

Girl, 11, was abused as she lay in her sick bed at orphanage

Victim left 'frozen in fear' by depraved carer

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Jailed: Alexander Wilson

A WOMAN yesterday recounted her sex abuse ordeal at the hands of her 'housefather' in an orphanage.

In harrowing testimony, she told an inquiry that Alexander Wilson had targeted her twice when she was 11 years old.

She said he had struck while she was lying sick in a bunk bed, leaving her 'frozen with fear'.

The woman – using the name Anne – told the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) she was 'terrified', adding: 'I felt very dirty. It wasn't right, it wasn't proper.'

She wept as she told the hearing in Edinburgh that even now she could not bear to say Wilson's name.

She said: 'I was in bed and it was during the day... the only reason I can think why I would be in bed was I was unwell, as I had a lot of illnesses, including chicken pox.

'I was in the bedroom alone in the top bunk when I heard someone coming up the stairs.'

Anne said Wilson had told her to sit up and he had put his hand under the covers and began 'adult kissing' her.

Describing the aftermath of the incidents at Quarriers Village in Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire, Anne said: 'He did what he did and just went out of the room.'

Wilson was 61 when he was convicted of 15 charges including assault and sexual abuse following a trial at the High Court in Edinburgh in 2004.

The case involved eight victims, one of whom was Anne. Six were former Quarriers residents and two were former staff members.

Anne suffered a 'significant breakdown in health' and received psychiatric treatment after the trial. Wilson was jailed for seven-and-a-half years.

Another witness – using the name John – told the SCAI hearing he had gone into care at Overbridge in Glasgow, a Quarriers 'satellite' home.

He was admitted, aged six, before going on to Nazareth House in Aberdeen – another institution under investigation by the SCAI over abuse allegations.

Now a social worker, John said his housefather, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was a 'Jekyll and Hyde' character who was prone to an 'extreme' loss of temper.

He once rubbed soiled underwear into John's face – which left him 'almost choking' – and then made him clean it in a sink, the inquiry heard.

The man was said to have administered beatings using his hand, sometimes with such force that John would fall against a wall. John also described being left outteam side in the freezing cold.

If he tried to get back into the building, his housefather would hit him in the head, the inquiry was told.

John said: 'You could not feel your feet, it was so cold – you were not allowed back into the house. You were kept outside for hours.'

On another occasion, John said that he was forced to go to church despite suffering from severe whooping cough. When he had a coughing fit, his housemother, sitting behind him, punched him in the back, he said.

John said she then 'dragged' him out of the church and started hitting him as she shouted: 'How can you cough in the house of God?'

John said that in March this year he went back to Quarriers in a bid to retrieve some of his personal records, but was told this was not possible due to data protection.

He said he was 'shocked' when members of the 'safeguarding' told him that when they were young they had not enjoyed some of the privileges that had been available to Quarriers children in the past, including regular holidays, which they said had meant those children had been 'fortunate'.

A third witness – using the name Alison and born in 1962 – was admitted to Quarriers Village in 1968 and left in 1980. She said that there was 'no love or warmth' at the home.

She told of once being punched in the head by a female member of staff for failing to make up a bed properly. Alison also said that her head was struck off the iron railings of a cot.

She said: 'She was out of her depth. There was nobody there to check her, no checks and balances.'

The inquiry, before Lady Smith, continues.