

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

LWS

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is [REDACTED] LWS [REDACTED]. My date of birth is the [REDACTED] 1950, I am 67 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I want to tell you about my care at Quarriers, Bridge of Weir, East Renfrewshire, where I was resident between [REDACTED] 1957 and [REDACTED] 1958. I was six years old and went there with my three siblings. I am unable to remember most of what happened because of how young I was. I am not able to be specific about names of staff or other residents.

**Life before going into care**

3. I was the eldest son of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. At the time I was placed in care I had three siblings, [REDACTED] who was two and a half years younger, [REDACTED] was three and a half years younger and [REDACTED] my brother was only six months old. In later years my parents also had my brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who are quite a few years younger.
4. I was born in Pollockshaws in Glasgow. My father was a joiner. One of my earliest memories of my father was him coming home on leave during his National Service. I stayed with my parents in a small room and kitchen.

5. I remember that I attended John Maxwell School in Pollockshaws, Glasgow. I can also remember staying with my grandparents at some time in [REDACTED]. They were my mother's parents. I went to another school when I was staying at my grandparents I think that it was called Priesthill. I assume I must have been five because I was at primary school.
6. I remember that my mother used to go to the local "steamie" in Pollockshaws. I can recall my mother pushing a pram with her washing in it. I can also remember cutting my leg when I fell through a glass roof.
7. In 1956 my family moved to [REDACTED] in Glasgow. My mother became ill and she was admitted to a hospital in Robroyston with tuberculosis. My father had a fall out with my wife's parents. I seem to remember that my father's mother looked after us for a while.
8. My mother was sent to [REDACTED] to try and recuperate from tuberculosis. It meant that my father, who was working full time to support us, was unable to look after us full time. My grandparents also found it too hard to look after us because of their commitments. I think that my father's mother came and stayed with us at [REDACTED] for a while.
9. A sister of my father's called [REDACTED] contacted her church and with the support of the local minister, arrangements were made for all four of us to go to Quarriers Orphanage, Bridge of Weir. I think on the first occasion we applied we were knocked back but after some pressure from the church we were accepted. My father was quite desperate for help at this time.
10. I do remember my aunt [REDACTED] saying to me if I was doing something wrong that it will be alright soon because I was going to be put into a home.

### Admission records for Quarriers dated 1957

11. I have no memories of the admission process because of my age when I entered Quarriers. On a recent visit to Quarriers I was given a copy of my admission records. They show that I went to Quarriers in [REDACTED] 1957 along with my three siblings. The application for admission was supported by a letter from Reverend [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
12. I have learned from the records that my father had to pay £1 per week for each of us to stay at Quarriers. I have no memory of these events but have copies of the paperwork which was handed to me by the reception staff on a recent visit to Quarriers.

### Care at Quarriers, Bridge of Weir, [REDACTED] 1957 – [REDACTED] 1958.

13. I don't think that there was any social work involvement in the decision to send me and my siblings to Quarriers. I think that it was all organised through the Church of Scotland. I was age six. My siblings were younger than me and my brother [REDACTED] was still a baby of about six months.

### Routine at Quarriers, Bridge of Weir

#### *First day and early memories*

14. I have no memories of my first day there. My only early memories were of going into my dormitory which was full of beds. I know that I was put into House 6. It had a garden and I remember a big lounge and a dining room. I do not remember any of

the names of the staff or other boys. My house was for boys only. I think there must have been between fifteen and twenty boys there.

15. I know that our family was split up into different houses as my brother [REDACTED] was only a baby and my two sisters were even younger than me. I think we were put into age groups. I learned on the visit I made to Quarriers a couple of years ago that I would have had "house parents" that would look after me but I don't recall this. I do remember a male and female that seemed to be in charge.
16. I think in the year that I was in Quarriers I didn't see my brother [REDACTED] I occasionally saw my sister [REDACTED] on a Sunday when she was in a lounge. I only saw my sister [REDACTED] on one occasion when she was playing in a sand pit.
17. My only real memories about care in Quarriers are the bad things that happened to me. I can't recall the good things or much about the routine there. We wanted to be home with our parents.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

18. We were woken early in the morning and would go down for breakfast. We always got what I thought was porridge for breakfast although on my recent visit to Quarriers I was told it was "piecemeal" we were being fed. It was very lumpy and I couldn't eat it. They used to stand behind you and tap you on the head forcing you to eat the piecemeal. I remember being sick into the bowl and being forced to eat the vomit.
19. I imagine that I went to school after that but I have no memory of school. I do remember evening meals and being allowed to watch television. I had never seen a television before. I enjoyed watching the television programme the "Lone Ranger".
20. There was a sand pit to play in. You would also go for walks with the staff. On a Sunday afternoon you would go for a long walk between services at the church. I think that you also went to church through the week on a Wednesday.

21. I can't remember being given chores to do but I do remember having to tidy your bed and look after your own clothes. I felt that there was a lot of aggression at Quarriers from the staff with the way they treated the boys. There was no feeling of being cared for or loved.

*Mealtimes / Food*

22. I think that the food was okay apart from the piecemeal that I was forced to eat. I don't remember being forced to eat any other food.

*Clothing / uniform*

23. I do remember that we were issued with a school uniform that included a pair of rubber soled boots. All the boys wanted to wear the rubber soles down so that they would get "tackety nails " put in to the boots. They would make a noise when you were walking. You got two sets of clothes and I think that one set was a school uniform.

*School*

24. I have no recollection whatsoever of attending school although I know that I probably did go. I had been attending primary school before I went to Quarriers.

*Punishment / Discipline*

25. In the house at Quarriers, they used the belt and strapped you. My memory of that is that if a child was being strapped and you looked at them you would also get the strap. I think that this happened to me. You were young and couldn't help but look.
26. It was a strict regime. There was a lot of shouting. I think I was only punished on a couple of occasions. The punishment just happened there and then. You would get the strap on your hands. It was just like the school belt.

27. You did get shouted at and I always felt that it lowered my self-esteem. There was a lot of emotional abuse when they told me that I was useless. They made you feel sorry for yourself. It went on all the time with all the kids who were there.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

28. I don't remember birthdays or Christmas spent at Quarriers but I do remember "dooking" for apples at Halloween.

*Visits / Inspections*

29. I can't believe that my father never visited us at Quarriers although there is no records of him having signed in. I am sure that my father did call and I have a memory of me and my siblings being taken out somewhere.
30. Eventually my mother got better and was brought to visit us at Quarriers. I didn't know who she was and my younger brothers and sisters also didn't know her. This must have been about the time we were getting ready to leave.

*Running away*

31. I ran away from Quarriers when I was about six. I was with some other boys and we all went away together. I always remember my father telling me that we were found in Paisley but I have no memory of that. I do remember we were taken back but I can't remember if we were punished. You were not locked in at Quarriers as the grounds were not secured and were quite open.

*Religion*

32. There was a church in the grounds and I remember that it was huge. You would have to attend twice on a Sunday. I can always remember that the minister was a

frightening character who wore a cloak. He would preach fire and brimstone from the pulpit. He used to threaten you with God. I was terrified of him. I think that all the boys and girls had to go to all the services.

### **Abuse at Quarriers, Bridge of Weir 1957 / 1958**

33. My memories of Quarriers are about the abuse I suffered, I have very few other memories. I was made to eat the piecemeal porridge that was served up every morning. I can remember being sick and being forced to eat the vomit from the cereal bowl. At the same time there would be a member of staff standing behind you and tapping you on the top of the head forcing you to eat. The porridge was inedible to me and I couldn't swallow the lumps
34. I do remember being strapped with the belt which was used by the staff. You were not allowed to look at the boy who was being strapped. I was caught glancing and I also got the belt. I think the other time I may have got it was when I ran away and was brought back.
35. The staff were constantly shouting at you and calling you useless. It was very discouraging for your self-esteem. The atmosphere was one of aggression and you felt uneasy all the time. The staff were not trained to deal with young boys.

### **Leaving Quarriers, Bridge of Weir, [REDACTED] 1958.**

36. All I can remember was meeting my father outside the gates at Quarriers. He had my mother with him but I didn't know who she was. My mother had come back from her treatment in [REDACTED] and was obviously better. This was the reason that we were being allowed to leave. My siblings, like me, had no idea who my mother was.

**Life after being in care**

37. My father had fallen out with his in-law's as I think that he felt they had not helped when he needed assistance when his wife was ill. My mother and father had big families and it was to be a long time later before they spoke again.
38. My family life was the same as any other child. I was sent to Tormusk Primary School in Castlemilk and was now living with my parents in [REDACTED]. My father worked very hard as a joiner.
39. I left school when I was fifteen and got on apprentice scheme as an electrician. I left school with a leaving certificate. My father was well respected in his trade and assisted me in getting an apprenticeship. I was fully qualified when I was 21. My parents moved address to [REDACTED] and at this time my two brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were also part of the family. They were much younger than me. My sisters [REDACTED] and I all got married within a few months of each other. I was working away from home a lot on the oil rigs.
40. I got married when I was 23 in 1974 and have two children in their 40's and five grandchildren. I split up with my wife in the mid 1980's after living in [REDACTED] where she came from. I came back to Glasgow. I still have excellent relations with my children and spent a lot of time looking after my grandchildren.
41. My father died in 1993 aged 63. My mother passed away nine years ago in 2009 aged 82. My mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when she was in her early fifties. I was very involved in helping to look after her as I lived very close to her in Glasgow.
42. In 1995 I was laid off from my job as an electrician and decided to go back to full time education. I was 45 years old. I was involved with the trade unions and because of this I was blacklisted for work. I did an access course at Langside College. I then

went on to university to do a degree in sociology, economics and social history. On completing the degree I went back to work as an electrician until I retired two years ago aged 65.

### **Reporting abuse in Quarriers, Bridge of Weir – 1957 / 1958**

43. I have never had a reason to report to the authorities the abuse I suffered at Quarriers. I have on occasion discussed it with other family members. As a result of the publicity I decided I would contact this Inquiry and tell my story. I have never spoken to the police.

### **Impact**

44. I think the memory of Quarriers still affects me. It is a bad memory. If I hear a church bell I immediately think of my time at Bridge of Weir. I am still unable to eat porridge to this day after being force fed.
45. I think that my self-confidence has always been quite low but to be honest I don't know if I can attribute it to my time at Quarriers but it certainly affected me as a young man
46. I think the biggest impact was not remembering being at school at Quarriers. It is just a blank. When I came home from Quarriers initially I must have gone to Arden Craig School as Tormusk School was still being built. I remember that there was a protestant and catholic building at the same school and all the rival kids used to throw things at each other. It was a very strange feeling.
47. I made an appointment and went on a visit to Quarriers with my sister last year. I was hoping to get some records but all they had to give me was the paperwork when

I was admitted. Despite the religious education at Quarriers I have never been involved with religion since. I do not like the sectarian thing which caused our family to fall out.

### **Records/Documents**

48. When I returned for a visit to Quarriers I was handed the only records that they said they had. It was an application for admission to "The Orphan Homes of Scotland" and is dated [REDACTED] 1957. It also includes a medical report on me.
49. Accompanying the application form is a letter of support from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] asking Quarriers to take me and my siblings into care. I will make these documents available to the Inquiry should they be required.
50. Quarriers state that they have no other records of my stay at Quarriers. There will be no social work records as I don't think my family had any dealings with the them.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

51. I think that children nowadays are more honest and not shy. They are not told to sit down and keep their mouths shut. This is one of the lessons we can learn. There should be no violence towards children.

### **Other information**

52. During my recent visit to Quarriers the people that were showing us round told me that the staff who were looking after us during my period of care were not properly

trained. I found that quite strange. I was also told that Cliff Richard had visited Quarriers about the time I was there but I can't remember that either.

- 53. 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..... *25/05/2018* .....