HMC indicated that he would fix another Pre-Inquest Review for the first half of September, following the provision of the second tranche of material by Surrey Police.

*[A further Pre-Inquest Review has been provisionally scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020, although it is noted that as matters stand, counsel for MPS is not available on that date, and it will be kept under review.]*

**MATTHEW FLINN**  
**5<sup>th</sup> June 2020**