

Vicar's death an accident: court

The Vicar of Wheatley died after he tried to edge across a notorious road crossing, an Oxford inquest heard this week.

The Rev. Hubert Brasier, 64, was driving his Morris Marina across the busy A40 trunk road to conduct an evensong service at Forest Hill.

But he edged forward from the central reservation into the path of a Range Rover, driven by Mr Desmond Hampton of London.

A few hours later he died in hospital of head and spine injuries.

Oxford coroner Mr Nicholas Gardiner recorded a verdict of accidental death.

The inquest heard how Mr Hampton who was travelling with his wife and children towards London, fought to control his car after the collision with Mr Brasier and had hit another car, driven by Mrs Frances Higgs, of Powell Close, Forest Hill.

Mr Hampton, a chartered accountant, of Kensington Park Road, London, said he was driving in

the fast London-bound lane at a speed under 70 mph.

"I noticed the Marina stationary in the central reservation and it appeared to stay there for quite a bit of time."

It appeared to move slowly and then seemed to hesitate. "I began braking and tried to get into the left-hand lane," he said.

The Range Rover collided with the front off-side wing of the Marina. Mr Hampton tried to control his car but ran into the side of an Allegro waiting at the nearby junction from Forest Hill.

Mr Hampton and his family were taken to hospital. The driver of the third car Mrs Higgs was unhurt.

Mr Gardiner said it appeared that Mr Brasier had crossed from the slip road and was moving across the A40 in front of the Range Rover.

It may have been difficult for Mr Brasier to see the vehicle approaching head-on.

He said the crossing had to cope with slow local traffic and long distance fast moving traffic. "That's never a good thing as far as road safety is concerned."