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10 WARWICK STREET, LONDON, W.1 REGent 7617

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT
JM-1995

July 8, 1968

Sir,

Your issue of Monday, July 8 reports the findings by Biles and Emerson of asbestos fibres in beer and states that the clinical importance of their observations has yet to be assessed.

It is quite possible that they are of no clinical importance whatsoever. Filter pads containing approximately 40% asbestos combined with 60% cellulose pulp have been used for filtration in the drinks industries since 1918 because there is no other known material which will enable the efficient filtration of undesirable matter. In addition, these filter pads are used extensively in the pharmaceutical field and have several chemical industry applications.

If these pads produced any harmful effects, these would certainly be expected to have shown up by now, but no such evidence has been recorded.

We have examined photographs by Biles and Emerson of fibres obtained from beer. These show fibres of only three/hundred thousandths of a millimetre in diameter and of such a length that 5,000 of these laid end to end would measure less than one-tenth of an inch. It is highly probable that the ultrasonic vibrator used in the course of their experiments had the effect of breaking down single fibres into a very much larger number of fibrils.

The total weight of asbestos fibres per pint would appear to be vanishingly small (five parts in a million million). On this basis, the total weight of asbestos fibres in the total annual U.K. beer production of 1,105,200,000 gallons would only be about just over 4/100ths of a gramme, or 2/1000ths of an ounce.

.../...

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ASBESTOS INFORMATION COMMITTEE

There is no evidence that the ingestion of asbestos is harmful in any way - particularly in such minute quantities as this. In any case fibres of this size would normally be eliminated from the human system by the usual processes.

Yours faithfully,

W.P. Howard
Secretary

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