

DERBYSHIRE ASBESTOS SUPPORT TEAM (DAST)



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Edited by Joanne Gordon November/December 2014

Mesothelioma Vigil

The Mesothelioma Vigil was an important awareness raising campaign and thanks go to everyone involved with the Forum for organising this event.



The aim of the 'vigil' was to promote the campaign for justice for asbestos victims and the need for medical research to prevent future deaths. At the suggestion of the MPs, this was done by unveiling our new banner at a vigil held in front of the Labour Party Conference Centre in Manchester on Monday 22nd September at 12 noon.

Between thirty and forty family members as well as support groups came along and were joined by thirteen MPs. We produced t-shirts which everyone wore to promote the message calling for justice.

Jim Sheridan, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group was there as well as Kate Green, Shadow Minister for Work and Pensions, who, in her speech, set out the Labour Party plans for the future, should they be voted into office, in support of Mesothelioma victims. Everyone who attended thought it was very successful in bolstering support for positive changes to the way in which sufferers and their families are treated.

Judicial Review

Thanks to the intervention of the Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum, the government will not be able to remove the exemption which would have seen those diagnosed with Mesothelioma having to face legal costs. During the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, (after much campaigning), the government made an exemption for Mesothelioma victims from costs associated with bringing a civil claim until they had time to consult and review the impact of removing the exemption on Mesothelioma victims and families. However, the government was intending to bring in the exemption without, in our view, a proper consultation. The Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum launched a Judicial Review against the government's decision and won!. Although the insurance industry have the money and the government have the power, we (the Forum) have the

right on our side and so, against all the odds, we were successful. Therefore, anyone diagnosed with Mesothelioma will not have to pay any legal fees from their compensation.

Support from Macmillan

If you are a patient or carer in Lincolnshire, Nottingham or Leicester and need help, including practical support, Macmillan Cancer Support may be able to help. Trained volunteers can offer:-

- Housework – ironing, changing beds, vacuuming, cleaning windows
- Gardening – light gardening duties
- Shopping – picking up groceries or helping with online ordering, taking dry cleaning in or picking it up
- Dog walking
- Emotional support

Practical Support does not include: Personal Care or Transport.

There is a limit to the service; initially 6 weeks' support will be given, usually once a week. After a review, another 6 weeks may be offered. If longer term support is required the volunteers will signpost to other local services. In exceptional circumstances support may continue, potentially with different volunteers, for a longer period.

There is a service set up in Nottingham, Skegness/Mablethorpe, Leicester, Cranwell/Sleaford, Louth and a new service setting up in Boston. If you would like to benefit from these services please contact DAST for the relevant contact telephone numbers.

Congratulations Dave Trigg – Chair of DAST

Dave Trigg, our Chair and volunteer for DAST, has been awarded the Midlands TUC Regional Health & Safety Reps award for 2014 for his work on asbestos issues. Dave has worked tirelessly to make asbestos issues a priority in his Union, UNITE. He regularly attends the All Party Parliamentary Health and Safety Sub Committee on Asbestos, as well as raising issues with local MPs and the local media. He has also supported DAST for many years. Congratulations Dave, well deserved!



DAST Meeting

Our DAST meeting, held at the Spot in Derby on 7th November 2014, was well attended with over 70 people.

Speakers included Neal Hodkinson from UCATT and Nottingham City Homes. Nottingham City Homes has chosen DAST as their charity of the year. Therefore, it was an opportunity for everyone to hear about the fundraising efforts they are undertaking on our behalf, as well as hearing the way in which the Unions at Nottingham City Homes work together to ensure good health and safety within their organisation.

Dominic Bray a Psychologist from Southport and Ormskirk Hospital talked about his solution focused approach to supporting his patients in helping them to focus on the positive aspects in life.

Jason Addy PhD, Researcher and Campaigner entitled his speech “starting a fire” - an imaginative title to talk about how we can ensure that the scandal of asbestos remains in the media. By demonstrating the essential elements for ‘starting a fire’ Jason was illustrating that all the important elements for ensuring media attention should be present in our story. Engaging emotionally is a key element as well as emphasising the critical importance of our cause and we should use the media as a tool to achieve our objectives by relaying our message and calling for action.

This is why we need people to share their personal stories to ensure they are ‘heard’ by those who have the power to change or influence the situation. We also need to counteract the negative opinions about the health and safety culture and to refute the claims that white asbestos (chrysotile) is harmless!

Shay Boyle from DAST brought the meeting to a close with a song, accompanied by his guitar, after which everyone tucked in to good food provided by the Spot.

Now our regular columnist, Yvette



Oldham, writes about her experience in Italy and the re-launch of the Health and Safety Executive Campaign.

The 'Eternit' Cassation Hearing Rome, Italy, November 2014 **By Yvette Oldham**

The case against 'Eternit' is a global 'DISASTER' – as thousands of ex-employees have died and continue to do so. 'Eternit' operated around the world, indeed Belgium have a case going to court next year.

In 2012, two former owners of one of the world's biggest asbestos firms, 'Eternit', were sentenced to 16 years in jail for failing to protect workers and residents at 4 Italian factories. In September 2014 Asbestos Forum members heard from Graham Dring (Manchester Support Group) that a request had been made by Italian groups for world-wide support of the above court case.

The accused are Belgian baron Jean-Louis Marie Ghislain de Cartier, 90 and Swiss billionaire Stephan Schmidheiny who were major shareholders in 'Eternit' and have been blamed for the deaths of over 2,000 people through contamination with asbestos dust. On 19 November the verdict of their appeal was to be delivered so 11 of us from the UK flew to Italy in support of the request.

Supporters from many countries travelled to Italy to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Italian victims' groups. They were:

AFEVA Italy, ANDEVA France, ABREA Brazil, FEDAVICA Spain, ABEVA Belgium, UAO Switzerland, ASAREA Argentina, ASBESTOS SUPPORT TEAMS, United Kingdom, BANJAN Japan and A-BAN Asia.



Yvette Oldham and Angela Sharp from DAST with Marc Hindry from France

All gathered and demonstrated outside the appeal court on 19 November to show how strongly we felt about the asbestos problem, which certainly attracted the attention of the media. The actual decision was not announced until the evening when we all queued to gain entry to the courtroom. Unfortunately all were devastated to hear that the case was being 'thrown out' due to the statute of limitations – too much time has passed for the men to be convicted. There was uproar from many in the courtroom and I believe it roughly translated as 'shame on you!' The men were and are still guilty but this situation really deflated all of us.

The next day (20th) all the delegations went to an international press conference at the CGIL (Union) headquarters to comment on the verdict.

From there we travelled by train (21st) to Casale for an update on the international fight against asbestos - luckily translators were on hand to assist us! In the afternoon we attended a mayoral reception in the Town Hall where the international speakers took to the platform, many victims spoke and we were introduced. We all felt united in our despair at the court case but determined that the fight would continue.

Whilst in Casale, we were introduced to the Official President of AFEVA, Italy. Her name is Romana Blasotti, a truly remarkable woman, aged over 80, who has lost 5 members of her family to asbestos disease. She has a strong spirit, speaks out whenever she can and is certainly a driving force for justice. Long may she prevail!

As victims are still dying, the Italian group are going to question how the 'statute of limitations' can be applied to this case. A decision was made to take the case to the European Court in Strasbourg – the fight goes on!

In the evening there was a meeting and all international supporters were ushered to the stage and applauded – we felt very honoured. We then moved outside to join a procession - led by Italian victims' families - around the town of Casale. We were ushered to the front of the parade, just behind the mayor and officials, which again showed appreciation of our support.

There was much media interest and, the next day, the Italian news channel showed pictures of the procession which had been reported in most Italian newspapers. The photograph, reproduced from 'La Stampa', illustrates the huge number of people in the procession.



We – Angela Sharp and myself - think our attendance was very worthwhile, felt appreciated and feel privileged to have been part of the international delegation.

Health & Safety 'Hidden Killer Campaign Re-Launch 9 October 2014 by Yvette

Many of you will be aware of a previous campaign which ran from 2008-2010, halted by the current government's review of all campaigns. Not before time, in my opinion, HSE announced a resurrection of the campaign which began last October launched by Mark Harper, MP, Minister responsible for Health and Safety.

Prior to the start of the campaign, the Asbestos Forum e-mailed the support groups as case studies were needed for publicity. This would, of course, bring home the human element of pain and suffering and how families are affected by asbestos-related diseases.

Current statistics indicate that 20 tradespeople are dying from asbestos-related disease. Therefore, it was appropriate to launch the campaign in the 'Tradepoint' store in Cricklewood. 200,000 free asbestos safety kits are to be distributed to at-risk tradespeople. Each contains information on working safely with asbestos. Additionally a free web app has been set up to enable people to find out if asbestos is present where they are working and how to protect themselves. I am a volunteer with the Derbyshire

Asbestos Support Team and have been through the devastation of mesothelioma and felt compelled to offer our family's experience of this disease. I duly typed the information and sent it to 'Kindred', the PR agency acting for and collating the case histories for the HSE. They contacted me to advise they wished to use the story and after a few tweaks the case study was ready to circulate to the media. Several other people across the country volunteered their stories and agreed to them being used in the public domain also.

BBC Radio Nottingham interviewed me and I tried to emphasise that asbestos could be found in domestic premises as well as commercial and public buildings. The public do not realise that asbestos was still being used until the year 2000 so they could be at risk from DIY in the home!

BBC East Midlands Today came to my home and interviewed me and I am pleased to say that they aired the item 3 times during the day. During our conversation I desperately tried to get over the message that asbestos is a killer substance, that it devastates families and how desperately we need a cure. From the feedback I have had, it seems many people saw and heard the items and I just hope many more took notice of the content.

People have asked me whether I get upset going through details of my husband's illness. The answer is a resounding 'YES' but not doing so would upset me more. Trevor knew I would campaign and I do so now, for others, in my darling husband's name.

Yvette Oldham

**Protect yourself and
your workmates with this
FREE Beware Asbestos
web app now**



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Yvette's piece about the HSE leads me nicely on to the re-launch of our own awareness project.

Wednesday 25th February 2015 – Launch of the Asbestos House Awareness Project at the Winding Wheel, 13 Holywell Street, Chesterfield, S41 7SA.

Our innovative project will raise awareness about where asbestos may be found today in our homes, schools and public buildings.

The launch will take place at 2pm (lunch provided from 1.15pm) and 6.45pm (refreshments from 6pm)

Speakers will include:

- Cllr John Burrows (Leader Chesterfield Borough Council)
- Cllr Andy Botham (Cabinet Member for Council Services)
- Trade Union representatives from UCATT, UNITE and Asbestos in Schools
- Families affected by Mesothelioma
- Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team

If you would like to come along please reply by contacting DAST on **01246 380415**

Or email:
mail@asbestosupport.co.uk



Patient and Carer Coffee Morning

We are holding a coffee morning for patients and carers. The coffee morning is intended for anyone diagnosed with Mesothelioma or lung cancer. There will be an opportunity to share experiences in a relaxed atmosphere enjoying tea and cakes. There will also be the opportunity to talk to Liz Darlison, Consultant Mesothelioma Nurse Specialist from Mesothelioma UK. We have access to a number of rooms for you to have a private chat with Liz if you wish.

The Coffee Morning is to be held on Friday 27th March 2015 from 10.30am – 12.30pm at the Double Tree by Hilton on Brayford Wharf North, Lincoln, LN1 1YW.

The Mesothelioma in the Midlands Conference will take place on Monday 20th April 2015 in Birmingham, please put the date in your diary. (More details to follow early next year). Speakers will include Liz Darlison from Mesothelioma UK.

DAST's support and service

Just a little reminder that we have resources such as hand-held fans to help breathing as well as support in terms of DVD's and literature for keeping active. We also have information regarding travel insurance. Please contact DAST on 01246 380415.

Fundraising News

Remember DAST over the Christmas holidays....

- Please do save us any postage stamps that you receive...use the increase in stamped mail as the Christmas cards start dropping on the doormat to raise funds.
- You can also save any unwanted gifts to donate to us for future raffles and tombolas.

Thanks to everyone who donated prizes for the raffle at our conference in Derby this year. The total raised was over £130.

Nottingham City Homes continue to offer brilliant support to DAST during our tenure as their charity of the year. A musical and social event at the end of November raised money for us through ticket sales and a raffle/auction. It was a fantastic night, with home grown talent from within Nottingham City Homes who had only formed 5 weeks prior to the event.



We must thank everyone who has supplied the following raffle prizes: Capital FM Arena, Dakota Hotel, Nottingham Forest, Le Bistrot Pierre, Nottingham, Capital FM Radio, Boots

Plc, Nottingham Panther Ice Hockey, Nottingham Cricket Club, Birds, Bullocks, Waters, Keepmoat, Vinshires, PPG Architectural Coatings Ltd, ANSA Lifts, Kaefer C&D Ltd, Smith Bros, Television Installations Services Ltd, Neil Shacklock, Volkerlaser, Swift, Faithful and Gould, Nationwide, Monitor, LAN Control Systems, JWL, The Garage Door Company, Neal Hodgkinson, Angela Sharp, Avonside Roofing, John A Stephens, Trentside Fixings, Farmfoods, Ambience Nails Hair and Beauty, Wilko, Jocelyn Flowers.

We'll let you know the final amount raised next time.

Send a William!

William Bear is about to feature on some blank cards. We will be selling these in packs of 5 for a cost of £2.00, with a 50p contribution to postage. Send your order to us in the New Year.



Please join us on Facebook – search the site for Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team. We also have a blog where you can keep up to date with the day to day concerns of the DAST team. Find us at

<http://derbyshireasbestosupportteam.blogspot.co.uk/>

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

If you need us we will be open on 22nd and 23rd December and 29th and 30th December and the morning of the 31st December 2014.

"I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!"

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



Please donate to DAST

- To make a regular monthly donation, ask us for a standing order leaflet or download a form from our website
www.asbestosupport.co.uk
- Donate online through The Big Give or Virgin Money Giving websites
- Send a cheque made out to Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team
- Save us your used ink cartridges, stamps and mobile phones
- Hold a fundraising event
- Buy one of our "Reflection" roses for a Christmas present.
<http://www.worldofroses.com/>
Bare root roses now available

