

IN THE SURREY CORONER'S COURT

BEFORE HM CORONER FOR SURREY, MR RICHARD TRAVERS

IN THE MATTER OF THE GUILDFORD PUB BOMBINGS 1974

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

- (1) MR PAUL CRAIG (DECEASED)**
- (2) GUARDSMAN WILLIAM FORSYTH (DECEASED)**
- (3) PRIVATE ANN HAMILTON (DECEASED)**
- (4) GUARDSMAN JOHN HUNTER (DECEASED)**
- (5) PRIVATE CAROLINE SLATER (DECEASED)**

JUNIOR COUNSEL NOTE OF PRE-INQUEST REVIEW

20th May 2020

2. Attendance

2.1

- a) CTI noted that junior counsel to the inquest had met with Surrey Police representatives on 31st March and 30th April 2020, and that a further meeting was to take place immediately after the Pre-Inquest Review.

- b)

tranche of material in the week commencing 25th May 2020. The tranche consisted of 134 witness statements, and an additional schedule summarising the contents of 712 statements (including the previously-mentioned 134 statements).

- c) The documents were to be reviewed by the counsel team in the first instance, and CTI noted that the schedule would assist them in identifying documents which did not require further follow-up for the purposes of the inquests.

- d) CTI confirmed that once the tranche was received, the counsel team would be able to begin its work in earnest, whilst Surrey Police would continue with their work in processing the documentation they had gathered, with a view to providing HMC with further statements, exhibits and messages in future tranches.

- e) CTI expressed the gratitude of HMC and the counsel team that Surrey Police had been able to continue their work despite the restrictions and challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that lockdown restrictions had been imposed from around one month after the previous Pre-Inquest Review of 26th February 2020.

3.2.2. Metropolitan Police Service:

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

and review initiated by the MPS were now complete, and that enquiries was now in the possession of Surrey Police. It was confirmed that a lot of material had been duplicative in any event.

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

3.2.3. Ministry of Defence:

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

3.2.4. Other participants:

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

3.4.4. It was confirmed that the Trust was not seeking IP status at the present time.

3.5. HMC then invited submissions from representatives of any other IPs who wished to address the court:

3.5.1. Mr Pleeth confirmed that the MOD was continuing to work with Surrey Police and anticipated being able to provide a more detailed written update in

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

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

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

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