

The Herald

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Teacher steps in to help clear youth in rape case

A teacher yesterday helped clear a youth who had been accused of rape by a schoolgirl.

Head art master Alistair Fleming, 48, went to the High Court in Glasgow to tell how he was once wrongly accused by the same girl of indecently touching her breasts.

“I knew she had lied about me and I put myself in the position of the accused and agreed to testify,” he told defending advocate Robert McCormack.

The teacher said he was scolding the girl in a room and never even laid a finger on her and was shocked to hear she had accused him of sexual impropriety.

Mr Fleming agreed with the advocate he had not claimed the privilege of the confidentiality he was entitled to in coming forward.

The jury, who also heard claims the girl fantasised about her sexual experiences to friends, found Mr Robert Gough, an 18-year-old fast-food shop worker, not guilty of rape.

He was in tears as he was greeted by his family outside and his mother, Irene, said: “That girl has put us all through a nightmare. I am taking legal advice to see if there is anything we can do about her.”

Mr Gough admitted starting to have sex with her last Christmas Eve behind a sports pavilion in Drumchapel, Glasgow, while they were sheltering from the rain after drinking Mad Dog and Buckfast with another teenage couple.

Mr Gough, of Bellsyde Avenue, Drumchapel, said he stopped when she told him to and was shocked when police charged him with rape a few hours later.

In her evidence, Miss X told Mr Raymond Docherty QC, prosecuting, she went with the accused and another teenage couple to an off-licence that night and they bought Mad Dog - a mixture of vodka and orange - and Buckfast wine.

Her parents had given her permission to stay the night with the other girl and they were sheltering from the rain at the pavilion.

She said that, when the other couple went round the side of the pavilion, the accused started kissing her then ripped down her jeans, tearing off the metal button at the top of the zip.

Despite her struggles, she claimed he started to have sex with her and she kept shouting for the other couple to help her but no-one came. On the way to the other girl's house, she told her she had been raped.

Asked about the incident with the teacher, the girl said she made a complaint after she thought he touched her chest while giving her a row. After a meeting with the head master, her mother, and a social worker, she realised she had made a mistake.

The other young couple denied hearing the girl cry out and said she seemed all right when they joined up again.

Miss X's girlfriend said that, after leaving the boys, Miss X told her she had been raped and asked her to lie and say she had tried to pull the accused away from her. She refused.

The girl agreed with Mr McCormack that Miss X had previously told her she had had sexual experiences and had miscarriages and she did not know whether to believe her or not. Miss X's mother said she had trouble controlling her daughter because she kept playing truant.

She was unaware of her daughter spreading false stories about her sexual experiences and said she had made a genuine mistake about the art teacher.

Mr Gough told Mr McCormack he had taken a lot of Buckfast that night but was not "really drunk".

He said Miss X started kissing him at the pavilion and undid the metal button and zip on her jeans.

Forensic tests showed no traces of semen on the girl or on her clothing and a doctor said she was still a virgin.

Mr McCormack suggested to the jury Miss X had torn the button off herself to back up her story

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