

# Beast of the Belltower victim says effort to clear monster was ‘sickening’

By Marion Scott, Scottish Sunday Post

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Victim David Whelan.

A survivor of one of Scotland’s most notorious paedophiles says those who defended the predator prevented others coming forward after a court found John Porteous abused two more children.

Porteous – dubbed the [Beast of the Belltower](#) – was convicted in 2002. But now a court has ruled he targeted two more boys while working as a house parent at Quarriers Children’s Village in Bridge of Weir in the ’60s and ’70s.

This time, Porteous, now 92, was found to be unfit to stand trial, so Greenock Sheriff Court instead held an “examination of the facts” which ruled he had abused the boys.

One of his original victims, David Whelan, 67, said campaigners protesting Porteous’s innocence gave the paedophile a voice, leaving other victims too traumatised to come forward.

David, who became a lead campaigner to set up the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, said:

“Porteous was so devious and plausible, even managing to hold positions of trust within the Church as well as a number of respected organisations. There was a deeply painful high-profile campaign declaring Porteous was innocent which had a horrendous effect on his victims and prevented others from coming forward, which is sickening to me.

“Those who leapt to the defence of Porteous should hang their heads in shame.

“Last week, yet again, a court found Porteous had targeted vulnerable boys who were in his care at Quarriers, despite all his protestations of innocence and giving evidence to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry four years ago.

“For decades, Porteous and his family continued to protest his innocence, involving even the BBC and the prison authorities, who allowed their cameras into the jail to allow him to speak.

“The BBC later had to issue an apology to me for the content of their programme.

“Porteous has never apologised or accepted his guilt. I suspect he will continue to do so until his dying day.”

BBC Scotland programme Secrets Or Lies, which questioned the guilt of Porteous, was later criticised by the corporation’s standards watchdog. It said the programme makers had made “serious errors of judgment”, adding that it was unbalanced and that so-called new evidence had not been properly researched.

David fled Quarriers when he was 16, going on to be a successful businessman in London. He buried the horror he carried with him until a call from Porteous’s wife Helen, who was also a house mother at the Children’s Village, begging him to be a “character witness” for his “Uncle John” after he was accused of abuse.

In his bestselling book, No More Silence, David told how he then had to step forward and reveal that Porteous had repeatedly abused him in the bell tower of the Children’s Cathedral before Sunday services, sparking the biggest ever police investigation into abuse at a children’s home.

In the wake of Porteous’s 2002 conviction and the subsequent campaign to clear him, David lost his business and suffered years of anxiety.

He said: “Having to constantly relive the horror of what Porteous did was devastating, however I have never regretted coming forward and telling the truth so others could finally see behind his carefully constructed mask of respectability.

“I sincerely hope what happened in court last week will serve as a lesson to those who jump to the defence of paedophiles like Porteous who still cast a very dark shadow over Scotland’s children’s homes.

“Thousands of children were physically and sexually abused in those homes, and most have never seen justice.

“Many will have died still carrying the scars inflicted upon them, and that is Scotland’s shame.”

Despite Porteous being jailed for eight years for abusing David and another little boy, a change in the law meant three years was knocked off his sentence.

David worked closely with Quarriers to establish a special support programme for victims.

He said: “We felt that the children who depend on Quarriers today did not deserve to lose out on services because of the dreadful crimes committed by former members of staff. Quarriers kept their word to help victims and we are very proud of what we achieved together.”

Link to the news item

[Beast of the Belltower victim says effort to clear monster was ‘sickening’](#)