

Inquiry Witness Statement of Marjory CAMBRIDGE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. My name is Marjory Stewart Cambridge and my contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. Margaret Gaughan, who died at the Vale of Leven Hospital ("VOLH") on 3rd March 2008, was my sister.

BACKGROUND

3. Margaret Gaughan's father and his second wife adopted me when I was a newborn baby. I was brought up with Margaret but she was nineteen years older than me. We became very close and she was more like a mother than a sister.
4. My dad died when I was nineteen and my mother died a couple of years later.
5. Margaret was a wonderful, warm-hearted person, with a great sense of humour. Everyone liked her. I loved her to bits. Even when I moved away I remained very close to her. We would write to each other all the time and I always made sure that I came back to Scotland several times a year to spend time with her.
6. She lived with her son Brian. Margaret's husband died back in 1962 and Brian was her only son.

7. Margaret was quite immobile in her later years as she suffered with arthritis in her legs. She had a stair-lift fitted in her home. She had angina. But she still enjoyed life and otherwise kept good health. She was as 'sharp as a tack'.

ADMISSION TO HOSPITAL

8. Around the end of December 2007 I was on holiday abroad visiting one of my children. I think it was around 1st January 2008 that I had a call from my son Thomas who lives in the Kilpatrick area. He told me that Margaret had been taken into the VOLH with a chest infection.
9. Brian Gaughan, Margaret's son, does not have a telephone so I could not call him to find out what had happened. I called my son and asked him if he could find out a bit more about Margaret's condition.
10. Before I flew back to the United Kingdom, around 10th January, my son called me back to say that Margaret had a chest infection and pneumonia. I cannot be sure about where she was being cared for during the period before I got back to the United Kingdom.
11. Once back in the country I travelled up to Scotland and stayed with Brian. He confirmed that Margaret was in the VOLH and still had pneumonia.

Treatment

12. I went to visit Margaret. She was in a four-bed ward at the time but I am not sure of the ward number. There were three other ladies in the room with her.

13. I spoke to one of the ward sisters and she told me that Margaret was reacting well to the antibiotics she was being given at the time. Margaret looked poorly and said she felt awful, but I tried to reassure her and told her what the sister had said. As far as I am aware what she was suffering from was pneumonia. There was no mention of other conditions at the time.
14. Margaret was quite deaf. Her hearing aid had been taken by the staff to get new batteries. I spoke to one of the sisters about it and then eventually a nurse admitted that the hearing aid had been lost. I asked the nursing staff what could be done and they said that they would have to arrange a hearing test in order to get a new hearing aid. I cannot say whether a test was done or not, but certainly Margaret did not get a hearing aid before her death.
15. After about four days Margaret had actually made good progress. She was sitting up in bed and said she felt a lot better. She looked much better and I presumed that she would be fine. I decided to go home and left my telephone number with the nursing staff. I had asked them if I could be updated about Margaret's condition.
16. I called the hospital every day after that but there was not much that the nurses could tell me.
17. Around the end of January I came back up to Scotland to visit Margaret. When I went to the VOLH to visit her she was in a single room in ward 15. She did not look well at all. She was a very funny colour and said she did not feel well. I spoke to one of the nursing staff who told me that she had not been well for a couple of days but I shouldn't worry.

18. The nurse explained that because of Margaret's age it would take longer to get over the kind of problems she had. I asked about Margaret being in a single room and I was told that it was to give her a bit of quiet. There was no mention of any infection at that time. I was not too worried and I went back home after a couple of days.
19. I had been home about three or four days when the hospital rang me and said that Margaret was quite poorly. There was no other explanation about her condition.
20. I travelled back up to Scotland the following day and went straight to the VOLH. Margaret was still in the same single room. I spoke to a nurse who again said that Margaret was quite poorly. There was no other explanation apart from that, but I suppose they might not be able to tell me that much anyway.
21. When I spoke to Margaret she was very quiet, and said to me that she did not expect to leave the hospital. She asked me to take care of her son Brian. She looked very unwell at the time. I was so concerned that I asked one of the nurses if I could have an appointment with a doctor to discuss Margaret's condition and an arrangement was made to see Dr Herd the following day.
22. I spoke to Doctor Herd the following day with Brian. I asked him directly what was wrong with Margaret and he said that she had *Clostridium difficile* ("C.diff") which at that time meant nothing to me. Dr Herd explained that it was a bug. I asked what he could give her for it but he said that there was nothing he could give as it was a strong strain of the bug. He was very nice. He explained that there was nothing they could do and his tone was not hopeful at all.
23. I went back to see Margaret the following day but she was very tired and listless and not really talking at all.

24. I travelled back home and kept calling the VOLH but they just kept saying that she was quite ill.
25. I think it was towards the end of February I travelled up to Scotland with my daughter to see Margaret. Along with Brian we went straight to the VOLH. Margaret was still in the same single room but was only semi-conscious. To be honest, I do not think that she knew we were there.
26. During this visit the smell of diarrhoea in Margaret's room was terrible. In fact I asked the nurses if they could clean her up. It was very quick visit as we had driven up and intended going straight back the same day. We were there no more than an hour. We had to get back because my daughter was working the following day.
27. I kept in touch with the VOLH, and I was told by the staff that Margaret was unconscious.
28. On 3rd March 2008 I received a call from the VOLH to say that Margaret had died. I came back up to Scotland a couple of days before the funeral. Brian had taken care of registering the death.
29. I never really found out anymore about the problems at the VOLH until some time later when Brian told me that there was to be a public inquiry.
30. When Margaret was at the VOLH it was an upsetting time but I found that the nurses and Dr Herd were all very nice in their dealings with me.

VOLH IMPRESSIONS

- 31. When I first visited Margaret in the VOLH in January 2008 I was quite shocked at the state it was in. I had been a patient there many years before and it had been a lovely hospital. However, when I went there to see Margaret the whole place looked neglected. For example, the paintwork on the walls was peeling all over the place.


- 32. I think there were problems as well with cleanliness because when I looked at the window ledges I saw they were dirty. And when I ran my finger along them and it was covered in dust. I actually asked Margaret if cleaners came in and she said that they did. To be fair, the bedding looked clean. It was really the building itself that seemed to be the problem.

- 33. There were had gel dispensers on the ward and there was one near the room Margaret was in. To be honest I cannot remember if they were filled or if I used them.

- 34. The ward Margaret was in seemed somehow cluttered and there was very little space between the beds for visitors to get visitors in.

- 35. Brian would take Margaret's laundry away and give it to Margaret's next door neighbour to wash. This lady had been a close friend and neighbour of Margaret for many years.

- 36. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.


Dated 19-07-10.....