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RE: JOHN CRANE

RRH TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH FRED DAWSON 3/14/06

26 Gwendale

Maidenhead, Berkshire, England SL6 6SH

Q	How long did they continue to use asbestos?
A	1950s to 1990s
Q	When did they stop making asbestos gaskets in England?
A	We never made gaskets. Used asbestos as an additive to soft packing. We braided soft rope. Asbestos was part of that.
Q	U.S. had SuperSeal packings. Is that one of them?
A	Probably was. Yes.
Q	U.S. had different numbers, e.g. 187-I. Did you become familiar with various style numbers?
A	No.
Q	They stopped using asbestos in U.S. in 1985. Did they continue to use asbestos in England beyond that?
A	Yes. They sold the company off in 1990s to another company. They were still using it then.
	Worked for TI Group (Tube Investments). TI owned several companies. Mainly three large companies. John Crane was the largest of the three.
	Early 1990 still using asbestos for packing in England. Until sold it off.
	In England and America another company made soft packings. We sold that company to them.
	We relocated our soft packings to Northern England which is where they are. A few people can give more information
Q	Did you know that John Crane had been making asbestos-containing packing since 1930?
A	Correct
	Automobiles used asbestos in gaskets from parts we made. Radiators, ships, pumps, steam. Soft packings would be used for ?? and valves.
Q	Do you know "chrysotile" and "crocidolite?"
A	No. They're strange names.
Q	Did you make packing used for acids? Were you ever told that some of those packings were for acid resistant pumps?
A	Yes. Without a doubt.
Q	Is there a difference in the appearance of acids vs. steam?
A	Yes. We used mainly vent packings for steam and for the wet packings we braided mostly.
Q	Is there any information or brochures or books about the products, photos, etc., that you have access to?
A	No. Lots when worked there.
Q	Do you have any catalogs?

A	Remember catalogs, but doesn't have any. Gone from there some years. 10-12 years since dealt with any of this.
Q	Know anyone who might have a catalog?
A	No.
Q	What was your job?
A	Maintenance technician. Worked on looms, etc. Negotiated on behalf of workers. God people checked medically. "Understood dangers of blue and white asbestos."
Q	Did they have dust controls and regular examinations of workers in place when you got there?
A	Yes. Extraction used in 1970s was basic, but did understand dangers because we disciplined people for not using equipment provided.
Q	Do you know anyone working there in the 1960s who is still alive?
A	I know names, but not addresses: Gordon Rance, Supervisor for several years. Lives in Maidenhead, Berkshire, England. Gordon dealt with this on a daily basis.
Q	Do you know the number of employees?
A	Regarding the packing division, there were three shifts, night, evening, day. At its heyday there were 140 people. When ended, 50-60 people.
	Aware of people who got sick. Had two people contact him regarding cases against John Crane. Had a relative approach him regarding his father. Was convinced his father died of asbestosis but death certificate said heart failure.
Q	If claims were filed before 1970, how would I find that out?
A	Not sure. Ray Dillon at the Union may be able to trace it. If taken up by the Union, he would know about it. (If privately pursued, would not.) Amicus records should show up. Amicus was the union.
Q	Know anyone who developed mesothelioma?
A	No. Only by word of mouth. Mesothelioma or asbestosis. Couldn't give names or addresses.
Q	Are you familiar with the word "mesothelioma?"
A	Yes. Definitely.
Q	Did any employees develop mesothelioma?
A	Not that I'm aware of. Knew people with shortness of breath. No lung cancer cases. Only two cases were the ones he was contacted about by those working vs. John Crane.
Q	Were there regular inspections of the plant by the health and safety people in England?
A	No. We had factory inspectors. Yes. They came around periodically, but they would not have dealt specifically with the asbestos part of it. They only checked the plant to see if it was operating in a safe condition. Didn't check to see if asbestos.
	Insurance agents came around, too. They would have been doing a planned audit. Not specific for asbestos.
Q	Did they require respirators when working there?

A	Required to wear respirators in room/areas where they would find certain levels of dust. We developed certain techniques for cleaning equipment. In general did not walk around with respirators or masks. Was supposed extracted sufficiently enough not to require personal protection. Extractors were like hotels and had ventilation dusting. Most extraction fans pulled through ventilators that would be poor by today's standards. Dust was collected in buildings, in walls, on sides of walls. In place in 1970. Old stuff. Used Watson extractors. Ended up with extractors far better.
Q	Did you have a doctor at the plant?
A	No.
Q	Industrial hygienist?
A	Yes. Spough Industrial Health Center. (It's been sold.) Was for general problems. Things in the eye, etc. People did health checks at the local Upton Hospital in Slough. People would go get chest x-rays there. Not done in 1970s. Started later in the 1970s.
Q	Do you have any literature about risk of breathing asbestos and things you should do to protect against it?
A	Yes. Had written rules and regulations. Had health and safety policy. General rules, but doesn't think they were in place in the 1970s. Thinks it was in the 1980s. Used to have some health and safety documents. Will look.
Q	Do you have any photographs of the plant?
A	I have a couple of old photographs somewhere--inside of the building showing the maintenance team doing some special thing.
	Was Union Convener for years.

REMINDER:

RRR TO CALL MONDAY OR TUESDAY FOR FOLLOW UP TO SEE IF MR. DAWSON HAS HAD A CHANCE TO LOCATE ANY LITERATURE, PHOTOGRAPHS, CONTACTS, OR OTHER INFORMATION