

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ABL

Support person present: No

1. My name is ABL My date of birth is 1951. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. My earlier recollections would be that up to about six years old we stayed in Montrose for a bit and then Clyde Street in Dumbarton. My dad was a bricklayer and that's where his work took him.
3. There was my mum, my dad, my older sister AAR and my wee brother AAR is years older than me and is about younger. My mum and dad are both dead now, my dad died years ago and my mum about years ago.
4. I can clearly remember going to St. Patricks Primary School in McLean Place in Dumbarton. I started school there and I don't have any bad memories from that time.
5. My bad memories all started when my father and mother were quite violent to each other. Only once, did I see my dad strike my mother. We would have been upstairs in bed most of the time. I would have been about five or five and a half.
6. I do remember quite clearly one night when the noise and the bedlam was quite severe. My dad come upstairs, and myself were scared, we were frightened.

My dad said to us "that's the last you'll see of your mother, you'll never see her again". That was it, and for many years I didn't see her.

7. In fact, on contact with my mother, when I was sixteen or seventeen and working in [REDACTED] Glasgow, this man came up to me and handed me a bit of paper. It had a telephone number on it. He told me to call my mother on the number and he walked away. I eventually phoned her, she was living in Glasgow at the time but I didn't clap eyes on her until I was about twenty one or twenty two.
8. So my gran came down [REDACTED] to Dumbarton to look after us but that didn't last long. She had difficulty managing the three of us. My dad worked through the week, but he was always home at weekends. She was there for about two months and my dad struggled looking after us on his own after that.
9. Our dad was a very strong Catholic and was very involved in the Church. Canon Bogan gave us regular visits at the house and I think it was through the chapel that my dad arranged for us to go to Bellevue Children's Home in Rutherglen.

### **Bellevue Home, Rutherglen**

#### *General*

10. I remember going to Bellevue in Rutherglen. It was about six months after my mum left and I was about six years old. I had my first communion at Bellevue, so it is possible we arrived there just before my sixth birthday.
11. The nuns definitely ran the place, the Sisters of Charity, but officially the daughters of something. They wore huge big white coronet hats and a dark blue habit with a white bib. The same as at Smyllum. I don't remember any of their names.
12. There was one or two nuns constantly looking after us and one layperson. There were more in the main building looking after the girls, I'm not sure how many.

13. We were grouped as the wee boys and the big boys. I remember the wee boys group was called the 'Sacred Hearts' and I was in that group. I was given number [REDACTED] and everything you owned had that on it. There was a big boys group for ages about ten and up, but I can't remember what it was called.
14. They took all our own clothes away from us and gave us black boots, grey shorts, sleeveless shirts, underwear, a V-neck jumper, basically the uniform that everybody had to wear.
15. I remember Bellevue, at the rear of the property the main building and the girls part were to the left. The boys part consisted of a concrete yard and a stairwell up and down. I also remember eating in a room they called the refectory.

*First day*

16. We packed up, AAR, [REDACTED] and myself, on a Friday and were at Bellevue about tea time. I don't think we got an explanation. I had a wee speckled looking suitcase. Dad took us in his [REDACTED] works van and within half an hour he was away.
17. I didn't know where we were or why we were there. Looking back dad wasn't able to look after us, but that may have come from my gran or maybe AAR as she was older and knew more.
18. I remember the access to Bellevue was through a pedestrian gate, you went up some stairs, turned right and up another set of stairs to arrive at the front door. There was rear vehicle access as well, off Stoneylaw Road on the road to East Kilbride. I remember walking in with dad and a red gravelly shale pathway.
19. I remember big grand steps, and as you walked in the front door there was a big foyer. The first door on the right took you into the parlour where there was lovely

furniture and glass domes with stuffed birds inside them. We were only ever in the parlour when my dad came to visit.

20. There was a nun that came to greet us and it wasn't long before my dad was away. Me and my brother [REDACTED] went one way and [AAR] went another way. I didn't see [AAR] after that unless it was when my dad come to visit. All of a sudden she wasn't there. Well, we knew she was there but we never spoke and never saw her.
21. We were taken to a dormitory up some stone stairs, the nuns marched us along and showed us our beds. There was a metal bedstead type of basic bed and a wee wooden cupboard. Basically that was it.

*Mornings and bedtime (washing and bathing)*

22. All the boys in my dorm were aged between five or six and ten but no older. It was the wee ones. I don't remember where [REDACTED] was. I remember him being there, but not the specifics.
23. The age range in Bellevue would have been from about five to fifteen. It's difficult to remember the numbers in the dorms. I think on ground level, in the wee boys dorm, there was about twelve beds. I moved up to the bigger dorm when I was about ten.
24. The girls dormitory was in the main building, I'm not too sure exactly where. I was never in the main building other than the parlour or the refectory.
25. I remember a layperson, [IAQ] who was okay, she was never angry with us. She showed us where the washroom was, there was a peg for our towel and she told us where our toothbrush went, that kind of stuff. I don't remember a bad side to her at Bellevue.
26. There was a washroom at one end of our dormitory, which was on the first level. It was an old stone thing with about twelve sinks and half a dozen toilets.

27. In the mornings the nuns came into the dormitory, shouted once and you were up. We got up, dressed, made our beds and the nuns inspected them. Then we washed and went for breakfast. If the bed wasn't right they pulled off the bedclothes and you got told to do it again.
28. There was bedwetting, the wee boy next to me, he always wet the bed. As soon as they came in, in the morning, the nuns took his sheets and put them over his head, like a ghost. Then they just made him stand there.
29. The boys would stand there forever and would never get breakfast I'm sure. They may have taken the sheets to the laundry area but I'm really not sure what they did with the sheets.
30. After tea, we had regular inspections after we got washed, dried and brushed our teeth. You stood in front of a nun and they inspected your hands on both sides, your elbows, your ears and then you knew what was coming. Batter, the nuns would hit you and you were knocked to your knees. That was only at night-time, that ritual, not in the mornings.
31. We were always walloped and the nuns would shout for you to go back to wash again. I would sometimes just sit on the stair and not get washed, wait ten minutes and go back down. It was a game we played. The nuns would then say "if you'd washed like that the first time you wouldn't get punished". I remember that clearly, it must have happened twenty or thirty times.
32. Another thing they done, which to me was cruelty, was a year or so later in the upstairs washroom in the main bit, not in the dormitory washrooms. A particular nun, I forget her name, would call me over in front of everybody and grab my hair at the side of my head and lift me up until I screamed. It was so painful, she would lift my feet off the ground, and that happened a lot of times. I don't remember it being for a reason, I got the feeling I was getting picked on and you could see the delight on her face.

*Food*

33. We ate our meals in the refectory, in the main building. In general, I didn't love the food, it was very very basic.
34. We had meat on feast days, mince and potatoes with carrots, nothing fancy, sometimes fish. Breakfast was cornflakes or porridge, their choice, and it was served in big aluminium trays on a trolley.
35. I couldn't for the life of me drink sour milk, it revolted me. Once the nuns found that out they put six wee bottles of milk out in the sun all day to make them sour. Then they made me drink that sour milk. I remember actually vomiting and then getting walloped and knocked down at the same time.
36. I can't eat raw grated carrots, and if you didn't eat all your food it would be put in the pantry with your number on it. Then it would come back to you at your next meal. I'd be sick eating it or I'd get a clout round the ear for not eating it. You got hit the first time for not eating it then you took it to the pantry and you knew that was what you were getting for your next meal. You could see the glee on the nuns faces.
37. I can't eat fat either and if my food was fatty it would go to the pantry for later. It happened all the time because the meat was predominantly fatty in those days.

*School / Religious Instruction / Work*

38. The primary school was within the grounds at Bellevue. I remember I was happy at St Patricks in Dumbarton but I've not got any memories from Bellevue Primary. I also went to St. Collumbkilles School in Rutherglen.
39. I don't have any particular memories, good or bad, from school during my time at Bellevue. I have no recollection on the clothing we wore at school.

40. It was quite strict with religion. When we got up in the morning we knelt beside our beds and said a prayer. Then again at night time before you went into your bed and went to sleep. That was about all at Bellevue.
41. The cleaners were the children themselves. At Bellevue we did all the sweeping, mopping, polishing, cleaning, all the normal chores were done by the children. You were told what to do and you learned. I remember work more from Smyllum not so much at Bellevue.

*Holidays / Leisure*

42. I don't remember any trips at Bellevue but my dad sometimes took us to Montrose.
43. I don't remember any toys, books or comics. I don't remember a television or anything to read. I'm racking my brains but I can't think that we had any of that.
44. There was a recreation room, I suppose, where we built up an actual boxing ring and had fights, that was fun and we just fought amongst ourselves. There was a gramophone in there as well.

*Birthdays and Christmas / Personal Possessions*

45. I don't remember seeing a Christmas tree or getting any presents. In those days Christmas Day was a working day so everyone was at work. We sat through three masses on Christmas Day which was ludicrous. It may have been a feast day and we might have got two potatoes instead of one, but I don't remember it being a celebratory day. If it was, I think I would have remembered it.
46. I had no ownership of anything in Bellevue. I had no possessions not even a pencil.

*Visits/Inspections/Siblings*

47. Dad would visit us nearly every Friday. We were left alone to sit and talk in the parlour room, but not for a long time.
48. My mum maybe visited once but that was to see [AAR] I didn't see her. I was only told this by [AAR] a couple of years ago but the day I had my first communion, my mum was there and sat up the back. I don't remember seeing her, just my dad.
49. That's a bad memory, that parlour and the visits, because the nuns would come in and say it was time for my dad to go. Then they would take my hand and say "oh, what a lovely family you've got, bye bye Mr [REDACTED]. Then when the door was closed you knew what was coming, they would just turn and 'bang' right across the head, it sometimes knocked you to the ground.
50. The nuns had this word they used, 'freends', and they would say "what right do you have to have freends visit you, when nobody else does". That's' my memory of the parlour, it sticks in my mind.
51. It was a clenched fist, punch and down you went, I seemed to get a lot of them over the years. It doesn't make sense to me now and it certainly didn't make sense then. Why would they take the chance to hit you, it was so false. I'm a bit vague with names so I'm not sure which nuns that was.
52. Dad only visited on Fridays and about three or so a month and I got hit over the head every visit. It was systematic, you knew it was coming. I got hit every day of the week in that place.
53. The nuns seemed angry my dad was coming to see me. He brought oranges and chocolate bars, stuff like that and the nuns would take that off you right away. You never got a chance to have any of them, they were all confiscated. There was no explanation given, we just assumed that was the normal, we just never seen them again.



54. I very rarely even saw my brother [REDACTED] and I had little contact with my sister [REDACTED] AAR. I only saw her on a Friday if dad was visiting. We were never a family unit as such. Loosely speaking, I wouldn't have known I even had a sister.

*Healthcare*

55. I don't remember being ill, or anybody being ill at Bellevue, or whether a doctor came in or you went to the dentist or whatever.

*Discipline – Running away*

56. There was no discipline code we were told of. You very quickly learned what to do amongst the other boys, that if you got it wrong you got hit. It was a great learning curve. Nothing was drummed into you, you just learnt that if you got it wrong they were going to let you know you got it wrong.
57. I know that when I was in Bellevue I was troublesome and on a few occasions I would run away. I would go into Rutherglen, jump on the tram that would take me into Glasgow then get a bus that would take me to Dumbarton to get back to my dad. Sometimes they would come for my fare and I wouldn't have any money so they would throw me off but sometimes on the SMT buses from Glasgow they would just let me sit there.
58. When I got to my dad's sometimes I would get to stay the night and he would take me back the following day but sometimes somebody would be waiting to pick me up as they knew that's where I was going. I'd get taken back by these strangers, not someone from the convent, someone with an old black car, they sat us in the back and wouldn't talk to you.
59. What I always remember is getting battered stupid when I got back, that was a punishment I was going to get, no matter what. My dad wasn't away five minutes and I would get a hiding for it. I enjoyed going back to my dad's but I dreaded going back to Bellevue.

**Abuse at Bellevue**

60. I didn't see girls at Bellevue, so I didn't see any girls getting hit.
61. I don't remember being hit by any layperson.
62. As I have said I was hit almost every day. There was two ways I was punished that I'll never forget. When I was hit after my dad had visited, that was one that particularly hurt and in the washroom when the nuns grabbed my hair and skin at the side of my head and lifted me off the ground. I was just a wee boy.
63. There was one time I was caught for pinching wee post bag things out of Woolworths down in Rutherglen. There was about six of us, and the nun in charge came along and lined us all up. She then spoke to one of the elder boys and explained what had been happening, then he turned and kicked me hard between the legs. He proceeded to do the same to every boy in the line.
64. There were bigger boys acting on the instructions of the nuns. The older boys were about fourteen or fifteen. They had a role to play, those older boys, and we were kind of in awe or scared of them at Bellevue.
65. Another time, on two occasions, maybe three, I had a broom broken over my back. I can't remember what I'd done, it must have been something quite major but this nun went berserk.
66. The first time she was hitting me with a big paddle type hand brush to start with but for whatever reason she picked up this broom and hit me again and again with that until it snapped over my back. Then she kept on hitting me with the handle that was still in her hand. That happened again, once if not twice with the broom.

67. That was sore and it was continual, bang, bang, bang. I do remember telling my dad and [AAR] that a nun had broken a broom over my back.
68. I also remember seeing other boys being hit with a hairbrush as well. I saw many other boys being hit that way. The frequency of it is difficult to say now but I must have been hit at least three times a week. If I was getting hit you would see someone else getting hit.
69. I seem to think the only way the nuns could rule was by fear. I'm not even sure what I had done to deserve some of the punishments. Perhaps sneaking into the pantry to steal food. I was caught by a lay person for that once, and a nun came down and battered me for that as well. It was real physical cruelty.

### **Reporting of abuse**

70. There was no one to speak to, only my father but he just would not believe anything that was detrimental to the church. He was a strict [redacted] Catholic and was very involved in the chapel. He was pretty close with Canon Bogan who was the parish priest for many years at St. Patricks in Dumbarton.
71. My dad had a wee building business and did all the work at the chapel [redacted] and never took a penny. He was also [redacted] for all his days. So me saying to my dad that the nuns hit me, was instantly dismissed. The nuns were very plausible when my father was there, not so much when he wasn't there. There was no one else to tell, no police and there was no social workers about in those days.
72. My dad was paying money to the Catholic Church for us to be there. I became close with my dad in later years and I remember he was very regretful that he put us in there. He told me he had paid the church or the local council, we were never sure which one, but he did tell me he had paid to have us attend at Bellevue and Smyllum.

## **Leaving Bellevue**

73. I remember Bellevue closed down while we were there. The numbers started to decrease, people were moving to other places and parts of the building had to come down. I remember a dormitory room was being torn out and we helped throw out all the old skirting boards through the windows.
74. I didn't think about it at the time, but we didn't know why it was closing down or where we were going next. No one explained anything. Bellevue, to us, was just another closed institution. If you took us from Bellevue and put us in Smyllum it was just another closed institution, just not quite as bad.

## **Smyllum Park, Lanark**

### *General*

75. At first it seemed like a big wonderful adventure, moving to another place with park land, a big area and a lot more people. I was ten when we went to Smyllum. I can't think I was at Bellevue for four years but I may well have been.
76. I don't remember arriving at Smyllum but I remember thinking it was going to be better.
77. I remember the main building had turrets and there was a chapel on the left and a refectory building to the right. There was a big circular foyer with big bay windows. Round the back was the girls part, a boiler house and the girls washroom area. Then there was a metal bridge, for want of a better word, with a building on it and if you went under that, it led to the boys section.
78. The boys section consisted of a type of courtyard with a play area in the middle and various two storey high rooms round about. Detached from that and further behind,

on another level, was the school, the school playground, infirmary and a detached building like a hall. I remember being in that hall watching a film when a priest came in and told us John F Kennedy had died.

79. I seem to have two names for the nuns who were in charge, whether they're right or whether they morph into Bellevue I don't know. One was Sister [REDACTED] AGI [REDACTED] who was [REDACTED] Then there was another who was the opposite, [REDACTED] and a bit more evil. She was called Sister [REDACTED] AFJ [REDACTED] a name something like that.
80. They were the two nuns that tended to look after the boys. They were like twins and walked about everywhere together, telling you what to do. They weren't elderly and I know that as I was an altar boy and I was at mass all the time and I saw all the elderly nuns. They were a lot older than the two that were in charge of us.
81. There were a lot more nuns at Smyllum. I think about eight or ten of them were much older and lived there but were not involved in the day to day activities of the place. I'm not sure. I remember about twelve or so nuns and they had the same Sisters of Charity hats and always a full habit. It was dark blue and long and they had a chain thing with a crucifix on it.
82. Something tells me, and again I can't give names, but I believe some of the personnel from Bellevue came to Smyllum. I don't know why I think that, maybe I just saw someone that was at both places.
83. There were civilian members of staff as well and I remember Miss [REDACTED] IAQ [REDACTED] she may have been at both homes. She had [REDACTED] lot or a sort of [REDACTED] person. She lived in a room at the end of the dormitory. But she hardly spoke and if you asked me to say a bad word against her, I can't remember. She was really just there to keep an eye on us and make sure we were okay.

84. The other name that comes to mind, was [REDACTED] somebody she was a very very unusual woman. She was [REDACTED] When we were wee you never seen that so she was very distinctive. Again she didn't say much and never shouted or anything like that. I remember nothing bad about them. Her role was just to watch us and make sure we made the bed and things like that. [REDACTED] also lived at the end of a dormitory.
85. I remember Radio Caroline and a record they played called 'Telstar', well at night [REDACTED] would put the radio on a chair and we could listen to it in the dark until they played Telstar then she switched it off. She was a nice enough person that's what I mean.
86. It was all boys and there were boys younger than me, maybe eight or nine and older than me, up to fifteen. I was there from age ten to about thirteen and a half.
87. A lot of my time at Smyllum was detached from other people as I was an altar boy or on the potatoes or away at school.

*Mornings and bedtime (washing and bathing)*

88. There were more boys in the dorms than at Bellevue. Maybe as many as forty in each dorm. I think there were possibly younger boys elsewhere. I'm not sure how many dorms there were in total. We were managed by two nuns and two lay staff.
89. I was normally up at 6.30am every morning, as I was an altar boy. I was washed and ready for mass at 7am every day. Seven days a week for three years, every day. Mass was predominantly attended by the nuns but there were also some people from Lanark.
90. The priests, that said mass, came up from St. Mary's in Lanark and one of them was French, Father Lyng, he was good. He gave us coffee as a treat and was nice, genuine and friendly. He flew through mass so people could bring their children at 9.15am and be out by 9.30am. He was always good to the altar boys.

91. In Smyllum you never got a bath every night, maybe twice a week. The baths were in a big washroom and were like long troughs, a foot deep and eighteen inches wide with water flowing through them. There was two taps at one end and a stopper plug at the other end and it was on a wee slope. The trough had about six wee dividers and you sat in the sections two at a time and washed quickly, then the next two. If you were near the end it was dirty cold water.
92. Lights out was 8pm but I'm not too sure.
93. Bedwetting was the same kind of routine as at Bellevue. You were punished, had the wet sheet put over your head and you would just stand there. I don't understand how that could ever stop a boy from wetting his bed. It shouldn't even be a punishment, but it was.
94. In the morning the nuns came in to wake you up, and you jumped out and stood by your bed. The nuns would walk along and say to the boys "is your bed wet, is your bed wet". I remember the boy next to me sometimes wet his bed. He would get the command and put the sheet over his head.
95. We would get washed, brush our teeth and come back in to get dressed and the wee boy would still be standing there. I don't know how long they stood there or what they done with the soiled sheets.

### *Food*

96. The meals were quite basic, pretty grim. I don't remember getting soup or a starter then a main meal and a pudding. Pudding was unusual, it tended to always be bread and butter pudding. It's now one of the very few things I can't eat, through choice.
97. Local women came in to make the breakfast, tea/dinner and supper. Supper was a piece on jam and butter and a cup of tea from these big giant kettles.

98. We had breakfast after the chores then it was school.
99. School finished in the middle of the afternoon and we got a bit of time for a play then it was dinner.
100. Dinner was very regimented as well. We lined up for everything. We walked to the table, got served with food, then sat in the same seat all the time. We had blue and white plastic plates and cups, we took them up and washed our own dishes in a big mucky aluminium dish.
101. After breakfast we had to go up and stand in a line, we got a spoon full of cod liver oil and a spoon full of malt extract. We were all lined up, the only disgusting thing was it was the same spoon for everybody.
102. After dinner it was literally straight to band practice for me every night. Other boys had play time and would be kicking a bit of wood about, but not us. After band practice it was our piece and jam with tea or, I remember getting Ovaltine. Then we got washed and went straight to bed. Lights out was almost straight away.
103. I don't remember any issues for not eating your food, not so much at Smyllum. You knew if you didn't eat it you weren't going to get anything else.

*School / Religious Instruction / Work*

104. The school was at the back of the property on a different level it was in a detached two story building. The classrooms were almost one big room in Smyllum, with glass divider partitions. There would be about twenty pupils in every class. At school was the only time we saw the girls, I remember that.
105. At Smyllum I don't remember having a jacket or school uniform. We were given clothes by the nuns. We had those distinctive pullovers or sleeveless jumpers that we wore all the time. There was a room with things on the shelves like, boots, trousers, shorts and you just got whatever was there.



106. If you needed something new there would be an inquisition why and a big thing done about it. It wasn't new, as such, it would just be something that was washed and put back into stock from somebody that had left.
107. Your clothes had your number sewn in and they were yours while you were there. They would be washed but I can't remember what the routine was with that. I can't remember what my number was at Smyllum.
108. Years and years before my time somebody who'd been at Smyllum had made good and made a lot of money. They left a bursary award that any of the pupils could take an exam for. If you passed the exam they would pay the cost for you to go to a different school.
109. The year I was there, myself and [REDACTED] passed this bursary award. Which meant for my first year in secondary school I went to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] School in [REDACTED] The travel costs got paid for.
110. One of the benefits to me was that I was in the outside world then and I got out there rather than being in Smyllum. Going to the outside school was almost a benchmark, and all of the other things I had seen had kind of gone away. I was still in the band so I still had that side of it.
111. [REDACTED] School had a distinct uniform, it was a good school and you had to go to Paisleys in Glasgow to get a blazer.
112. I enjoyed [REDACTED] School, there were clever people and good teachers and it wasn't hard to learn and study. I always felt pretty down getting on the train back to Smyllum afterwards. You knew what you were going back to.
113. I was an altar boy, there was four of us. We were at the morning mass every day. We saw the older nuns and some of the nuns and staff from Bellevue at the early masses, so perhaps some of them moved as well.

114. At Smyllum religion was drummed into you. We said prayers before bed, grace before and after every meal. Although I wouldn't call that praying it was just something you had to say or you didn't get eating.
115. I made my first confession just before I left Bellevue. I don't remember how it worked or how regular they were at Smyllum. It happened but I'm not too sure of the frequency.
116. Smyllum was a bigger place with more staff and more children, who also did everything.
117. A sore point for me was the rota system for two particular chores that were meant to be done by all the boys. One was to do the fires and the other was the potatoes. You were meant to do them for two weeks each, then you would wait a long time before your turn came round again because there were a lot of boys.
118. I was always getting in trouble at Smyllum so they put me on the fires for six weeks. The fires was good because the women who made the meals came in and they would make you toast and give you a cup of tea without anyone else knowing.
119. I was put on the potatoes for nearly six months. After mass you went into this room adjacent to the kitchen and when you put the light on, it was black with cockroaches, like a carpet. They scattered but they never disappeared. So, there was a sink, the potato machine and sacks of potatoes. I had to fill the machine with potatoes and after it skinned them I had to take a potato peeler and remove the eyes from every potato by hand. The water was freezing, the smell was revolting and all the potato skins, thousands of them, were just like vomit. I was on that for six months and I was screaming, asking, begging to get taken off it. I never got an answer I was just told by the nuns, "you're on potatoes this week, you're on potatoes this week".

120. It was definitely a punishment, and looking back it was a rebellion and conformity thing. I remember thinking 'why am I here, why am I here, why am I here' but I don't even remember being bad. Obviously I just upset the wrong people.
121. I sometimes had to carry one or two milk churns all the way down to St. Mary's in Lanark which you struggled with. Sometimes you were dragging them along the ground and it cut your legs. Smyllum supplied the milk to the nuns or the parish priests at St. Mary's so you done the fires, took the milk down then came back for your breakfast.
122. I also worked in the potato and turnip fields. That was hard work and you did it whether you liked it or not. I'm not sure if that was cruelty, I don't know.
123. Everything was cleaned by the boys, everything was swept up, tidied up, cleaned, polished and shined. Even the u-bend under the sink had to be cleaned and spotless.
124. The beds had an inspection that came with it. It's a wee sore point because you learn pretty quickly how to tuck the four corners of a bed in. You've got a rubber sheet, a sheet, a top sheet and an army blanket, that was your bed. It's not too difficult, you can't mess that up.
125. There was times though that the nuns would hit somebody because the corners weren't tucked in properly. It was just a nothing thing, the idea being to teach you to do it properly.
126. They also taught us how to darn our socks and to knit. There were rows of wee boys, all knitting.

### *Holidays / Leisure*

127. I don't remember much leisure. We played football in this tarmacadam square, after dinner sometimes, either with an old ball, if we were lucky, or a lump of wood.

BAC

occasionally organised proper football. There was a field down in front of the premises with goal posts set up. We had two teams and we played football with a leather ball and old fashioned football boots. That was all boys from the school and that was the only proper play time as such.

128. I didn't play a lot as I had band practice most of the time.
129. I remember when I was at Smyllum a wee boy got hit on the side of the head with a golf club. I think it was either at West Linton when we were at summer camp or in the bottom field at Smyllum, I'm not too sure.
130. I remember a boy swinging an old golf club and it hit someone on the side of the head. He was taken away to the hospital and later we heard the boy had died.
131. I was behind him when it happened. There was about ten or twelve boys all trying to get a shot of the club when it hit the boy on his right temple. He didn't die right away, I think it was after a week or so. The boy who was hit was older than me and he had a brother who was also at Smyllum. I don't know who was swinging the club.
132. I don't remember a mass or funeral for him and I would have been there as I was an altar boy.
133. We sometimes went to the Saturday matinee in Lanark about half ten in the morning. We would all walk down to the pictures about half a mile away. We were given money for sweets. There was no one supervising us, on trust you went and on trust you came back.
134. There was no television and no books, but I think there was a radio player. That was probably when we were going to bed.

*Birthdays and Christmas / Personal Possessions*

135. I've no recollection of Christmas. I knew it was a holy time and there was midnight mass and three masses on Christmas Day but I've no recollection of toys or presents. I really don't know.
136. There were no birthday celebrations for anybody.
137. We had no personal possessions, absolutely nothing. Your personal space was what I'd call an army bed, a chair and a wee locker. I think we kept dress shoes and work boots in it. We certainly never owned any toys or possessions.
138. There was no pocket money. My dad used to leave us pocket money but we had to hand it in to the nuns. It would be a shilling or whatever but we never seen it again. Mind you there was nothing to buy. Something rings a bell about a room where a flap came down so maybe there was a tuck-shop. I can't remember though.

*Visits/Inspections/Siblings*

139. Sometimes on Fridays we'd be sent for as dad was there to visit. It wasn't as frequent as Bellevue but that was maybe because Lanark was that bit further away. We would never know he was coming. I'm not making excuses for him but that was a real unexpected treat. About nine out of ten of the kids in there never got any visitors.
140. I think he just turned up and chapped the door. AAR, [REDACTED] and I would be sent for when my dad had arrived and we would all sit in the bay window in the main foyer. That was where we all sat and talked.
141. One time a nun sat in on it and took notes but that was when my dad needed me to [REDACTED] with him. It was so he could then return as he didn't have a visa. If I went with him, as one of his family, they couldn't keep him in. So this nun was at the meeting and I had to accept the risks there might be and that if everything went pear shaped my dad and I would both be stuck [REDACTED]

142. In the end they agreed for me to [REDACTED] with him, my dad drove us there in his car. I was eleven and we were away for four weeks, then he took me back to Smyllum Park and normal service resumed.
143. I only really saw my sister [REDACTED] AAR [REDACTED] in the morning on the train to school when she would help me with school work. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
144. It's hard to say with [REDACTED] he must have been there, but not in my dorm and I don't remember having any social activity with him. I can't even remember seeing him at Bellevue either. I would have known [REDACTED] was my younger brother but I can't think of having much contact, maybe it was an age thing.
145. [REDACTED] AAR [REDACTED] went on to [REDACTED] Secondary School, then to college and university and [REDACTED]
146. You see the nuns nowadays, I expect most of them are quite highly educated, either teachers or [REDACTED] People like that would recognise the benefits of a sister talking to a brother. When I think back, the nuns we had were simple country folk. They had this idea that boys should never even see a girl and you were just kept apart.
147. There was never any visits from social work or any priests or anybody to see how we were. Father Lyng, we saw him at mass, but nothing like that.

### *Healthcare*

148. I don't remember much about health in particular. There was an isolation hospital or infirmary at the back where you would go for a few days if you had measles or chicken pox or something. I remember spending a few days in it myself. There was a nurse came in and looked after you, not a nun.

149. I don't remember a dentist and I don't remember anything in house for going to the doctor so you would have to go externally I would think.

*Discipline – Running away*

150. I didn't want to be at Smyllum and I couldn't understand why I was there. I don't remember being cheeky and I didn't curse or swear.

151. I ran away about two or three times and got bus after bus to try and get back to my dad in Dumbarton. Dad didn't come to see us very often at Smyllum. I was expecting him, I kept watching and watching but when he never came, I would run away.

152. I would usually get a skelp over the head or a hit. They would also shout at you and tell you not to do those things. It was not as severe as Bellevue.

**Abuse at Smyllum**

153. I wasn't long at Smyllum before I started getting hit again. [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED] was the [REDACTED] he was the worst. He was a [REDACTED] and his hobby was [REDACTED] which were all children, myself included. Somebody had donated a full set of Boosey and Hawkes brass band instruments.

154. So every night, Monday to Friday for all the years I was there, we had band practice straight after tea. I played trombone, or I was told I was playing it, and I learned to play it. I probably saw more cruelty in that room than anywhere else in Smyllum. Looking back and describing it, it was a habit with that man.

155. [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED] would walk behind while you were playing music and he had this wooden baton, like a drumstick, his trick was to hit you on your ears with it. It might sound daft but that was probably sorer than getting a slap. Other times he would slap you. There was another boy at the time who was forever getting a skelp on the ear

as well. Say there were sixteen of us in the band, probably ten of us got hit all the time, including myself. [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED] was a man I disliked from day one.

156. It didn't half hurt when he got you on the ears. I don't know what it achieved because you couldn't play an instrument after it. A lot of the times I would be in tears and the other people in the band would be in tears. It seemed to be his thing, but it would never make you a better trombone player.
157. It would happen every week, over many years. At bad times he would hit or slap you and knock you to the floor if you got notes wrong. It was just him and the band members. About nineteen or twenty of us, there were no nuns there. I was hit more at those band practices than anywhere else in my life.
158. As a wee note, [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED] stayed in a [REDACTED] within the grounds of [REDACTED]. Many years later they built a hospice there. Years later, in 1983 or 84, I was driving tankers for [REDACTED]. I got a job to deliver fuel to that hospice and fill up the oil tank.
159. I was talking to the caretaker while I was making the delivery and he asked if I knew Lanark. I told him I was brought up at Smyllum and he asked if I played in the band and if I remembered a man called [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED].
160. I asked why he was asking that. The man told me [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED] was in the hospice dying. He asked if I wanted to see him and you can call it morbid curiosity but I did and if he'd been sitting up I'd have told him exactly what I thought of him. Anyway the nurse took me into this room and I wouldn't have recognised him, he was literally dying, there was nothing left of him.
161. I thought to myself what a horrible person, and not just to me, to other people during my time at Smyllum. I don't know how long he lived after that. I didn't particularly want to meet him again. But that's a strange wee thing, Smyllum can touch your life for different reasons.



162. He was probably crueller to me in Smyllum than anybody and I wasn't alone.
163. When I went to Smyllum I developed psoriasis through nerves and what have you. One night, and this happened to me twice, Sister [REDACTED] AGI [REDACTED] told me to wait behind after I'd had a bath. I went into a wee cubicle with a bench in it. She got me to stand up on top of the bench and take my shorts off. I was eleven or twelve and didn't know what was happening.
164. Then she appeared with this black muddy ointment and she started to rub it on my skin. She rubbed it on my knees and ankles for about ten seconds where I had the psoriasis then moved to my private parts. She rubbed the ointment there for about ten minutes. That was the only area she wanted to rub the ointment on to. I didn't have psoriasis there. The ointment was like 'dubbin' and had an antiseptic smell.
165. There was this other boy, who didn't even have psoriasis, in another cubicle with another nun and they, seemingly, were doing the same thing. The nuns were kind of laughing and giggling to each other and [REDACTED] AGI [REDACTED] then called in this other nun. She came in and [REDACTED] AGI [REDACTED] went out. This other nun also rubbed me with the ointment, she was only interested in touching me privately with this black muddy ointment.
166. The second time it was just Sister [REDACTED] AGI [REDACTED] herself. She was trying to arouse me again by rubbing my private parts with this ointment. On both occasions I was told to take my shorts down. I was naked where I was being rubbed, while standing on the bench.
167. When I think back now, I know how wrong it was and that it was inappropriate sexual contact. Back then I knew something was wrong, but what do you do. She was trying to arouse me and probably did, but I was just a wee boy, you don't know what's happening to you.
168. There was nothing else happened in that vein. Smyllum to me was more about people getting hit.

169. The hardest bit for me was getting hit after my dad came to see us. That happened at Bellevue and Smyllum, the nuns would say "how have you got friends and family" and then they'd whack you.
170. One thing that just came to mind was when I got a trumpet. A lot of us had pen friends, people we'd never met and would just write to us. Well, a nun told me my birthday was coming up soon and to write to the lady I was in touch with, who was from Buckinghamshire. So I remember writing to her, a normal letter, and I told her my birthday was coming up soon. The lady sent me a plastic trumpet as a present and Sister [REDACTED] AGI [REDACTED] took it off me, said "what right have you to get presents" and battered it off my head. It broke in two. Just because I got a present, I couldn't understand that.
171. The nuns systematically hit children. I can't explain it. One time, in Smyllum, we were polishing the big dormitory floor and the boys were all lined up in fours. Four on their knees rubbing in furniture polish, four behind them wiping the polish off, then the next four had what we called 'dummies' like a broom with a weight and a cloth on the end and they did the final polish. Well, one of the boys decided to run across the floor, and slide on his cloth but the floor splintered and a bit of splintered wood went in through his hip and back out. It was quite messy and quite a serious injury.
172. The boys were laughing and joking and a nun came in to see what all the noise was. She seen me and gave me a whack, but why me? They would just slap or punch whoever was nearest and I was nearest. I was maybe laughing so I got it. It came from nowhere and no one even dealt with the wee boys hip.
173. The two nuns that hit the most were Sister [REDACTED] AGI [REDACTED] and another, they were like a tag team, always walking about together, one hitting and one watching. No one was trying to stop it, all the nuns were aware.
174. Another time we were playing football and the ball shattered a window of the girls washroom. A nun came running out and she just hit the first wee boy she saw,

knocking him to the ground. She didn't even look at the window. It was like whoever was nearest her when she came running out, was just getting whacked.

175. I saw so many people getting hit and I got hit lots and it wasn't as if we were troublesome teenagers. Sorry, I can't remember any of the other boys' names.
176. I was hit at Smyllum, but it was more a one-off type of thing and it wasn't as often as Bellevue. Bellevue was repetitive and constant. The biggest problem at Smyllum was the nun with the ointment, that was very unusual, and [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED]. There was nothing else specific.

### Leaving Smyllum

177. I remember my father came in and told me I was coming home to Dumbarton. I remember one of my first questions was if I could still go to [REDACTED] High School. My dad said he would talk to whoever and hopefully I would. I remember I was quite pleased about that, the knowledge of it.
178. It didn't happen that week, maybe a couple of months went by before the day my dad actually came to collect us. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] AAR [REDACTED] were still at Smyllum.

### Reporting of abuse

179. When I was at Smyllum I did tell my dad about the abuse at Smyllum, but not the ointment thing. He would never believe a word of it. I think I'd told him about it that many times at Bellevue that he wasn't going to listen when it came to Smyllum.
180. I can picture him, he wouldn't answer me and never when a nun came in would he ask to have a word to question it. It's almost a blinkered vision that if a priest or a nun said it never happened then it never happened, and it's my imagination. If I told

him once I would have told my dad a hundred times. AAR would have heard me tell my dad.

181. I didn't ever see any girls getting hit. told me he got a few slaps as well but I didn't see that. I think both and me told my dad but he didn't want to listen to it.
182. I got the feeling many years after, when I got to know my dad a bit better that he was acutely embarrassed that he had put us into Smyllum. He then knew there was a lot wrong with Smyllum. He felt very very guilty. He wouldn't come out and say the words, he wasn't a communicative person, but he knew we were angry.
183. The reason for that was that when we were in Smyllum my dad met another woman, and they had a boy, That boy lived the life of luxury while we were all living in an orphanage.
184. When I was older I used to argue black and white with my dad, really heated arguments about that, I would ask "why, why, just tell me why and I'll go away". They were all living a normal life and there's me, and AAR in a home.
185. I think my dad could have done more but hated me and I always think it was her saying to my dad "they're no coming home".
186. There was no one else I could have told, certainly not a nun. As a collective they were not that naive and couldn't have not known what was going on. The only man was BAC and he was a cruel so and so.
187. The nuns all knew about BAC and his hitting at band practice. I find it impossible to think that the nuns didn't know about that. They would hear about it, if not watched it. What they would do about it, is not for me to say.
188. When I got old enough to think back I got the feeling it was quite institutionalised. People knew that people done that and whether it was normal or not I really don't

know. It was continual and there was a lot more of it than a lot of people think. It wasn't beatings where they punched and punched and kicked and kicked, it was this punch then an hour or day or week later there'd be another.

189. The lay people never bullied or hit you but you couldn't tell them either.
190. I don't remember going to nuns and complaining as half the time it was them that were doing the hitting.
191. I never saw a social worker, no one ever spoke to me.
192. I never felt any love or affection in either Bellevue or Smyllum.

#### **Reporting to police/criminal proceedings**

193. I only ever told my dad back then, we wouldn't have known how to report it to the police. Later on you see the story evolving and I could have reported things but I chose not to, out of respect to my sister, [REDACTED]

#### **Life after being in care**

194. When I left Smyllum I was thirteen and a half and I went back to live with my dad in [REDACTED] in Dumbarton. I went back because my father was able to look after me, it wasn't because of my age or anything. It was just me and my dad. We visited [REDACTED] AAR and [REDACTED] at Smyllum every Friday.
195. About eighteen months after I left Smyllum my brother [REDACTED] AAR came home as well and we got a bigger house around the corner. I'm not sure why [REDACTED] didn't come home.
196. [REDACTED] AAR stayed on at Smyllum after we were there, I'm not sure why, then she went on to study as a school teacher. I'll always remember the day she came in and said



of bad feeling between [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and myself, there was a lot of resentment. She saw me as interfering with her lifestyle.

204. At fifteen I wanted to work and leave school, I wanted to be an engineer, but it was more or less decided for me, by [REDACTED] that I was going to be a hairdresser. My dad had said if I go down that route he would buy me a shop and we would take it from there. I did that for three years but I didn't like it.
205. I was then about eighteen or nineteen I started falling out more with my dad, because of the background we had, it wasn't difficult. When I turned twenty I decided to go to London.
206. I was in London for four years driving lorries illegally as I didn't have the proper HGV licence. I'd told them I was twenty two when I was twenty one and that I could drive lorries. I was driving lorries up and down the country until the company discovered I didn't have a licence. They then put me through my test.
207. When I was about twenty six I got a job with [REDACTED] as a driver, which I was good at. Then an opportunity came up to go into the office at [REDACTED] I was made for that.
208. I was office manager [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for the next three years. [REDACTED]
209. I was married in 1974 [REDACTED]. They are both now married and have their own families and I have four grandchildren that I absolutely adore.
210. I went on to become [REDACTED] Operations Manager [REDACTED]. The discipline in that was what I learned growing up.
211. In about 1997 I decided to work for myself and I spent the next ten years as a consultant [REDACTED] in the way of operations.

212. I did that until I was 55, when I decided I needed to slow down, so I came home to Scotland in 2006. I love [REDACTED] and as a retirement business I've set up a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] company. I run the business on my own and pick and choose what I do working at my own pace.
213. In my first marriage we grew apart, it wasn't violence or money or anything you could give as a reason. We did have counselling but it was just never going to work. I didn't want to divorce before the children were eighteen so we stayed together until [REDACTED] when we were divorced.
214. I met [REDACTED] about three years later, and we've been together now for twenty years. We married in [REDACTED]

### **Impact**

215. I found it difficult to live with my father up until I was about twenty.
216. I was absolutely paranoid about bringing up my own kids and making sure no one would get near them for any kind of abuse. The family has not been damaged, that I know of, because of Smyllum. If I'm proud of something it's what I've managed to give them, the values I've managed to give them. My best friend in the world is my daughter [REDACTED] Every day in life, no matter where we are, we talk.
217. I appreciate it can go the other way. You see people on the news getting done with a serious assault or something and they say the person had a bad or a violent upbringing. I think 'so did I', so it doesn't necessarily make you go out and commit crimes. I can understand though, that some of them might.
218. I did have a bad upbringing and I resented not having a loving environment to be brought up in. My whole focus was therefore on ensuring my children had just that.



219. From age fourteen to twenty I had a chip on my shoulder but there was a driving force to do something. I had a tremendous drive to work. I get the feeling that's because of my early days, not in spite of them, I don't know, but maybe that's why I'm so organised.
220. The sheer regimentation of Bellevue and Smyllum, it was total. There wasn't a time when you got a chance to decide when or how. The thinking was all done for you and you had to comply. Perhaps that's why, when I moved into management, I found it easy to apply common sense and discipline.
221. I don't think the breakdown of my first marriage was as a result of impact from being in care. I can't say it wasn't but I don't think it was.
222. I didn't bully or hurt my children and I always found that being persuasive or assertive is better than bullying or aggression.
223. With [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] my eyes were wide open all the time, I don't know if that's the person or the environment I was brought up in. I was protective towards my kids. [REDACTED] always says it's to do with the way I was brought up. I was brought up thinking, work hard to prepare and provide for my kids and that was the ethos that I worked to.
224. I've got stronger over the years and tackled different things because I'm stronger.
225. I do think about my times at both homes. Hardly a few weeks will go by without thinking on it. I get the feeling it touches a lot of people, over the years, for different reasons.
226. There's times when I have to go through Lanark or head out that way and all of a sudden some of the memories come back. Seeing [REDACTED] BAC [REDACTED] for example, when he was lying in that bed at the hospice. That was the closest I've ever come to hating somebody. I know you're not supposed to, but if there is such a thing then I did.

227. I don't like hearing about abuse to children, but to see it, to see harm coming to kids, kids hurting, or being beaten or sexual abuse, I just hate seeing anything like that.
228. Some things can just trigger feelings. A while ago there was something in the news about curling on Lanark Loch, and I know the loch well, but I didn't see it, I just saw Smyllum and the rooms and the people. It doesn't revert me back to good times, it tends to be darker ones.
229. I sometimes think I didn't know how to smile. There's just no good emotions thinking back but we must have had some good times.
230. I once drove through to Smyllum with my wife [REDACTED] it was still a derelict building. We managed to get in through a broken door and we walked through the ruins. Well the hairs on the back of my neck stood up with the ghosts in there. It wasn't good, it brought back bad memories. There was silence but there wasn't silence. You could hear pupils crying, screaming and playing football, but it was derelict.
231. I'm okay now though, it'll bring back memories but they can't directly hurt me. The hurt was then and I feel as if I've grown into adulthood through it and worked hard at being okay. Although I can understand how other people could be quite upset. I'm not saying I can just sail through it, far from it, it'll give me enough to think about.

### **Treatment / Support**

232. I've not received any treatment or counselling, not for being in care.
233. I never spoke of abuse to my first wife and never fully to my wife [REDACTED] I've spoken of much of it with my sister [REDACTED] AAR [REDACTED] but not the sexual stuff.

### **Records**

234. I've had no contact with Smyllum since the day I left. I do sometimes think about where those kids all ended up.
235. I've not tried to recover any records. I've never taken out any civil action, I've no focus on that, just my children and grandchildren.

### **Lessons to be learned**

236. There needs to be transparency. Transparency of the people who are caring, of the people who are looking at those doing the caring and of the ones looking at them. There should not be such closed environments, there should be people watching, listening and recording every single thing that's going on.
237. They should be answerable as well, nobody was answerable in those days. It was such a closed environment and my theory is that every single one of them was involved in it. They all knew about it or were guilty by association and if that same group of people shut up about it, nobody would ever know. In that kind of environment they could do whatever they want.
238. I feel, personally, I'll never get explanations but I don't want that. I'd like there to be some recognition by someone about what these people did. All I've seen until now is a denial, "oh, we're the nuns, we would never do that" or "if it happened we weren't aware of it". Everybody respects nuns and priests but the truth is we seen another side of that.
239. If nothing else came out except an acceptance. I'm not sure what good an apology does, I think a lot of people have been hurt by it.
240. I've been lucky I've come out okay but there's another hundred who haven't. I know there's people that were there, it's probably destroyed them. How do you answer that? There's no answer for them, nothing to make their values change. It's just

deny, deny, deny but I can honestly say to myself, and to you today, that I've seen it and experienced it, it's in black and white and nothing can change that.

**Final Comments**

241. About fifteen years ago I got talking to a lady at the [REDACTED] and it transpired she was one of the two main people who had fought the good fight for recognition of all the buried babies at Smyllum. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

242. My sister [AAR] and I have had a wee conversation over the years, just wee snippets, but I would never sit in detail and discuss any of it. I've spoken to my daughter [REDACTED] because she's inquisitive, but it's a tenth of what we've spoke about today.

243. I was also contacted by the media, the News of the World newspaper. It was to do with the abuse in Smyllum not the children being buried. I must have got about three or four phone calls but I categorically said 'no' to any interviews.

244. I've never spoken to anybody the way I've spoken to you guys today. It's been enlightening to see your interest in it and I think a lot of its good for me. By being able to talk to you I think I'll go out the room a bit stronger than I come in and I didn't think that would happen.

245. 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..... 27/11/2017