

MAVIS NYE

EXPOSURE FROM SHIPBUILDING

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Everybody says that you can't 'til you do
Standing there, staring at the mirror in the room
Tell yourself "One more day, one more day, one more shot"
The voices in the night, in your head
Yeah, they'll pay you to quit
He'll tell you that it's hard, 'cause it is
But you can do anything, anything you want to
There's footprints on the moon

Song: Footprints on the Moon
Gabby Barrett

It's the summer of 2021 and Mavis Nye, for the twelfth year since her 2009 asbestos cancer diagnosis, works through her personal pain and treatment so that she can help educate, console, be a sounding board, and raise funds for other mesothelioma victims and warriors. Her husband Raymond remains at her side as her carer, experiencing first-hand the suffering which this disease brings to the entire family. Together, they have held steady and true through the treatments, uncertainty, tough decisions, and over the past year, COVID. This is their story.



Mavis is a handsome lady in the true sense of the word. Raymond, her constant support and advocate, has been at Mavis' side for 64 years. Make no mistake that Mavis, although not born to a starring role, is a star. In the international world of asbestos exposure, mesothelioma, and outreach to help the afflicted, no global citizen is more famous or singularly more important. As to Raymond; well, he is her rock and support. He steps into the limelight periodically to discuss the role of a carer but, on the whole, he is Mavis' buttress to support and reinforce her work. Their joint journey into asbestos related diseases began in 2009 when Mavis saw her doctor after experiencing labored breathing. On June 4, 2009, her 49th wedding anniversary, she made an urgent appointment with her general practitioner who quickly had her admitted to the hospital where they drained seven liters of fluid from her lungs. After weeks of tests and biopsies, Mavis was diagnosed with mesothelioma including a prognosis of only a three months to live. Immediately, their lives turned upside down and all of their plans changed. Their first priority became discussing the available medical procedures and treatments, with the second priority being locating the potential exposures to asbestos. In addition, Mavis began working to put her affairs in order with a deep concern for her husband.

The listing of medical treatments undertaken by Mavis is extensive. There is no cure for mesothelioma and, as such, treatments tend to involve extending the quality and quantity of life. Her disease is a "left epithelioid mesothelioma" which is the most common mesothelioma cell type. In this disease, epithelial cells mutate into cancerous cells as they become irritated and genetically altered by asbestos. It accounts for over 50% of the mesothelioma cases and, to Mavis' benefit, is the most treatable. Such patients as Mavis have more treatment options and a better prognosis than do those who have sarcomatoid or biphasic mesothelioma. As to Mavis, her mesothelioma is in the lining of her lungs and known as a "pleural mesothelioma" because of

that location. The life expectancy for such a diagnosis ranges from a few months to up to two years depending on the advancement, location, and cell type; although, each patient is unique.

Mavis' treatments over the years are as follows:

DATE	TREATMENT
2009 (June)	Diagnosed with a left epithelioid mesothelioma via a video-assisted thoracoscopic biopsy. Underwent talc pleurodesis and four cycles of cisplatin and pemetrexed.
2011 (Sept – Dec)	Developed progressive disease and was treated on a trial of NGR-hTNF, a selective vascular inhibitor, for four months to slow down the progression of the disease. Then underwent rechallenge with four cycles of pemetrexed and cisplatin, achieving disease stability for 11 months, then received six cycles of carboplatin and gemcitabine, achieving disease stability for a further six months.
2014 (June) to 2016 (June)	Received 52 cycles of pembrolizumab (MK-3475), which tolerated well. This drug is also known as Keytruda. This is a new immunotherapy treatment for which Mavis was one of three mesothelioma patients among 23 other cancers as the first experimental use in the U.K.
2018 (April)	21 months after completing the two years of pembrolizumab, disease progression started which saw Mavis back on pembrolizumab. Stable disease was maintained for 25 cycles when radiologic disease progression was confirmed.
2021 (April)	Progressed to spine and completed System 2 trial for Radiotherapy to control pain, which has been successful.

Mavis is not cured, mind you, and continues to live with the possibility of the advancement of the disease; such as her recent scare in December 2020. However, her long term survival has provided opportunities for her to advance issues and work on causes denied to most people suffering from mesothelioma.

Determining the location for potential exposure to asbestos fibers requires research and understanding a person's background. Mavis was born on August 27, 1941 as one of 3 children to Violet and Francis Kirsopp. She was raised in Chatham, England where, like many families, her father worked in the Royal Naval Dockyard in Chatham as the family breadwinner. Mavis' ancestral employment at that dockyard can be traced back to also include her Great Grandfather, Edward Kirsopp and her Grandfather, Jackson Kirsopp. Her father worked as an electrician on ship construction and renovation in the dockyard. As asbestos was a significant product at the shipyard during that time and her mother would launder the family clothes, it is possible that Mavis's initial exposure to asbestos was while she was an infant in the cradle through her teen years. That area of England has a particularly heavy history of Mesothelioma diagnosis. Mavis has a specific recall of her father returning home from work covered in dust, including on his clothes and in his hair. She also believes, based on the similarity of her symptoms and her father's symptoms, that her father likely was suffering an asbestos related illness.

Mavis' primary confirmed exposure, however, is through Raymond beginning in the 1950s when she was just 15 years old. Raymond was employed from 1953 to 1958 as a Shipwright Apprentice at the Royal Naval Dockyard on the River Medway in Chatham in Kent, South East England. After a two year absence for his National Service, he returned to the Chatham Dockyards as a Shipwright from 1960 through 1962. Mavis has posted a discussion on the asbestos exposure at the Chatham Dockyard at <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/asbestos-chatham-dockyard-mavis-nye/> and YouTube has a discussion at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXMGKWMh-Po>. During Raymond's employment at the dockyard, he would meet Mavis to share lunch breaks and spend time after work, all the while with Raymond wearing his work coveralls. Little did they know then that asbestos fibers

attaching to those clothes, fine and invisible to the eye, would cause them so much pain 50 years later.

Raymond's job classification required him to work in a particularly dusty environment as Shipwrights worked in the vicinity of other occupations tearing out asbestos on the ships "from stem to stern." In spite of this exposure, Raymond was never informed by either the union or his employer about his potential exposure to asbestos or the hazards related to such exposure, nor was he issued any safety equipment such as a mask. Although it is Mavis who has developed cancer from this asbestos exposure, Raymond has also suffered health related issues having been diagnosed with pleural plaques from the asbestos. As Mavis was responsible for the family laundry, much of her exposure involves "shake down" claims arising from shaking out Raymond's work clothes before laundering while he was employed at the Chatham Dockyard.

Raymond's exposure to asbestos in the dockyard arises from three distinct physical areas: (1) the ships on which he worked, (2) asbestos used with the railway, contained in the technical school facilities, contained in the fireproofing, and as used in heat insulation, and (3) in piles of material removed from the ships or which was being staged for ship installation. Amosite (brown asbestos) was generally used on Naval ships for molded insulation because it was light weight and resistant to spreading fires, although both Crocidolite (blue asbestos) and Chrysotile (white asbestos) were also commonly used for specific components. Hundreds of products on Navy ships used asbestos with the weight per Navy ship widely ranging. Raymond's exposure to asbestos fibers would have necessarily involved all of the shipboard fiber types with a heavy exposure to Amosite fibers. Because of Raymond's exceptional memory, and the ability to confirm certain facts through historical material such as the Royal Dockyard Library, the

Chatham Dockyard Lock Log No 36, Wikipedia, and other sources, Mavis and Raymond have identified that he worked on the following ships at the Chatham Shipyard from 1955 to 1962:

SHIP	INFORMATION
HMS <i>Alaric</i> (P 441)	Submarine of the Amphion class built in the Cammell Laid Shipyard (Birkenhead, U.K.), commissioned 11 December 1946, modernized in the 1960s, sold for scrap, scrapped at Inverkeithing during July 1971.
HMS <i>Artemis</i> (P449)	Submarine of the Amphion class build by Scotts Shipbuilding & Engineering Company of Greenock, Scotland for commissioning on 15 August 1947. The ship sank while refueling in 1971, was raised and then sold for breaking up in December 1971. Scrapped at Portsmouth in 1972.
HMS <i>Cassandra</i> (R62 changed in 1945 to D10)	C-Class destroyer originally ordered as the HMS Tourmaline and renamed in November 1942, launched on 29 November 1943. Scrapped during 1967 at breakers yard of Thos W Ward at Inverkeithing, Scotland.
HMS <i>Diamond</i> (D35)	Daring-class Destroyer build by John Brown & Company in Clydebank, Scotland in 1950, all-welded, scrapped in Rainham in Kent in 1981. Substantial refit in Chatham Dockyard in 1959.
HMS <i>Forth</i> (A187)	A submarine depot ship built by John Brown & Company, Clydebank, Scotland, commissioned 14 May 1939, sold for scrapping 25 July 1985. Renamed HMS Defiance on 15 February 1972. She was modified to support nuclear-powered submarines at the Chatham Dockyard between 1962 and 1966.
HMS <i>Narvik</i> (L3044)	Launched in 1945 as LST 3044, built by Vickers Armstrong, renamed Narvik in 1947, scrapped 1 December 1971.
HMS <i>Seraph</i> (P219)	Submarine of the S-Class built by Vickers Armstrong in Farrow-in-Furness, commissioned 27 June 1942, decommissioned 25 October 1962, scraped at Briton Ferry in December 1962. In 1955, fitted with armour plating and used as a torpedo target boat. In October 1942, briefly became the USS Seraph flying the US Navy ensign. Appeared as herself in the British film <i>The Man Who Never Was</i> (1956). Parts of her conning tower and a torpedo loading hatch were preserved as a memorial at The Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina as the only shore installation monument in the United States where

		the Royal Navy ensign is authorized to be permanently flown by the British Admiralty
HMS <i>Sheffield</i> (C34)		Southampton Sub class of the Town-class cruisers used during WWII. She was built by Vickers Armstrong, commissioned on 25 August 1937, nicknamed “Shiny Sheff” because fittings were made of stainless steel instead of brass, and scrapped at Faslane in 1967 after removing of her equipment at Rosyth. She received refits in 1949-50, 1954, 1956-7, and 1959-60 including enclosing the bridge, adding a lattice foremast and a comprehensive anti-nuclear and biological washdown.
HMS <i>Swiftsure</i> (08)		Minotaur-class light cruiser, built by Vickers Armstrong at Newcastle-on-tine, commissioned on 22 June 1944. Major retrofit began in February 1957 at Chatham Dockyard, sold to Thos W Ward for scrapping during October 1962 at the Inverkeithing yard in Scotland.
HMS <i>Tenby</i> (F65)		Whitby-class anti-submarine frigate build by Cammell Laird and Cot, Birkenhead, commissioned on 18 December 1957, sold to the Pakistan Navy in 1975 but not taken up, sold for scrapping in 1977 to Thos W Ward for breading up at Briton Ferry.
HMS <i>Tiptoe</i> (P332)		T-class submarine, built by Vickers Armstrong, Barrow, commissioned 10 May 1944, sold in 1971, scrapped 1975 at Portsmouth.
HMS <i>Turpin</i> (P354)		Submarine of the T-class (welded instead of riveted) constructed at the Chatham Dockyard and commissioned on 1 October 1944. She was sold to Israel in 1965 and commissioned into the Israeli Sea Corps in 1967 at INS <i>Leviathan</i> . She was scraped during 1978 (unknown location for scrap.

Raymond can also identify non-shipboard exposure to asbestos arising from his work at the Chatham Shipyard. Asbestos tear off materials were stored all over the docks in open piles and eventually shipped to St. Mary’s Island where they were, for a time, buried. Raymond could not walk through the docks without exposure to asbestos in the air and asbestos on the ground where he stepped. These same boots were worn home each and every day coated with asbestos fibers and, unlike the clothes being laundered, the boots (and potentially his working cap) were not

given the same daily cleaning. Additional information about the ships and asbestos at the dockyard can be found at the Chatham Historic Dockyard, a maritime museum on part of the former dockyard site which has ship records back to the year 1646. The Chatham Dockyard closed in 1984.

Raymond also believes that he was occupationally exposed to asbestos while working for British Uralite in 1962 after leaving the Chatham Dockyards. The air quality at British Uralite, which manufactured water pipes, included a lot of asbestos dust.

What makes Mavis and Raymond so exceptional is the extent of their post-diagnosis activities and Mavis’ role in education and fundraising. Starting in 2009 and running through the present, the below discuss just a sample of Mavis’s activities, accolades, and awards:

DATE	DESCRIPTION
2009	Using a solicitor, get paid for Mesothelioma without proving specific exposure. Did not have a court case. Now, can use support group without a solicitor as will help fill out the forms.
2010 April	Established Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/mavis.nye in which Mavis posts multiple times a day on asbestos, cancer, and other related health issues.
2013	Invited into the all party parliamentary group on Occupational Safety and Health, meets every six months. Chair is Jim Sheridan, M.P.
2016 Jan 28	Received British Citizens Award by the government of England.
2017 April	Established foundation at https://www.mavisnyefoundation.com/ to raise funds for medical equipment and personnel.
2017 April	Established Facebook page for the Mavis Nye Foundation at https://www.facebook.com/groups/432649193771341 . This is a public group having 1900 members as of August 2021.

2017 May		Retained counsel in the U.K. for making a claim against potential bankruptcy trusts in the United States. Recovery agreed with Eagle Pitcher Bankruptcy Trust.
2019 July 20		Awarded honorary Doctor from East Kent University
2021 May 13		Received the IOSH President’s Distinguished Service Award from President Jimmy Quinn and Chief Executive Bev Messinger
2021 July 9		British Empire Metal award for meritorious civil or military service worthy of recognition by the Crown.

Mavis focuses much of her efforts on exposures arising in England and the surrounding countries. The United Kingdom has the highest per capita incident rate of mesothelioma in the world. The current rate is 2700 mesothelioma diagnoses per year. Given the 30 to 40 year delay between exposure and disease development, that equates to 108,000 newly diagnosed mesothelioma sufferers in the United Kingdom over the next 40 years, even if all future asbestos exposures were eliminated today.

Certainly, there are others deeply committed to helping those exposed and suffering from asbestos related diseases, such as Linda Rheinstein of ADAO in the United States and Laurie Kazan-Allen of International Ban Asbestos Secretariat, just to name a couple, but they are typically spouses or family members. Mavis’ original social media friend and hoped for partner, Debbie Brewer, succumbed to mesothelioma, leaving Mavis to “carry the flag.” Mavis is a long term survivor who takes a leadership role while each day fighting her own personal health and treatment battles. Through the use of social media, she continues to provide information and good wishes every morning to those most in need of hope and comfort. She gives of herself, and others respond. Sometimes it is just a cheery good morning, while other times, it is much more serious for education or raising funds, either directly, or through the foundation she has

established. Mavis, at times, also uses her social media platform to post on other health items of interest that are of importance in the U.K. As stated on the Mavis Nye Foundation website:

She set to with a vigor that was unstoppable. She expanded these small groups humble beginnings and created various groups on social media and soon, the Mesowarriors as they had become known was now a global name. It had gained a reputation for support and advice. Today her work is internationally recognized. She is available on a personal level to support and encourage victims of mesothelioma. She is supported by many influential people; she is in demand for presentations to spread the word. She talks with Lords, Ladies, Professors, Oncologists and Doctors, and MP's. She has spoken on occasions in the House of Commons in the company of distinguished speakers. She was awarded a BCA for her work. She is an NHS patient rep, and sits on various committees and support groups. Her energy and enthusiasm knows no bounds. She has been given an Honorary Dr. Degree by East Kent University.

Using social media as discussed above, Mavis battles in the front lines in terms of education, exposure, helping the researchers delve into potential areas of improvement, educate the public about recognizing and avoiding asbestos exposures, purchasing equipment and medical resources, cheerleading for those affected by this horrible disease, and raising funds for her foundation in support of medical treatments and resources. Each day, the public can find her on social media, while working through her personal pain, posting help and encouragement to other mesothelioma warriors, and keeping others up to speed on sufferers who passed away the day before. As Mavis likes to say, "Lighting the Meso Warrior candle."

Mesothelioma is not just a financial or fundraising issue for Mavis and Raymond; rather, it strikes hard on all emotional levels. Shortly after Mavis' diagnosis and while she was still in hospital, Raymond wrote down his own feelings on learning that his wife had a terminal disease caused by asbestos:

Worst thing is. I must put this down to me. I have helped to kill the most precious thing in my life. How can I cope with that? The poison dust was on my clothes in my

hair, asbestos. A job that I took to earn money for wife and family. Now with one child gone [the couple lost a daughter in a car accident in 1978] and maybe soon a wife. I don't want to go on. Life can be cruel. Terry [their son] has his life he will get over Mavis, it's something kids have to do and me. But to lose a wife or husband is not the same.

To conclude, Mavis and Raymond would like to provide words of advice to those over 100,000 U.K. citizens and their carers who will follow them during the next 40 years. They have had the benefit of longevity which provides, if not wisdom, then at least experience from which others may learn.

Links to books by Mavis and Ray may be found at [Our Books - Mavis Nye Foundation and Christines Story Misadventure or Misjudged \(lulu.com\)](#)

ADVICE FROM MAVIS

The advice I would like to give to Mesowarriors is make sure if you know you have come into contact with asbestos to inform your GP and ask to be monitored through the years. Hoping that they can pick up the disease in the early stages and not at the A&E stage when the lung collapses and the fluid has to be drained.

When you do get a diagnosis remember the time scale they give you is only an average. They don't know how long you will live; they don't know how strong you are and how positive you are. I said it wasn't going to get me I will fight this and that's just what I did. I took on any trial they offered as that was the only way to receive treatment.

Stay calm and we are surviving Mesothelioma now in 2021 one day there will be a cure. Believe that.

ADVICE FROM RAYMOND

Words of advice from a carer's point of view.

Advice is usually offered from an experienced person. And in this occasion I am experienced.

I've had to date 12 and a half years experience as a carer to my wife as a mesothelioma patient.

When she was diagnosed and given 3 months at best my thoughts were whatever she wants

whatever she she needs will get. For me nothing was impossible. Heartbroken I had to pull

myself together and just do it. In hindsight it's easy to say don't get involved with Asbestos. In

practicality it's not so simple. In our case the exposure was 49 years prior to diagnosis. How can

you plan for that?

But with years of treatment we have reached a point we could never have hoped for. I give her

all the love and attention. Never stop giving love. It's as good as any treatment it helps to give

hope even when there is little. Who knows what's round the corner.

For advice to potential exposees. I would say if you suspect you will be exposed to Asbestos.

STOP. Step back think what you are doing move away don't touch it let the experts deal with it.

Don't endanger your family. You will regret it.

But regret will not help you when it's too late.