

## Euro-MP wins asbestos claim

EURO MP Mr Alex Falconer, a former dockyard insulator who worked with asbestos, has made legal history in Scotland by winning an asbestos damages claim against the Ministry of Defence.

The MEP has accepted a token £100 in damages, but his right to make further claims against his former employers has been reserved until the year 2014, in the event of his medical condition becoming worse.

The action was brought under the 1982 Administration of Justice Act, and Mr Falconer was represented throughout by agents appointed by the Transport and General Workers Union. It is expected that it will now open the doors to claims from other asbestos workers.

Mr Falconer (47) worked as an insulator in the lagging shed at the Naval dockyard between 1969 and 1974, when his work involved stripping insulation from ships undergoing refits.

He claimed that throughout that period he worked in an atmosphere of asbestos dust with no proper breathing equipment.

He claimed that when breathing equipment was provided, it was insufficient to prevent him from inhaling asbestos dust.

Mr Falconer learned in 1982 that asbestos dust had been found in the pleural linings of his lungs, and he took the first steps towards raising an action in the Court of Session.

A settlement was reached before the case was heard by Lord Davidson on Wednesday.

The action, however, will remain open until 2014 to allow Mr Falconer to take further action against the Ministry of Defence if his condition develops into an asbestos-related disease such as cancer or mesothelioma.

"I'm in perfect health at the moment, but the gestation period for these types of cancer is around 40 years," Mr Falconer told the Press. "The Court decision enables me to claim again if I should suffer further illness as a result of exposure to asbestos dust."

## briefly

### Nuclear war game protest

EURO-MP, Mr Alex Falconer, and peace activists joined the Royal Observer Corps at their local nuclear bunkers on Sunday — to protest against the nuclear war game exercise, Warmon II, which was taking place throughout Scotland.

In the event of a nuclear attack the bunkers would be used for monitoring the local effects of radioactive fall-out.

Commented Mr Falconer, "We are not knocking the work done by the volunteers. But we believe the whole exercise is a sham. It is based on the delusion that there is any chance of most of the population surviving a nuclear war."

The war game exercise, programmed for two Sundays, concludes on 1st November — by which time Mr Falconer hopes to have visited a large proportion of the nuclear bunkers sited in his Mid-Scotland and Fife constituency.

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