

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

██████████

Support person present: Yes/No

1. My name is ██████████. My date of birth is ██████████ 1968. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before boarding school

2. My dad was ██████████, my mum is ██████████ and I had two younger brothers, ██████████ and ██████████. Dad had heart problems and died when I was nineteen. ██████████ was eighteen months younger than me and had Down's Syndrome. He has also passed away. ██████████ is four-and-a-half years younger than me.
3. I was born in the north of England, but my parents were both teachers and moved south to the Midlands when I was about four. We stayed in a place called ██████████ in North Shropshire and the family home has remained there ever since.
4. I had a happy upbringing, although I suppose there were challenges because of my dad's health and also because of ██████████'s difficulties. The world for people with Down's Syndrome and their families was very different in the 1970's to what it is now.
5. I went to ██████████ School ██████████ and when I was about thirteen, the deputy head brought it to the attention of my dad that Gordonstoun were advertising in the local education authority's newsletter that there were music scholarships available. I guess I was a talented musician as a kid, my main instrument was the 'cello, though I was also a pianist, and the musical education at Gordonstoun would be significantly different to what it was in the state sector.

6. Afterwards, my dad called me into a different room in the house and told me about the scholarship. I'd never heard of Gordonstoun before and dad spelled out the option and the opportunity that there was and I agreed to giving it a go. I didn't think I would get in and I didn't think it would be for me anyway, because I had this image that public schools were like mini versions of Oxford and Cambridge.
7. It was difficult because my dad was quite a forthright, left-wing trade unionist. He didn't believe in public school education and he was passionate about the state system. I take my hat off to him that he was willing to forget his principles so that his son could have a chance of a better education. I know that he took some stick in the staffroom at his school for that decision though.
8. After applying for the scholarship, I had to sit what I think was called a common entrance exam over the course of a week in my state school. The exam consisted of a number of tests each day, some of which I couldn't do, for example there was Latin, which we didn't study at my school. In the maths exam there were about ten questions and I could only answer one, because we hadn't done the rest in my school's curriculum. The only subject I could really go for was general studies, because the questions were asking for my opinion on various things.
9. After I had completed the common entrance exam I thought there was no way I could have passed, but I then had to go to Gordonstoun with my dad for an interview. That was in March 1982 and dad and I got the train and spent the day there.
10. Obviously, as I was applying for a music scholarship, I had to have an audition as part of that interview and it was everything I expected it to be. They didn't tell me who was interviewing me, but I later found out that one of them was Michael Mavor, the headmaster. I remember one of the things he asked me was what things I was passionate about and I talked about social injustice and institutionalised discrimination, mainly with my brother in mind, but also because I was fairly radically left-wing. I had inherited my father and his family's sense of duty, working class activism and solidarity.

11. It had all obviously got into my dad's head though, because even when we first got there, my dad had told me I needed to change how I spoke. He was also saying things such as "they'll be watching you eating", so that, effectively, I thought I was under scrutiny right from the word go. Dad obviously felt that I had to be somebody different and that I had to modify who I was to stand a chance of getting in.
12. Dad was interviewed that same day as well, by the headmaster, Michael Mavor and I know that part of that was to do with finance. Dad told me afterwards that Mr Mavor had established that he couldn't afford to send me there and confirmed that I would need a scholarship or nothing. Many years later, I found out that my parents also received financial help from other sources, including a family friend.
13. I remember sitting in a café in Inverness train station afterwards, reflecting with my dad and telling him I'd given it a go, but that I didn't think I was going to get in, however we got back home and within a week or so we got a letter saying I had been successful and that I had got my scholarship.
14. I was in the third form at the time and initially I thought I would have to repeat my third year at Gordonstoun, but instead Gordonstoun said I should go for the summer term and see how I got on. If all was well I could progress to the fourth form, or if I needed to catch up I could repeat the third form. That, of course, meant that I was going to start at Gordonstoun a matter of weeks later.

Gordonstoun

15. I attended Gordonstoun from April 1982 to 1987. I had two years in the Upper Six, which was called ■■■ at Gordonstoun, to enable me to repeat my A-levels at the school, because it was deemed that my performance had been affected by my dad's serious cardiovascular disease. He had at least one heart attack during my exam period.
16. It would be inaccurate to say that there weren't good times, but my school experience was in so many ways tainted because of my background and the social values that

came with it. I felt like an outsider, that I was intruding on some form of exclusive social club. That I had been let in, but only if I followed the rules and remembered where I came from.

17. I was expecting Gordonstoun to be different because it was a boarding school, but I wasn't expecting there to be such big gulf. It was akin, I suppose, to trying to get an education in another country, it was so different. Gordonstoun had been portrayed to us as a school that anybody could go to, but that just wasn't true. There were people there from lots of different countries, but they were all rich people. They were the children of people in power. It was as if the school were trying to fit the upstairs and downstairs of 'Downton Abbey' into one and it fundamentally didn't work.

Layout

18. Gordonstoun is situated about five miles outside Elgin, in the north of Scotland. The school is made up of a number of buildings, including boarding houses, a dining hall for the entire school, a chapel and buildings where we were taught, almost all of which were within the extensive grounds. The exception was one of the boarding houses, Duffus, which was just outside the school gate.
19. All the lessons were held in a mixture of buildings located throughout the estate. There were some old wooden Nissen huts for some and there was also a science block and a maths block. History and religious education took place within a building known as 'Round Square', which was also where one of the boarding houses was situated. It was an ancient building, shaped like a doughnut and also housed a staff room and a library.
20. There were five or six boys' boarding houses and two, then later three, girls' boarding houses. Gordonstoun House was the third form boys' boarding house when I first went there, but it then became a sixth form girls' house.
21. Some boarding houses were bigger than others. I think there would probably have been about sixty boys in Altyre, which was effectively in the same building as Bruce

House and was split in half. They are now in new buildings, but when I was there it was another Nissen hut. Each was a mirror of the other, with the housemasters living at either end and rooms for the assistant housemasters as well.

Structure

22. I think there were about six hundred pupils at Gordonstoun, a quarter or a third of which were girls and including boarders and a number of day pupils.
23. I stayed in Gordonstoun House for my first term, where there were also four sixth formers staying. They were the ones who were in charge. They were there to enforce discipline and one of them was the house captain. When I went back after the summer holidays I moved to Altyre House and stayed there for the remainder of my time at the school. There were also some third formers in Altyre and there were boys from all the successive years, including some from upper sixth.
24. My housemaster in Gordonstoun House was [REDACTED] and then it was James Fitzgibbon in Altyre for a year, before John Lofthouse took over. James Fitzgibbon was useless, but John Lofthouse was good and I'm actually still in touch with him. He was a down-to-earth Yorkshireman and so we had some commonality. He was really good in the respect that he was often seen around the house and he took a big interest in me.
25. Michael Mavor remained the headmaster for the duration of my time at Gordonstoun and he expected every teacher to do more than just teach. Some were housemasters, some were assistants, some would teach sports and some were involved with the 'services'. Services were fire service, coastguard, lifesaving and those sort of things and we were all expected to volunteer to join one. In fourth form there was lots of pre-services stuff, such as first aid, before you entered the services in your fifth form. I joined the fire service.
26. Each boarding house also had an assistant housemaster and there was a system whereby each boy was allocated a house tutor. Mine was a guy called John Pownall,

who again was really good. He was also very down-to-earth and would come in every now and again to see how I was doing, because he, like the other house tutors, didn't live there. John Pownall was my house tutor throughout my time in Altyre and he too was very good.

27. I think the house tutors' role was probably for both our education and our pastoral care, although the vast majority of John Pownall's involvement with me was academic. I guess it came down to the individual how much time a house tutor would spend in the house. Some would see their tutees and leave, whereas others, one being [redacted], would spend all evening in the house, sitting, speaking and having laughs with the boys.

Culture

28. As soon as I arrived at Gordonstoun, I was made aware that there was an age hierarchy amongst the pupils. The more senior you were, the more you had to be obeyed. If you answered back to a senior, you were potentially asking for trouble and to be picked upon. This system evolved into doing jobs or running errands. I remember being told by seniors at breakfast to get milk for their table. If you ignored the request you were putting yourself at risk and that was a relatively minor errand.
29. That hierarchy was unofficially enforced, it wasn't written down that you had to obey kids who were older than you, but it followed me all the way through my time at Gordonstoun. If you were in the fourth year you were expected to discipline the third formers. Fifth years were expected to discipline the third and fourth formers and so on.
30. Prefects were called colour bearers and were all in their sixth form. They had been appointed by the headmaster and they all wore a little purple ribbon on their chests. The head prefect was known as the guardian of the school. The way Gordonstoun would put it would be that they had been appointed to influence positively the upbringing of the other pupils, but that was borderline enforced discipline. They could tell you what to do and you had to follow what they said.

31. When I first got to Gordonstoun Prince Edward was the guardian of the school, the head colour bearer. It seemed such a coincidence that he had been given that role and there was a bit of me that thought it was not just about him being an exemplary student, it was about who he was.
32. I remember getting into trouble with one sixth former in particular when I was not long at Gordonstoun. He had been asking me to do things and I told him where to go. That hadn't been my state school experience, which had been much more egalitarian. He looked at me with a very bemused expression and other boys told me I couldn't say that.
33. Gordonstoun had this habit of everyone calling each other by their surnames all the time. Even the staff did it. Unless you were friends with somebody, you were only referred to by your surname and that just seemed to depersonalise you. In my state school we called each other by our first names and I found it odd that being called by your first name in Gordonstoun was the exception.

First day

34. There wasn't really any explanation from the staff as to what was expected of me, or how I was to behave when I first arrived at Gordonstoun. I was expected to learn most of the idiosyncrasies that were part of life there from the other boys. Those included various behaviours, including one that was totally alien to me, which was that you stood up whenever a teacher or any guest came into a room. I didn't do that initially because that had not been part of my experience and I remember being forcefully told to do so by other pupils.
35. The big difference for me was all the rules from the other kids and right from the start I felt like I was like somebody trying to wear the wrong clothes. I just didn't seem to fit in and my first night at Gordonstoun was probably one of the worst nights I've ever had.

Daily routine

36. There were three dormitories in Gordonstoun House and there would have been ten or twelve boys in mine, all sleeping in bunk beds. Between each bunk bed was a desk, which was halved with the boy in the bunk on the other side. You also had a locker in that room for most of your clothes and you had a locker downstairs for your sports kit.
37. At first, boys in Altyre House slept in dormitories of eight to ten and as they got older and became seniors they moved into bedsit study rooms. This is, I guess, where the sham of the whole thing came out. I remember being shown one of the bedsit studies when I went for the interview and somebody told me this was what I would get. They didn't tell me that I would only get it when I was in my sixth form and actually I would be in a dormitory when I first went.
38. We were woken in the morning by one of the senior boys and the whole school immediately had to go and do morning run. The morning run was round part of the south lawn and, irrespective of the weather, we were made to do it just in shorts.
39. After morning run everyone went back to their house for a wash or a shower, before getting dressed, carrying out whatever house duty we might each have been allocated and then going for breakfast in the dining hall. After breakfast every school day started with what was called chapel, what I had been used to calling assembly. The whole school would go to that and then afterwards there were lessons.
40. At the start and the end of every term there was what was called a 'flag service' held in the chapel. Effectively this was a special service where the headmaster would talk to us about the school's expectations for the term and a flag would be given to the guardians to hoist on the top of the school.
41. There was a break in the morning and then another at lunchtime and then at least one lesson after lunch, although that varied. Lessons stopped about 2:00 pm and then, depending on the day, there were a whole series of activities that you had to participate

in. Two days a week there were games and once you got into the senior system there was services on a Wednesday.

42. As I was a musician, I had orchestra practice two days a week after games and so I suppose I was busier than a lot of the other pupils. I was also involved in duet and trio ensembles with other music scholars under the supervision of a teacher. It was a big commitment for me.
43. The services and my music commitments took us up to evening meal, which I think was at 6:00 pm. They called it supper, whereas I would call it tea and it was a big meal that would last an hour, after which prep would start. I didn't know what prep was at first, because I had been used to homework.
44. Prep lasted for an hour-and-a-half, until 8:30 pm and was carried out in your boarding house in strict silence. It was supervised in Gordonstoun House by a sixth former and in Altyre by several of the senior boys. After 8:30 pm you had more house duties to complete and then you had free time until 9:30 pm when we had to prepare for bed. There were no staff on during the night, the dorms were regulated, regimented and disciplined by the sixth formers.

Mealtimes/Food

45. Initially, each house went to eat in the main dining hall at a particular time, because it wasn't possible to feed all six hundred students at the same time. The food was alright, I can't complain, really. We got three substantial meals a day, although if you didn't like something it was tough, you didn't get anything else.

Washing/bathing

46. It was expected that you showered in the morning and we did so in communal showers. There were no cubicles and there was no supervision. It wasn't so bad in Gordonstoun House because all the boys were much the same age and the sixth

formers never showered with us, but in Altyre House there were boys from thirteen to eighteen all showering together.

Clothing/uniform

47. Mum and dad were given a big list of clothes that I had to take with me, all of which had to be purchased from an Edinburgh firm called Aitken and Niven. There was absolutely everything on that list, including things such as what you wore for sport and what you wore every day during lessons. There was also something called the 'going out' uniform, which was different from the ordinary uniform and consisted of a shirt, tie and blazer. You were expected to wear the going out uniform whenever you weren't on school grounds.
48. Gordonstoun allowed you to wear your own clothes on Saturdays after morning lessons and after chapel service on Sunday morning. This could and did become a means of demonstrating affluence and supposed style. There was definitely a Gordonstoun look for both boys and girls and it was expensive and exclusive.
49. The clothes I wore came from local, rather than high street, shops. I remember as I got older that I managed to persuade my parents to get me things from 'C&A', including my own jacket. Up until then, the only coat I had was the school duffle coat. I also wore football shirts, because that was how boys my age at home dressed and I thought it was normal. At Gordonstoun, it was anything but and as a result of all this I was targeted not just as unfashionable, but as poor.

Leisure time

50. Leisure time was organised to the extent that on Saturday afternoons, for example, if you were good enough to represent the school in rugby union, hockey or cricket, you played then. I was good enough and played both rugby and cricket for the school and had some free time afterwards. If you weren't good enough you had a bit more free time.

51. The school obviously thought it wasn't a good thing for kids to be left to their own devices all weekend though, so there were attempts made, particularly during the fourth form, to do some organised activities. This was good in the sense that it resurrected my passion for football, because football just wasn't played at Gordonstoun. Eventually, during my time at the school, there was a school football team and I was part of it.
52. If you wanted to go into Elgin to shop or to go to the cinema, you were allowed out on a Saturday afternoon, however when I realised you had to wear the going out uniform I avoided doing so as much as possible. Gordonstoun kids stood out a mile and I knew mixing with local kids on the street just wouldn't work.

Schooling

53. It quickly became clear after I started at Gordonstoun that academically there was a massive disconnect between the common entrance exam I had taken to get in and the level of teaching. Gordonstoun was obviously not a school for which there was much semblance of academic pedigree. I had thought after sitting that exam that I was miles behind in maths, but actually I was miles ahead. We had been doing things in the state school that weren't even being thought about at Gordonstoun. I couldn't understand why the exam had been so difficult and hadn't borne any relation to what I was being taught.
54. I remember telling my dad and I think he possibly started to consider at that point whether Gordonstoun was actually what it had set out to be. Latterly, towards the end of his life and my leaving Gordonstoun, my dad was actually very disillusioned with the school.
55. My dad and I had got it into our heads that Gordonstoun was going to be not just a better music education, but that the teachers would be better quality too. As it turned out, the vast majority of them did not, I believe, have a teaching qualification. Some might have a first-class degree in their subjects, but they were not qualified to teach.

56. I felt under scrutiny right from the start and academically I wondered whether I would be good enough, or whether I was going to have to repeat my third year. What I found really unfair was that there were exams at the end of the third form, which included everything the pupils had been taught the previous year. I hadn't been there for two terms of it, but the only help I got was being told to borrow someone's book and swat up on what I'd missed.
57. That being said, in my junior years, I regularly performed well in internal examinations. I got high marks and, whilst proud of my achievements, I quickly found out that excellence in the classroom could be, and was, a reason for some to bully.
58. As the school is just a mile from the coast, a lot of stuff was coast-orientated and we had to study basic seamanship as part of the school curriculum, however I had missed all the third form stuff. In the fourth form there was a whole week of seamanship when every day we had to cycle to Hopeman, which is a couple of miles away on the coast. If you didn't have a bike you had to borrow one.
59. The school actually employed a sea captain and a bosun to be his assistant and during that week you would do seamanship and go out on boats in the morning. This was something that was totally out of my comfort zone. I wasn't aware then, but I now know that I have had problems with my mental health since childhood and that I have had autism since birth and I found it very challenging. It wasn't just being out on the boat, it was tying the right knots and similar things like that. We were expected to have a certain level of knowledge, but because I had missed it in the third form it was even more difficult for me.
60. When I first turned up and was told I needed to go in the boat, I can remember being harangued by the captain. I'd never been in a boat like that before and he told me to put the fender out. I didn't know what he meant and replied "sorry, what?". Possibly because I didn't say something like "sorry sir, I don't know what you mean", he lambasted me and made a fool of me for not knowing what a fender was used for. It was very alien and fuelled the feelings of vulnerability and inadequacy I was already suffering.

61. Musically, I think I was far ahead of most of the other pupils at Gordonstoun. As part of my music scholarship, Gordonstoun offered me the opportunity to be taught by people who were head of 'cello at the Royal Scottish Academy and the Royal College of Music in London. They gave me master classes, because that was the level I was at, and attending them meant I had to go out of school on my own, wearing the going out uniform, and make my own way. One of my teachers preferred to teach me at her home, which was at Spean Bridge and in the middle of nowhere. I had to get a bus to Inverness and another bus down the side of Loch Ness. It took hours.
62. I did get quality music teaching, albeit not within the school, however, and I blame myself for this, because Gordonstoun was based on trust, I was trusted to practice and I did not. If I had remained at home, my dad would have been on my back making sure I practiced, but nobody did that at Gordonstoun. In due course, that was what let me down in terms of my musical education.
63. Ultimately, I never got an 'A' at my O-Levels, or my A-levels and I think I was the first pupil to actually repeat their sixth form at Gordonstoun. Previously people who had failed their A-levels had gone to a fee paying college in Edinburgh, nobody had repeated their A-level at Gordonstoun. Michael Mavor, the headmaster, had obviously rationalised that my dad's illness had impacted on me and I should therefore be given a second chance, however I think my dad was very concerned when he learned I was going to have to repeat that year whether the school was going to keep subsidising me, although they did.
64. As a relevant addendum, when I did return to repeat my A-levels, a teacher made a comment in one of the first classes I attended. She said something along the lines of "unless you put the effort in, you'll be returning to repeat a year and you don't want to do that". I thought she was referring directly to me and that had a significant impact on my self-esteem.

Sporting Activities

65. Gordonstoun, like most public schools, focused on rugby union as a sport for boys, which was very different from my state school, where both rugby and soccer were at least equal partners as winter and spring term sports. Prowess on a rugby field at Gordonstoun could and did give you some degree of credibility, both to teachers and to fellow students.
66. Luckily, I was adept at most sports and therefore it wasn't an issue for me in terms of performing on a pitch, however, my cultural and, to my mind, totally normal, immersion in football, would lead some to see this as being unusual.

Trips and holidays

67. You went on a cruise on the school yacht twice at Gordonstoun, going in and around the Scottish islands on the west coast and living on the boat for a whole week. By the time my turn came in the lower sixth, there was a new captain, who was very much better than his predecessor. He was more supportive and appreciative of people's efforts.
68. On the last night of my cruise we were docked at a town somewhere on the west coast and were allowed to go ashore, although most of us had no money to spend. We were docked next to a Royal Navy frigate and their captain allowed us to go aboard and I remember being in a large room onboard and being supplied with loads of beer. As this appeared to have been sanctioned by our Captain, whom I seem to remember was there as well, I didn't see any harm in terms of breaking school rules, and the beer was free.
69. I drank too much and was sick overnight. I remember leaning over the side trying to vomit and actually lying on the quayside the next morning suffering the effects of a hangover. I, for one, was scared of repercussions, despite the circumstances and it was only afterwards that I was conscious of the dangers involved. I wondered, given the state I was in, what if I, or anyone else, had fallen overboard. There was no sense of responsibility, care and supervision.

Religious instruction

70. I was in the chapel a lot, but only because the music department was based there, however I still can't quite work out how religion worked at Gordonstoun. There was a school chaplain, but I don't think it was taken very seriously and I seem to remember the headmaster taking us for religious education sometimes.
71. Everyone had to go to chapel on a Sunday and if you didn't go and it was noticed, you could be punished. We all had to wear our going out uniform and services were Christian focussed, when we all sung hymns and collectively prayed. There was special provision for Catholic pupils to go to the local Catholic Church, but considering the school had pupils of practically every religious persuasion, no allowances were made for them.

Work

72. Every junior boy was given a menial house duty to complete both in the morning, before breakfast, and also after prep, before you went to bed. You could be sweeping floors, or cleaning litter up from outside and it was always supervised by the sixth formers who were on duty. It didn't last very long, but it could be difficult because, for example, there weren't enough brooms. If you weren't quick in getting a broom you could be waiting around until somebody else had finished their job.
73. There were school and house cleaners who came in every day, so I could never see the point. I think it was possibly a way of trying to inculcate a sense of responsibility for our surroundings in us.
74. As a member of the school's fire service, I was required to actively participate in fire calls. Very soon after passing my initial training, I began to experience disturbing thoughts and feelings of real fear when I heard the fire siren or a bleeper, which was the signal for you to run as fast as you could to the fire station and respond to a call. I can't recall exactly what happened physiologically, only that mentally I wasn't able to respond quickly enough to a situation that I hadn't prepared myself for.

75. I did run, but when I got there I was in no fit state to take on the challenge of being a member of the fire crew. I thought it was hyperventilation, but I suspect that I experienced what I now know to be panic attacks. I attended around seven fires, each one of which affected me mentally to such an extent that I find it hard to believe how I actually did cope. As a result, I was 'stood down' in my first year of sixth form and spent the rest of my service helping new and potential recruits in their training.

Healthcare

76. There was what was called a sanatorium at Gordonstoun, which was the sick bay and was known as the 'san'. The san was a specific block, where you could go any day and wait in a queue if you were not well and wanted to see a doctor, like you would in a GP's reception. Also in this same block were four or five mini wards, with a kitchen area at the top and one side being for girls and the other for boys. I remember being in one of these rooms after I contracted German measles.
77. There was no dental treatment whatsoever, however at the start of every term you had to report to the san to be examined. I think that was by a doctor, although I'm not sure. A doctor would examine you at other times as well, although I'm not sure of the frequency. I recall boys telling me that the doctor would feel your testicles, however I can't remember that happening to me.
78. We were all weighed and measured at the start of every term by one of the two nurses that the school employed. Those figures were recorded and were part of our termly report, but I've no idea what they did with that information. I lost a lot of weight when I was at the school, which was recorded, but nobody did anything about trying to find out why.
79. My dad wrote diaries over the last three or four years of his life, which covered that time when I was at school. I looked at them fairly recently and he referred to my 'mystery illness', which I now know was depression and autism. Whilst I was assessed physically as a consequence of my experiences with the fire service, and I seem to

remember having an Electroencephalogram (EEG), which I presume was to deal with any suspicions of epilepsy, no-one thought to actually find out whether I had a mental illness. It didn't occur to anyone whether there might be a psychological reason or underlying condition. I consider this now to be serious neglect.

80. There should have been, to my mind, more enquiry as to my mental health, but there was not. I was lucky because one of the house tutors, [UI ██████████] who was also my ██████████, knew I was out of my comfort zone, however the focus was not on mental health, it was on physical wellbeing.
81. I suspect the school's attitude was of the time, but the whole nature of life at Gordonstoun was not conducive to somebody with mental health problems. That was the fundamental clash and there were remarks all the time in my school reports that I needed to go out of my comfort zone and explore new areas. It wasn't that I didn't want to, I just couldn't. That was recognised, but there was no support for it.

Birthdays and Christmas

82. You kept quiet about birthdays, probably because birthdays could be an excuse for someone to be targeted for bullying. To be fair, I would keep quiet about my birthday when I was in the state system as well, because boys would take great pleasure in thrusting somebody's head down a toilet and that sort of thing. My birthday tended to fall during ██████████ break, but other boys wouldn't say anything either. We were always at home over Christmas.

Bed Wetting

83. I don't recall anybody having a problem with bed wetting, or with sleepwalking at any time I was at Gordonstoun.

Family contact

84. Every week we were supposed to write home to our families and, as a junior, all the pupils had what was called a 'training plan', which was a little yellow book in which we had to record having done so. There were also questions such as 'Have you cleaned your shoes today?', or 'Have you eaten all your meals?' and we had to tick each one whenever we had completed it. I tended to write on a Sunday. None of our letters were checked at all, we were trusted to write and send our letters ourselves.
85. Each house had a payphone that we could use if we wanted. We could phone our parents, or we could use it to phone between houses if we wanted. Obviously, if there are sixty kids all trying to use one payphone, that was difficult though. I usually phoned on a Sunday and often did so at a time that coincided with the end of whatever football match was playing in England, so that my dad could tell me what the score was.
86. My parents owned a caravan and used a caravan park in Aberlour as their base when they attended open days at Gordonstoun during the summer term. On the Friday evening it was the custom to allow pupils to join their families for a meal, which, for the vast majority of Gordonstoun pupils, meant dinner at a local hotel or restaurant. For me, it meant joining my mum, dad and two brothers at the caravan for something home-cooked, which was used as a basis to tease me, to set me out as different. It made me feel inadequate and my only defence was to somehow exhibit a bizarre sense of self-ridicule. Only then could I gain some element of controlling the narrative. It used to make me feel deeply ashamed.
87. In my sixth form my dad actually had a coronary [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I had to go in the ambulance with him from Gordonstoun to Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin and halfway there the ambulance had to stop because my dad went into cardiac arrest. John Lofthouse, my housemaster in Altyre, had taken my mum and brothers into his house to look after them, however another teacher then took my mum to the hospital and they were following the ambulance when it stopped.
88. It was horrific, but because that had happened at Gordonstoun there was a little bit of extra care for me afterwards. Somehow, however, that didn't translate into considering I needed mental health support.

89. Other than the end of term reports, pastoral care and contact with my family depended on the quality of the teacher. John Lofthouse went far beyond the call of duty in terms of keeping my family up to date with me. He realised that, not only was my situation with regard to the alien environment I was in an issue, but because my dad was going through all the horrific issues with his health, he wanted to reassure my dad that things were going well, or that things were not going badly. He phoned and letters went to and from them.
90. There was also contact between the headmaster, Michael Mavor, and my dad. I think Mr Mavor also recognised that Gordonstoun was not a natural environment for me and that I needed a bit of guidance, particularly when I went back to school after my dad had the coronary [REDACTED] Perhaps some of the communications between them had been about my scholarship, but I am also aware that my dad had become quite disillusioned with the school by then and I think Mr Mavor was possibly trying to make out things were better than they actually were.

Visitors and external Inspections

91. The school had various visitors every so often and I'm not sure who they were most of the time, although I remember some were politicians. When you got more senior, from fifth form onwards, not only did you have a house job, you also had a school duty and one of those was to show visitors around the school.
92. The only reason I can remember this is because I was asked to take round a Conservative peer, who had come to visit. I think the headmaster, Michael Mavor, chose me deliberately because my political persuasion would have been the complete opposite of this man's. Mr Mavor made some point afterwards about my managing to avoid any political discourse during the visit.
93. I guess some of those visitors might have been old boys or old girls of the school, I'm not sure, but certainly there was no inspection of the school as far as I can recall. I

believe there was no compulsion for a private school to be regulated in that sort of way.

Running away

94. I wanted to run away from Gordonstoun and I used to dream about doing so, but I never did. I do know that people did and I know someone who has since published a book about her experiences, in which she recalls running away. That happened while I was at the school, although I didn't know about it at the time. I don't know what action the school might have taken on her return, although I would like to have thought that the school would have treated it as a cry for help and not a disciplinary matter.
95. I did skive things that I didn't like. One of the things you were supposed to do at least once in your sixth form years was attend the headmaster's dance, which was Scottish reels. I was unable to learn all the different dances, which I now know was because of my autism, so I skived it. I should have got in trouble, but I didn't.

Discipline

96. There was formal discipline and there were always things that you knew would run you the risk of being punished, for example if you shirked lessons. I don't think I ever did, so I'm not certain what the punishment might have been, however it could have been lines, or something like that.
97. Another formal punishment was detention, which was on a Saturday night and usually seemed to be held in the maths block. I got detention a couple of times and it was usually given for not doing your prep, or talking when you were not supposed to, like in chapel.
98. Formal discipline was dished out by teachers and staff and also included corporal punishment. I think the headmaster had the sanction of the cane, although I can't recall any pupils actually getting the cane. The only reason I can remember it was because around 1982 the BBC did a documentary on Gordonstoun called 'Fit for a

king' and in that Prince Edward talked about the value of corporal punishment. There were a lot of headlines about it at the time.

99. There were also 'walking punishments' and I know kids who were told to walk into Elgin, which is about five miles away. If you were given a walking punishment you were trusted to do it, there was never a teacher at the other end to make sure that you did. I think a lot of the time pupils did actually do it, but I don't know why. To me I couldn't understand why anybody would complete a punishment that wasn't being enforced, but that was the Gordonstoun ethos.
100. There was obviously the ultimate punishment of being expelled and down from that was being what was called 'rusticated', which was being sent home for a week or so. I never thought being sent home was much of a punishment. Other serious punishments were issued for things like smoking or drinking.
101. The headmaster would post details of any expulsions or rustications on a section of the school noticeboard. The reason would be put up as well, although not in specific detail as to what had happened. It would say a particular guy had been expelled for having sexual relations with somebody, or just a blanket term that someone had been expelled for bullying.
102. The colour bearers could enforce mini forms of punishment, such as what was called 'penalty drill', which involved running around Gordonstoun House for however long they decreed. It seemed to me that those punishments were issued on a whim and you didn't necessarily need to have done anything wrong.
103. It was all part of that age hierarchy and these colour bearers were the top echelons of the school. Some colour bearers bought into the rationale and the ethos behind it and were good at the role. They didn't abuse the position of authority that they had been given, but some did.
104. There was also informal discipline, which were the punishments given to pupils by other pupils senior to them. Some of those punishments would have been officially

sanctioned, for example if they had been issued by a colour bearer, but some would not have been. You could be punished for wanting to go to the toilet during prep and prep time in Altyre House, was quite bad. There had to be complete silence and if you did ask to go to the loo the sixth former would, almost always, refuse you permission and tell you to wait until prep finished at 8:30 pm.

105. The training plan that all the pupils had also included details of any punishments we had been given and it was trusted that we would each complete our little yellow books truthfully. If a punishment wasn't supervised we were trusted that we would still do it and enter it in our books. I think the argument was that if you didn't do what you had been told to do, you'd feel guilty and that guilt would be a far bigger punishment.

Abuse at Gordonstoun

Peer

106. I was made to feel inferior in so many ways at Gordonstoun and it was blatant. My clothing, my haircut, my hair colour, my accent, my social norms, my political interest and my possessions were all targeted. There were also more subtle approaches in the form of exclusive language and the relaying of holiday experiences. I constantly felt that my life experiences and culture, of which I was so defiantly proud, were ridiculed and used as an object to belittle, harass and bully me. I couldn't compete even if I had wanted to. I suspect that many realised this and enjoyed the inflated sense of superiority that they felt they merited.
107. Fagging was endemic within the school while I was there, however I don't want to name any of the boys who were the main perpetrators. I don't think there was anybody within any of the boarding houses who was not involved in some way, either as the victim of fagging, or as the perpetrator, proving that they were tough.
108. Fagging could be lots of things, like at breakfast in the morning somebody would point out that there was no milk on the table and you would be told to go and get some. You

just did, because if you didn't there might be some retribution, such as specific targeting for belittlement, or perennial repetition of the same activity, like press ups.

109. I learned from my very first day at Gordonstoun that you did what the seniors told you to do. It was routinely part of the system that you were expected at the start that you would be the victim of fagging and that was abused. People would say that when you were in the fifth or the sixth form you would be able to do the same. It was almost like if you put up with it at the start, you would be able to reap the benefits in later years.
110. There wasn't a time when you were in the boarding house, or during the school day as a junior pupil, that was safe. Even into the early part of the night you could still be targeted and you could have your bed flipped over, or something like that.
111. During chapel services, every house was allocated a section, Altyre's being on the far left as you looked outwards. In my junior years, one student who was in the year above me perfected the habit of hooking your school jumper to a peg in front of him as he sat behind you, which effectively meant that you couldn't stand up or leave.
112. This happened to me on at least one occasion and I remember being ridiculed. I wanted to avoid the attention of teachers who may have thought I was being disrespectful in not standing, but most of all was the sense of panic that I felt and my mental state, already afflicted by illness, just couldn't cope. Automatically, I wanted to pull myself clear, but that would mean ruining my school jumper and I only had two and knew that a replacement would have to be bought by my parents. I didn't want that to happen because I knew money was scarce.
113. In the end I tried to threaten the guy, which only increased his amusement. It was a horrible, belittling experience, but you couldn't tell anyone, you just had to accept it. From then onwards I always looked for where he was sitting before taking a seat myself. I also remember pulling my jumper tightly around me to prevent it being tugged.

114. The TV room in Altyre was another vulnerable place. There seemed to be a feeling amongst some seniors that it was 'neeggish', which was a Gordonstoun word with an unclear, but always negative, meaning, to spend your time watching television. People would sometimes voice that clearly when entering the room. Seniors would also turn channels over without consulting anyone else, so if you were looking forward to watching something in particular, you sometimes worried as to whether you were going to be allowed to do so.
115. Another common and degrading experience was having your chair tipped over from behind, something that could also, of course, be quite painful. Certain people were known to be 'chair tippers' and that happened to me at least once, to my recollection. My answer to that was to go and sit in the corner so nobody could see me.
116. There was a group of people before I went to Gordonstoun called the 'Altyre mafia', who had become almost legendary in house culture and folklore. From what I remember being told, they were a particularly nasty group of individuals who almost terrorised those they bullied. They must have been horrible, brutal, to have been given that name.
117. It seemed to me that the boys in Altyre considered that they had to keep the legacy of the Altyre mafia going and almost had to live up to that culture and practice of bullying. They had to perpetuate a system and belief that the boys in Altyre were tough and that this was what they were expected to do. It was clear that there was also an expectation that when you yourself were in a senior position, you would carry on the culture of dominance already well established. In other words, you were expected to bully and if you didn't, you once more set yourself up to be targeted.
118. This wasn't just a case of gaining acceptance amongst your peers and those still senior to you in age, it was in many ways, self-preservation. You bullied to avoid being bullied. This meant that I had to do things that were very uncomfortable, to avoid being targeted as weak. I had to appear and act tough. I had to pick on people myself, which I did. I had to go along with what was happening, to pretend to buy into this prevailing culture, to maintain this damaging façade.

119. Supervision of the menial tasks the junior boys had to do around the house was a big opportunity for the sixth former on duty to bully, if they wanted to. There were stupid situations, such as being told to sweep a corridor that had already been swept. My tactic was to do my duty as soon as possible after prep and to be seen to be doing it, in the hope that the sixth former on duty would acknowledge this.
120. You were always scared of getting things wrong in the house, which was particularly prevalent when carrying out your respective house duty. Sometimes, at the whim of the senior concerned, or if your tasks were not done to their satisfaction, you had to repeat the task even though there was nothing left to clean, pick up or tidy, which meant that this became a time for random bullying.
121. You had to effectively play the system by keeping your head down, doing what you were told, not drawing attention to yourself, not complaining and not answering back. You had to complete your tasks as thoroughly as you could and in some cases you had to pre-empt whatever you might be told to do. I didn't want somebody on my back for not doing my house duty, so I would do it before I was told and as quickly as I could. I didn't want someone telling me I still hadn't done my duty and then risk being punished. Nevertheless, this didn't mean that you couldn't be targeted. It was really a no-win situation.
122. I remember an occasion in my fourth year, when I would have been fourteen years old, and had forgotten that I had sent a pair of school trousers to the laundry. I looked everywhere for them in my boarding house, becoming increasingly panic-stricken as I knew I only had two pairs and that losing one meant asking my parents to pay for a replacement. In my desperation, I told my housemaster who immediately instigated a house search.
123. A house search was almost universally dreaded, particularly by those who had illicit things that they didn't want a teacher or a senior pupil to find, and this was the first time I'd come across the experience. As a result, I was targeted.

124. There was a particular place in Altyre that was called 'under the clock', which was an area located where the main corridors crossed. At prep, the senior pupil in charge would plonk his desk there so that he could see in three different directions and if anyone did insist in coming out of any of the rooms, he would see them.
125. In Altyre House and also in Bruce House, the hot water pipes ran the length of the corridor, along the ceiling and past where this clock was and they weren't covered. I never had to do it, but I know boys who were told to hold onto this pipe and walk with their hands along its length. It was all ad hoc and dependent on which senior was in charge whether such a punishment was used, but the other seniors would all watch boys do it.
126. In my junior years, between third and fifth forms, you could hear things happening in the dorm during the night and you just tried to keep your head down and pretend to be asleep. In my mind at the time, I would then be less of a target for bullying. I could hear anything that people said about me, of course, but then I wouldn't be able to react. I recognised that if I did so, people would realise I wasn't asleep and I would then become even more of a target.
127. You were made to feel scared because of what you saw and heard, even if you were not the victim or intended target. I am well aware that some people had terrible experiences, but you knew that if you did anything to make yourself stand out, you then became the replacement quarry. I tried at times to say nothing and to keep out of some people's way, but it was difficult if not impossible in a boarding house situation. Just walking down the corridor at the wrong time could make you a potential target.
128. One of the things I now do is I am a holocaust researcher and when you hear the survivor testimonies of the camps, there were similar patterns to what I recognised from Gordonstoun. As an example, survivors of camps would say that one of the things that they did in order to survive was to not draw attention to themselves. They had to do exactly what they were told and not make eye contact and Gordonstoun was like that as well.

129. If you drew attention to yourself at Gordonstoun, either by complaining when someone asked you to do something, or if you didn't jump to the task straight away, you could potentially be picked on again and again. My approach, when I realised this was what was happening, was to do what I was told and not make eye contact. I remember being so anxious on many an occasion when walking past the clock and seeing lots of seniors sitting there having a laugh after prep, that I would go past very quickly and keep my eyes down so that I didn't make eye contact.
130. It became clear to me that the shower room in Altyre was potentially a dangerous place. Being aware and seeing how juniors were treated led to a wish either to spend as little time there as possible, or to not go at all. As there was a surge of use in the morning after the run, it was then that I felt I could be targeted. However, individual pupils were often targeted at other times if their use of the shower coincided with that of a bully, so no time appeared to be safe. As a result, in my junior years, I did my best to avoid being there and went unclean a lot of the time.
131. The result of this was not just feeling degraded because I knew I wasn't taking proper care of myself, it meant that I became a target because of body odour or unclean hair. The bullying was entirely verbal but was just as damaging.
132. As well as the communal showers in Altyre, there was also a cold shower, which was another Gordonstoun thing. Cold showers were seen as being good for you, so kids could be made to have a cold shower and not just a quick one. You never knew when you could be the one that was picked on to have a cold shower.
133. Latterly, when I became aware that not showering was affecting my physical health, I tried to have a shower at times when nobody else was there, however there was no safe time. One of the house bullies could come in while you were the only one there and he could make you have a cold shower, or belittle you. That didn't happen to me, but I was aware of it happening to others.

134. Everything was about finding the best way to survive and so mentally for me, to a mind that was already ill, the anxiety I felt was enormous. The only time I probably felt safe was during my music lessons, because I knew I wouldn't be bullied there.
135. Even during classes you couldn't get away from it, because some teachers would do some horrible things, for example some of them would take the fun out of the way that you spoke and I spoke differently to the vast majority of people at Gordonstoun. The only people who were different from that refined English accent were the Scottish pupils, but even then they spoke with a posh accent. Teachers would speak in a particular way too and I was always conscious that I might be ridiculed for the way that I spoke.
136. There was no respite from the name calling and the psychological abuse, which began as soon as I got on the school train. The school organised party travel on trains at the beginning and end of each term. Sometimes, this would entail the reservation of specific carriages on a routine, scheduled service, on other occasions it involved the hire of a whole train. In my early school years, I travelled from Crewe to Inverness and Elgin on a service that ran from London Euston, which meant that by the time the train arrived at Crewe, the Gordonstoun section was already packed. I still remember the nervous apprehension on the morning of travel, feelings that intensified once we were on the platform waiting for the train to arrive.
137. As part of my luggage involved my 'cello, I stood out as soon as I boarded the train and entered the carriage. I remember listening for name calling, scrutinising people's faces for anything adverse. I had to put my 'cello somewhere, but the difficulty was where without somehow inconveniencing others. There was usually a member of staff that travelled with everyone and he would be a source of initial help, but he couldn't stay with me and as soon as he went, my anxiety levels increased. I remember feeling that I just wanted to be anywhere else. I felt immensely vulnerable, anticipating verbal attack at any point.
138. When I was home and in my sixth form at Gordonstoun, I used to take the train to Liverpool to watch Everton and I took on the identity of a Liverpudlian. Liverpool in

the eighties was the exact opposite of Gordonstoun. It was raw, the local government were militant left-wing and it was working class.

139. I was watching football with lads my own age who spoke with a Liverpool accent and who were just like me, so I perfected that accent. I dressed the same way as others around me at matches. I couldn't pretend to be affluent, or materialistic and neither did I want that, so I chose to be the exact opposite. I became whom I felt most comfortable being, a scouse football fan.
140. That put-on accent wasn't massively different from the way I spoke anyway, but still people would pick on me for speaking differently. I would be told to speak properly by teachers, who were frowning on me, but what I also found difficult was my dad frowned on me too. I remember him commenting on my use of language being slovenly and my reaction was to ask him if he wanted me to speak like these people at Gordonstoun.
141. By that time I was less susceptible to being physically bullied, however, the verbal side, the psychological patterns, continued. Even when I became house helper, which was the head of house, for a term, I never thought that I truly deserved the accolade. I thought I was chosen in order to give me some confidence, which was something that I always lacked. I fulfilled the task, but with little enthusiasm or dedication.
142. My political views, left and sometimes extreme left, stayed with me at Gordonstoun and were actually reinforced by what I experienced there. Inherent in this perspective, inevitably, was the issue of republicanism. I have always been a proud republican and anti-monarchist, which didn't sit easily within the Gordonstoun environment and broad community.
143. I was slaughtered for expressing such views. I was castigated and told continuously and sometimes venomously to "go and live in Russia". I was actually booed at sixth form lectures when I wished to make a political point. There was no understanding and appreciation of the diversity of views on this and related matters. I felt it was bullying in a fundamental and systematic way.

Specific bullying

144. There were particular people in the house environment you went out of your way to avoid and I did everything I could to do so. These were all boys who were mostly, but not exclusively, in years above me. Sometimes though, even pupils whom I considered friendly, and even those in my own year, would make detrimental comments about me to other boys. I suspect this was a means of trying to endear themselves to those other boys. To make them appear strong and tough themselves.
145. In the boarding house, I remember feeling apprehensive if I had to walk past certain people. I expected physical contact, a punch, or being tripped up, and at the very least, some name calling. Some would hold their noses as I went past. I quickly knew who the main bullies were, but anyone realistically could take it upon themselves to target you. It seemed to me that some bullies felt that they had to be nasty, and be seen to be nasty, to maintain that aura of strength and fear.
146. I don't want to say who they were because I suspect a lot of them had also been part of that same culture and had been bullied themselves. Every one of us probably did a bit of that.
147. There were some things that you could do to try and get onside with people. Prowess in sport was one and I was lucky because I was good at sport. That didn't mean, however, that you didn't get the verbal and the mental stuff, because I got that all the time. It did mean that I probably avoided some of the physical stuff though.
148. I can think of one guy who was expelled for bullying while I was at Gordonstoun. This guy was in the year above me and he was a brute. He was a physically powerful lad and, although he never physically bullied me, you were wary. You felt intimidated by him all the time. He was the sort of person who, if I saw him sitting under the clock and I needed to go to the loo, I wouldn't. I would wait till he had gone.
149. I remember one time this guy called me by my first name, when everyone called each other by their surnames unless they were friends. I was so relieved when he did this

as, although I wasn't friends with him, he had obviously accepted me. I hoped I was then off his radar.

150. One of my house duties was in the tuck shop and I remember if he came you gave him free sweets. If you didn't there would be consequences and I'm pretty sure I saw him punch people. I think he was in the fifth form when he was really bad and it became common knowledge when he was eventually expelled. I remember this guy coming back to the school after he had been expelled and being chased away by the teachers.
151. This guy was blatant, he was as thick as two short planks and he wasn't subtle, but there were worse people. The worst ones were those who were subtle. One was a lad who, mentally, had a significant effect on me, but again I don't want to name him and I have since learned that he had been bullied intensely himself.
152. At the start of my second term in Altyre, I was allocated to a study shared with three others, one of whom was in the year above me. I stayed there for two terms, effectively seeing out my fourth year. Things were fine at the start, even though I had the worst space, which was by the door, albeit I always liked that as it provided a means of escape. I also didn't have much in the way of niceties. All I had were a few posters and a small radio, rather than the large multi-deck tape machines owned by most. Rugs were used by Gordonstoun pupils as desk or wall coverings, but I had none, nor did I have a tuck box, nor very many books and I had no cassettes. I just had my desk, a chair and a shelf unit.
153. It was my habit on a Saturday afternoon to listen to the football on my radio, which, to me, was perfectly normal. It was what everyone I knew back home did if they weren't going to games themselves, however, it made me a target.
154. One Saturday towards the start of term when, I remember, it was dark outside, I left the study for some reason and went a short way up the corridor before realising that I'd forgotten something and went back. As I neared the door, I could hear a

conversation taking place inside. This one individual was going on about how much he despised what I did and who I was.

155. I suspect he knew that I'd overheard, because from that time on, things become more overt. He made no secret of his thinking and of his hostility. He told others that he had deodorant to keep out my smell. He belittled me at every opportunity. He never had a friendly or kind thing to say to me. Mostly, he just carried on as if I wasn't there, that I didn't exist.
156. I, however, was tense and anxious all the time. I didn't know what to do or where to go. I took to taking my radio into the dormitory so that it wouldn't annoy him. I tried to spend as little time as possible in the study so that I could avoid him. Telling on him just wasn't an option, it would have made me a target for others in addition to him.

[REDACTED]

157. IUJ [REDACTED] was an [REDACTED] teacher [REDACTED] and he was a horrible individual. He belittled me once when I made the mistake of asking him for something while [REDACTED] at the start of the daily chapel service. I deserved a telling off, but not the words he used, which were "one of the dumbest individuals around", or words to that affect. This was early in my Gordonstoun career when I was full of apprehension and feelings of inadequacy. Feelings that I didn't belong and this just reinforced it.

158. It seemed to be well known that IUJ [REDACTED] used to touch girls bottoms. I didn't see him doing so, but I was aware of his reputation and my own girlfriend would tell me that he had touched her up.

IUL [REDACTED]

159. IUL [REDACTED], the [REDACTED] teacher, was seen as being this loveable big person. A gentle giant who was big on morals, but actually he was not. He was part of a system

that said I was not good enough to go out with my girlfriend and that I should not even be at the school.

160. He was related by marriage to my girlfriend's family, who lived in Elgin, close to the school. For reasons I cannot accurately account for, her mum and dad, who was an old boy of the school, didn't like me. I never did anything wrong by her, so it was obviously something about me, my persona, my background, my upbringing, my tastes, my character.
161. When my girlfriend and I first started going out, I was in the upper sixth form and she was in the lower sixth. When I repeated my A-levels, we were, in effect, in the same year. Very early in my repeated year, I came out of Gordonstoun House one afternoon to see my girlfriend in protracted discussion with [UL] about one hundred yards away on the school drive. Their conversation seemed to go on forever, and there was something about their body language which put me very ill at ease. It was obvious that the subject matter was a serious one.
162. When I next saw her, I asked what it was all about and she told me it was about my return to school. She said that [UL] had asked why I had not taken up any offer of a higher education place, when the only offer I had was from Portsmouth Polytechnic.
163. I couldn't understand why he had felt it appropriate to talk about my situation with her, rather than me, and it was clear that his view was that I shouldn't have been allowed to come back to Gordonstoun. I could not understand why was he so involved, nor why should he have a view on this, and an earnest one at that. He wasn't my housemaster and even though he had taught me [] at A-level, that was the one subject in which I had gained a mark acceptable for university entrance and therefore wasn't repeating.
164. I remember thinking that somehow I had to justify the decision to return and went to see him that evening to state my case. I have always questioned his motivation and, although I can't prove it, I have come to the conclusion that he wanted me out because he, or someone else, thought my presence may have a negative impact on my

girlfriend's success, or otherwise, in public examination at the end of that school year. He wasn't, therefore, bothered about me, it was about my relationship with my girlfriend. I was supposedly a bad influence, a distraction at best and serious competition at worst.

165. As time passed, I began to realise that perhaps it wasn't his motivation that was the case in point. I wondered whether my girlfriend's parents put him up to this and whether they had actually asked him to intervene. I can never prove this, but the connections do seem too obvious.
166. My concluding suspicion was that the motivation of [IUL] and my girlfriend's parents was to unsettle us as a couple and to reinforce their belief that I wasn't good enough for her. That my presence would have a detrimental impact on her A-level studies and exams.
167. I find that abuse by [IUL] of his responsibilities as a teacher really difficult to reconcile and from that time on, I always thought I was being watched and scrutinised. It seemed like he was everywhere and I felt that anything I did wrong in relation to her would be passed back to her parents who would then encourage action against me, either via [IUL] or others, or by themselves.
168. Our relationship was strong and it survived what amounted to be a test, but the pressure was intense. My girlfriend was my one safe context amidst the turmoil of Gordonstoun in my latter years at the school, amidst the pressure of exams, family troubles as a result of my father's illness, and, of course, my own mental state. To be put under unnecessary pressure because of the completely inappropriate actions of a senior member of staff could potentially have been too much.
169. I've always questioned since whether that was abuse. It wasn't physical, but it was mental abuse. It tortured me all the time. I felt constantly on edge that I was having to justify the position I was in and I actually had a breakdown at a concert in Gordonstoun House following this, which I remember vividly.

170. I think the catalyst was that feeling of insecurity in my relationship with my girlfriend, even though that was imagined and not real. More fundamentally, I remember it being a time when I was worried about my father's health and it was during my convalescence from breaking a leg playing football. My mental illness was also, obviously, a key factor. I was on that same tightrope, but tottering alarmingly from one side to another. I recall staggering from the concert room into the reception area where I was laid down on a sofa during the interval.
171. Conversations were happening around me and there seemed to be concern as to what I was experiencing. I remember asking a teacher to check that my Dad was okay, because I wondered if something had happened to him. I was taken back to my boarding house and put to bed. I recall telling a close friend that I didn't see the point in carrying on, a remark that led him to tell me off for thinking in that way, however I don't remember any medical intervention. Nobody came to check on me, even though I was left in bed the next morning and I remember somebody telling the others not to wake me. Looking back now, this omission seems bizarre in the extreme.

Reporting of abuse at Gordonstoun

172. The staff must have been aware of the culture of bullying that existed and certainly my housemaster in my early years at Gordonstoun, Mr Fitzgibbon, was.
173. As a consequence of being specifically targeted by that one individual during the spring term of 1983, when it came to returning to school for the summer term in April, I just didn't want to go back. On the morning of my return, I told my Mum this and she had to call my Dad away from school to speak to me. This he did, with the consequence that I agreed to get on the school train that lunchtime. I didn't want to upset my Dad or even question him and so, reluctantly, I gave way.
174. My Dad called Mr Fitzgibbon, who met with me when I got back to the house. I can't remember what was said, other than him telling me to "buckle down" and my only thought was that this wasn't going to resolve things. It didn't and the bullying

continued. The culture was that you didn't tell, therefore nothing changed. I also cannot remember Mr Fitzgibbon ever following things up with me personally.

175. I have considered why I didn't stand up to my dad and tell him I wasn't going to return to Gordonstoun and I suppose that was because of his health and because I didn't want to let him down.

Leaving Gordonstoun

176. I left Gordonstoun in 1987, after I had repeated the year and completed my A-levels. I had improved my music mark after repeating the year, but the ironic thing was that I wasn't going to study music, I wanted to study history and my history mark stayed the same. I know now that history was not a good subject for autistic people because the sort of questions that are asked at A-level are so open to interpretation.
177. John Lofthouse actually wrote in my leaving report that Gordonstoun had been an alien environment for me. Clearly he recognised the challenges that I had faced.

Life after Gordonstoun

178. Music had been part of my experiences with my dad and when I lost him when I was nineteen, it became too painful to play, however I did go on to study music at Durham University. I graduated with a 2-1 in music and then achieved a distinction in a Master's degree in sociology of sport that I studied at the University of Leicester. Thereafter I attained a teaching qualification in music and games.
179. Every time I got a qualification [redacted] came into my head, telling me I was only good enough for Portsmouth Polytechnic. It came out alright in the end, but it had been a big struggle to get there and each time I attained another qualification I felt I was putting two fingers up to him.
180. Towards the end of my teaching course, I got an offer from the University of Leicester to work in the [redacted] department and I initially embarked on an academic career. I

then went into sports development and became a rugby league development officer at both student and professional levels, although I eventually turned my back on that because professional sport is quite ruthless.

181. I changed tack and went into an area that was always my domain and reflected all the things I had said at my interview for Gordonstoun, which was concerning equality and diversity. I worked in local government as an equality and diversity manager until my mental health collapsed to the extent that I could no longer work fulltime.
182. Now I am self-employed in that capacity and do lots of mental health awareness work as well. I have never made much money, but I guess the careers that I have had have reflected my long-term interest in sport and in areas of equality, diversity and inclusion. I have also had three books published.
183. I am married to [REDACTED] and we have four children. Three are technically my step-children and the youngest, [REDACTED], we had together. He was born in 2002.

Impact

184. There are so many facets to the lasting legacy of my experiences at Gordonstoun. Most people that are now in my working life would have no idea that I went there and I don't want to broadcast the fact that I did. I don't open up about it because it's not something I want to talk about.
185. I know that there are many potential causes of my mental illness, however I know now that my school experiences served to exacerbate my descent into mental illness and my ability to deal with this disability. Indeed, in some circumstances, Gordonstoun only increased and added further dimensions to its prevalence, its nature and its toxicity. I might already have been ill before Gordonstoun, but I was certainly ill whilst at Gordonstoun.
186. I felt intense guilt that I wasn't able to support my family during term times and that I had a duty to make my dad proud so that he had something to hold onto in his own

precarious health circumstance. I couldn't though, do what Gordonstoun wanted me to do. I couldn't engage in new activities and new situations without intense anxiety. I had to continually resort to the familiar as a way of coping and Gordonstoun never recognised this. I felt a persistent push, a demand, to 'develop my character', as was the Gordonstoun message, to make full use of facilities and to extend the breadth and depth of my activity.

187. I could not do these things when my mind was telling me I needed familiarity and routine just to survive and all that happened was that I became more and more ill, albeit I never really recognised this at the time. Only later, after a mental illness diagnosis, did this make proper sense, but the question I find myself asking time and again, is why this wasn't apparent to others? I wonder why nobody picked up on my mental state and whether I was such a good actor that I effectively hid everything from everyone. I know I tried to do this at home because I didn't want my anguish and my fears to worry my dad. I couldn't face the prospect of upsetting him, potentially tipping his failing heart into arrest and possibly killing him.
188. I guess I relied on Gordonstoun, away from my dad's eyes and ears, to help me, but it didn't. I spent more time at school than in the immediate vicinity of my family, so why was my mental health not detected there and addressed?
189. I was depressed at school. I know that now. At times, I lived on a tightrope and if things were going well, I could cope, but if anything knocked me out of my stride, the challenge was set. Often, it was one I couldn't handle. I would ruminate and catastrophise. I needed security and familiarity. I needed to be valued. I needed encouragement. There were individuals at Gordonstoun who helped me enormously, members of staff as well as my girlfriend and other fellow pupils, but I was a constant ticking bomb. Silent a lot of the time. Not wanting to draw attention to myself. Ever waiting for bad things to happen. It is why I can recall specific incidents that happened nearly forty years ago. I still dwell on them.
190. Even today, when I hear what I consider to be a Gordonstoun accent, an accent that is refined or posh, and particularly when engaging with people who have such an

accent, I flinch and believe that I am being scrutinised. I feel that I have to be careful with my words, particularly in pronunciation. I expect to be challenged. I expect the directness that seems to be ingrained in people from this social class. I expect to be asked questions that I don't want to consider. I expect to feel uncomfortable.

191. I don't want to be offensive, to strike back as it were, but it puts me completely on the defensive. It is as if I am in a cage with no escape. My inability to converse, to deal with the interaction, seems almost to solidify my outsider status. I don't want to belong, of course, but I don't want my inability to do so to be subject to examination. I don't want to be mocked because of who I am.
192. Recently I went to see a friend from Gordonstoun in Southampton. While I was there, I instigated meeting someone that I used to play lots of music with, who had also been at Gordonstoun and who lived very close by. We met up as a threesome and, as soon as I heard that accent, I was stifled and I was shuddering. It felt like I was back at Gordonstoun.
193. It was noticeable that, even though I had instigated meeting up with the lady I had played music with, the two of them, with their Gordonstoun accents, were talking to each other and I was on the periphery. It was exactly like it had been at school. No matter how much I tried to join in I couldn't.
194. Ironically, another of the legacies of my going to Gordonstoun is that I don't fit in with the people I had gone to state school with either. I went away and as soon as I did, I left behind people who were my natural allies.
195. Even today, after having to travel on the school train, I find getting on a train and walking through a packed carriage frightening. I still think that everyone is watching me, scrutinising my every movement. I walk with either my head down or by focusing on the door at the end of the compartment, anxious to avoid eye contact. There are occasions when I just stand in the corridor to avoid the situation.

196. Instead of giving me confidence as I tried to forge a life and career for myself after Gordonstoun, all that grounding at the school served to do was to make me scared of failure and of appearing weak. Issues of self-doubt and low self-esteem are specific aspects of my mental illness, however, so it would be unfair and wrong to blame Gordonstoun entirely for those traits.
197. Then again, rather than identify and address these things, all my Gordonstoun experience did was to exacerbate them. In my view, Gordonstoun failed to offer me the right type, nature and degree of support, not just in terms of mental illness, but in relation to dealing with these issues. The onus was on me to forge my own way, that was the Gordonstoun message, but I couldn't do that without the support I needed to deal with the ramifications of mental illness.
198. I have felt guilt, shame and self-recrimination as a result of the obligation I felt to pick on people myself by way of self-preservation. I have literally beaten myself up again and again. I have constantly asked myself why I didn't have the strength or the conviction to resist. I was vulnerable at the time, and I still feel that way now. The combination of this with the mental illness I experienced at Gordonstoun has been difficult to live with.
199. I have recurrent dreams about Gordonstoun and the majority follow the same pattern, that I have been made to return there even at my current age. That I necessarily stand out. That all the support mechanisms I did have, specific teachers, my girlfriend, have been denied me. Indeed, with regard to my girlfriend, sometimes she is there but she has become distant. We are no longer close, though I don't understand why. I am being forced to repeat my A-levels until I achieve a 100% mark.
200. I also dream that I go to the sanatorium and tell the doctor and school nurse that I feel depressed. They don't acknowledge this and send me away. Some dreams even involve my walking away from school, going to the nearby cliffs, sometimes with firm intent to throw myself off and take my own life. The route I take is clear. I see myself hiding from people on my way through campus. I feel the relief at not being detected or challenged. The desire to escape is overwhelming.

201. These dreams are very vivid and very real and, of course, very challenging, disturbing and unpleasant.
202. My Gordonstoun experience imposed severe tests on my mental health. Whilst this in itself would have presented a considerable challenge, the fact was that I already had a mental illness, something that wasn't even recognised, let alone addressed, in my years at the school.
203. My mental disability was made more fragile and more acute because of this immersion in a culture which was anything but democratic, and which constantly seemed to reinforce my status as an outsider, someone who could never belong.

Treatment/support

204. I have been under Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT), which is my local mental health trust, for about twenty years, ever since I was diagnosed with clinical depression soon after the birth of my youngest child in 2002. Subsequent treatment, specifically psychotherapy, revealed that I had been mentally ill for many years, even back into childhood.
205. This made sense of many things that I recalled from my formative years, including things that happened at Gordonstoun. In addition to autism and depression, I have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Anxiety Disorder. I know that the former developed after the death of my father in 1988, the year after I left school, but the latter too, though a more recent diagnosis, has its roots, I know, in childhood experiences.
206. I am presently an outpatient of LPT and I am supposed to be seen every three months, however that does not happen because the waiting list is so long. I've been on anti-depressant medication since my diagnosis and I keep getting other medications in addition to help me with other difficulties, for instance my anxiety.

Reporting of Abuse

207. The only person I have talked to about my experiences is a solicitor in Glasgow. I know one or two people who have explored the possibility of redress from Gordonstoun and have gone to him. We have had a very preliminary chat and his recommendation was for me to contact the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. He told me that once I had done so, I could go back and speak to him.
208. I have talked about my experiences to some extent with my wife [REDACTED], but I have not made any formal report to any of the authorities.

Social Media

209. There is a 'Facebook' page called 'G2', which is a place for people to talk about some of the things that happened at Gordonstoun, in particular the bullying. I joined it and confronted the guy who had bullied me after he had heard my radio playing the football commentary.
210. I didn't confront him directly and I didn't say who it had been, but I posted on a thread what the consequences of his actions had been. He recognised himself and he came out and apologised on the thread. I don't think he had been aware of what he had done, because it had been mental abuse and so much of that had gone on.
211. Some people would come on and would belittle the experiences of others, though. They would talk about what they might have done to a bunch of fourth formers. It was like a badge of honour and people would comment that it sounded like blatant bullying, but they would just respond that it wasn't meant to be.
212. One guy who posted was a really big bully and he now seems to spend his time trying to give words of advice to people who were bullied. I wonder how that can work, given that he had been one of the main perpetrators.

Lessons to be Learned


213. I cannot forgive Gordonstoun for the abuse and I cannot forgive them for the neglect. In a school that specifically requested we write home every weekend and that we did our house duty, why was no-one observant enough to realise that I was mentally ill. I can't believe how that was not seen, or if it was, that it was ignored.
214. I realise that my mental illness might have been down to my family dynamics and I now know that I was autistic, but neither condition formed part of any adjustment that I needed Gordonstoun to make. Nothing was done to enable my health to be supported at an institution that was so finicky about taking your weight and your height and yet ignored obvious mental distress.
215. To go through my teenage years at an institution from which there was no respite, in which I lived for around eight months in every twelve, and not have something as apparent as a mental illness recognised and/or addressed, is quite alarming. So many aspects of life were assessed and meticulously recorded and scrutinised at Gordonstoun. To have a medical condition such as depression not registered, let alone treated, is in my view an example of genuine negligence. I hope it would not happen now, but I suspect that it could not.
216. I don't blame [UI], or John Lofthouse, because they did their best, but they were swamped. They were asked to do too much and the medical attention to detail that I needed was not provided. I was invalided out of the fire service at the school because of the panic attacks I had been having, but that was not picked up on. I would like to think that reasonable adjustments would now be made within the school environment to help any child who might be struggling with their mental health.
217. I would like to hope that anyone who goes to Gordonstoun now will not have the same experiences I did, whatever their background. I hope it will be more compassionate and more person-centred. I hope it is now a more caring environment where somebody who might be struggling to fit in is helped.

218. I know this isn't going to happen, but I would love there to be an end to public schools. I hope that the issue of social class is treated as a proper area of discrimination. As an equality and diversity specialist, I know that it is not one of the protected categories within the Equality Act.
219. Anyone that teaches in any school must be properly qualified and must be vetted. I am aware, from what I have read and from what I have seen on various documentaries, that there has been a culture of staff just being moved from one school to another. They have even been given references and been able to go to on to work in other schools, despite their record of abuse and it's hard to believe that has happened.
220. I know some schools have disappeared, for example Fort Augustus Abbey School who I played rugby against. I remember thinking at the time who would want to go there, it was so much in the middle of nowhere, however, if public schools are to remain, they must be properly checked and there must be proper consideration given in relation to safeguarding. There must be mental health awareness and there must be reasonable adjustments made for all disabilities.
221. Some people would say that the public school system should be opened up to anybody and that is how I got to Gordonstoun, but it didn't help me. Many of the people that were in my class in my state school seemed to get better qualifications in their O-level and A-level exams. The people that had been at the same academic level as me in state school all had successful university placements.
222. I hope the Inquiry can bring to light all the examples of institutional neglect and abuse there may be. Sadly, I suspect there may be many. I hope that the Inquiry is hard-hitting enough and has enough clout to enable organisations like Gordonstoun to reflect properly and change things for the future. They can't change things that happened in the past, but I hope they can reflect on the experiences that someone like I had.

223. I still get lots of communication from Gordonstoun, including copies of the annual report and emails from the principals and I get Gordonstoun pupils ringing me up asking me for money to donate to the school. I get invited to alumni events, which always seem to revolve around golf or rugby union and having dinners. In some of those communications, the message that Gordonstoun seem to be giving as a result of the Inquiry seems to be one of shock that these things happened.
224. The fact is that there are still people either on the staff, or involved with the school in some capacity, who had been pupils at the same time as me and so I do not understand how the school can be shocked. They knew what was going on when they were pupils.
225. I am constantly being given the message that the school has learned its lessons and that it will support the people who have suffered and I want to believe that is actually true. I hope that Gordonstoun can actually come out and apologise to someone like me and accept what I experienced was bad. I hope they can accept their neglect, the mental abuse and the social class abuse and I hope they can say sorry.

Other information

226. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed 

Dated..... 3rd MAY 2023