

**IN THE SURREY CORONER’S COURT
BEFORE HM SENIOR 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)**

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 I shall now set out the findings of fact and conclusions I have reached at the end of the resumed inquests into the deaths of the five young people killed by the Provisional IRA in the Guildford Pub Bombings of Saturday 5th October 1974. As is well known, two Guildford pubs were attacked that night, first, the Horse and Groom on North Street and, secondly, the nearby Seven Stars on Swan Lane. Both were widely known as “army pubs” and were targeted as such. The deceased were all in the Horse and Groom when the first bomb exploded; thankfully, there were no fatalities at the Seven Stars as it had been evacuated by the time of the second explosion a short while later.
- 1.2 Surrey Police’s criminal investigation took primacy immediately after the bombings and these inquests were opened and adjourned on Monday 7th October 1974 by the (then) Coroner for Surrey, Lieutenant Colonel Murdoch McEwan. Following the convictions of “the Guildford Four” for murder and conspiracy on 22nd October 1975, Colonel McEwan decided that it was unnecessary to resume the inquests and certified the result of the criminal proceedings to the Registrar of Deaths under section 20 of the Coroners (Amendment) Act 1926.
- 1.3 As is also well known, the Guildford Four were acquitted on appeal and although the subsequent quashing of those convictions on 19th October 1989, some 14 years after their initial convictions, undermined the basis for Colonel McEwan’s decision, this did not automatically revive the inquests and, as it happened, no-one sought their resumption. The matter rested there until I received a letter dated 31st October 2017 sent on behalf of Ann McKernan, the sister of one of the Guildford Four, and also on behalf of Yvonne Tagg, a former soldier injured in the bombings. This letter contained an application to resume the inquests, which, following the death of Ms McKernan, was later supported by Cassandra Hamilton, a sister of one of the five deceased, Private Ann Hamilton.
- 1.4 After hearing legal argument and for reasons set out in a ruling dated 31st January 2019, I allowed the application and resumed the inquests under paragraph 8 of Schedule 1 to the Coroners and Justice Act 2009. I later recognised the following as interested persons: Joyce Clowes and Patricia Garrard (sisters of Mr Paul Craig); Thomas Forsyth and Marion

Rennie (siblings of Guardsman William Forsyth); Cassandra Hamilton (sister of Private Ann Hamilton); Maureen O'Neill and Diane Reid (sisters of Guardsman John Hunter); Wendy Hutchinson and James Slater (siblings of Private Caroline Slater); Surrey Police; the Metropolitan Police Service ("MPS"); and the Ministry of Defence ("MOD").

1.5 As I have made clear throughout, sections 5 and 10 of and Schedule 1 to the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 have precluded any investigation of the identities of the Provisional IRA terrorists responsible for the bombing. Taking that into account, I have treated the following as within the scope of these inquests:

- (1) who the deceased were;
- (2) the political and historical context for, and the objectives and methods of, the Provisional IRA bombing campaign in England from 1973 to 1975;
- (3) the (former) Horse and Groom public house where the fatal explosion occurred and events there on the evening of 5th October 1974;
- (4) the nature of the bomb, its location and the nature, timing and effects of its explosion;
- (5) the aftermath of the explosion, including the emergency response, attempts to rescue and treat the deceased, when, where and how each of them died and the medical causes of their deaths;
- (6) whether the bombings or the deaths were foreseeable or preventable and any security systems, precautions or training in place to protect the military personnel based around Guildford from the threat posed by the Provisional IRA.

1.6 Before turning to the evidence and my findings and conclusions, it is right that I should acknowledge the considerable assistance provided to me by a number of public bodies.

1.7 First and foremost, I would like to express my immense gratitude to Surrey Police for the time and resources spent by its officers and legal team on the collation and disclosure of the vast amount of historic investigation-related material which it holds. This involved searching not only its own archives, databases and systems, but also liaising with other

organisations. In the event, Surrey Police made more than 10,000 documents available to the inquests, responded to countless questions and provided regular and timely updates, assistance with witness-tracing enquiries and support for its own witnesses. In addition to this, I was grateful for the attendance and assistance at the inquest hearings of Fiona Barton QC and Robert Cohen who represented Surrey Police.

- 1.8 The MPS, MOD and Home Office also provided invaluable assistance in searching for and disclosing potentially relevant materials in their possession and in liaising directly with Surrey Police to avoid duplication. Furthermore, the MOD kindly arranged for one of its scientists to give expert evidence about the explosives used and its Defence Inquests Unit supported its witnesses at the hearings, including by arranging and hosting video links for two who were unable to travel from remote locations. I was also grateful for the assistance at the hearings of Edward Pleeth of counsel acting on behalf of MOD and of James Berry of counsel acting on behalf of the MPS.
- 1.9 In addition, I am grateful to the Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust, the South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and their legal teams. Although these Trusts were not formally recognised as interested persons, they nevertheless assisted with the collection of evidence and with witness tracing and liaison.
- 1.10 Finally, I was greatly assisted by counsel to the inquests, Oliver Sanders QC and Matthew Flinn and, more recently, Alice Kuzmenko, who (well supported by one of my Senior Coroner's Officers, Heather Nin) worked on preparations for the hearings and questioned the witnesses on my behalf.
- 1.11 Despite the lapse of time since the bombings, I heard a considerable volume of evidence over 13 consecutive days from 20th June 2022 to 6th July 2022, including live oral evidence from two expert witnesses and 35 witnesses of fact and written evidence from a further 55 witnesses which I admitted under rule 23 of the Coroners (Inquests) Rules 2013.
- 1.12 For reasons relating to their health or location, eight of the live witnesses gave evidence by video link under rule 17 of the Coroners (Inquests) Rules 2013. The written evidence admitted under rule 23 came from individuals who have died, who could not be traced or who were unable to give live evidence for health reasons and from one individual who was

unwilling to assist and could not be compelled to do so because she lives outside the jurisdiction. I have also taken account of plans, maps and photographs exhibited by or shown to various witnesses and a number of sensitive photographs from the night of the bombing which were not displayed in open court.

- 1.13 The Guildford Pub Bombings took place almost half a century ago and were traumatic and shocking for those involved; a point that was made very clear to me when those who were able to do so, gave live evidence before me. It was both inevitable and understandable that some of those who gave live evidence could not remember matters of detail and a handful said they had actively tried to shut out and forget what happened. However, these difficulties were offset by the fact that the vast majority of live witnesses made police statements at the time and told me that I could rely on their more detailed contents as having been provided truthfully and in good faith.
- 1.14 I am more than satisfied that I heard sufficient reliable evidence to enable me to ascertain the crucial facts I have been required to investigate as to: who the deceased were; when, where and how they came by their deaths; and the registrable particulars required under the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953. I have arrived at my findings and conclusions on the balance of probabilities and I hope that they will serve to fill the important gap in the historical record of Surrey, which I mentioned at the start of these hearings.
- 1.15 Unfortunately, the families of the deceased were unable to secure public funding to allow their participation in these inquests through legal representation. My counsel and I have endeavoured to make up for this lacuna, but I would again wish to make clear that it is a matter of regret that legal aid is not more readily available for families in complex cases such as this, whether or not they engage the enhanced investigative obligations of the State under article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights. These inquests involved the disclosure to the interested persons of more than 800 documents, they heard evidence from 80 witnesses over 13 hearing days and related to events which took place almost 48 years ago. The surviving, and now elderly, relatives of those who died could not realistically be expected to have participated without legal representation, which could and should have been provided. This is particularly poignant when one considers that the reason the deceased were targeted was because of their membership of and connections with the armed forces.

2. Guildford in 1974

- 2.1 In order to put matters in context, I need to start with some words about Guildford at the time of the bombings. In some ways, the town was very different in October 1974: “The Exorcist” and “The Great Gatsby” were on at the local cinemas; flared trousers were everywhere; some of the town centre pubs were still frequented by Teddy Boys; and one police witness recollected ongoing problems with Mods and Rockers. In other ways, things were very much the same, including the fact that young people flocked to the town centre on Saturday nights to socialise in its busy pubs, bars and restaurants.
- 2.2 In 1974, there were numerous pubs within a few minutes walk of each other in, around and between North Street and the High Street. These included not only the Horse and Groom and the Seven Stars, where the bombs went off, but also the Carpenter’s Arms, the Greyhound, the Little White Lion, the Three Pigeons, the Spread Eagle and the Surrey Arms.
- 2.3 From the evidence I heard, it was quite clear that some of Guildford’s pubs were well-known for being “army pubs”, that is to say, popular with military personnel based nearby. The Horse and Groom, Seven Stars and Three Pigeons all fell into this category, with the Horse and Groom known and popular for its cheap beer and the Seven Stars popular for its disco.
- 2.4 In this regard, there were a quite a number of military bases within striking distance of Guildford in 1974 including, in particular, the Headquarters of the Women’s Royal Army Corps or “WRAC” at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Stoughton (“QEB”) and the Guards Depot at Pirbright. Both were close to Guildford: Stoughton is on its outskirts, two miles from the town centre, and Pirbright is six or seven miles away. As I will explain shortly, four of the deceased were new recruits to the WRAC and Scots Guards and were no more than three or four weeks into their basic training at QEB and Pirbright.
- 2.5 At this point, it is important to note that, first, the WRAC was the parent unit for almost every female member of the army and all its non-commissioned recruits undertook their basic training at QEB and, secondly, the Guards Depot provided basic training to new recruits to various army units, including, the Scots Guards, the Welsh Guards, the Irish Guards and the Royal Household Cavalry. This combination of factors made Guildford

the place to go for young recruits wishing to socialise with their counterparts, including those of the opposite sex, and helps to explain why the town centre and some of its pubs were so popular with young soldiers.

2.6 In order to establish the timings of various critical events, it is helpful to know that the following were all less than a mile from the Horse and Groom: the Casualty Department at the Royal Surrey County Hospital or “RSCH”, then on Farnham Road; the Guildford Ambulance Station, then on the corner of Woodbridge Road and Leas Road; and the Guildford Fire Station at the Stoke Crossroads, on the same site as the current Fire Station. As a result, ambulances and fire engines were in attendance at the Horse and Groom within a very few minutes of the first explosion. By this point, a number of Surrey Police officers and special constables were already on the scene - they had been patrolling North Street and the surrounding area and arrived within seconds of the blast.

2.7 Indeed, it was notable that additional police foot and vehicle patrols had been deployed into the town centre after a particularly large influx of military personnel was registered at Guildford Police Station. From the evidence I heard, it appeared that one reason for this influx was the issuing of a general “pass” allowing the new recruits at QEB and Pirbright to leave camp for the evening. For at least some of these recruits, this was the first such pass they had received since commencing their basic training in mid-September and it was their first Saturday night out in Guildford.

3. Who were the deceased?

3.1 I have already mentioned that four of the five deceased were military personnel, but it is also important to emphasise that they were all very new recruits who were just weeks into their basic training, they were off-duty and, more importantly, they were teenagers. None of them was close to being a seasoned soldier or any kind of “military target”. The same goes for the fifth victim, Paul Craig, a 21 year old civilian who was in the Horse and Groom to celebrate the birthday of a close friend who was another recruit and his own 22nd birthday the following day. In the circumstances, rather than use their surnames, titles or ranks, I think it more appropriate to refer to all five by their first names. Consequently, I shall refer to them as: Paul, Billy, Ann, John and Caroline.

3.2 I heard moving pen portrait evidence about all five:

(1) Paul Craig

Paul's older sister, Patricia Garrard, read out a statement about her younger brother. He was born on 6th October 1952 in the family home in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire. He attended Saffron Green Primary School and Hillside Secondary Modern School in Borehamwood. He then qualified as a scenic plasterer at what later became the EMI Film Studios. This is the job he held and enjoyed until the time of his death. Mrs Garrard described Paul as the life and soul of his family and friends, an involved uncle to her children and his mother's main source of support, both socially and financially.

(2) William McKelvie Forsyth

I then heard a statement from Billy's older brother, Thomas Forsyth. Billy was born on 6th August 1956 in Barrhead, Renfrewshire and was 18 when he died. He went to the Old Cross Arthurlie Primary School, later the Springhill Primary School, and then on to Barrhead High Secondary School. He was a popular boy and played for the school football team. After leaving school, Billy worked as a store boy and then at the local Armitage Shanks Factory, before enlisting with the Scots Guards on 21st August 1974, which he did together with his close friend, John Hunter. For his basic training, which began on 11th September 1974, Billy was posted to Caterham Company at the Guards Depot in Pirbright. His parents were never the same again after his death and his siblings continue to cherish their memories of their younger brother.

(3) Ann Ray Higgins Murray Hamilton

Ann was born on 18th March 1955 in Crewe, Cheshire and was 19 when she died. There were two statements read for Ann. One was collated by my officer, Mrs Nin. This revealed that, save for a few months, Ann lived in the family home in Crewe up until her enlistment. She showed an interest in the WRAC whilst she was at school. After attaining a Royal Hygiene and Health Certificate, Ann held a series of jobs - as a breakfast cook, waitress, shop assistant and then assistant manageress at a bakery. Meanwhile she kept up her hobbies of football and ballroom dancing. She then enlisted with the WRAC as a Private on 4th September 1974 and commenced basic training at QEB on 16th September 1974 as a member of "3

Platoon". The second statement was provided by Ann's sister, Cassandra Hamilton, who was only two years old when Ann died. Despite this, Ms Hamilton has fond memories of being read to by Ann, and for years after her death she heard stories of Ann's happy and bubbly nature, and of her love for life.

(4) John Crawford Hunter

I then heard a statement about John, to which his sisters Maureen O'Neill and Diane Reid had contributed. John was born on 1st April 1957 in Barrhead, East Renfrewshire and died aged 17½. He lived on the same street as his former classmate Billy Forsyth, and the two were inseparable. John was the captain of the school football team and, after leaving school, he worked as a carpet fitter and then at the Armitage Shanks Factory. John and Billy enlisted with the Scots Guards together and began their basic training in Caterham Company together and on the same dates. After his death, John's parents endured years of agony over his suffering, and the family never recovered from their loss.

(5) Caroline Jean Slater

Lastly, I heard a statement collated by Mrs Nin in relation to Caroline, who was born on 18th June 1956 in Birmingham before moving with her family to Cannock in Staffordshire. There she attended school, and later went to Hightown Secondary Modern School in Hednesford. Caroline held several jobs after school – as a shop assistant at a boutique and a machinist at a clothing factory. Whilst working there, Caroline applied to join the WRAC. She enlisted on 28th August 1974 and began her basic training at QEB on 16th September 1974 also in 3 Platoon. On the day of her death, Caroline went shopping to buy clothes for her sister's baby, but her tragic death meant that she was never able to give them to her nephew. Caroline was 18 when she died.

4. The Provisional IRA bombing campaign in England 1973-1975

4.1 As already mentioned, I have not investigated the identities of the individuals responsible for the Guildford Pub Bombings, but there has never been any real doubt that the attacks were the work of the Provisional IRA.

4.2 In order to set the scene at the start of the inquest hearings, I admitted into evidence under rule 24 of the Coroners (Inquests) Rules 2013 the following finding of Sir John May's *Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Convictions Arising out of the Bomb Attacks in Guildford and Woolwich in 1974* (Final Report dated 30th June 1993 (HC44), paragraph 14.1):

The Guildford Pub Bombings were the first in a new wave of Provisional IRA attacks in England.

4.3 None of the interested persons objected to the admission of this finding, I did not hear and have not seen any contradictory evidence and it was endorsed by the independent expert historian appointed by me to give live evidence at the hearings, Thomas Hennessey, Professor of Modern British and Irish History at Canterbury Christchurch University.

4.4 Professor Hennessey prepared a report dated 15th June 2022 on the political and historical background to the Northern Ireland Troubles and, in particular, the Provisional IRA bombing campaign in England from August 1973 to January 1975. His report included a lengthy chronology of attacks in London and the South East together with more notable attacks elsewhere in England during this period. (With one possible and minor exception, there were no attacks in Scotland or Wales, although there were attacks against armed forces bases in Germany.) In his oral evidence on 20th June 2022, Professor Hennessey agreed that there was a lull in the mainland bombing campaign around September 1974 and that the Guildford Pub Bombings were the first in a new wave.

4.5 Professor Hennessey surveyed the political and historical background to the Northern Ireland Troubles including: the unification of the Kingdoms of England (subsequently Great Britain) and Ireland by the Acts of Union of 1800; the Easter Rising of 1916 and Irish War of Independence of 1919-1921; and the subsequent partition of the island of Ireland under the Government of Ireland Act 1920 and Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.

- 4.6 Partition resulted in the creation of two constitutional entities: in the south, a majority Catholic state in the form of the Irish Free State within the Commonwealth and, from 1948, the independent Republic of Ireland; and, in the north, the majority Protestant province of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. Professor Hennessey explained that Northern Ireland comprised six of the nine counties of Ulster (selected to ensure a permanent Protestant unionist majority), it was governed by the Ulster Unionist Party from 1921-1972 and was “inherently unstable” by reason of its significant Catholic nationalist minority who were mostly in favour of Irish independence.
- 4.7 This was the backdrop to the Northern Ireland Troubles whose early stages unfolded as follows: in 1968, Catholic nationalist demonstrations about discrimination and civil rights led to Protestant unionist counter-demonstrations which led to communal violence and a police crack-down; according to Professor Hennessey, the Troubles are generally considered to have begun on 5th October 1968 when the Royal Ulster Constabulary violently dispersed a largely Catholic Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association demonstration in Derry / Londonderry; in 1969, British troops were deployed to Northern Ireland to restore law and order and to protect the Catholic minority; by early 1970, the principal republican paramilitary group - the IRA / Sinn Féin - had split into “Provisional” and “Official” factions and the more militant Provisional IRA commenced a campaign of paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland; in 1972, this led to almost 500 fatalities, the Official IRA declared a permanent ceasefire and the United Kingdom government suspended devolved “home rule” from Stormont and imposed “direct rule” from Westminster.
- 4.8 Pausing there, it is important for present purposes to understand the interconnected ideology, objectives and methods of the Provisional IRA as explained by Professor Hennessey. In short, long-standing IRA doctrine dating back to 1938 rejected the authority of the United Kingdom and Irish governments and held that the IRA Army Council was the only legitimate government across the whole of the island of Ireland. The Provisional IRA adopted this doctrine or “theology” and saw itself as entitled to rule the island of Ireland and to use “force of arms” or “armed struggle” to compel the withdrawal of British troops and the British state. This was the strategic political objective of its campaign of

paramilitary violence and Professor Hennessey explained that this evolved and escalated over time in the hope that it would eventually reach a point where it became effective.

4.9 As a further step in this escalation, the Provisional IRA Army Council authorised paramilitary activity on the Great Britain mainland in early 1973 and the first attacks took place on 8th March 1973 when car bombs exploded in London at the Old Bailey and in Whitehall. These attacks were timed to coincide with the day of a border poll in Northern Ireland on whether the province should remain within the United Kingdom. There was then a lull in activity - because the original terrorists responsible for the March attack were apprehended - and the campaign resumed in earnest in August 1973 and continued until a temporary ceasefire in early 1975.

4.10 It is unnecessary for me to rehearse Professor Hennessey's full account of this campaign which he described as "a sustained period of terrorist activity across England as a whole". For present purposes, it is sufficient to note the following salient points:

- (1) the campaign had different waves, peaks and troughs, but its general trend was one of escalation and intensification and of a progressive increase in the sophistication of the Provisional IRA's intelligence-gathering and reconnaissance, the size of the devices it used and the seriousness of the damage and injuries they caused;
- (2) the campaign targeted individuals and premises connected with commercial and economic activity, such as department stores and cinemas, and public services such as the public transport system, government, police, politics, the judiciary and the military;
- (3) the Provisional IRA rarely gave pre-attack warnings and never did so in connection with attacks against "military targets" and, furthermore, it took the view that families, friends and associates of on and off-duty military personnel were deemed to be on notice that they were also considered collateral targets and might be attacked without warning;
- (4) after August 1973, post-attack claims of responsibility by the Provisional IRA were also rare, save that it made occasional public statements in order to try and explain or justify attacks which had caused particular public outrage or revulsion;

- (5) so far as military targets, it is notable that the Provisional IRA launched an “opportunistic” dynamite attack against a Royal Household Cavalry camp at Pirbright on 17th September 1973 (without causing any injuries) and was later responsible for the much more serious attack against a coach carrying military personnel and their families on the M62 on 4th February 1974 (killing 12, including a mother and father and their two children, and injuring 38 more);
- (6) the ultimate aim was to create public alarm and therefore political pressure and, consistently with this, the Provisional IRA sought to be as unpredictable as possible and to keep the authorities and public guessing as to where its next attack might be;
- (7) after the above-mentioned lull in September 1974, the renewed wave of attacks that started with the Guildford Pub Bombings involved time-bombs, throw-bombs and shootings and marked an increase in the intensity of the campaign and the numbers of fatalities and casualties;
- (8) “army pubs” in Guildford would have been seen as attractive “soft targets” because they were frequented by large numbers of younger, new recruits from nearby bases who would inevitably be relaxed and off their guard, although Professor Hennessey was unable to say whether the higher number of female army personnel present in the area - by reason of the WRAC headquarters being at QEB - would have been a further source of attraction;
- (9) while the Guildford Pub Bombings took place on the 6th anniversary of the start of the Troubles, the bombings have not previously been connected with this anniversary, Professor Hennessey was not aware of any such connection and he was unable to say that 5th October was likely to have been specifically selected or that it should have been recognised as a high-risk date (albeit that the commemoration of significant dates is a feature of Northern Ireland political culture and attacks were sometimes planned to coincide with such dates);
- (10) I also heard evidence that the bombings took place immediately before the general election on 10th October 1974 and, while Professor Hennessey was not specifically

asked about the possible significance of this, I have no reason to think this was relevant or made an attack more likely or foreseeable.

5. The Horse and Groom Public House

- 5.1 The Horse and Groom was a Courage Brewery pub located at the eastern end of North Street on its upper and northern side, opposite the Old Cloth Hall and the public library. Viewing the front of the pub from the pavement, with the road behind, there was a covered passage or car port adjacent to its left side or western side wall - this had a sign above indicating that it led to a (Quaker) "Friends Meeting House" behind the pub. There were also two bus shelters outside the pub: one further west along North Street a few metres beyond the covered passage; and another immediately in front of the pub to the right of its front entrance.
- 5.2 In keeping with its name, the pub's interior décor had a loose equestrian theme with the ground floor public area sub-divided by a number of floor-to-ceiling partitions resembling the sides of horse stalls in a traditional stable block. These partitions had tongue and groove lower halves and metal railings above.
- 5.3 On entering the pub through the front door, there were two small lengths of partition on either side and, beyond these, the main saloon was set out as follows:
- (1) on the immediate right - there was a fruit machine and then a small alcove or annexe area leading to the gents' lavatories and with windows looking out onto North Street - I shall refer to this area as "the snug";
 - (2) on the immediate left - there was a C shaped alcove with windows looking out onto North Street and with its three main sides formed by the front and left-hand or western side walls of the pub and a length of partition of the kind just described running perpendicular from the side wall back into the saloon parallel with the front wall - I shall refer to this area as "the first alcove";
 - (3) straight ahead and to the right - there was an L shaped drinks bar, with a short hatched length running laterally from its corner towards the snug and a much longer length running longitudinally ahead from south to north and up to the rear wall of the pub;

- (4) straight ahead and to the left, beyond the first alcove and opposite the main length of the bar - there was a larger, windowless C shaped alcove formed of, first, the reverse side of the partition already mentioned, secondly, the left-hand or western side wall of the pub and, thirdly, an internal wall running perpendicular from that side wall back into the saloon parallel with the front wall - I shall refer to this area as “the main alcove”;
- (5) on the far left, beyond and behind the main alcove - there were doors leading to the ladies’ lavatories and some stairs, which led down into the basement cellar.

5.4 The bomb exploded in the main alcove and it is important to understand the construction and layout of this area in a little more detail:

- (1) the original pub building had been extended and reinforced with columns and beams at various points in its history: the first alcove sat inside a single-storey front extension underneath a flat-roof and railed balcony; and the western-most edge of the main alcove partly occupied a further brick extension to the left-hand side wall of the pub - adjacent to the covered passage already mentioned;
- (2) although not much more than a metre deep, this side-extension encroached west into and so narrowed the covered passage and had a carpeted concrete floor incorporating two man-hole covers allowing access to the pub’s drains;
- (3) save for the narrow strip of the main alcove housed within the side-extension, the remainder of its floor was constructed of carpeted wooden floor boards above the basement cellar;
- (4) running from left to right and west to east, the upper internal wall of the main alcove comprised, on the left, a short strip of wall, in the middle, a chimney breast with a fireplace and gas fire and, on the right, another strip of wall with a jukebox in front - the ladies’ lavatories were behind this wall.

5.5 There were tables, chairs and stools throughout the alcoves and the snug and there were also two built-in bench seats around the sides of both alcoves: a two-sided L shaped bench seat running clockwise along and around the front (or south) and left-hand (or western)

walls of the first alcove; and a three-sided C shaped bench seat running counter-clockwise around the main alcove from the chimney breast, towards and then down the left-hand (or western) wall of the side-extension and then back along the stable-style partition dividing the two alcoves.

5.6 I find that both alcove bench seats were constructed of wood and upholstered with vinyl-covered foam plastic to the seats and seat-backs and that underneath the seats, they were open and had space down to the floor.

5.7 I heard written evidence from a James Norman Tinney who, in 1974, had been a part-time barman at the Horse and Groom. His evidence was that the two alcoves were particularly popular with military personnel and the snug was more commonly occupied by civilian regulars.

5.8 I also heard written evidence from Mr Tinney and from the pub's regular cleaner, Edna Legg, that there was nothing under the bench seats when Ms Legg cleaned the pub on the morning of Saturday 5th October 1974 or when Mr Tinney swept under the bench seats again when the pub closed after lunch at 2.30pm. On the strength of this evidence, I find that the bomb was not yet in place that afternoon and was planted some time after it reopened at 5.30pm. The pub's evening opening time was confirmed in statements from the relief landlord and landlady, Alan and Heather Bristow, and other witnesses, although a handful of witnesses thought (mistakenly in my view) that it reopened for the evening at 6.30pm.

6. The events of Saturday 5th October 1974

6.1 I heard some evidence that the weekend of the bombing was significant for Ann and Caroline's intake of WRAC recruits because it was the third weekend of their basic training and this was designated as the first weekend they were allowed free time away from QEB. That said, I also heard evidence that some members of 3 Platoon had already been into Guildford town centre on a number of occasions, including to visit the Horse and Groom and Seven Stars. Ann's friend Janet Oliver (now Janet Fleming) gave live evidence and recalled the two of them visiting both pubs on the evening of Friday 4th October 1974, albeit that this might have been treated as part of the "third weekend".

- 6.2 According to written evidence I heard, Ann and Caroline went shopping in Guildford during the day on Saturday 5th October 1974 and bought train tickets for the following weekend, when it appears that 3 Platoon were to be given an exeat allowing them to travel home to visit their families. That evening, Ann and Caroline went back into town by taxi together with Janet Oliver and Isabella Price; they arrived at the Horse and Groom at about 8.00pm.
- 6.3 Ann had dark hair and was wearing a blue woollen dress, pink underwear, brown tights, and two rings. Caroline had fairer hair and was wearing a grey denim jacket, black woollen sweater, red skirt and brown check pants with brown tights.
- 6.4 At the pub, Ann, Caroline, Janet and Isabella joined a fellow 3 Platoon recruit, Carol Burns (later Wordsworth, now deceased), to celebrate her 19th birthday together with her parents, Robert and Eileen, and their family friend, Paul Craig. As I have already mentioned, it would have been Paul's 22nd birthday the following day and the evening was to be a joint celebration for him and Carol. Paul had driven Carol's parents from Borehamwood to QEB in his white Ford Cortina where they picked up Carol and another 3 Platoon recruit around 6.45pm. The other recruit was Sheila (or "Sammie") Parrotte (later Higham, now deceased). The group arrived at the Horse and Groom around 7.00pm and located themselves in the upper corner of the main alcove around a table to the left of the fireplace.
- 6.5 Paul had dark hair, a slightly heavier build than most of the young men from Pirbright and was wearing a navy blue suit, white shirt and blue tie, although he took this off later and put it in his pocket. He was also wearing pink underwear, brown socks and black platform shoes.
- 6.6 Billy and John travelled into Guildford from Pirbright by bus and then train together with a group of fellow Caterham Company recruits including James Cooper, Stephen Cooper, Alexander Findlay, Robert Noddle, Barry Rushton and Brian Scanlan. It appears from the evidence that this was the first time most of this group had been permitted to travel into Guildford for the evening and that they had heard which pubs to try on the Pirbright grapevine. Different members of the group tried the Seven Stars and Three Pigeons before meeting up in the Horse and Groom, and Billy and John arrived there around 7.45pm to 8.00pm.

- 6.7 Billy had short army-style fair hair and was dressed in a sports jacket, a white sweater, a white open neck shirt, white trousers and platform shoes. John had short army-style dark hair and was wearing a red, black and white check sports jacket, a black cardigan with red piping, a shirt and black trousers. Underneath his clothing, John had a large surgical plaster or dressing around his chest, apparently related to a back complaint.
- 6.8 By the time all five of the deceased and their companions were inside the Horse and Groom, it was busy and getting busier and the vast majority of the people there were young military personnel, including new recruits from QEB and Pirbright. All of the 3 Platoon and Caterham Company recruits just mentioned together with Paul and Mr and Mrs Burns were sitting or standing in the main alcove. Alan and Heather Bristow, barmaid Maureen O'Sullivan and barmen Peter Knee and James Tinney were busy serving drinks and collecting empty glasses and music was playing from the jukebox, including songs such as "Honey Honey", "When will I see you again?", "I shot the Sheriff" and "Jailhouse Rock".
- 6.9 The precise movements of those in the main alcove in the run up to the explosion are not important, save to note that Billy, John and Brian Scanlan spent some time chatting to Ann and to Isabella Price and, prior to 8.40pm, Ann and Caroline both separately made brief trips to and from the Seven Stars to check out the disco: Ann went with Isabella and Janet; and Caroline went with Sheila.
- 6.10 In the moments before the explosion, all five of the deceased made what proved to be fateful movements and changes of position and some of their friends unwittingly made corresponding moves away from danger: Paul swapped places with Carol Burns and she asked him the time; Ann and Caroline returned from the Seven Stars; Billy sat down between Caroline and Ann after a brief trip to the jukebox, the bar and then the lavatory; Billy and Caroline started chatting; Billy's favourite song - "Long Tall Glasses" by Leo Sayer - came on the jukebox; there was a loud bang and a bright flash and the lights went out.
- 6.11 At this point, there were approximately 120 people in the pub and each of the deceased and those with them were positioned around the main alcove as follows, starting from the fireplace at 12 o'clock and moving around the bench seat in an anticlockwise direction:

- (1) Carol Burns was on the bench seat nearest the fireplace and Paul was next to her on her right, they were facing towards the front of the pub;
- (2) Carol's mother, Eileen, was sitting to Paul's right in the upper corner of the alcove;
- (3) on the bench seat above the concrete floor of the side-extension, with their backs to the external west side wall and facing the bar were Robert Burns, then Caroline, then Billy, then Ann, there was then a space which had just been vacated by Brian Scanlan and Isabella Price and, beyond that space, in the lower corner of the alcove, was John;
- (4) sitting on the bench seat in front of the partition, with their backs to the first alcove and facing the fireplace were Alexander Findlay (to John's right) and James Cooper - Stephen Cooper had been sitting between these two shortly beforehand and was at that moment collecting an empty glass from the table in front of Paul and the Burns family so he could take it to the bar to get a drink; the bar having run out of glasses.

6.12 Having heard all the evidence, I find that the explosion occurred at approximately 8.50pm. In truth, the evidence to this effect was overwhelming. The contemporaneous Surrey Police Control Room log recorded the first incoming call at 8.50pm and this time was confirmed by the majority of the witnesses, give or take some minor discrepancies: Andrew (or Jeff) Saunders, a fireman at Guildford Fire Station, timed the incoming call at around 8.50pm as did William Edwards, an ambulance driver / attendant at Guildford Ambulance Station; William Denton, a pub regular, put the time at shortly after 8.40pm; John Howard, another regular, said he went into the gents' lavatories at 8.45pm and was still in there when the explosion took place; Sidney Pavey, a bus driver for Greenline coaches, was driving route 715 and said he turned into North Street at 8.53pm just before the explosion; Carol Burns had just asked Paul Craig the time and he had told her it was 8.55pm; and the police officers in the area all put the time at around 8.50pm.

6.13 To put the matter beyond any doubt, I heard oral evidence from Alexander Connor and Rowland Rehill, two soldiers from Bruneval Barracks in Aldershot who were in the (much less busy) Three Pigeons at the time of the blast. Both made police statements at the time

confirming that Mr Rehill had checked his watch at the time of the explosion - a habit from time spent in Northern Ireland - and noted the time out loud as 8.50pm exactly.

- 6.14 One witness sought to suggest the explosion occurred earlier in the evening. This was Charles King, albeit that he was not present in the town centre on the night of the bombing, did not see or hear the explosion, had no evidence to gainsay the generally accepted timing of 8.50pm and accepted that he might be wrong. Mr King's late son, Robert, was a journalist with the "Surrey Advertiser" in October 1974. On the night of the bombing, Robert was in the newspaper's offices nearby when the first bomb went off and he immediately attended the Horse and Groom and filed a report on the Press Association wires. Charles King recalls Robert telephoning him after doing all this and that this call came in 10 minutes before the television news at 9pm. This would not have been possible if the bomb had gone off at 8.50pm.
- 6.15 However, Robert and his Surrey Advertiser colleagues reported the time of the blast as 8.50pm - at the time and subsequently - and never sought to correct this. There was also no television news at 9pm that night: the "Radio Times" and "TV Times" listings magazines show that a party election broadcast on behalf of the Liberal Party was due to be shown at 9pm on BBC1, BBC2 and ITV and that the BBC and ITV news broadcasts were scheduled for 10pm and 10.10pm respectively. Some documentary evidence does refer to television and radio news flashes about the bombing that night, but I doubt any of these occurred at 9pm or would have been allowed to override an election broadcast mandated by Act of Parliament.
- 6.16 Given the overwhelming nature of the evidence pointing to 8.50pm as the time of the explosion, I find that Charles King is mistaken and that his son probably called him 10 minutes before the 10pm or 10.10pm news on either BBC1 or ITV. It may also be that Mr King's evident and avowed concerns about the case against one of the Guildford Four, Carole Richardson, influenced his recollection, albeit that an earlier blast time would not have strengthened the alibi evidence advanced on her behalf and extensively analysed by Sir John May in his report about the case.
- 6.17 The explosion itself and its immediate effects were violent, intense and devastating. Understandably, those witnesses who recalled the moment of the blast gave accounts

which varied as to matters of fine detail, but they all spoke of a loud bang and bright flash emanating from the main alcove, followed by darkness, dust, panic, chaos and confusion. A number of witnesses in the main alcove also described a feeling of electrocution which could not have been caused by the blast and which I find was likely to have been the result of live electricity cables falling down with the ceiling. It must have been terrifying.

7. The bomb

7.1 At the time of the original police investigation, forensic examination of the bomb site was carried out from 6th October 1974 by Major Donald Henderson from the MPS bomb squad and also by two scientists from the MOD's Royal Armament Research and Development Establishment or "RARDE", namely, Principal Scientific Officer Douglas Higgs and Senior Scientific Officer Donald Lidstone. A huge quantity of debris and fragments were also removed from the site, and from the bodies of the dead and injured, for analysis at RARDE's laboratories with Mr Lidstone leading this work and preparing the principal reports.

7.2 I have been able to read the reports and statements of Major Henderson, Mr Higgs and Mr Lidstone, but they are all now deceased and so I could not hear from any of them in person. I was therefore assisted by expert evidence from Lorna Hills, a Principal Case Officer in the Forensic Explosives Laboratory at what is now known as the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory or "DSTL". Mrs Hills is a successor to Mr Lidstone and an eminent chemist with expertise in explosive materials and devices and extensive experience of giving expert evidence in related criminal proceedings. She was able to explain and interpret the contemporaneous reports of Major Henderson, Mr Higgs and Mr Lidstone and I found her oral evidence clear, concise and helpful.

7.3 In the light of Mrs Hills' evidence, I make the following findings about the nature of the bomb which exploded in the Horse and Groom and killed the deceased:

- (1) recovered fragments of zinc from a dry cell battery indicated that the bomb was detonated by way of an electrically initiated firing circuit;
- (2) recovered fragments from the lens bezel of a widely-available Smiths pocket watch, and the absence of any alarm clock fragments, indicated that the firing

circuit was activated by a small electro-mechanical timer, in other words, the device was a time-bomb set to go off after a period of delay and it would have been relatively quiet and not ticking loudly;

- (3) chemical tests for nitroglycerine, nitrobenzene and cyclotrimethylene trinitramine indicated the presence of a nitroglycerine-based high explosive likely to have been industrially-produced and the degree of damage caused indicated the quantity of this to have been approximately 10lbs or 4½ kilograms - a significant quantity of high-powered explosives equivalent to about 18 sticks of dynamite;
- (4) the absence of any shrapnel or surviving fragments of container indicated that the bomb was not held in a metal container or packed with bolts, nails or other debris and was likely to have been carried in a small to medium sized bag or daysack, or as a parcel, meaning it was likely to have been non-descript;
- (5) upon detonation, the explosive substance within the bomb underwent an extremely rapid chemical reaction that instantaneously converted it from a compressed solid into a much larger volume of gas which blasted outwards in a 360 degree shockwave travelling in all directions faster than the speed of sound, at very high heat and with immense, unstoppable force - this would have been experienced as a very loud bang accompanied by a flash of flame and light and would have been extremely traumatic and disorienting;
- (6) the bomb itself was of a type commonly used by the Provisional IRA in England at the time.

7.4 Mrs Hills was also able to explain the conclusions reached in relation to the position of the bomb when it exploded and I am in no doubt that it was placed in the main alcove under the bench seat running north to south along the windowless western wall of the left-hand side-extension, adjacent to the covered passage and above the concrete floor and manhole covers already mentioned. This was abundantly clear from the following features of the damage caused:

- (1) behind the bomb - the wall of the side-extension was blown out into the covered passage and destroyed and, furthermore, some of the internal wall between the side

wall and the fireplace was also blown into the ladies' lavatories immediately behind;

- (2) below the bomb - an elliptical crater of impacted concrete approximately 50cm by 60cm was blasted into the concrete floor underneath the side-extension and an adjacent manhole cover was shattered;
- (3) in front of and above the bomb - damage to the carpet emanated from the site of the crater, visual "thrust patterns" created by soot or heat expanded outwards from the same focal point, ceiling laths above were forced upwards and much of the ceiling plaster had collapsed, examination of surviving fragments of the alcove bench seat cushions showed that projectile fragments had been thrust upwards through them, directional perforations to table legs in the alcove and injuries to and debris removed from the legs of many of those who had been in the main alcove also indicated that the point of detonation was close to floor level and under a bench seat;
- (4) in the main alcove - the gas fire was blown out of the fireplace and towards the jukebox which was itself blasted towards the bar and the wooden floor in front of the fireplace (which was found to have been badly infected with woodworm) collapsed into the basement cellar shortly after the blast - causing the carpet and underfelt to split and opening up a hole around 2 metres by 3 metres wide.

7.5 As I have already said, the moment and immediate aftermath of the explosion must have been a truly terrifying event and the physical effects were similarly devastating:

- (1) the hearth in front of the fireplace, a large quantity of other debris and numerous casualties fell through the hole in the floor and into the basement cellar;
- (2) typical experiences of the survivors inside can be derived from the evidence of Brian Calvert (standing near the fireplace at the time of the explosion and described being thrown towards the bar), James Cooper (said the blast threw him about 12 feet out of a window and into the street), Stephen Cooper (described most of his clothing being blown off) and Robert Noddle (at the edge of the main alcove and felt as if something hit him in the back and knocked him off his seat);

- (3) most of the wooden furniture in the pub was obliterated, the partition between the two alcoves was blown out, the front wall of the pub was badly cracked and displaced outwards, the front door and ground floor windows were blown out, several coping stones fell from the flat roof above the first alcove, the railings over the missing section were bent downwards, the flat roof itself was noted by Christopher Shaw (a Senior Assistant Engineer with the Brough Council) to be “hanging on to the wall by its fingertips” and there was extensive damage throughout the saloon and the ladies’ lavatories and even to the chimney stacks.
- 7.6 In fact, Lesley Doxie, Chief Building Control Officer for the Guildford Borough Council at the time, attended the scene and formed the impression that the pub was in imminent danger of collapse. This view was shared by one of his colleagues, Mr Shaw, who attended the scene shortly after the explosion and from whom I was fortunate to hear oral evidence.
- 7.7 Mr Shaw confirmed that the pub building itself was very old and I take judicial notice of the details published in connection with its later designation as a Grade II Listed Building which indicate that it was built in the 17th century and extended in the 19th century. Mr Shaw told me there was nothing which he observed to suggest that the extent of the damage was due to any particular defects in the construction of the building. In fact, Mr Lidstone concluded that one of the past changes - the addition of pillars around and concealed strong steel joists above the alcove areas - had greatly strengthened the structure of the building and may have saved it from total collapse and avoided the disastrous consequences this would have had for those inside and their rescuers.
- 7.8 At the same time, Mrs Hills explained that the displacement of the left-hand western side wall of the side-extension - which resulted from the bomb’s position adjacent to that wall coupled with the relative strengths of the blast and the wall itself - allowed significant pressure from the shock wave to escape outside and thereby vented the interior and mitigated the extent of the damage within. Had the wall been stronger or the bomb been differently positioned, this might not have happened and the effects of the explosion inside might have been better contained but thereby amplified.
- 7.9 As already indicated, I find that the bomb was planted in the pub by Provisional IRA terrorists some time between 5.30pm when the pub reopened for the evening and 8.50pm

when the explosion occurred. I am satisfied from the totality of the evidence that the bomb was probably planted by a young man and woman often referred to as a “courting couple”. This couple were seen in the main alcove on the bench seat above where the bomb was planted and were not identified and traced in the early part of the police investigation. Their identities fall outside the scope of these inquests and are unlikely ever to be known and I have not attempted to establish their descriptions or movements in any further detail.

8. The aftermath

8.1 By virtue of the close proximity to the Horse and Groom of the Guildford Ambulance and Fire Stations and various police patrols already being present in the area, the emergency services were all on the scene very quickly:

(1) WPCs Jacqueline Parrish and Andrea Gibson and PC Jeremy Spindlove were all there within a minute, approximately 15 regular and special constables were in attendance by 8.55pm and no fewer than 40 officers were on the scene by 9.20pm, including very senior personnel up to and including the Chief Constable;

(2) the first ambulance arrived from Guildford Ambulance Station around 8.53pm crewed by Richard Nicholls and William Edwards, this was swiftly followed by an equipment and control Land Rover crewed by Dave Barnett and Clive Morris which arrived at 8.55pm and a total of 11 Surrey ambulances were at or between the Horse and Groom and RSCH by 9.31pm;

(3) the first two fire appliances arrived from Guildford Fire Station at around 8.58pm, followed by a third a minute later and 10 appliances were on the scene by 9.27pm.

8.2 Despite uncertainty about the possible collapse of the building or detonation of a second bomb, members of all the above services, together with members of the public, all showed great bravery and courage in unhesitatingly going into the bomb site to try and help those inside.

8.3 The situation they found was grim. The saloon was dark and filled with dust and smoke. WPC Parrish described it as “a bloodbath and utter chaos” and Wynne Weston-Davies, a surgeon dispatched from RSCH, described a scene of total chaos, with people inside tearing at debris. In addition to the deaths of the deceased, I heard written evidence that 62

people were injured in the Guildford Pub Bombings (52 in the Horse and Groom and 10 at the Seven Stars) and the RSCH received 53 patients on the night (including Billy), admitted 16 as in-patients (also including Billy) and transferred 26 to military establishments.

8.4 I recognise that, in such circumstances, it is unlikely that everyone involved will have had entirely clear, let alone consistent, recollections at the time and even less likely that they will do so now. Bearing this in mind, I have made findings of fact where the evidence allows me to do so safely on the balance of probabilities.

8.5 As I have already mentioned, the explosion caused the floor in the main alcove in front of the fireplace to collapse, leaving a large hole down into the basement cellar below. I heard evidence that Carol Burns, Stephen Cooper, Sheila Parrotte, Barry Rushton and a number of other casualties who also survived (probably including Robert and Eileen Burns) fell into this hole and were able to escape or were helped out relatively quickly. As one would expect, it appears that all five of the deceased also ended up in the basement and I am satisfied that it is likely that they did so.

8.6 Conditions in the basement were very difficult. PC Gerald Queen went down into it around 8.55pm and described a pile of bodies about three feet high and covered in rubble, water leaking from burst pipes, radiators making hissing noises and wires hanging all over the place. He and PC Spindlove recall seeing a doctor in the basement. This was Dr Daniel Stewart, whose written statement explained that he was in the area, went down into the basement with two firemen in order to help and saw four bodies in amongst rubble and barrels - two male and two female.

8.7 From the various somewhat inconsistent and incomplete oral and written accounts admitted in evidence, I have been able to satisfy myself of the following factual matters:

(1) Paul

According to a post mortem report by Professor Arthur Mant dated 10th December 1974, Paul's injuries consisted of bruises and superficial lacerations, shattered eardrums, lung bruising and haemorrhaging and these injuries were consistent with the explosive device having detonated to his right. I heard some written evidence

that Paul was “under the doctor” for some kind of heart condition involving “tremors”, but Professor Mant reported no signs of natural disease and I cannot say whether any such condition played a role in his demise. What is clear is that there was no evidence of Paul showing any signs of life at any stage and I find it likely that he died almost immediately. PC Queen described helping to lift the dead body of a large man wearing a white shirt and dark trousers out of the hole and I think this was probably Paul. His covered body was transported to RSCH in an ambulance crewed by Richard Styles and Richard Griffiths. This also carried Caroline’s body which was removed from the ambulance first, placed in a garage opposite the Accident Centre and labelled “Number 2”. As it happened, John’s body was unloaded from another ambulance next and labelled “Number 3” and Paul’s body was unloaded after that and labelled “Number 4”. Paul was formally certified dead by Dr Stewart at 10.05pm.

(2) Billy

Billy survived the explosion, was lifted out of the basement and rushed to RSCH by an ambulance crewed by Richard Nicholls and William Edwards. He was admitted by Charge Nurse Eric Snell between 9.10pm and 9.15pm and treatment was commenced by Senior House Officer Dr Christopher Terreblanche whose written evidence referred to Billy being brought in around 9.20pm. Billy was wheeled into the Resuscitation Room and the remnants of his clothing were cut away and removed. As well as reading Dr Terreblanche’s contemporaneous police statement and Billy’s hospital notes, I heard detailed oral evidence from the Surgical Registrar at RSCH, Wynne Weston-Davies, who was involved in treating Billy from about 9.40pm onwards. Mr Weston-Davies, who had reported to RSCH within a few minutes of the explosion, was initially dispatched to the Horse and Groom as the designated “mobile surgical team”, but was unable to assist there and returned to the hospital around the time of the second explosion at the Seven Stars at 9.35pm. Billy had suffered cuts and burns to his face and forehead, fractures to his right ankle and left leg, lost much of the flesh from his left leg and left foot, was haemorrhaging a significant quantity of blood from his left femoral artery and was very pale. He was initially conscious, but in a state of severe agitation and disorientation and fighting off the efforts of those trying to assist him. Mr Weston-

Davies recalled efforts to put a tourniquet on Billy's leg and that this was extremely difficult due to him thrashing around. Billy later lapsed into unconsciousness following administration of Omnopon, but his leg tissue was so badly disrupted that it was still difficult to stop the bleeding. Together with Consultant Surgeon, Richard Notley, Dr Terreblanche, Mr Snell and possibly others, Mr Weston-Davies attempted to treat Billy for more than an hour. A splint was applied to his leg, large quantities of fluid (dextrose saline, plasma and Dextran) were administered intravenously to increase his blood volume, an endotracheal tube was inserted and an electro-cardiogram was set up. However, at some point Billy went into cardiac arrest. Unsuccessful efforts to resuscitate him ensued, including by way of cardiac massage, but he was eventually declared dead by Mr Notley at 10.50pm. Professor Mant's post mortem report confirmed the injuries just mentioned and also little oedema of the brain, bruised lungs, a ruptured spleen and internal bleeding. Professor Mant concluded that Billy's injuries were consistent with the bomb having exploded to his left.

(3) Ann

Professor Mant's report showed that Ann had deep lacerations across her right and left thighs, avulsion of the calf muscles in her right leg, various fractures, bruising and haemorrhaging, crush injuries to her chest and in her lungs, a ruptured spleen and internal bleeding. Her injuries were consistent with the bomb having exploded beneath where she was sitting and to her left. PC Queen described seeing an apparently dead female with badly injured but intact legs and wearing pink underwear in the basement. This must have been Ann. However, Fireman Andrew Saunders said he helped a young lady in the basement who was wearing a blue jumper and pink underwear to sit up and that a nurse with a stethoscope (almost certainly Jennifer Austin (now Ware)) listened to her chest and indicated there were some signs of life. This must also have been Ann. Accordingly, and based on the time Mr Saunders and Ms Austin arrived, I find that Ann survived for 10-15 minutes after the explosion. However, it also appears from the evidence that PC Spindlove and ambulance driver / attendant Dennis Lyons helped lift or pass Ann out of the basement on a stretcher and that she had died by the time they did so. From their arrival times, coupled with the fact that Mr Lyons and his colleague

Michael Lawrence had arrived at RSCH with Ann's body in their ambulance before the incident officer, James Adams, arrived there around 9.17pm, I think it more likely than not that Ann died in the basement cellar between 9pm and 9.15pm. Her body was placed into the hospital garage being used as a makeshift mortuary, labelled "Number 1" and formally certified dead by Dr Stewart at 10.05pm.

(4) John

Professor Mant's post mortem report refers to John having suffered deep bruising, fractures, penetrating wounds, lacerations, haemorrhaging, a perforated left eardrum, a ruptured spleen and internal bleeding. These injuries were consistent with the explosive device having been detonated to John's left. Professor Mant also noted that John's right chest was strapped with Elastoplast-type dressing. This was an identifying marker noted by several witnesses at the scene. Dr Stewart's written evidence describes him focusing his attention on a male in the basement with shallow breathing and abdominal and chest strappings. This must have been John. Trainee nurse, Mrs Ware, was also involved with John's treatment. She was driving home along North Street in her nurse's uniform when she was stopped and asked to help. She gave oral evidence at the hearings, had almost no recollection of events, but stood by the police statement she made at the time. This referred to her assisting a man with chest strapping - John - noting that he had a faint pulse and cardiac activity while he was still in the basement, and receiving a head-shaking gesture from Dr Stewart to the effect that he was dead or about to die. Mrs Ware's statement described treating John with a sucker in the road outside, after he had been lifted out of the basement, and a doctor (Dr Patrick Johnston) suggesting elevation of his feet. Dr Johnston's written evidence was consistent with this and said he was able to detect a faint and irregular heartbeat, albeit that John was obviously dying. Ambulance driver / attendant Maureen Osborne's written evidence referred to her arriving at the Horse and Groom at 9.13pm and attempting to help a man with large plasters across his chest - John - but getting no response. I find it likely that John had died by this point and, allowing time for his removal from the basement, that he died at the roadside between 9pm and 9.15pm. Although attempts at resuscitation were made, he was pronounced dead at the scene and his body was taken to RSCH in an ambulance crewed by Ms Osborne and Philip

White. This arrived between 9.20pm and 9.25pm and John's body was placed in the makeshift mortuary and labelled "Number 3". He was again certified dead by Dr Stewart at 10.05pm.

(5) Caroline

Professor Mant's post mortem report identifies Caroline as having lost her left foot, much of the tissue from her lower left leg and her lower right leg through its middle third. A number of witnesses referred to a young woman who had lost her legs or feet and, when they did so, this must have been a reference to Caroline. A number of witnesses gave evidence about seeing Caroline still alive in the basement, attempts to tie a tourniquet around her right leg, to clear her airway with a sucker and to give her cardiopulmonary and mouth to mouth resuscitation. That said, she was clearly very seriously injured and I find it likely that she died in the basement and was already dead when her body was lifted out on a stretcher and placed on the pavement. She had certainly died by 9.17pm when her covered body was collected from the pavement and placed into an ambulance crewed by Richard Styles and Richard Griffiths. She was driven to RSCH, arriving around 9.22pm and I have described the unloading and labelling of her body. On balance, I find it likely that Caroline survived the explosion and was treated in the cellar for at least a few minutes before she died there, but I am not able to narrow down the period in which she died any more precisely than a window between 8.55pm and 9.15pm. She was certified dead by Dr Stewart at RSCH at 10.05pm. Professor Mant also found fractures to Caroline's right femur, sacrum and pelvis, chest haemorrhages, a ruptured spleen and internal bleeding and wounds from metallic fragments that penetrated her skin. He concluded that these injuries were consistent with an explosive device having detonated immediately beneath Caroline, in other words, she was sat directly above it.

8.8 In addition to the above, Professor Mant described all the deceased suffering burns to their faces and heads and singeing to their hair and gave the cause of death for each as, "Blast injuries".

8.9 I did not hear sufficient evidence to enable me to ascertain the order in which Paul, Billy, Ann, John and Caroline were removed from the basement cellar of the pub.

9. Were the bombings or the deaths foreseeable or preventable?

- 9.1 As I have already mentioned, Professor Hennessey gave evidence that the Provisional IRA considered “army pubs” to be military targets and had a policy of not giving advance warnings in connection with attacks against such targets. Consistently with this, I have seen a number of contemporaneous documents reporting that no warning was received prior to the bombing. I also heard no evidence to suggest that a warning was given or that the authorities had any advance intelligence of the attack. For the avoidance of doubt, I did not hear any evidence to suggest that any of the deceased, or indeed anyone else, was individually or personally targeted on the night in question and there is no reason to think they were or might have been.
- 9.2 In the light of Professor Hennessey’s evidence, I find that there was nothing specific about the date of the attack or the choice of pub which could have made the bombings reasonably foreseeable or preventable. I also find that the Provisional IRA targeted the Horse and Groom simply because it was popular with young, inexperienced and therefore vulnerable members of the armed forces and chose that Saturday night for no other reason than that it was a well-known night off and would be busy. Beyond this, the terrorists were deliberately pursuing their general aim of unpredictability and of “keeping the authorities guessing” in order to maximise public alarm and thereby political pressure.
- 9.3 I find that these conclusions are reinforced by the fact that two Guildford pubs were attacked in parallel that evening. They were both known as “army pubs” and they were both crowded with military personnel when the bombs were planted. By contrast, and tellingly, the Three Pigeons, which was also known as an “army pub”, but which was relatively empty that night, was not attacked.
- 9.4 While it is not clear to me that military commanders had or have any power to dictate or regulate the activities or movements of army personnel while they are off-duty - absent some emergency or operational imperative - I am not satisfied that the general threat of Provisional IRA activity against military targets on the mainland in late 1974 was sufficient to justify or require the taking of steps to prevent or discourage visits to town centres or civilian pubs. Professor Hennessey explained that this general threat subsisted not only in London and the South East, but also the West Midlands, the North West of

England and West Germany. If there had been grounds to “lock down” the military bases around Guildford, the same would have been true nationwide and I have neither seen nor heard any evidence that would have justified such a draconian and restrictive action. More generally, military personnel are entitled to have time off and to socialise away from work in the same way as anyone else and it is important that they are treated like responsible adults and not segregated from their local communities.

- 9.5 Furthermore, I have found that the bomb in the Horse and Groom was planted after it opened at 5.30pm on 5th October 1974. The terrorists who did this would have been able to confirm for themselves that a large number of youngsters - recognisable as soldiers - were in the pub before planting their bomb. Had local military personnel been banned from or advised against frequenting the Horse and Groom or doing so on Saturday nights, the terrorists would have observed that there were none present and would have planted their bomb at another time or at another place instead.
- 9.6 Finally under this heading, I heard some relatively limited evidence about the security systems, precautions and training in place to help protect military personnel from security threats posed by, amongst others, the Provisional IRA.
- 9.7 Lieutenant Colonel Scott Innes, Staff Officer Grade 1 for Security at Headquarters Regional Command gave helpful evidence. He explained the (understandable) dearth of surviving documentary MOD materials about these matters (more than 95% of the department’s records from the early 1970s have since been destroyed) and he outlined the “BIKINI” security alert system and the provisions of the Manual of Army Security, which were in place in 1974.
- 9.8 Colonel Innes candidly emphasised that he could attest to the theoretical existence of these measures, but not their practical application by any particular army unit almost 50 years ago. The recollections of the former service personnel giving live evidence before me about the BIKINI alert system ranged from patchy to non-existent, but I did not find this significant and I think it improbable that it was not in operation across the armed forces. Contemporaneous media coverage of the Provisional IRA attack at Pirbright on 17th September 1973 and a security report about the Bruneval Barracks in Aldershot dated 7th June 1974 also pointed to the active consideration and operation of the BIKINI alert system

in the region at that time. I am similarly satisfied that the Army Security Manual was in place and was likely to have been the subject of general application in practice, including its provisions on the education of service personnel about security threats. In this regard, Colonel Innes made the obvious point that “rules and regulations... are taken seriously and adhered to” within the disciplined environment of army life.

- 9.9 Moreover, there was clearly a rule against military personnel wearing their uniforms when off-camp and off-duty and it was widely understood that this was intended to lower their profile and to make them less of a target, albeit that they were still readily recognisable as soldiers by reason of their short hair, varied accents and general bearing and demeanour. Nevertheless, I took this as further evidence of the army thinking about and taking reasonable steps to safeguard the security of its personnel and to mitigate the threats they faced. Another detail reinforcing this view was the fact that Mr Weston-Davies, the hospital surgeon who helped treat Billy and other casualties after the bombing, was coincidentally married to a WRAC Lieutenant based at QEB. He gave evidence about sending some flowers to her at the camp in 1973 and to their delivery causing a bomb scare which made the local papers.
- 9.10 So far as concerns training, I heard evidence from Dr Gillian Boag-Munroe. At the time of the bombing, Dr Boag-Munroe was known by her maiden name of Taylor and was a Second Lieutenant in the WRAC stationed at QEB. In this role, she was in immediate command of Ann and Caroline’s training platoon - 3 Platoon - and had the sad duty of identifying their bodies in the hospital mortuary in the small hours of 6th October 1974. She made a statement about this at the time, but she also helped me with live evidence about the regime at QEB. She was clear that the WRAC officers “lived and breathed security” and that recruits *were* told about the threat from the Provisional IRA, albeit that she could not recall giving this training herself and did not know what would have been said. Nevertheless, I accept her evidence to the extent that some security briefings and reminders were usually given as part of WRAC basic training at QEB.
- 9.11 However, whether this happened in the first three weeks of that training course is another matter and I was struck by the fact that none of the WRAC recruits who gave live evidence before me - Janet Oliver (now Fleming), Marion Montgomery (now Prescott), Caroline Macrae and Helen Atkins (now Wood) - could recall any such training. Indeed, Mrs

Fleming, who was badly injured in the bombing and left the army after completing her recovery, and Mrs Wood, who left the army after completing her basic training, were both clear that they did not have any such training.

- 9.12 A similar picture emerged from the evidence of the male military witnesses. I was unable to trace any senior officers serving at Pirbright at the time to give evidence about the general training and security regimes at the Guards Depot, but I did hear from more junior personnel serving with a variety of units and based at Pirbright, Bruneval, Hammersley and Bordon. Most of those who went on to serve with the army for any length of time tended to be confident that they had been trained in protective security and the threat posed by the Provisional IRA. For example, Brian Calvert was a Private in the Royal Hampshire Regiment who had been in the army for four years by the time of the bombing, including two tours in Northern Ireland, and he clearly remembered regular training of that kind.
- 9.13 By contrast, Stephen Cooper, a new recruit to the Scots Guards in the same intake as Billy and John, who left the army shortly after the bombing, did not recall and did not think there had been any security-related elements to their training. Mr Cooper gave careful and considered evidence and made the compelling point that if he had been given training about the threat from terrorists he would have recalled and made a “mental connection” with it after being blown up by the IRA. Others in that same intake gave similar evidence. Brian Scanlan, another Scots Guard recruit based at Pirbright, who was further into his basic training at the time and who also left the army shortly after the bombing, said much the same. Robert Noddle, then a recruit to the Royal Household Cavalry, who stayed in the army for another five and a half years, also could not recall any security-related training or instructions while he was at Pirbright and said this came later when he got to the Combermere Barracks in Windsor.
- 9.14 On balance, I find it likely that most recruits at QEB and Pirbright *were* given some training about security threats and awareness during the course of their basic training, but unlikely that this was always done within the first month of their arrival or, therefore, before they were first allowed to leave their camps and socialise with other military personnel in civilian social settings. In particular, I find that Billy, Ann, John and Caroline had not been given any training or briefings about protective security, the threat posed to

them by the Provisional IRA or the need for awareness and vigilance, including when off-duty and in civilian social settings.

9.15 Notwithstanding this, I am also quite clear that this lack of training did not cause or contribute to any of the deaths in any way:

- (1) There were a number of more experienced military personnel in the Horse and Groom that night - who had been trained about the threats they faced and the need for awareness and vigilance - and they were similarly oblivious to the fact that terrorists armed with a bomb were moving amongst them.
- (2) I did not hear any evidence capable of supporting a finding that additional training could or would have led to the detection of these terrorists or the bomb they planted. The Horse and Groom was crowded, noisy, dimly-lit and smoky, its customers went there to relax and mingle with each other and it is unrealistic to think that any of them could or should have been on a constant lookout for suspicious people or packages.
- (3) Strangers and bags of unknown ownership are commonplace in pubs and not necessarily suspicious and I heard no evidence to suggest that the “courting couple” who probably planted the bomb could or should have been identified as terrorists. Moreover, I am sure that they took great care to conceal the bomb under the bench seat carefully and inconspicuously and I am reinforced in this conclusion by the knowledge that the bomb concealed in the Seven Stars was not found even after the pub had been evacuated and searched.

10. Conclusions as to the deaths

10.1 After hearing the evidence, I gave counsel for the interested persons an opportunity to make legal submissions and received brief written submissions on behalf of Surrey Police, the MOD and the MPS. In addition, Ms Barton QC for Surrey Police and Mr Pleeth for the MOD both supplemented their arguments with short oral submissions. I have considered all of those submissions and taken them into account.

10.2 The submissions were essentially unanimous that, if I was to adopt short-form conclusions in these inquests, the only possible conclusion was one of “unlawful killing”. I agree.

Paragraph 8(5) of Schedule 1 to the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 provides that a determination in an inquest resumed following a homicide trial may not be inconsistent with its outcome. However, the acquittal of the Guildford Four on appeal does not detract from the uncontested fact that each of the deceased was murdered by one or more members or supporters of the Provisional IRA.

10.3 That said, I do not think short-form conclusions of unlawful killing would properly reflect or do justice to the importance of the facts of this case. Accordingly, I shall incorporate Box 3 into Box 4 of each Record of Inquest, which will consist of a narrative (adapted as appropriate) that refers to unlawful killing, but better encapsulates the facts of what happened.

10.4 I shall refer to “terrorists” in the plural because I have found it likely that the bomb was planted by a “courting couple” as referred to by a number of witnesses. Given that two bombs were planted in two pubs in tandem it is, of course, likely that the overall conspiracy involved more than just two individuals.

11. Entries on each Record of Inquest

11.1 Paul Craig:

Box 1: Mr Paul John Craig.

Box 2: Ia. Blast injuries.

Box 3: See Box 4.

Box 4: Paul Craig was unlawfully killed in the Horse and Groom Public House, North Street, Guildford on Saturday 5th October 1974 after being struck by the blast from a powerful time-bomb planted by Provisional Irish Republican Army terrorists. The bomb contained approximately 4½ kilograms of nitroglycerine-based high explosive and had been planted under a bench seat in the public house sometime after it opened at 5.30pm that evening. Mr Craig was sitting with friends on the bench seat when the bomb exploded, without warning, at approximately 8.50pm. As a result, he suffered very serious blast injuries from which he died almost immediately. Mr Craig was one of five young people killed by the bomb: none of them was targeted personally, rather the public house and the area in which they were sitting were targeted because they were popular, and crowded, with military personnel.

Box 5: (a) 6th October 1952, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire.

(b) Paul Craig.

(c) Male.

(d) .

(e) 5th October 1974, Horse and Groom Public House, North Street, Guildford, Surrey.

(f) Scenic plasterer, 8 Bristol House, Eldon Avenue, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire.

11.2 William Forsyth:

Box 1: Guardsman William McKelvie Forsyth.

Box 2: Ia Blast injuries.

Box 3: See Box 4.

Box 4: William Forsyth was unlawfully killed. He died in the Resuscitation Room of the Royal Surrey County Hospital Casualty Department, Farnham Road, Guildford on Saturday 5th October 1974. He had been struck by the blast from a powerful time-bomb planted by Provisional Irish Republican Army terrorists in the Horse and Groom Public House, North Street, Guildford. The bomb contained approximately 4½ kilograms of nitroglycerine-based high explosive and had been planted under a bench seat in the public house sometime after it opened at 5.30pm that evening. Guardsman Forsyth was sitting with friends on the bench seat when the bomb exploded, without warning, at approximately 8.50pm. As a result, he suffered very serious blast injuries and was rushed to hospital, but died at approximately 10.50pm following unsuccessful emergency treatment. Guardsman Forsyth was one of five young people killed by the bomb: none of them was targeted personally, rather the public house and the area in which they were sitting were targeted because they were popular, and crowded, with military personnel.

Box 5: (a) 6th August 1956, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire.

(b) William Forsyth.

(c) Male.

(d) .

(e) 5th October 1974, Royal Surrey County Hospital, Farnham Road, Guildford, Surrey.

(f) Guardsman in the Scots Guards, 18 Kerr Street, Barrhead, Renfrewshire, Scotland.

11.3 Ann Hamilton:

- Box 1: Private Ann Ray Higgins Murray Hamilton.*
- Box 2: Ia Blast injuries.*
- Box 3: See Box 4.*
- Box 4: Ann Hamilton was unlawfully killed in the Horse and Groom Public House, North Street, Guildford on Saturday 5th October 1974 after being struck by the blast from a powerful time-bomb planted by Provisional Irish Republican Army terrorists. The bomb contained approximately 4½ kilograms of nitroglycerine-based high explosive and had been planted under a bench seat in the public house sometime after it opened at 5.30pm that evening. Private Hamilton was sitting with friends on the bench seat when the bomb exploded, without warning, at approximately 8.50pm. As a result, she suffered very serious blast injuries from which she died sometime between 9pm and 9.15pm. She fell into the basement cellar of the public house after the floor collapsed and died there before she could be lifted out. Private Hamilton was one of five young people killed by the bomb: none of them was targeted personally, rather the public house and the area in which they were sitting were targeted because they were popular, and crowded, with military personnel.*
- Box 5: (a) 18th March 1955, Crewe, Cheshire.*
- (b) Ann Hamilton.*
- (c) Female.*
- (d) .*
- (e) 5th October 1974, Horse and Groom Public House, North Street, Guildford, Surrey.*
- (f) Private in the Women's Royal Army Corps, 267 Walthall Street, Crewe, Cheshire.*

11.4 John Hunter:

- Box 1: Guardsman John Crawford Hunter.*
- Box 2: Ia Blast injuries.*
- Box 3: See Box 4.*
- Box 4: John Hunter was unlawfully killed. He died outside the Horse and Groom Public House, North Street, Guildford on Saturday 5th October 1974 after being struck by the blast from a powerful time-bomb planted by Provisional Irish Republican Army terrorists. The bomb contained approximately 4½ kilograms of nitroglycerine-based high explosive and had been planted under a bench seat in the public house sometime after it opened at 5.30pm that evening. Guardsman Hunter was sitting with friends on the bench seat when the bomb exploded, without warning, at approximately 8.50pm. As a result, he suffered very serious blast injuries from which he died*

sometime between 9pm and 9.15pm. He fell into the basement cellar of the public house after the floor collapsed and was lifted out and placed by the roadside where he died while attempts were made to save him. Guardsman Hunter was one of five young people killed by the bomb: none of them was targeted personally, rather the public house and the area in which they were sitting were targeted because they were popular, and crowded, with military personnel.

- Box 5:*
- (a) 1st April 1957, Barrhead, East Renfrewshire.*
 - (b) John Hunter.*
 - (c) Male.*
 - (d) .*
 - (e) 5th October 1974, Horse and Groom Public House, North Street, Guildford, Surrey.*
 - (f) Guardsman in the Scots Guards, 11 Kerr Street, Barrhead, Renfrewshire, Scotland.*

11.5 Caroline Slater:

Box 1: Private Caroline Jean Slater.

Box 2: Ia Blast injuries.

Box 3: See Box 4.

Box 4: Caroline Slater was unlawfully killed in the Horse and Groom Public House, North Street, Guildford on Saturday 5th October 1974 after being struck by the blast from a powerful time-bomb planted by Provisional Irish Republican Army terrorists. The bomb contained approximately 4½ kilograms of nitroglycerine-based high explosive and had been planted under a bench seat in the public house sometime after it opened at 5.30pm that evening. Private Slater was sitting with friends on the bench seat when the bomb exploded, without warning, at approximately 8.50pm. As a result, she suffered very serious blast injuries from which she died sometime between 8.55pm and 9.15pm. She fell into the basement cellar of the public house after the floor collapsed and died there before she could be lifted out. Private Slater was one of five young people killed by the bomb: none of them was targeted personally, rather the public house and the area in which they were sitting were targeted because they were popular, and crowded, with military personnel.

- Box 5:*
- (a) 18th June 1956, Birmingham.*
 - (b) Caroline Slater.*
 - (c) Female.*
 - (d) .*

(e) 5th October 1974, Horse and Groom Public House, North Street, Guildford, Surrey.

(f) Private in the Women's Royal Army Corps, 35 Princess Street, West Chadsmoor, Cannock, Staffordshire.

Before closing the inquests, I would, once again, like to record my thanks to all counsel for their work and assistance, which I have appreciated, and to pass on my very sincere condolences to the families and friends of all those who died as a result of this appalling act of terrorism.

Richard Travers

HM Senior Coroner for Surrey

21 July 2022