

CAMPAIGNER:
Composer
Andrew
March with
Cherie Blair



BAD BLOOD AT HIGH COURT

**Compensation battle for the
victims of transfusion scandal**

By Warren Manger
HEALTH REPORTER

A HIGH COURT review begins today into how much the government pays to patients who were given blood infected with killer diseases.

Former Nuneaton schoolboy Andrew March is one of 1,200 who was given blood infected with HIV during the 1970s and 1980s.

The haemophiliac also suffers from Hepatitis C, cirrhosis of the liver and could well have CJD, the human form of mad cow disease, all because he was injected with 'bad blood' at Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital when he was just nine years old.

But despite being handed a death sentence by the scandal, the survivors are entitled to just a fraction of the £800,000 support given on average to victims in Ireland.

Composer Andrew, 36, said: "The government tries to hide behind the fact it has given us £150 million, but if you divide that between 4,800 victims and spread that over more than 20 years that equates to just £1,500 per year, per person."

"That's not enough to cover the cost of care or loss of earnings and some people don't even get that. It's absolutely appalling."

Last February the Archer Inquiry finished its two-year investigation into the scandal and published a detailed report recommending victims in Britain get the same payouts as those in Ireland.

The government refused, wrongly claiming the Irish government paid more because it was found to be at fault for the cases there.

Instead Britain increased the victims' annual support to just £12,800, a step which sparked outrage from Andrew and other members of the campaign group Tainted Blood.

Andrew, a former pupil at Higham Lane School, spear-headed Tainted Blood's calls for the judicial review.

He said: "The court cannot replace the government's decision but we are hoping for a sympathetic judge who will quash it. We want the truth about why they refused to accept the inquiry's recommendations."

The review at the High Court is due to last two days.