

Conclusion

Words are not adequate to describe the tragedy that has been illuminated by the accounts.

Anyone who has read them has discovered nothing new. Asbestos has (copiously been talked and written about for ages) been extensively discussed and documented for a long time, but any proposed remedial action ignored with a deathly silence.

Every issue whether simple or complex concerning asbestos, centres upon the time and manpower allocated to it. In addition issues have been met with half truths and downright lies or a veil drawn over them by people simply looking the other way in order not to lose face.

This book was conceived to give a voice to those involved and attempts to reflect the differing views and backgrounds of its contributors and those who will read it.

The accounts reflect upon how the extraordinary property of a mineral is (opportunistically utilised) exploited solely for economical reasons throughout shipyards and construction sites. But that property is also a danger to human health.

The stories are also about hard-working and (assiduous) conscientious individuals, loyal to their employers and workmates, doing their best not only for themselves, but their families and communities. It shows the journeys taken by both men and women when confronted with this insidious and pernicious adversary. These individuals have (intimately) taken us intimately through their thought processes: from the shock of being told of the disease; to their good and bad times, courage and rage; and then finally the shattering of their dreams. These painful journeys will leave an indelible mark upon the reader.

The hope is that such accounts will act as a catalyst, one that will prod people to change things for the better and not be repeated. For simply put these people died for the bottom line on a balance sheet, the extra zero in the profit column. And this is the perverse nature of such a system, a system that devalues people's health, respect, even life for the sake of a few pence more. One that (simply) sees a man not as a man, but simply a unit of labour.

Let's pause a moment and reflect. What gives happiness to us and our love ones? Surely it isn't "that dust" that settles on and around us.