

# **What did I do to deserve to die this way.**

Vanda Michelin

In 1967 my husband and I started going out together; two years later we got married after he started work at Fincantieri as a pipe fitter.

In 1972 my son was born.

At first he worked on board ship, but after an accident he was transferred to the workshops. He would tell me that he and his workmates were always working in a dusty environment and complained that they had no extractor fans present, especially when replacing pipework. I know that he tried to keep his workplace clean and had campaigned to have fans installed. No one paid attention to workers' health.

My husband carried on working until 1996 when he was pensioned off three years early. As yet they had not classified pipe-fitting as being one of asbestos related industrial diseases.

In fact he only had a year to enjoy his retirement as he soon became sick. It started with a cough and then a pain his left side. When he started to cough up blood we went to the doctor. After some tests he was diagnosed with not mesothelioma, but cancer. In December of that year, they removed a quarter of his lung. They told us that this was an attempt to arrest the disease, but in reality there was nothing to be done. Only we knew of his true condition.

Three months later another scan was done that showed the tumour had regrown. He started to have chemotherapy, but soon quit as he simply got fed up with going to hospital.

In his final months, he gave up. Although he had anaesthetist in attendance at home, he suffered immense pain. He just couldn't get out of bed unless he slid out on his stomach causing intense agony.

He died at home.

To put it in simple terms no organisation or person really helped him. He always said to me “ why have I done to deserve to die this way.”