

Life Story

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I was born in 1944, where I still live now, in Zellina, a district of San Giorgio di Nogaro. After spending my most of early childhood helping my parents in farming labouring.

I then went onto the local Technical School and by studying hard managed to get a job at the age of eighteen at the firm of Saici Torviscosa. I relished the new experience of being a pipe-fitter, but unfortunately was unaware of the perilous nature of asbestos. In those days it was used, with abandonment, in every part of the site. I'll now describe how.

When I worked in the machine shop we cut asbestos sheets to make new plant seals, using electrical shears. Without thinking about it, I was breathing in the dust swirling around me. But I also did maintenance work throughout the site, including where the cellulose was cured in a dryer. This involved maintaining the appropriate temperatures and to do so, asbestos coated everything. Often our finishing line stopped because of leaks, so to fix them we had to go inside the dryers and weld the "pokers" up again. Then I was moved to the processing unit which controlled the humidity in wood chips. The stoves used were internally coated with asbestos and were vented into our workspace, instead of externally..

In 1993 when that department was closed, I took early retirement with my pension enhanced by five years; my then contributions stood at thirty years

After some years of retirement, my dear ex-workmate Giacomo Ioan, advised me to get a check-up. I had X-rays on my lungs at Udine Hospital, but they found nothing wrong. But he insisted that I get a scan and did so in 2003. After having one at Monfalcone Occupational Hospital, they asked me back a week later to have another more precise. They found plaques on my lungs which were indicative of asbestos exposure; they also found two small nodules, the same symptoms as Giacomo.

You can imagine how I felt, here I was suffering from some thing caused externally that could have been avoided.

In 2004, I lodged a claim for an Industrial Disease. The assessment was that I had been exposed to asbestos for twenty nine of my just over thirty years of working life. I've accepted that I have an occupational disease, not incapacity. The Government topped up my pension by another five years.

Up to now, I've had five scans and am still being monitored. It causes me and my love ones a great deal of anxiety and that gnaws away inside me. We remain unsettled because we are unsure of what lies before us. What is more galling is that I don't smoke or drink and now find I've picked a disease up from simply going to work.

My only wish now is that the conditions of not only I, but my unfortunate colleagues do not worsen to the point of being irreversible.