

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Leon CARBERRY

Support person present: No

1. My name is Leon Carberry. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1944 and I am presently 73 years of age. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

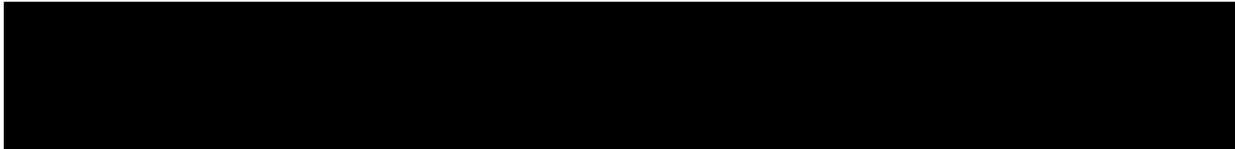
2. My family was quite large and times were hard before I went into care, rationing was still going on. We were living in a place called Daisyhill, which is a suburb of Newcastle.
3. I can't remember exactly how many brothers and sisters I had at that time, my parents eventually had a total of sixteen children. I had an older brother [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and an older sister [REDACTED]. I also had younger brothers and sisters that included [REDACTED] David, [REDACTED]. The others came along later.
4. I remember my father coming back from the war in uniform and I remember him working in the shipyard. I also remember him bringing his wage packet back and emptying it on the table for my mum to split up as necessary.
5. My mother took a couple of my siblings away to stay with my father's mum in Barrhead, Glasgow. I think it was [REDACTED] and David she went with. I then followed

with my dad and my younger brothers [REDACTED] We went by road and hitchhiked and walked from Newcastle to Barrhead.

6. I'm not sure how long it took us, but I remember getting lifts in two lorries. One was a fish lorry and I remember the smell in the back. On the way, we stopped in Jedburgh late at night and the police sergeant on duty let us sleep in the holding cell. In the morning he brought us bread, jam and tea for breakfast.
7. We made it to Barrhead and we all stayed at my grandmother's house there. It was a very old cottage with three rooms. There was a kitchen-come-dayroom, a bedroom and a lounge. We all slept in the lounge. While we were there my mother gave birth to another child, although I can't remember which one that was.
8. While we stayed there, my sister [REDACTED] was standing in front of the fire when her nightdress went up in flames with a spark from the fire. I put the flames out, but she eventually died from the burns.
9. We stayed in Barrhead for quite a while and I went to St John's school there. My parents were still not coping and after a while we were taken into care at Smyllum Orphanage in Lanark. There was no consultation, we were just taken. I think that was sometime in 1954. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Smyllum Orphanage

10. I think a car picked us up and took us to Smyllum. I can remember the confusion of arriving in this place with all these other youngsters about and all these nuns everywhere. I'd never seen a nun before or had any contact with them.
11. My brother [REDACTED] David [REDACTED] went with me to Smyllum. That was the last time I saw David alive. He was taken to a separate area that was on the outside of the building, round the front. I think it was a nursery. [REDACTED]



12. The dormitory I was in was up a flight of steps on the outside of the building and above the school classrooms. At the top of the steps was a large room with an organ and other bits of furniture in it. Off that room was the dormitory, which was a long room with probably around thirty beds in it, fifteen on either side.
13. There were polished wooden floors and at the bottom of the room, to the left, was a room where the sister slept. There was also an assistant, HBX? who was a lady [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] She had an office there. Behind that was a washroom with a row of washbasins.
14. The dining room was across the playground, down_a short flight of steps, down another short flight of steps and opposite the boiler room. I think everyone that stayed in the dormitories on that side of the building ate there.
15. The building itself was surrounded by other buildings, offices and whatever. We didn't have access to those other buildings. Just past the boiler room was an internal general recreation area, where we went after school. Above that was another dormitory.

Routine at Smyllum Orphanage

First day

16. I don't remember who met us when we arrived at Smyllum, but I do remember getting a meal when we arrived and then getting taken up to my dormitory and shown my bed. [REDACTED] The small amount of clothes that I had were put into a bedside locker.

Mornings and bedtime

17. I think the nun that was in charge of my dormitory was called Sister **AFK** although I'm not sure. She seemed to be a very even-tempered person and she certainly never punished me at any time. The only names I can remember of the boys that were in my dormitory were two boys who were twins. Their surname was **██████** I can't remember their first names.
18. I don't remember what time we had to go to bed and whether it was different in the summer and winter. When we were woken up in the mornings we had to go and wash our hands and faces. I don't remember ever brushing my teeth. After that we'd get dressed and go downstairs to the dining room for breakfast.

Food

19. All meals were served in the dining room. Breakfast would consist of cereal, porridge, toast and tea. I don't remember anything cooked. The evening meal was a substantially cooked meal and I had no problems with it.
20. The food was fine and I never had any complaints. Previously, at home, I had not been well-fed at all. We weren't allowed to leave food at Smyllum, but that wasn't a problem for me, I never left any. I don't know what happened if anyone did leave any.

Washing and bathing

21. We never had a shower, I didn't even know what one was. Baths were as rare as hens' teeth. We mainly just washed in the sinks.

Clothing

22. Our day-to-day clothes were a shirt, jumper and trousers that I think belonged to Smyllum. I don't remember having a coat.

Leisure Time

23. After school and dinner, we would all go to the recreation area where we were allowed to play for a short while. If the weather was fine we were allowed to play in the playground in the courtyard.
24. Afterwards, we all had to line up and head off to our dormitories. We were then allowed to play in the room next to our dormitory. I don't remember any games or books.

Holidays

25. One time we went away camping with the priest. I don't remember where or how many of us there were, a fair few. We were near a river and I remember stepping on a broken bottle and cutting my foot. I still have the scars.
26. Every year there was a local festival in Lanark and the nuns would take us there. The amazing thing about that was that we were all dressed in nice grey trousers and a lovely jacket with braiding and a badge on it. The minute we got back all the clothes were taken off us.

School

27. After breakfast we went to school in the classrooms under the dormitory. The classrooms were divided by glass and wood partitions. I remember my particular teacher very vividly, she was either American or Canadian and she was a nice lady. I enjoyed going to school and I thought she was a great teacher. She used to set competitive questions and the [REDACTED] boys and I used to compete with each other to see who would be top of the class.
28. A couple of nuns were teachers too, although I don't remember their names or what subjects they taught.

Healthcare

29. I never saw a doctor or a nurse while I was at Smyllum. The only injuries I had were from when I got hit and I never got any medical treatment for them.

Religious Instruction

30. We went to church and confession every Sunday and there was some religious instruction in school. Towards the end of my time at Smyllum I became an altar boy and rang the bell for matins and communion. Religion was a big part of the place.

Chores

31. On certain days Sister [REDACTED] AFK would have us clean and polish the wooden floors. We had a "bumper" which was used to shine up the polish that was put down. I don't remember how often we would have to do that, but it was quite regular. I can't remember if we had other chores to do.

Birthdays and Christmas

32. Birthdays were not celebrated at all at Smyllum, but Christmas was. We used to get a couple of toys at Christmas, but as soon as it was over they would take them off us. I don't know where they went.

Visits/Inspections

33. Nobody came to visit me when I was at Smyllum. I don't remember the social work coming for any inspections or anybody else either.

[REDACTED]

34. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I never saw David. [REDACTED] Boys and girls

were kept separate, the only time we were in the same place was at church when they sat on one side and we sat on the other.

Personal possessions

35. I had no personal possessions. I hadn't taken any with me and I never received any while I was there.

Pocket money

36. I never got any pocket money at Smyllum; there was nowhere to spend it. We did get sweets sometimes, though not very often.

Bed Wetting

37. My bed was just outside the assistant's office and I wet the bed just about every night. If I wet the bed **HBX?** would come out, give me a quick shake and tell me I was a naughty boy. She would then take me to the washroom, change my clothes, wash me down and give me a quick kiss.
38. In the morning the bed would get changed. I would get told off by **HBX?** and ridiculed in front of the other boys. She would make it known that I had wet the bed and that I was a dirty boy. It wasn't over the top, but it was embarrassing. There was no physical punishment, but this happened to everybody that wet the bed.

Discipline

39. The only sister I experienced punishing anyone was Sister **BAE**. I never saw any of the other sisters doing anything, although they would see what Sister **BAE** did and they did not intervene. One of the other nuns was called Sister **AHS** but I can't recall any other names.

40. Some of the sisters would call you by your first name, others by your last name. It just depended which sister it was. I was never aware of just being a number, or anything like that.
41. Sister [BAE] used to carry a hairbrush under her apron. Sometimes she would make you put your hand out and she would hit you over the palm of the hand with the hairbrush. It was a wooden hairbrush with tortoiseshell on the back and it hurt. I don't know why she felt the need to do it and sometimes I was very confused about why I was getting punished. I cannot remember having done anything that would have merited punishment.
42. She also used to drag us by the ear into a storeroom and hit us with a thick leather strap that was about twenty-four inches in length with a split down the middle. She called it "Lochgelly". She had a very thin strap as well that she sometimes used, generally on your hands. Because it was thin and well-worn, it would wrap around the back of your hand.
43. Another thing she carried was a red stick that was about twelve to eighteen inches long. She used that to rap us across the knuckles when we were in the recreation area.
44. Getting hit with the hairbrush and the stick really hurt and I would cry. I'm not sure how many times I was hit while I was there. I saw her hit other boys too, it was a regular occurrence.

Death of David Carberry

45. I was told that my brother David died of measles and diphtheria, although I have since learned that was not the case. [REDACTED] I [REDACTED] taken to see him after he died, but I never saw his funeral or any Mass said for him and I never saw where he was buried. I was not given any support whatsoever. I still do not know where he is buried.

Abuse at Smyllum Orphanage

46. The sisters would regularly make us all line up when we were in the recreation area after school and that's when the trouble started. There would be some sort of announcement made and we would all have to line up by holding an arm out to the right and then to the front, to make sure we were the same distance apart in rows and columns. I can't remember if there were any girls there.
47. We were then given exercises to do, stretching our arms above our heads, out to the front, down by our sides and out to the side. Sister [BAE] was in charge and carried a metal "clicker", which we all called the "frog". When she pressed it, it clicked and when she did we had to move our arms.
48. Sister [BAE] would walk among us and if our hands weren't square and rigid, she would rap us across the knuckles with the red stick she carried. I was hit many times with the stick and saw other boys getting hit too.
49. Next to the recreation area was a chute that the coal was put down to go into the boiler room. Sometimes we would slide down it and one time I got caught by [BAC] He was a well-built man with big hands. He belted me across the ear with the flat of his hand and did it so hard that he made my nose bleed. I wasn't aware of [BAC] hitting anybody else.
50. When I went back in, Sister [BAE] saw me and asked me what had happened. When I told her, she called me a liar and dragged me down to a back storeroom and hit me with the "Lochgelly" strap. I think she must have thought I'd got into a fight.
51. There was [AHP] and one time, when I was in the boiler room with him, he closed the big wooden doors and shut me in with him. The only light was from the coal burning in the boiler and he sat me on his knee, brought

out his penis and made me masturbate him. It only happened once, he never came near me again, but I remember it very clearly.

Leaving Smyllum Orphanage

52. I was in the top class at school and because the end of the school year was approaching, I was transferred to [REDACTED] School in Falkland, Fife, in 1957. I would have been about thirteen years old.

53.

[REDACTED]

Reporting of abuse at Smyllum Orphanage

54. I never reported anything that happened to me at Smyllum. I didn't think anybody would care. It was just routine as far as I was concerned. I just lived with it. I have never even told my wife what happened with [REDACTED] AHP

[REDACTED]

55.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

56. I was only in [REDACTED] for a few months before my grandmother from Newcastle took me out. I lived with her in Newcastle and I went to school there for about a

year-and-a-half. My mother then came and wanted me back in Scotland so I went back to Barrhead when I was fourteen-and-a-half.

57. I never went back to school and instead started training as a coal miner. After the initial training, I was signed up to be a trainee gas extraction engineer. When I finished that training, which was in Alloa, I transferred down to Wallsend to a colliery called the Rising Sun.

Life after being in care

58. Just before I turned seventeen, I joined the Air Force and trained as a radar operator. I was subsequently transferred to a special operations unit, called a mobile air-ops team, which consisted of Royal Marines, Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Gurkhas, paratroopers and other regiments. When there was any trouble, the unit were despatched as the lead team and I was seconded to trouble spots worldwide. My job was to bring fighters in on target, under the directions of an army lieutenant.
59. I have twice been awarded General Service Medals for service in Cyprus and Borneo. I was also awarded the Pinjat Jasa Malaysia medal from the Malaysian Government.
60. I was posted to various RAF bases in-between tours of duty overseas until eventually I ended up at RAF Bulmer in Northumberland, from where I was discharged.
61. I met my wife, who worked in the Meteorological Office, and we got married in 1968. Britain had nothing to offer us at that time and we decided to move to Australia. We ended up in Western Australia (WA) and I became a citizen a year later. We went on to have two sons.
62. For the first couple of years I worked as a sales representative, travelling all over the land and then I joined the WA prison service in 1976. I was a member of the riot

squad for eight years and eventually I rose to the rank of assistant superintendent within the prison service. I was awarded the Australian National Medal and bar for 15 years and 25 years of service.

63. In 2004 I transferred to the WA police. I was a police operations manager in charge of police lockups and an advisor on new procedures for the full-time employment of auxiliary police officers. I retired in 2015.
64. I have been awarded the WA police medal and the WA police commissioners medal for excellence.

Impact

65. While I was at Smyllum and out playing or in the classroom, I forgot about the abuse. Children are very resilient. When I was in the recreation area though, I was frightened. I knew exactly what was happening and I knew that at some point I was going to get a belt across the back of my hands with the stick, the hairbrush, or whatever.
66. Although I have never mentioned what happened to me with **AHP** to anyone, it will always stick in my mind. I was always very reluctant to wash my two sons, because I knew what had happened to me.
67. Even now, from time to time I will have dreams about Smyllum when I am sleeping. I have to put these into context with the things I was involved with in later life though, including when I was on active service and as a prison officer. I have dealt with a number of traumatic incidents in my careers and these have made me quite strong. I know that when I wake up, it is just a dream that I have had and I am able to deal with it accordingly.

68. My treatment at Smyllum has made me very bitter and I turned away from the faith entirely. I hate everything that the Catholic Church represents, although I do respect that other people can do what they want. I do not, however, let it rule my life.

Records

69. I have never applied to get my records from Smyllum. There is a website in Australia where you can look at old newspapers and records and I tried to find a similar site in the United Kingdom, but without success.

Other information

70. I am still in contact with some of my brothers and sisters. My wife and I make regular phone calls to my sister [REDACTED] every ten days or so. She still lives in Scotland and has been out to visit us a couple of times. We get on really well together.

71. I also ring my brother [REDACTED] a couple of times a year or so. He is still in Scotland too. [REDACTED] lives over here in Western Australia and we have reasonably regular contact. He lives about sixty-five kilometres away and we see each other from time to time.

72. My sister [REDACTED] lived in Italy after marrying an Italian. He passed away about eighteen months ago and she now works in Bermuda as a nanny. We made contact with her about fifteen years ago and actually went over to Italy and stayed with them.

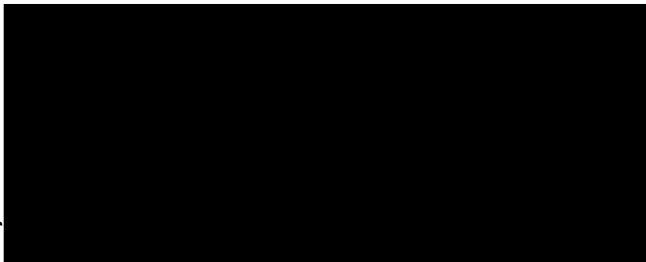
73. One year, when we were in Britain, my brother [REDACTED] passed away. He had Crohn's disease and it was a shock to me. We went to the funeral in Manchester.

74. The last I heard of my brother [REDACTED] was that he was living in southern Ireland. I tried contacting him via "Facebook", but to no avail.

75. I've seen the rest of my family when I've returned to Britain a couple of times, but we are like two families. I don't really know them and don't have any contact with them.
76. Recently I happened to see a newspaper article online and read about Smyllum. I contacted the paper and eventually I saw my brother David's death certificate. I was quite surprised when I saw that that the cause of death was not what I was told. The cause of death I had been told, measles and diphtheria, had always stayed in my mind. It led me to believe that there had been no medical examination or post-mortem carried out. The result was that I was very sceptical about what was in the death certificate. The newspaper, with my permission, thereafter forwarded my details to the Inquiry.
77. I consider that the people responsible for the abuse of children have not been brought to book and have essentially got away with it. I have never been happy that it has not been investigated sooner. I believe that people should be held to account, including the people that manage these organisations, all the way to Rome. I get sick to death of people washing their hands, ignoring and denying anything happened.
78. I would like to see the organisation responsible for running Smyllum exposed for what it has done and I would like to see recommendations from the Inquiry that it be stripped of all its assets and authorities and disbanded. Those assets should then be used to help any children in the future. I don't expect any compensation, however if that should to come about and there was a compensation claim lodged, I would support it for others to be helped.
79. The organisation should be thoroughly exposed for the illegal activities they committed and should be dealt with severely. I don't believe any of the people at Smyllum when I was there will still be alive, but the ones that committed these offences in later years should be put on trial and dealt with by the law.

- 80. I believe the Catholic church is responsible and should be made to pay. There were priests and others around at the time that witnessed things happening and did nothing. To me that is just wrong.
- 81. I would like there to be more care taken by the government and that an Inspectorate be set up to oversee organisations, both the people that run them and the children in their care.
- 82. I would like to see comment by the government on the recommendations of the Inquiry. I would like to see the extent of the government's support for the Inquiry. I think it's very important that the Inquiry is very strong in its recommendations.
- 83. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.....



Dated.....

5TH Day of January 2018