

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CGM
[REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is CGM [REDACTED] now but I was CGM [REDACTED] when I came out to Australia. I got married in 1968 and after that I was known as CGM [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1944. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My father was a Canadian [REDACTED] called [REDACTED] and my mother was [REDACTED] My mother's birth name was [REDACTED] My father went back to Canada. I've never have any luck trying to trace him. I was born in Inverness and I was eighteen months old when I originally went in to care. All I know is that my granny and my mother took me to Nazareth House in Aberdeen. Aberdeen was the only place that I knew in the early part of my life. It was a beautiful place with granite buildings.
3. I have an older sister called [REDACTED] who is four years older than me. I have a brother called [REDACTED] who died the year before last, then there was me. From my mother's second marriage there was my brother [REDACTED]
4. My mother was going through a divorce and she already had two children. Then I was born. My mum got remarried and had another [REDACTED] who is my brother [REDACTED] Later on when I eventually met up with my family nobody really wanted to discuss the circumstances of me going in to care in Nazareth House, Aberdeen.

Life in care – Nazareth House Aberdeen

General

5. Nazareth House Aberdeen was lovely as I remember. I don't really have much recollection of going in to Nazareth House though because I was so young. I have recollections of it being a beautiful place with lovely buildings. I do remember that the gates had broken glass at the top in case someone decided to take a leap over them.
6. I did have some friends there and they were called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and my very best friend [REDACTED]. Years later I was able to write to Nazareth House and ask if there were any photographs of us children when we were there. They did send me one and it had [REDACTED] and myself in it. I really pined for [REDACTED] when we were sent to Australia because she never came with me.

Mornings

7. Daily routine was a lot of church and the rosary. We had the Angelus prayers at 6:00 am and 6:00 pm, you had to stop everything and do what you had to do and say what you had to say. I loved that though, I really like the church ceremonies.

Mealtimes

8. I can't remember meals. The only meal I actually remember was when we went from Kilmarnock to the big place in Hammersmith when we were on our way to Australia.

Bedtime

9. I remember that there were around ten or twelve girls to a dormitory because I can remember the beds. There was a nun looking after us and she was called LRX [REDACTED] LRX [REDACTED]. There were other sisters there as well but she was the only one I knew. We lived in dormitories and we had those big brown heaters in the rooms.

Washing and bathing/Hygiene

10. I don't remember much about bathing or washing routine other than the fact that the nun who was looking after us made sure that we washed ourselves. There was a little cottage on the grounds or nearby to Nazareth House where some ladies lived. I think these ladies were like lay staff who used to come in of an evening to assist with bathing the girls.

Leisure time

11. We used to walk along to Duthies Park in Aberdeen with the nuns and there would be lots of beautiful coloured crocuses. I tried so hard to grow them in Australia with no luck at all. I think we used to go there quite a lot because I remember all the flowers that were there. Other things we did was to play kids games like Hopscotch.

Schooling

12. I don't remember anything about going to school whilst I was at Nazareth House, Aberdeen. I remember going out into the yard and they would have milk crates and we all had to go a get a little bottle of milk. In the summertime sometimes the milk would be curdled.

Healthcare

13. I can't remember ever visiting the dentist and the only doctor's visits I remember were when we were getting prepared to go to Australia.

Religious instruction

14. There was a lot of church and religion but I loved that. There were nuns visiting all the time and there were always services going on. Nazareth House, Aberdeen was the only family home that I knew and the nuns were like parents to us.

Visitors

15. I don't remember having any family visitors when I was in Nazareth House, Aberdeen. I do remember that as we got closer to going to Australia a priest called Father Tye used to visit. He was a lovely man, he took me under his wing after we got on the boat to Australia. I don't know where Father Tye was from, he may have come from the Aberdeen Parish.

Emotional care/support

16. The nuns were all I knew and they were often very kind to us.

Personal Possessions

17. There was a little room at Nazareth House and there were lots of little pigeonholes and we each had our own. I think once a month we were allowed to go down and there would be things left in the pigeonhole for CGM [REDACTED]. There would be lollies and one time a little doll. The little doll that I got had jet black hair and blue eyes. I get upset when I think about it. I don't know who put it there. The name [REDACTED] is in my memory but I'm not sure. If you had done anything that the nuns judged to be bad you wouldn't be permitted to go to that room. You were allowed to keep the things you got in that room and I think it was my family that were putting them in there.

Discipline

18. If you did anything wrong a nun would cuff your ear. Or withdraw a privilege like visiting the pigeonhole room. The type of thing that would have stopped you being allowed in there would have been things like fighting with other girls or tripping someone up.

Migration

Selection/information

19. Nobody ever asked me if I wanted to go to Australia. I think I was around seven years old when things started to happen. What I do remember was having a lot of doctor's appointments. I remember going in to a room and I had to sit up on a chair. All the lights went out and then this great big red light came on. It frightened the living daylights out of me. I was tubby and [REDACTED] when I was young. It was very bad. I got into so much trouble for it when I got to Australia. They checked to see if we had head lice or anything like that. We had to have the needle for inoculations. However we had no idea at this time that this was something to do with going to Australia.
20. The doctors asked me questions like, "Do you know anything about Australia?" We didn't know anything about Australia but they told us that there were kangaroos and that it never rained. The doctors said that it was always hot and sunny. But these were just general questions, I still had no idea that I would be going to Australia. I thought the doctor's questions were just part of schooling because at school they would ask you questions about Rome and Cardinals and all of that. I assumed that was what the doctors were doing as well. I think one doctor remarked that it was a long way to Australia but I didn't even know what Australia was never mind where it was. This was the first time I can ever remember seeing a doctor. There were quite a few of us getting medicals at this time.
21. I remember the lay people being involved in taking us to the medicals. A big black car would come which we called a 'Black Maria' and we would get in it either with a lay person or with one of the nuns. At one stage [REDACTED] told us that we were going on a long trip and that we had to pack a case. I asked her where we were going and she said Australia. I remarked that it was funny because I'd heard one of the doctors talking about Australia. I thought Australia might have been just around the corner.

22. However, regardless of where it was, it was a trip out and we all looking forward to it. I thought it was maximum of half an hour or an hour away and we'd come back to Nazareth House straight after. I never discussed it with the other girls because I was always with [REDACTED]. But as it turned out, to my great distress [REDACTED] didn't go to Australia.

Leaving Scotland

23. There were four of us, myself, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] we were all of a similar age. I knew these girls but not as closely as I knew [REDACTED]. We were from Aberdeen but there were eight Scots all together who ended up going on the ship. We were told that we would be picking up some more girls along the way. The nun told us that we would have some more friends to play with.
24. We got the bus to Aberdeen train station. I remember getting on the train all dressed up in these new clothes. We thought we were going somewhere really good. The train took us to Kilmarnock. [REDACTED] was the only nun who was with us. We had to keep saying the rosary during the train trip. She was getting very tired and we were itching to get out into the corridor and run up and down. We kept watching her to see if she fell asleep. We were just normal kids.
25. I remember that so well. [REDACTED] has been on my mind all through the years. She was such a good friend, I was heartbroken to leave her. We went on the train from Aberdeen and I think we went all the way to Kilmarnock. We picked up other girls at Kilmarnock. It felt to us that the train journey was taking for ever. [REDACTED] just kept telling us to say the rosary. As we were doing this we could see she was getting sleepier and sleepier. We knew that if she nodded off we could run up and down the carriage.
26. I remember some of the stuff that was packed in my case. There were a couple of brand new dresses, one was bright yellow and I hate yellow. I think that one of the lay girls must have packed my case for me. From Kilmarnock we got the train down to Hammersmith which is where the mother house of Nazareth House is. [REDACTED] was with us all this time and some lay people were there. I think one was called Mrs

Laverty. I remember that clearly because we used to get into trouble for calling her Mrs Lavatory. Also Father Tye was there, he joined the train at Kilmarnock.

27. We stayed overnight at Hammersmith. We arrived late at night and there was a big hall with all these mattresses down. We just took any bed that we could. There were eight kids from Scotland. There were ten from Ireland and the rest of the children were English. There were 101 children altogether in our group. Father Tye was to look after the boys and there were three ladies for us girls. We were then told that we were going on a long boat trip to Australia and that it would take weeks to get there. All I could think was that I wanted to be with my friend [REDACTED] and to this day I still haven't traced her. LRX [REDACTED] did not join us on the boat trip.
28. On the morning that we left for Australia we were woken up to go to church. Then we went to a big dining room to have breakfast. When they took the plates away from us and put a big plate of black things down in front of us. I didn't know what they were because I'd never seen anything like that before but they were black mushrooms. I didn't eat them. Next thing we were on a huge bus from Hammersmith to Tilbury Docks. I was very travel sick on that journey. Up until I got on the ship I still thought we would be going back at some stage to Aberdeen.
29. We sailed on a ship called SS Orontes and we arrived in Fremantle on [REDACTED] 1954 and then on to Melbourne on [REDACTED] 1954. On the ship I remember Mrs Laverty and the other women being around the girls and I remember Father Tye being with the boys. The women showed us around the ship and told us where we had to go for meals and things. It was very strict about where you were permitted to go on board. We were also told that we always had to stay together. We all had our meals together and there were four of us in my cabin but I can't remember who they were.
30. I know that there were maybe two older girls in our cabin because I remember them chatting up some sailors. Also I remember that one time one of the older girls had been doing some washing and she hung her clothes to dry over a chair next to a heater. There was a small fire and I got the blame for it. I was so upset and crying all the time because of this. The next thing we knew we were all at confession. I told Father Tye that I hadn't done it, which was hard because I was hysterical and I had

such a [REDACTED] Father Tye believed me and after that he looked after me. He gave me the job of carrying the chalice at mass and I loved doing that.

31. I remember one time during the crossing that we had to dress up in our bathing costumes and parade around with a sash across us saying 'Australia' on it whilst people took photographs of us. There were quite a lot of people on the ship who were not associated with Child Migrants and I remember that I used to play with a little baby on there. I loved playing with that little baby.
32. It was a very rough trip going over there and I was sick a lot of the time. I don't know if there are any records of this but I was also sick because of the events arising from the fire. I'd got myself so upset about all of that and the fact that I had been wrongly accused. I was also pining so badly for my friend [REDACTED] and wanting to see her. I did tell Father Tye about all the things that were upsetting me and he reassured me that everything would be alright and he told me to pray.
33. I also have a memory of two fully clothed men jumping into the pool on the ship to rescue me at some stage. They got Father Tye for me as they sat me by the side of the pool to recover. I don't know what was wrong with me but I think I spent a few days in the infirmary whilst I was on the ship. I was desperate to get out because I just wanted to go back and play with the little baby that I was so fond of.
34. We were well fed on the ship. The stewards knew who we were and they used to leave dry biscuits and cheese out for us. We loved that, the biscuits were gone in seconds. Although looking back it was probably the wrong food for me to be eating. We stopped at Port Said and I remember the locals coming up to the ship with things to sell. There used to be a programme of forthcoming events posted somewhere on the ship and therefore we knew we were getting near to Fremantle because they told us that we would be arriving the next day.
35. All through this time nobody had ever discussed with us what was going to happen to us when we reached Australia. The only thing we did know eventually was that the boys needed to get ready because they were going to be dropped off first. They told us to say goodbye to the boys because they would be going. I remember that one of

the Irish girls, [REDACTED] had a brother who was dropped off at Fremantle whilst she continued on to Melbourne. This distressed [REDACTED] very much.

Life in care – receiving country

Nazareth House, Camberwell, Melbourne, Australia

General

36. The girls continued on to Melbourne but Father Tye went off in Fremantle with the boys. We were told that we would be arriving in Victoria and that we would be going to a big place like Nazareth House in Aberdeen. We knew nothing else about it. I thought maybe that we were visiting somebody, I had no idea that we were not going back to Scotland. I don't know how they dealt with our documentation for entering Australia because I had not one piece of paper with me.
37. At the port in Melbourne there were buses waiting for us, to take us to Nazareth House. There were three buses all in a line. Mrs Lavery and the other ladies came with us but we didn't actually know where we were going. We travelled for about an hour or so maybe a bit longer. I remember the journey because the fumes in the bus made me really sick.
38. The weather when we arrived in Victoria wasn't too bad for us as it was coming into the Australian winter. We had to put coats on and get ribbons put in our hair for arriving at Camberwell. I remember also that when we arrived we were organised into a line with our hands on the waist of the person in front of us. They then took a photographs of us all. I have always wanted to get my hands on that photograph. They also took photos of us on our arrival at Camberwell with all the nuns in their black and white habits. The little case that I had travelled with disappeared and I never saw it again.
39. I did actually see Father Tye again at Nazareth House in Camberwell in Melbourne. He must have made his way there after the boys were settled in Fremantle. This was after I'd been there for a while.

First day at institution

40. We were given a guided tour of Camberwell and names were put on beds in the dormitories. They were bigger dormitories than Aberdeen and there were maybe as many as twenty-five beds in the rooms. We were shown around by the nuns and Mrs Laverty. It was a beautiful looking house, white and red brick. There were big verandas on the front of the building and big palm trees in the front of the yard. There were also old people living there. After the girls had settled in I don't think Mrs Laverty and the other women stayed more than a few days.
41. I remember at Camberwell there being nuns called, Sister ^{MEJ} [REDACTED] Sister Blandina, Sister Blandella and Sister ^{LSV} [REDACTED] but we called her ^{LSV} [REDACTED]. This was not just a children's home, it also had old ladies and old men living there. Sister Elizabeth was with the old men. That's the nuns that I remember but there were a lot more nuns. You would see them all walking around in twos, there may have been twenty-five or more. The children were all separated into similar age groups. As I recall there was no specific nun in charge of us, we would see different ones. We were told that we now live here and this is where we will now go to school. As soon as I got there the nuns chopped my hair off. I had long blue/black hair and I was so upset about this. The nuns told us that it was because we were going to school and if it was short then all we needed to do was brush it.

Mornings

42. The nuns would get us up every morning at 6:00 am. We had to attend 8:00 am mass. After mass we would have breakfast.

Mealtimes

43. I was very sick a lot of the time when I was there, I was hugging the toilet. I didn't know what was up with me at that time. I'd be up in the middle of the night being ill. The nuns would just scold me and tell me that there was nothing wrong with me. Most of the time this was ^{LSV} [REDACTED]. She would just say to me, 'You're alright, there's nothing wrong with you'. I was also really sad and I was pining for my friend [REDACTED].

44. Sister ^{LSV} [REDACTED] or ^{LSV} [REDACTED] must have got fed up with me being ill and complaining of being in pain because she used to hold the crucifix in front of me, with Jesus on the cross and say, "That is agony, not you, there's nothing wrong with you. Go away and pray" I never got any medical attention at all when I was there and I was always sick.
45. The food at Camberwell was not nice, it was stodgy porridge that we would have to make. Great big cauldrons of porridge because you had to feed everyone at Nazareth House, all the old people, the nuns and the children. That was one of your chores when you were allotted tasks. You would know the night before if you were going to work in the kitchen.
46. The nun's dinners would be cooked in different ovens. The nun's food was different to ours. You could smell the bacon and realise that they were getting tasty things. All the girls ate together at mealtimes but the nuns ate away from us. There were consequences if you didn't eat your food. You had to go on what was called 'Bowl Table'. That that was where you were put if you had been naughty in any way. Sometimes we would all complain saying, "We don't want to be on the bowl table", but if you kept that up you got whacked with a big stick. I think it was actually a cricket stump. This would usually be done by Sister ^{LSV} [REDACTED] but other nuns would strike you to.

Leisure time

47. Our playground was on the top floor in an area we called 'the roof'. It wasn't actually the roof but it was right up at the top of the building and it was where we played. If you'd wanted to jump over the edge you wouldn't have survived.
48. One time I took part in a singing competition, I remember it being something to do with Monash University. We sang the Kookaburra Song in harmony and we came in third. I remember on that occasion we were dressed up in a yellow blouse and a maroon tunic. It felt good to do that.

Trips and holidays

49. As we got older some of the girls were able to go away to the country for two weeks holidays. I think we were maybe thirteen or fourteen when I went to a place called Castlemaine to stay with a family called [REDACTED]. That was about two and a half hours away by train. Mr [REDACTED] was a pharmacist and they had a family of five.
50. The last year that I went there to stay, Mr [REDACTED] had me working in the pharmacy. I was ill and they took me to the doctor. I ended up having my appendix out even though they told me afterwards that my appendix was ok. So I didn't really need the operation. I was in the hospital for two weeks if I remember rightly. I told the doctors that I'd been sick for so long
51. After the hospital, I went back to the [REDACTED] home to recover. Unfortunately my wound broke open and I had to go back into the hospital to get it re-stitched. Eventually, just a few years ago it was discovered that I had celiac disease. Therefore my exposure to the types of food at Camberwell would have been very aggravating to my condition and that contributed to me having such a miserable time being sick as a young girl.

Schooling

52. I left Camberwell with no qualifications. There was very little education which is a shame because I love history and I'm an avid reader.

Healthcare

53. Winter in Melbourne is freezing cold and I suffered terribly from chilblains, especially up the back of my legs. The nuns knew about it but there was no point in complaining because they would just tell us to put up with it. I never got any treatment for my constant vomiting.
54. I saw the dentist once at Camberwell. He had a big van which came in to the grounds. It stayed there until we were all done. A couple of weeks after I had been to the dentist

I was called up to a room in Camberwell that they called 'The Parlour'. The dentist was there with a little bag. Apparently because of [REDACTED] I now had to wear a plate. At night I had to wear a headband with a kind of chinstrap. This brought me more humiliation because the girls would laugh at me. I ended up throwing it away.

Religious instruction

55. It was a Catholic institution, our whole life revolved around church and religion. I loved church though and I still do to this day.

Work

56. Like many of the other girls I had to do the kitchen chores like making the porridge for everyone, peeling the potatoes and things. Also there were these massive long corridors with big stairs and we had to strip the wax from the floors and wash it all off until there was no shine at all. Then the next day I would have to re-wax it. You would get the mean girls who picked on the Scots and they would come and put their footprints in it to mess it all up. LSV [REDACTED] would say, "I want to see the floors shiny like a shilling". It was really hell, especially doing the floors.
57. We had to make our own beds. Also we had to take turns at cleaning the dormitories and the bathrooms and toilets. There was a roster that told you what your duties were for the week. But the chores were also given out to you as punishment if you upset a nun.
58. I was always given the big steps to scrub on my own. I had to do this after tea which would be 6:00 pm. Then LSV [REDACTED] would come along and tell me that they weren't good enough and I'd have to do them all over again the next night. The small steps were bad too because they seemed to go on forever. In the winter I'd be freezing and it would be getting dark. The old men would sometimes walk around and I was terrified of them.
59. I wasn't allowed to turn the lights on and as it got darker and I was scrubbing, I'd be getting closer to where the old men lived and they would be coughing, spluttering and

I was absolutely petrified. I just wanted it to stop but as I went along the coughing was getting louder and louder. I used to hide under the stairs and I'd get into trouble from LSV. I'd ask, "Why do you do this to me?" and she would get into my face and say, "You'll do what I tell you" and she'd grab me by the chin so hard. Another sister called Sister LSW was another one who would grab you by the chin so hard she'd nearly choke you.

60. Then I got the chore that I was to go and feed the old people. I would have been around eleven or twelve years old at this time. I had to serve breakfast, lunch and tea. It was the bedridden old ladies that I was to feed and I was frightened of the old people. I had to physically move the old ladies around in order to get them in a position to feed them. Many of them were lying flat. Another job you would be given was to wash all the urine soaked sheets in a big bath with bleach. Then you had to wring them out by hand, we did this for hours at a time. To this day, every winter my hands break down. That was one of the punishment chores.
61. I would very regularly be nudged in the back in the middle of the night by a nun and ordered to go stand outside a nun's room. I would quickly get dressed and I would be taken round to where the old people were. The first time this happened was to tend to an old man who had passed away. They said he had gone to heaven. I had to help the nun to wash him, to turn him over and wash his back. There was a bowl with cotton wool in it and all the old man's orifices had to be plugged up. The nun would hold the man forward and I would have to put the cotton wool in his backside. I was told to get as much in as I could. If I could get it all in then I was to put it all in. I just prayed that god would get me through this. I would get called out in the night as often as two or three times a week. I'd never seen a naked man before. Sometimes the nun would cover up parts of the men with a towel.

Christmas/birthdays

62. People used to donate toys and things at Christmas but we never saw any of them. Things like cricket sets were given but the only times we would see them would be when Sister LSV would whack us with the stumps. There would be brown bags

like shopping bags and each one had somebody's name on it. But most of the stuff we never saw. I never knew Christmas the way that other children knew it.

Visitors

63. The only visit that I personally ever had was when one of the nuns just said to me one day, "You have a visitor". A message came down that ^{CGM} [REDACTED] was to be washed and dressed because she had a visitor. I had no idea who it was and when I went in, there was Father Tye in the corner of the room. I ran over to him and he just picked me up in his arms. It was only me he was there to see and I think I had been there for a while when this happened. I took him to see the girls. A nun was with us all the time. I didn't tell him how unhappy I was because I was just so pleased to see him.
64. Other than that, Nazareth House was a place where so many of the Catholic community would visit to be shown around. There were always visiting priests and nuns coming in from Ireland. This went on all the time. We would get dressed up in cleaner clothes when the visitors came down to see the children.

Emotional care/support

65. I was so sad and upset about Scotland and my friend, I was asking about Aberdeen and I wanted so much to write to my friend [REDACTED] but the nuns just said that "No letters are to be sent from here". They would tell us that over and over again. Before meals they would say once again "There are to be no letters written". This would be ^{LSV} [REDACTED] or Sister ^{MEJ} [REDACTED]. We never ever received any mail either.
66. I used to ask about my family. I'd also say to the nuns that there must be some paperwork, I must have travelled with some paperwork. But personally I had nothing. The nuns would just say, "They didn't want you and they did the right thing by you by putting you in here". You weren't allowed to talk about Scotland anyway. I was devastated because Scotland was beautiful and it was my home.

Discipline

67. You got whacked with a cricket stump, which was a piece of wood about two foot long. LSV used to do this to us. They were so strict, it was terrible. Sister MEJ had a bamboo stick and she loved to hear it whistle. She used to whack you on the hand with this stick, so fast that it would whistle. When she was finished you wouldn't be able to feel your hand. This punishment would be given to me if I stuck up for one of the Scots girls or if I'd done any childhood mischief like calling someone a name.

Nature and frequency of abuse

68. I had a [REDACTED] and a thick Scottish brogue. LSV used to take delight in getting me up to do dictation in class which was completely humiliating for me. She would open a bible at a random page and I had to read from the book. I'd start reading and the other girls would be laughing at me all the time. I would just break down and cry. The girls would then mimic the way I'd talked, it was terrible. The Scottish girls were always picked on.
69. The Scottish girls used to get together on the roof and discuss how we could change things. We would discuss ways to talk that would help us avoid humiliation. When I was being picked on to read I used to just run out of the class and LSV would be shouting, "You get yourself back here".

Life after the institution(s)

70. There was no real preparation for leaving Camberwell. I was just asked if I wanted to go to stay with the [REDACTED] who were the family that I had stayed with during the holidays. I of course said that I did. I think I must have been around fifteen so I'd been in Camberwell for around six years when I left there. I stayed there for a while but I knew it wasn't for me because my friend LST and I always said we wanted to go back to Scotland and that as soon as we got the chance we would go. In the meantime though I needed to get back down to Melbourne to see my friends, LST LSU [REDACTED]

and [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] had their own children and I used to help out in the Pharmacy. It wasn't a real job though.

71. Mr [REDACTED] used to show me how to make the ointments because back then the Pharmacist had to do all that. I loved doing that but I was pining for the girls again. I think I ended up staying with the family for around twelve months.
72. I then got a job at the children's hospital in Parkville, Melbourne. I was in the ward where the little ones with cleft palates and hair lips were. I used to get the children ready for surgery although I had no training at this time. The hospital did beautiful work with the children. I think I was there just short of two years.
73. After that I went to St John of God in Brighton, Victoria. It was a very exclusive psychiatric hospital where people used to get electric shock treatment. I was lucky enough around this time to get jobs where I could live in. So I didn't have to worry about getting and paying for expensive accommodation. At this place they had a house at the back of the hospital and there were around eight nurses there. So we all had our own rooms. I still hadn't done any qualifications at this stage. I had started to feel a bit down and I was getting sad about Scotland and wanting to find out what happened to [REDACTED] my friend from Aberdeen.
74. I stayed at that hospital for four or five years. One day I took it into my head that I wanted to go to Sydney in New South Wales. I'd never been there before but I had saved up enough money from not having to pay for board. So I went into the nun's office and just told them that I was going to Sydney the next day. When I arrived in Sydney I knew nobody but I just kept telling myself to calm down and that God was with me.
75. I went to a phone booth to get the directory to find a guest house. I found one that sounded like a nice name up at Kissing Point, Turrumurra. Once there I started to go to mass every day in Sydney. One day I thought I recognised the face of the priest who was saying mass and it was a priest that I knew called Father John McCulloch. He'd been at the St John of God hospital in Brighton when I was there. When Father

McCulloch saw me he got time off and took me all around the place to see things that he thought I would like to see.

76. He asked me if I wanted to go back into nursing because he could arrange some training for me. He got me into Concord Repatriation Hospital in Sydney and it was another live in job. I lost touch with him after that but he was so kind to me.
77. I had also worked at St Margaret's Hospital which was a female psychiatric hospital in Ryde in Sydney. They put me on the ground floor and the majority of the patients were old nuns. Many of them were very psychiatrically unwell and I knew that I had to get out of there as soon as I could. Whilst I was there though I met two ladies who were mother and daughter. The daughter was later to become my mother-in-law.
78. The mother was always telling this daughter that she had to invite me round for tea. It was through going for tea that I met [REDACTED] my first husband. I think a bit of matchmaking went on. We got married on the [REDACTED] 1968 and we were so happy. We weren't able to have children at that stage because I had terrible back problems.
79. Anyway against all odds I eventually became pregnant and my mother-in-law came with me to my scan. [REDACTED]. I went on to have [REDACTED] in 1981. I had terrible depression after [REDACTED] born. When I looked down at [REDACTED], all I wanted was my own mother.

Campaigning/awareness raising/other organisations

80. My friend ^{LST} [REDACTED] helped me get in touch with the Child Migrant Trust and they were brilliant in helping me travel back home a few times eventually to spend time with my family members.
81. I eventually met with Margaret Humphries who started the Child migrant Trust. I also went to Canberra for the big government apology last year. Margaret started asking the questions about the way child migrants had been treated and how they had not really been told that they were leaving their home country for good. I think that when

we arrived at Nazareth House, Camberwell that we were the first child migrants to arrive there. I think that was why they were making such a fuss with us taking photographs and everything.

Records and family tracing

82. When my [REDACTED] I became desperate to find my own family. I had sent money over to England in an effort to trace my family but to no avail. My friend [REDACTED] who lives in Canberra and I decided to sit down and decide how we were going to trace my mother. We ended up going to the British Embassy in Sydney then we went to the Post Office and we got the telephone books for the Highlands of Scotland. I knew my mother's name was now [REDACTED]. So we were searching in the Inverness area. All this time I was praying to St Jude for help. St Jude is the patron saint of the impossible or lost causes.
83. One weekend we decided to ring some of the numbers and one of the ones we rang turned out to be my Uncle [REDACTED] who was my mother's brother. So when this man answered the phone I said that I was looking for [REDACTED]. I was all shaky and my legs were all shaking. The man on the other end wanted to know why I was asking for her. He asked where I was ringing from and I told him Australia. I said "My name is CGM [REDACTED] but I was a [REDACTED]". I said "I think [REDACTED] is my mother". I went in the Nazareth House in Aberdeen when I was eighteen months old, I was now forty-two years old.
84. The man on the end of the phone said that he was going to ring my mother and that I was to ring back the following night. My Uncle [REDACTED] knew nothing about me because he'd been in the navy when I was born. Apparently Uncle [REDACTED] then rung up my mother and told her to sit down because he had some news for her. She got a bit cranky with him and wondered what he was going on about. He just said to please sit down. He said to her, "I've just had a call from Australia. From a CGM [REDACTED]".
85. Mum packed a case and made her way to my uncle's house so that she would be there when I called back. When I put the phone down I just cried and cried. My friend

█████ stayed with me till I made the phone call the next night. I called and my mother answered, I said, "Is that you █████ Uncle █████ said to call you █████ She said that was her nickname. My mother would have been in her late sixties at this time. We talked and we cried, then we talked some more and we did a lot more crying.

86. When I told my husband █████ he immediately said that I had to go to Scotland and take █████ to meet my family. To meet them all at Inverness Airport was so overwhelming and lovely. This was my family, I couldn't believe it. We had a tremendous family reunion with singsongs and a few drammies. The family were all amazed that I could remember so many Scottish songs. I got to know my older sister █████ When we were there it was snowing and █████ had never seen snow before. We were knee deep in snow at the airport.
87. My family didn't know that I'd been sent to Australia. My mother must have had her hands full when she was young. I would never have a bad word said about her, she was the most loveable person. I stayed in Scotland for four weeks which was great because we all got to know each other.
88. I have never managed to track down any paperwork relating to my migration as a child. I have tried through Nazareth House but they won't give you any information. We left there with nothing. No paperwork. I did go back to visit Nazareth House in 1981 and I did remember it. A nun met me and showed me around but I remembered so much of the layout. I remembered where rooms were and the description of statues that were there.

Other matters for relating to migration

89. To go over the United Kingdom I had to become a naturalised Australian in order to get a passport. I remember it clear as day because I had to go to the town hall because they have a service for people becoming Australian. At the time my hip was so bad that they had to bring a wheelchair for me to get out to the car. During the ceremony the Mayor had to come to me because I just couldn't walk.

90. I think Nazareth House were able to supply all associated paperwork that was required for me to get legal documents and social security.

Impact

91. I've always had terrible trouble with my back. Shortly after [REDACTED] and I got married I was put in pelvic traction for about three weeks in order to try and straighten my spine. They told me that you don't get scoliosis overnight and that it had to be there from a lot earlier in my life. The treatment was so painful. I was on painkilling injections. That didn't do any good because I had to get four major operations on my back after that. I think the damage was caused by wringing out sheets and scrubbing stairs at a time when my body was still developing.
92. I've suffered from terrible depression which may relate the pain I was in with my back and the fact that it wasn't getting any better. I started to wonder if I was deformed. I was eventually prescribed what I call 'Shut-Me-Up' pills. I've been taking a concoction of different pills down the years. I get tablets for pain and tablets to help me go to sleep. I also get really terrible panic attacks. I still get times when I think back to my time by the stairs at Camberwell hearing the old men coughing and it getting closer and closer to me.
93. I now have Vertigo. I'd never had it my life before but now I do. It is awful and it makes me feel like I'm going to pass out. They've done a brain scan and they say there is nothing physically wrong with my brain. So I'm also on medication for that. I get terrible cramps in my legs which I also have tablets for. My pain wakes me up.
94. I've seen a psychiatrist called Doctor Bannon at Blacktown Hospital in Sydney. He gave me some tablets. Other times it has helped me to go to the Blacktown, Woman's and Girl's centre where I've had maybe a twelve week block of therapy counselling sessions where you can get things that are bothering you off your chest.

95. Because I never understood love and affection at that young stage of my life, I found it very difficult to show it sometimes as an adult. Certain emotions were difficult for me to display and I know that my husband [REDACTED] and the children knew that about me.

Final thoughts

96. I hated it at Camberwell, absolutely hated it. All the time I was there I just thought about Scotland. Though for all the negative things I have seen from some nuns I have also seen other nuns and priests in different places show such kindness to me.
97. The UK and Australian governments need to find out why all this child migration occurred and tell the truth about why this cruelty happened to children. I'd like to see my records or anything pertaining to me as a child. Nothing should be hidden from us. Both governments are responsible for dumping us in there. By the end of the Scottish Public Inquiry there should be no more lies. We need to know the truth. It was so cruel, they failed us.
98. 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... [REDACTED]
Dated... *12th August 2019*