



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Barnardo's workers jailed for crimes against children in care



Margaret Hewitt and Robert George Anderson.

Two former care workers, found guilty of abusing children at a Barnardo's home have been jailed for a total of 29 years. Margaret Hewitt, 69, formerly of Drain's Bay, Larne and Robert George Anderson, 46, from Ballycarry, but now living in England, were convicted of a catalogue of abuse at Belfast Crown Court in June but only sentenced recently.

Anderson was sentenced to 18 years in prison, after being found guilty of 17 charges committed against five children between January 1979 and June 1981. Hewitt was jailed for 11 years after being found guilty of 53 charges against eight children between December 1977 and June 1981. Most of the assaults took place at the Macedon home in Newtownabbey, on the outskirts of Belfast, more than 25 years ago.

Passing sentence, Mr Justice Weir said Hewitt and Anderson's crimes were "disgraceful". He criticised Barnardo's management for allowing unqualified people to look after young children. The judge said: "Making every possible allowance for the difference between residential social work standards then and now, such incompetence and neglect on the part of Barnardo's then management is difficult to comprehend."

Police are still looking for a third suspect in the abuse case, Colin McKeating. He left Northern Ireland and his present whereabouts are unknown.