

Man sexually assaulted by three men while at orphanage, inquiry hears

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A former orphanage resident has told an inquiry he was sexually assaulted by three men over a number of years during his time in care.

The witness, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was giving evidence to the Scottish Child Abuse in Inquiry in Edinburgh.

The inquiry heard he was admitted to Quarrier's Village in Renfrewshire before his first birthday in the mid-1940s and he stayed there until his mid-teens.

The late-19th century development consisted of dozens of orphan homes known as "cottages", which were run by a "house mother" and "house father".

It was heard on Wednesday the witness was abused by a man in the village – who he worked for from the age of around 13 – while in his shop.

He said: "His pants fell down, he said 'would you pull them up for me?'

"He would hold me, he would hug me, he would put his hands down on my buttocks.

"He would touch me there (on my genitals) as well. He would feel down there.

"It wasn't a one-off occasion."

He also told how he was taken on holiday alone to Arran by a church group member who had "taken a liking" to him.

It was heard the witness had gone to bed and woken up with the man lying naked beside him in bed.

His "house father" was also said to have abused him, but all he could recall was holding the genitals of the man, when he was aged around seven years old.

The witness also gave evidence about the physical abuse of other boys.

One incident, he said, saw a child die at home after receiving a beating from a teacher at the village's "school of hard knocks".

The inquiry heard the boy died as a result of a heart condition following the attack.

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Witness

Meanwhile, another former orphanage resident said he been left with physical and mental scars as a result of the abuse he suffered while at Quarrier's Village.

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He told how he had run away from the home on one occasion to see his mother and to escape the abuse.

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The witness said: "I had so many beatings, I couldn't take it any more – I was in so much pain all the time.

"You can only take so much in life – so many beatings... you fold up."

James Peoples QC, senior counsel to the inquiry, asked the witness about a statement he had submitted which said his time in care had left him frightened for all of his life.

The witness said: "You always wondered if you were right or wrong. I've questioned that for a long, long time."

The latest stage of the inquiry is examining the care given to children at establishments run by non-religious and voluntary organisations.

Those being examined in phase three are Quarrier's, Barnardo's and Aberlour.

The inquiry before Lady Smith continues.