Asbestos in Construction Fatality File

St Albans construction worker died from asbestos exposure, inquest hears

A construction worker died from an asbestos-related disease after it lay dormant until for around 30 years, a coroner ruled last week.

Gerald Martin, of Colney Heath Lane, died at Peace Hospice in Watford on October 22 after losing his battle with epithelioid mesothelioma.

An inquest held last Wednesday at Hatfield Coroner's Court heard that he started working in construction.

Senior Coroner for Herts Edward Thomas said during that time there were lots of houses built with outhouses, which had roofs made of corrugated asbestos sheets.

Gerald had to cut the sheets up using an electric saw which would release dust into the atmosphere.

The inquest heard that he was not exposed to asbestos in any other way and for about 25 years was healthy.

But at the start of this year the 85-year-old was found to be getting a bit breathless. Following a scan in June doctors discovered shadowing on his lungs.

Mr Thomas said: "The fact the first symptoms only showed in the early part of this year is perfectly conclusive with what we know about mesothelioma, it lies dormant, and we don't see the symptoms. Someone perfectly healthy doesn't get symptoms they may get them as a chest infection."

He ruled the cause of death as industrial disease.