

My brother was not a paedophile

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HARRY Dickson was sent to prison after he was found guilty of raping a six-year-old girl.

In March 2007 the Appeal Court judges overturned his conviction.

Living back at home with his mother in Pennine View, Morecambe, he awaited his retrial in October where he planned to clear his name once and for all.

But in June he died from a heart attack. He was 55.

His family claim the stress of the two years he was forced to serve in prison caused his death.

Mr Dickson, a regular churchgoer, was jailed for 12 years by Preston Crown Court in May 2005 after being found guilty of 19 sexual offences against a child between 1989 and 1992.

But he won his appeal after it was ruled that the Crown Prosecution Service had failed to disclose significant medical and psychiatric reports from the defendant, now in her 20s, which they said should have been put before the jury at the trial.

The appeal had been shrouded in secrecy after judges ordered a blanket ban on media coverage.

The family of Mr Dickson, who had been working as a university porter and assistant senior tutor, have always protested his innocence.

They are now said to be planning to take official action over the case, which they claim was a miscarriage of justice.

His sister Marian Cowper believes the stress of the last three years led to his death.

"After the conviction everyone was so stunned, it was just horrendous," she said.

"It shouldn't have happened; one girl shouldn't have been able to do that, and the CPS should have been forced to give up the medical evidence. It was a total shambles.

"My brother died because of this; he had ischaemic heart disease, and stress played a great part in that.

"He was a caring, thoughtful man...a wonderful person and anyone who knew him knew that. I am proud to be Harry's sister."

Mrs Cowper, who lives in Surrey, said she now wants some answers about the way her brother's case was handled.

She plans to lobby MPs and will be making an official complaint against the CPS.

"I would like to see people who are caught lying prosecuted for it," she said.

"Hopefully this will never happen again because I don't want people to have to go through what we have – I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy."

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