## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

MMG

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is MMG I'm known as MMG and my date of birth is 1946. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

## Life before boarding school

- 2. I was born in **Aberdeenshire**, my family are originally from My father was **Aberdeenshire**, he was from Orkney. His father had been chaplain to the fleet in the First World War, that was why he was in Orkney.
- 3. My mother was **a second second second second** She came from a poorer family and was brought up in Aberdeen. Her father was a boiler maker in the shipyards and had been in the trenches in the First World War.
- 4. I have one elder sister, who is three years older than me. My parents are no longer alive.
- 5. My father was an insurance manager and my mother was a housewife, but she did odd jobs as well. She was a sales woman with Wedgewood and did various other jobs from time to time. She was a very capable woman but didn't have the same level of professional qualifications and education as my father.
- 6. My mother was brought up in a typical working class Scots home, living in a council house in Torry, Aberdeen whereas my father was the son of Aberdeen and Orkney, so, socially, it was a slightly unusual match.

- 7. My father was an only child and a very kind and decent man but also very private and reserved and not terribly comfortable in company. My mother was one of four children and was very energetic, gregarious and outgoing.
- 8. Family life was okay when I was younger, it was a funny family in some respects as my paternal grandfather also lived with us. The family home was

as my grandfather was the parish priest

Church in He was also the

- 9. My grandfather was a widower and had an enormous so my mother and father, who had just returned from the war, established the family home there. It was called and we stayed there for my first seven years.
- 10. I went to Primary School when I was five, but I was only there a couple of years before the family moved to Edinburgh. My father was given a job in Edinburgh and I was seven when we moved there.
- 11. My family were Episcopalian but when we moved to Edinburgh my mother and father both decided to become Catholics. I remember being present at the ceremony in Edinburgh where we were all converted to Catholicism. My grandfather,
- 12. We were in Edinburgh living in the family home, with three adults who had very different personalities and very different educational backgrounds. In some respects, it wasn't always a terribly harmonious unit, yet, it was a very good home, very kind, very caring and very structured.
- 13. I then went to Scotus Academy in Edinburgh, which had just opened and was run by the Christian Brothers. Our stay in Edinburgh only lasted about two or three years because our father was promoted and became the branch manager of the Insurance Company in Dundee.

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- 14. My mother was horrified as she had come to love Edinburgh. She had also taken to Catholicism with a passionate zeal. She was something of a partisan Catholic.
- 15. Next thing was a move to Dundee by which time I was about nine. My sister had already been packed off to boarding school. She went to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Queens Cross, Aberdeen and that's where she spent most of her education.
- 16. My mother then decided, in Dundee, that I was to go to a boarding school. I remember my parents having these discussions and my father was baulking, as the thought of having to pay the fees was very painful for him.
- 17. However my mother prevailed and, as she thought some of the Dundee Catholic Schools were pretty rough, it was decided I should go to Fort Augustus. Whether they were any rougher than Fort Augustus is open to question.
- I was basically consigned to the tender care of the Benedictine Order when I was about nine. I was too young for Fort Augustus so I was packed off to Carlekemp Priory School in North Berwick.
- 19. It wasn't an unhappy home, but it was my mother's decision that I was going to a boarding school. It was her zeal for Catholicism and her firm conviction that the Holy Fathers and the nuns could do no wrong. It was just the place for her delicate boy to be shoved in front of the hardships of the world.

## Carlekemp Priory School, North Berwick

#### General

20. Carlekemp was a preparatory school for Fort Augustus. It was run by the Benedictine Order. I have a good memory of it.

- 21. When I first went to Carlekemp it was Father MFD SNR There were a few other teachers and staff some of whom would transfer on to Fort Augustus.
- 22. I remember many of the monks, Father MEW was one. I think he's been in trouble for child abuse, physical not sexual. He was quite a small man with National Health specs and a crew cut and was known by the boys as MEW.
- 23. There was a Father **MEZ** who was a **MEZ** who was a **MEZ** and was known for telling stale jokes. There was a Father Aidan Duggan who is a well-known and now infamous paedophile.
- 24. There was also a Father MFC he was young and, to our eyes, quite a hero. He was probably only 26 or 27 much younger than the other monks.
- 25. Those were the main teachers but there were some teachers as well. There was a MFB who lived on the premises, he smoked a pipe. There was a matron, Kitty O'Donnell, who also lived on the grounds, in a cottage in the woods. She looked after our health and floated around in a matrons starched uniform with a white cap.
- 26. There was a Mrs Gilhooley as well, a very kind lady with hair like cotton wool. She was a teacher. I think that was about all of them.

# Routine at Carlekemp

# First day

27. I have no real recollection of my first day at Carlekemp. It was a mock Elizabethan mansion house, very beautiful, with leaded window panes and oak panelling. It had a big study hall, the prep hall, where we went every evening and our teachers set prep.

- 28. The age range for the boys started from around seven or eight and went up to about thirteen when they were transferred to Fort Augustus.
- 29. The boys I remember from Carlekemp are David Walls and I'm still in contact with both of them, I who were brothers, I and I and

#### Mornings and bedtime

- 30. The dorms were pretty much structured by age. They were quite large airy rooms with beautiful views over the Firth of Forth. They all had different names and there was probably about six or eight beds in each of them. I remember we would say prayers before going to bed.
- 31. We would get up in the morning and prayers would almost certainly come into it. Then down to mass in the chapel, on to breakfast and then back to the dorms to make the beds. After that it was pretty much class time.
- 32. We were in class until lunchtime, then afternoons were pretty much spent on sports and activities. Later in the afternoon was usually back for further classes then it was prep and something to eat.
- 33. Later on you may have had a bit of free time, or whatever, then you went to bed. That routine was much the same at Fort Augustus as well.
- 34. It was the same Monday to Saturday, but they would perhaps show a film on the Saturday evening. Sunday was different, a lot of religious stuff, that would take quite a lot of time, then there would be some sport in the afternoon.
- 35. Sunday evening was spent writing letters home. We would write to our parents telling them what a wonderful time we were having. Letters home were censored and had

to be shown to whoever was supervising the section. I don't remember ever writing anything that I was told to change but there were some things, looking back now in retrospect, that did raise your eyebrows a little bit. By that I mean the things the boys knew not to put in the letter. They had an understanding, not to rock the boat.

## Food

- 36. The catering was done by a lay team who had nothing to do with the Benedictine Order. We had regular meals, breakfast, lunch and an evening meal.
- 37. I don't remember feeling hungry at Carlekemp, I'm sure the food was adequate. I just ate what was given to us. It was the usual institutional stuff, mince and tatties, soups, puddings.
- 38. I remember on a Saturday night we had a special treat and got pie and chips, before watching the film, that was great.
- 39. Not liking the food wasn't really an option, it was like the Gulag Archipelago, you just ate the food to survive. In a way, I suppose it stopped you being fussy about food.

## Washing / bathing

40. We must have had some form of washing at Carlekemp, showers or baths or something, but I don't remember.

## Clothing / uniform / possessions

41. We wore uniform all the time, it was all grey, the trousers, shirts, socks and jumpers. Then we had a green and blue Carlekemp blazer with the moto thereon and a green and blue tie. We all wore the same rugby or hockey kit, it was all specified very precisely and, basically, everybody had to be the same.

- 42. You had a locker in your dormitory, next to your bed, where you kept your clothes. The clothing was all detailed when I was preparing to go there. I remember mother going through a checklist, with 'X' number of vests and 'X' number of socks and all that sort of stuff.
- 43. Everything had to be labelled with your name and number before we arrived as well. You had a number, which started OSB, for Order of Saint Benedict. So all my labels were my name and then
- 44. I had a trunk that all the clothes were packed in and when I got to the school it was all duly unpacked and put away in the locker. That was you for the next three months.
- 45. You had other things like rubbers and rulers and pencils and they went in your desk in your classroom. You also had a desk in the study hall as well.

#### School / religion

- 46. All the monks taught us and they all took classes. It was a subject centred curriculum, not like a primary school with the one teacher all the time. We had different teachers for different subjects.
- 47. The classes were very small, in fact the whole school was tiny, with only about sixty or seventy children. The classes were called forms and the one I was in had only about eight or nine boys, so you would think you'd get a fantastic education.
- 48. At boarding school you don't have homework so your teachers set prep, which we did in the study hall. It's preparation, usually reading and studying, we had it at Fort Augustus as well. Sometimes it was exercises to do. Every night you would have about an hour and a half of prep, then you would have supper and then another hour of prep.

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- 49. Prep was divided into half hours, and at the end of every half hour you got to change preps. You could go from maths to geography and so on.
- 50. I would say the teaching was patchy, but it's only ever as good as the teacher that's teaching you. Some were better than others. Generally speaking, right across my education at Carlekemp and Fort Augustus, it was very inconsistent.
- 51. There were a number that weren't good teachers and a number that weren't qualified teachers. In fact most of them had degrees but they were degrees in scripture from a Catholic university in the north of Italy or something. I would say, in most cases, they had no qualifications in teacher training.
- 52. One of the most worrying things, in respect of both Carlekemp and Fort Augustus, was that most of the monks had been pupils there themselves and they hadn't taught in any other school. They hadn't been educated in any other school and had no point of reference from anywhere outside those two schools.
- 53. When it came to teaching in those schools they basically repeated what they had learnt themselves and I think that was very damaging to the standards in both schools.
- 54. I think the religious thing made quite an impact at an impressionable age. There was a lot of kneeling and praying and litanies and all the rest of it. All the usual Catholic stuff, it just went on and on and on.
- 55. There was religious knowledge classes, which was basically catholic indoctrination, learning the catechism and things like that. Learning the commandments, stories about the lives of the saints, just what you would expect.

## Chores / pocket money

56. We didn't have too many chores. We were supposed to make our beds and keep our lockers and desks tidy but we weren't really required to do many chores.

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57. We must have had pocket money but strangely enough I don't quite remember that at Carlekemp. I don't remember a tuck shop or a sweet shop at Carlekemp. I remember Mrs Gilhooley, who was a very kindly soul, would occasionally buy us bits and pieces in North Berwick.

## Leisure / trips

- 58. From the start of the summer term until winter we played rugby. From Christmas until Easter it was hockey and from Easter until the summer holidays it was cricket. We also went on runs, to make you fit. We also played some golf on the little nine hole course next to the main North Berwick course.
- 59. We had quite a lot of our own recreation time as well. We used to do the kind of things little lads did. We would take little jaunts down to the beach, which was just across the golf links, or sneak into North Berwick. It was a lovely environment, with the Bass Rock and the islands.
- 60. We weren't actually allowed to go into North Berwick, not until we were a little bit older. Even then such a visit would only be occasional. We were allowed to go down to the beach and out of the grounds a little, but most of our lives were spent within the grounds.
- 61. Most things were structured and staff would be involved, we had quite long walks, we would go on, but there was a bit of messing about. We mucked about, bird watched, had fights, played little games of cowboys and Indians and that sort of thing.
- 62. MEW Father MEW had a cinema projector and on Saturdays we would sometimes watch films.
- 63. We didn't go on too many trips. We once went to Nunraw Abbey, so that was a busman's holiday if ever there was one, but I don't really remember any others.

## Christmas / birthdays

- 64. We were never at school during Christmas so I have little memory.
- 65. Boys did receive packages from their parents at birthday time but I don't remember there being a celebration, not to any great extent.

## Visits / Inspections

- 66. Some of children who went to these schools were forces children, whose parents were overseas. It was quite common for them to send their children to boarding schools so they weren't changing schools every couple of years. These forces families moved around a lot.
- 67. For other families, the parents just lived too far away to come for visits, but, generally speaking, it was at half term weekend that parents and families visited.
- 68. I remember looking forward to it with great anticipation as mum and dad would come and take me away for the weekend. I don't think I stayed overnight, I think they took me away and brought me back on Saturday evening, then came back and took me out again on the Sunday.
- 69. The main thing was getting away from the school food, and being able to eat a meal that was half decent. Those half term visits were the only visits we had.
- 70. We did have official inspections, by Catholics. I don't remember ever having any inspection by HMI, not at Carlekemp. The only thing I remember was some religious guy who came to inspect our religious knowledge.
- 71. This was during my last year at Carlekemp and he fired a question at the class offering a half a crown, which was a fortune to us, to anyone who could answer the question correctly.

72. The question was 'who was it, apart from the Virgin Mary that was born without original sin?'. Well, no one knew it so everyone just started guessing madly and I guessed right. I said 'Jeremiah' who evidently was born without original sin, so I got half a crown. So that was the only inspection I was ever aware of at either school.

## Healthcare

- 73. There was a matron, Kitty O'Donnell, and we had inspections where she looked in our ears and things. If you picked up an infectious disease, or something that could spread, I think there was a quarantine place where they could take you. I think that was just a room in her cottage.
- 74. There was a doctor that came now and again, if he was needed, but I can't remember ever having any dental care.

#### Running away

75. I don't ever remember anyone running away or there being any problem with boys running away.

#### Bedwetting

76. I think there were one or two boys who wet their beds. I didn't and I don't know how that was dealt with.

## Discipline

77. I think it was mostly arbitrary justice meted out on the spur of the moment, quite often in a fit of temper. The more formal punishments weren't so much at Carlekemp.

- 78. I would say, at some time or other, with the exception of Mrs Gilhooley, all of the staff at Carlekemp were responsible for administering some form of physical punishment to the boys, including me.
- 79. There was a bit of humiliation went on as well. If someone struggled with their work the response wasn't so much to support them but more to humiliate them.
- 80. The teachers would perhaps hold up a piece of work or a jotter, that was covered in red ink and tell the class what a terrible piece of work it was or tell the boy that he had done badly because he was lazy.
- 81. I remember one lad who struggled, and there was no sympathetic attitude to the fact he was struggling, it was more a moral lack on his part, that he hadn't met the standard, so he was held up to ridicule by some of the teachers. That happened on more than one occasion. That applied at Fort Augustus as well.

## Abuse at Carlekemp

- 82. Father Aidan Duggan was an exotic priest in some ways. He would waft along the corridors and there would be a scent of aftershave. There was something about him that made him stand out from the others.
- 83. Aidan Duggan could be bad tempered and one of his favourite tricks was to hit you over the back of the hand with the edge of his ruler. On one occasion he hit me on the back of the hand and broke my watch. Which, of course, he had to get repaired.
- 84. He did that quite often to boys, including me, and you would have skin broken on the back of your knuckles.
- 85. Father Aidan Duggan was fond of reading stories at bed time and we liked to hear them too. He particularly liked spooky ghost stories, Count Dracula and things like that.

- 86. We would all be in our dormitory and boys from other dormitories would come too. Father Aidan would come in and sit on a bed and if it was a ghost story he would have a torch on and we all loved that kind of thing.
- 87. There was a bit of cuddling going on there and one particular boy, that I remember, was mostly the target of that. I wasn't so aware at that time, but he was a lad that Aidan Duggan liked to get close to.
- 88. I would say one thing about several of the monks there, but particularly Aidan Duggan and MFC they, to my more mature eye, seemed like people with very poor emotional intelligence.
- 89. They blew hot and cold, and I was a teacher myself, so I know kids can drive you bananas, no matter how patient you are. They did blow hot and cold and, I think, in some cases, this was a form of grooming. David Walls is still a friend of mine and he certainly had such an experience with Aidan Duggan.
- 90. MFC was also inclined to be extremely ill-tempered at times and young boys often became a target when he lost it.
- 91. I suppose a young man coming to terms with celibacy in a monastic life and being surrounded by cheeky pesky little boys probably was quite a difficult thing to live with but sometimes MFC went over the top.
- 92. I remember a particular instance with MFC where I was the victim. We were in a classroom and I must have made a cheeky remark that really got under his skin and he went absolutely berserk. He basically beat me up.
- 93. I can't quite remember it all, it happened that quickly but it wasn't just a slap on the ears or a sharp word. It was a flurry of blows.

- 94. I didn't need to see the matron, I pretty much shrugged it off. I didn't let these things get the better of me, I just got on with it.
- 95. What I would say, looking back at that incident, is that if I was ever the victim of physical abuse, that incident was what came closest to it. I was never the victim of any sexual abuse.
- 96. Father MEW was keen on slapping boys around the lugs, that was one of his favourites and it happened quite a lot. I remember once, at the end of term, he was in the changing rooms and he was slapping guys around the head while saying 'end of termitis is a slapping disease'.
- 97. That was just accepted. I hadn't been at any other school and didn't know what went on at schools. I had no standard of comparison so that kind of behaviour was accepted as normal.
- 98. What didn't happen nearly as much at Carlekemp as at Fort Augustus was the formal punishments. The belt and the birch happened all the time at Fort Augustus. I don't remember that happening much at Carlekemp.
- 99. There was some good companionship at Carlekemp, there were some nice lads and some not so nice lads but the culture of these schools was very authoritarian. It was very hierarchical, like the army, and that sort of culture tends to invite those, who can find space within it, to throw their weight about a bit.
- 100. Lads that were inclined to be bullies would find, in that sort of environment, opportunities to throw their weight about, and some of them did. I saw that happening a bit more at Fort Augustus. Bullying was institutionalised at Fort Augustus but that wasn't quite the case at Carlekemp.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Carlekemp**

101. There was no one at Carlekemp that you would want to go to and share your worries with. That would be seen as a weakness and that applied even more so at Fort Augustus. There was no real personal warmth and it was not a very comforting environment.

# Leaving Carlekemp

- 102. I was at Carlekemp for four years. When I turned 13 it was time for me to move up to Fort Augustus.
- 103. Looking back I would say Carlekemp was not a supportive school, more of a survival test. Fort Augustus turned out to be much the same.
- 104. Some did survive quite well, for this or that reason, and it didn't seem to affect them too much, but for others it did leave a mark on them. It could be from feeling uncomfortable because of the activities of the monks, like Duggan and the cuddling, or, like me, they could have been the victim of some rough treatment.
- 105. There was an expectation that things were going to get worse at Fort Augustus. If you ever asked about Fort Augustus, while at Carlekemp, the word that tended to come back to you was that it was very strict.
- 106. In a way, this gave you a perverse admiration for strictness. Strictness was equated with quality so the implication was that you were going somewhere that was good, as long as you towed the line.

## Fort Augustus Abbey School, Inverness-shire

General

- 107. When I was at Carlekemp we referred to Fort Augustus as the 'Fort'. When we got there it was known as the 'Abbey'. It was an old Hanoverian Fort.
- 108. There was no preparation for going to Fort Augustus, I hadn't been there before and I can't actually remember how I got there. My father would probably have taken me with my trunk of stuff.
- 109. It's at the south west end of Loch Ness and it was run by the English Benedictines as well. There's no separate Scottish Benedictines.
- 110. Fort Augustus was an abbey with a school attached to it, unlike Carlekemp which was just a school with monks on the staff. So what you had was monastic community with some of them working at the school, and others that didn't. There were monks you would see at religious services who you rarely saw at any other time.
- 111. Father Aidan Duggan was transferred to Fort Augustus more or less at the same time as me, but he wasn't on the teaching staff, so I didn't ever see him. He became the bursar.
- 112. When I first went, Father MFF was the SNR He was a real academic, spoke many languages and had a real academic career.
- 113. Then we had the housemasters, for the two houses. The houses were Lovat and Vaughan. Lord Simon Lovat was the chief of the clan Fraser during the 1745 Jacobite rising, and was actually imprisoned at Fort Augustus, and Cardinal Vaughan was an eminent English churchman.
- 114. The housemasters were very significant figures in Fort Augustus life. When I arrived the housemaster of Lovat was Father MFE and the housemaster of Vaughan was Father Celestine Hayworth. Father MFE was known as MFE or MFE because that's where he came from. I was in Lovat house.

- 115. I didn't have much to do with Celestine Hayworth, he went on to become Abbot of Fort Augustus, and Father MFG whose name was MFG but he used MFG
- 116. It was a funny mix at Fort Augustus, there were aspects that were quite posh, with double barrelled names and posh accents, and then there was the Irish and Glasgow Catholics, so you had a complete cross section of people. Some boys came from professional backgrounds and some from very ordinary backgrounds.
- 117. I remember many members of staff, some were monks and some were lay teachers. There were quite a few lay teachers because they didn't have enough people to teach the subjects and I would think some of their qualifications were quite dubious.
- 118. As far as teaching staff go, Father MFE only taught and Father MFG taught taught He was a good teacher, very organised, but I don't think he had any teaching credentials at all.
- 119. Father Celestine Hayworth taught maths and there was Father MKT who became SNR after MFF just shortly before I left. He taught was from Irish stock and had a perfect cut glass accent.
- 120. One of the sectors was MIH a former pupil, he was a very man and taught junior classes and took a lot of sector classes. MIH
- 121. There was a Charlie Palmer and a Mr Duffy, who were science teachers, a young man, Mr Fotheringham who came from Oxford, a Mr Keith Anderson who taught English and a Derek Fowles who was a history teacher.
- 122. There must have been about 120 boys at Fort Augustus, and the ages were from 13 to 18. There were six forms and if you went there from Carlekemp you went straight into second form.

## **Routine at Fort Augustus**

#### First day

- 123. I knew some of the boys, from Carlekemp and I had some idea of the routine as it wasn't enormously different. Broadly speaking they were the same.
- 124. I seem to remember having an introductory meeting with my housemaster, Father MFE He said I should know most of the ropes having been at Carlekemp, which was probably true.

#### Mornings and bedtime

- 125. The dormitories were different, they were mostly in cubicles, not open rooms, they were divided into cubicles which were open to view from the cubicle opposite but it was semi private by comparison to an open dormitory.
- 126. While I was there they opened a new building where the dormitories were open but I was always in the old building. The new building was Vaughan and the old building was Lovat so they were house dormitories.
- 127. I remember all the new boys were told the dormitories were haunted by a ghost called the 'Breather'. It was part of a school lore.
- 128. We got up early, about 6.45 am, and Father MFE would walk around the dormitory with a bell getting everyone up. I think we said a prayer, put our clothes on and went down to the basement where we washed at the sinks.
- 129. We then went up to the house meeting room where we said morning prayers and any announcements were made by the housemaster. We then went to church and after that we had breakfast in the refectory. That would have been about 8 o'clock in the morning.

- 130. After breakfast we went back to the dormitory, made our beds and then it was downstairs to get ready for class. Classes started about 8.40 am and went on until lunchtime with one or two breaks.
- 131. After lunch there was a short time to get ready for sports. That was all very well organised, and you played whatever sport was being played at that time of year, then came in, had a shower and changed back into you stuff.
- 132. About 4 o'clock we had afternoon tea, which was served in these huge brown metal teapots. The tea inside was like tar and was served with great lumps of bread and jam.
- 133. After that it was more classes. They started about 4.15 pm and went on until about 5.15 pm or so. Then at 5.30 pm we had to go to the study hall, or prep hall, for first prep. First prep went on until 7 pm. The prep was just as we did at Carlekemp.
- 134. At 7 pm it was back to the refectory for our evening meal. After 7 pm we had a little bit of free time, then it was back to the study hall at 8 pm for second preps. Second preps was from 8 pm until 9 pm.
- 135. After second preps there may have been some prayers, but we were in bed for 9.15 pm. For all ages, that was bedtime and shortly after that, it was lights out. No radios, talking was forbidden and you were supposed to go to sleep.
- 136. On Saturday there was no afternoon classes and no prep. Things stopped at lunch time but there would be sport in the afternoon, a rugby match or something. On Saturday nights we, generally, watched a film.
- 137. On Sunday morning a lot of praying went on and a huge amount of time was spent in mass. We always had High Mass which seemed to go on all morning. Sunday afternoon was more sport, I can't remember what we did on Sunday evening, perhaps that's when we wrote letters to our families.

Food

- 138. The food wasn't great, we were almost dying to get away from it at half term break and the holidays. I do remember being a little bit hungry once or twice but it wasn't a big thing.
- 139. We had porridge for breakfast along with great lumps of bread, jam and tea. Lunch was pretty much mince and tatties, fish and chips, the institutionalised food that you would expect and there were one or two odd things as well.
- 140. The food was not memorable, but you just ate it. Not liking it was not an option. You knew what to do and you didn't complain.
- 141. Lunch was in the refectory, all the tables were set out by the houses and the SNR sat at the top table. He was originally on his own but when Father
  MKT became SNR he revived an earlier tradition of allowing one boy at a time to have his meal with SNR
- 142. That was absolute torture because everyone was laughing at you. I remember I had lunch with him once and you had to sit there with all the other guys lined up in this great big hall. He wasn't the easiest guy to talk to but I managed to tell him about a poem I had translated into Scots and he was quite delighted about that.
- 143. So you were at your house tables and a great platter of food would be put down on the table. Father MFE had this little ritual where he would put his hands out in front of him and the boys either side of him had to place the big serving knife and fork into his hands simultaneously, or he would just let them fall on the ground.

## Washing / bathing

144. The basement was quite vast and there were showers, baths and ranks and ranks of wash basins down there.

145. If we were showering there was usually someone milling about, one of the housemasters would be supervising us.

## Clothing / uniform / possessions

- 146. The dress code was very strict at Fort Augustus, much like Carlekemp. Everything was grey, except for the jacket which was a type of tweed. They had a special Abbey Tweed, which was a kind of Lovat green and was for everyday wear. You always wore a jacket and tie and leather shoes.
- 147. On grand ceremonial occasions we wore a bright red blazer with a badge. The badge was a Corbie, a crows head, which had a white disc in its mouth. That was the Fort Augustus badge and was a reference to a crow that is supposed to have stolen away a piece of poisoned bread that Saint Benedict was going to eat.
- 148. Nobody wanted to wear the red blazers, you could be seen coming from miles away, you were like a Belisha beacon. There was no casual wear as you would have nowadays.
- 149. Apart from your clothes and your stationery you could keep some things but there wasn't really anywhere to keep them and pilfering was endemic. For example, if you left a couple of bars of chocolate on your desk in the study, next time you looked they'd almost certainly not be there.
- 150. We had a desk in the study hall and a dormitory cubicle. We kept our stationery and books in the desk and our clothes in the cubicle. Down in the basement you kept your sports kit and boots and things in a locker. That was never locked, it was an open basket type thing.
- 151. The whole place was characterised by absolutely no privacy, none whatsoever, not for the whole time I was there.

## School / religion

- 152. Some of the teaching was very good. If that was in the hands of some of the better teachers then the quality of instruction was very good but it was very variable.
- 153. For example, KT Father KT was a second teacher and taught very well. However, he refused to use the text book for the Scottish Highers. He replaced the vocabulary, so when it came to the exams half the vocabulary was foreign to us.
- 154. That was typical Fort Augustus, they were away in a world of their own. Father
  MKT refused to use the set book, that followed the syllabus. We were learning
  and could say prayers and things but then we would struggle when it came to exams.
- 155. English was well taught, French was good, the teacher, Mr McKechan, didn't have a Fort Augustus background so he knew what was needed and that was okay. I wasn't strong in science or maths so I'm maybe not the best person to speak about that.
- 156. What I can say though, is that the brighter boys that were emerging from Fort Augustus had a much poorer collection of examination results than brighter pupils that came from state schools.
- 157. They had some good teachers but standards were quite poor academically. I say that, because I do remember a French teacher arriving at Fort Augustus. His name was Mr McKechan, but he didn't last long, because he said the standards were miles behind the schools contemporaries.
- 158. Mr Derek Fowles was English and he taught history. There we were in the heart of the Scottish Highlands living in an old Hanoverian fort and we learnt all about English history, never any Scottish history at all.

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- 159. If you looked at the exam results from Fort Augustus they were quite modest considering that some of the lads were very gifted. We had religious knowledge, which was known as 'RK', and was basically a Catholic indoctrination. We didn't learn about Mohammed or anything like that.
- 160. Religion was just a continuation of Carlekemp, a lot of masses and religious talks from housemasters and all that kind of thing. Sunday was spent doing a lot of praying in the morning. We also had Benediction about 6 pm. There was a lot of religion.
- 161. It was a very confusing environment at Fort Augustus, what with the Christian message of the gentle shepherd on the one hand and all the macho male behaviour and fierce disciplinary system on the other.

#### Chores / pocket money

162. I don't recall much in the way of chores. I believe we did get pocket money, a pound or two, which was distributed to the boys in small quantities. We would spend it on sweets or whatever.

#### Leisure / trips

- 163. We would go home for end of term holidays at Christmas, Easter and for the summer. My family home during most of my Fort Augustus years was in a place called **called protocold** just outside Dundee.
- 164. When I went home to **Example** it was a little bit difficult to start with as I was a stranger and didn't really know the local lads. I did get to know them a bit though and we would play football. The thing was they were much nicer than the people I knew at Fort Augustus.
- 165. That was true and it was quite a revelation, to find these boys were friendly and welcoming. We had good games and good laughs together. A lot of the

competitiveness and hard edged instinct that existed at Fort Augustus just wasn't there. We just played for fun and to celebrate being together and that was just great.

- 166. Perhaps if I'd gone to one of the rough schools in Dundee, that my mum was terrified to send me to, I might have been a lot happier. I can't say for sure but it's a thought.
- 167. We played a lot of sport, rugby, hockey and cricket at Fort Augustus, much the same as Carlekemp. If you couldn't cut it on the sports field it was a miserable place. I was an okay sportsman, not great, but okay, so that was alright.
- 168. I remember that if the powers that be had decided to award somebody their colours or half colours for performance in sport there would be a great announcement during dinner. The person's name would be read out and there would be enormous applause as they accepted their award.
- 169. You never got any applause for being honest, or decent, or kind to the guys around you or for achieving anything in the arts or whatever, it was always sports. Sports was God.
- 170. Other than sport we had some hobbies and recreational activities. We had woodworking clubs and chess and music and stuff like that. I learnt to play the cello and I was the second state of the rock band at Fort Augustus. We used to play all the old Shadows tunes.
- 171. We also did drama and theatre, which presented its own problems, as they had to dress the boys up as girls. There was actually quite a lot of things going on, photographic clubs, art clubs and things like that.
- 172. There was one or two afternoons when there was no sports and that's when we would take part in those activities. There was time for them and we had an element of choice.

- 173. There was lots of running. We went out running in the countryside in the freezing cold and snow. You were only allowed to wear one rugby shirt, one pair of shorts, with nothing underneath and a pair of gym shoes with no socks. That's what we went running in.
- 174. Guys that were in the teams got to go away and play other schools, Gordonstoun, for example. If you were involved in music you got away a bit, I was a musician and got to go to Inverness and Fort William to play in amateur productions.
- 175. You could get away for a bit and every few weeks, depending on the religious calendar and holidays, you had what was called a 'three weekly'. It didn't actually happen every three weeks but, when it did, there would be a double bell rang in the morning, after the first lesson of the day, and that was the signal that the rest of the day was going to be a holiday.
- 176. There was different arrangements depending on your form. If you were in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> form, a party of you would go out into the countryside with a teacher. You took stoves and sausages and baked beans and things, wore all your outdoor clothes and went off with a teacher, running riot in the country. That would be until about 4 pm.
- 177. If you were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> form or above you would go off in groups of three or more, without any supervision. You had to leave a note with your housemaster, to say where you were going, because you could choose your destination. That was quite sensible.
- 178. There were one or two places we were told not to go because they were considered dangerous, certainly in the winter, when the ponds were frozen, there were places we were told not to go and skate.

#### Birthdays and Christmas

179. We went home for the holidays, Christmas, Easter and summer. I don't remember anything about birthdays. You had your own wee private celebration and if you got something sent from your parents you might share it with your pals. That was about it.

### Visits / Inspections / Review of detention

- 180. At the half term weekend your parents could come and visit and you could go out with them.
- 181. I'm not aware of any HMI type visits and inspections, there was nothing like that. I'm not aware of any inspections from the hierarchy of the Catholic church either, not in my time. It was a little world in its own bubble, we were very isolated.
- 182. At lunchtime, the mail was given out at the table. I was sent the Sporting Post from Dundee by my father and I would read about the football.
- 183. Father MFE strongly disagreed with football and used to say it was a game played by guttersnipes. He would roll his eyes and groan when he handed me the post. There was a terrible anti-football prejudice that ran through the school.

## Healthcare

- 184. There was a matron, Mrs **She actually had the second second**
- 185. There was a doctor who came in and did health checks. There was one or two people that broke legs and things like that and they had to be taken to Inverness or Fort William. That was the nearest place for that kind of care.
- 186. I don't remember any dental care or any travelling caravan or anything like that, so I think dental care must have happened during the holidays. I don't think health was

neglected, I think everything worked well and there was always somebody there who would pay attention.

### Running away

187. I think there were one or two attempts to run away. I never ran away, and I'm not sure exactly what happened with boys that did, but there would have been a punishment.

#### Incidents of note

- 188. I remember there was a fire at Fort Augustus, it was when I was in my second or third year, perhaps 1960 or 1961. There was a little fellow, I think his name was, and he set fire to the place. He'd been miserable and had evidently said to some of his pals that he was going to set fire to the place.
- 189. Well Fort Augustus went up in the night, he'd gone down to the basement and, as far as I know, set a fire down there. One of the monks smelt the smoke, we were all awakened by the fire alarm in the middle of the night and I remember the dormitory was full of smoke.
- 190. The whole school was evacuated and we were taken to a separate gymnasium building. The monks themselves had a fire engine and Father MFG and some of the others were involved and were on the spot straight away.
- 191. It was a serious fire and the whole of the brothers wing could have gone up but the monks put it out. The police were involved, I'm sure, and the lad involved was expelled and never seen again.
- 192. We also had a death during one of the three weekly holidays. It was a boy a year younger than me. The class had gone to Glen Doe on the shores of Loch Ness. It's a fair walk from Fort Augustus. The class were heading off to a boat house there. They

would have been second form, so it must have been in about 1961. I think it was after the fire.

- 193. A local man had been out on the loch fishing, in a boat, and he spotted something red floating in the water. It was one of the boys, and the spotted something he played in the string quartet with me.
- 194. Nobody really knows what happened but he must have fallen into the burn at Glen Doe and maybe the force of the water took him out into the loch. There are some people that think there was a lack of supervision or some kind of shenanigans going on. Some people have said there are still questions to be answered about that death but I don't know the truth about it. I can only imagine the police were there.
- 195. I only heard about it, but certainly died, and was buried in the monks graveyard at Fort Augustus. I remember being an acolyte at his funeral.

#### Bedwetting

196. I don't know but I could speculate that there might have been problems with bedwetting with some boys. I couldn't say.

#### Discipline

- 197. The discipline was pretty fierce actually. There was a question of seniority so the senior boys lorded it over the junior boys. That existed and was expected, a senior boy was above you in the hierarchy.
- 198. The most senior boys were the prefects or the 'Pots' as they were known. They were strict and expected to be strict, we even heard about them at Carlekemp. The discipline was dealt with mostly by the **SNR**, but particularly by the housemasters. It was all corporal punishment and usually the stick, although it wasn't actually a stick it was a belt.

- 199. It was a daily fact of life at Fort Augustus. The Pots went snooping around to see if they could find faults, referred what faults they found to the housemasters and they then administered the punishment. That was normal daily life.
- 200. The Pots couldn't administer corporal punishment but they could hand out lines. Generally, they would find a Latin book with tiny print and get you to copy it out ten times or so. That would take ages and ages to do.
- 201. Another punishment the Pots could hand out was 'rolling'. That was getting the boys to roll the big lawn in the summer. There was a big iron roller and the Pots would give boys, it had to be two boys at a time as the rollers were so heavy, thirty minutes rolling. I never did it but you often saw boys dragging the heavy rollers up and down the cricket pitch.
- 202. At least that wasn't vicious, it wasn't too bad. Some of the stuff was completely uncalled for though, just disproportionally vicious.

## Abuse at Fort Augustus

- 203. A typical example would be that you'd be sitting doing your prep in the study hall and a command would come from one of the Pots, *"Keep your desks closed"*. The Pots would then go round and inspect all the desks and if your desk was untidy you would get the stick.
- 204. The Pots would read out the numbers of the boys, at study prep, identifying everyone who was to get the stick and what it was for. It could be for an untidy desk, or locker or bedroom locker.
- 205. If you were told at prep you were to get the stick you didn't actually get it until the next day after lunch, in the housemasters office. You had to go and see the housemaster and tell him what it was for and he gave you the stick. As I said, it was

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actually a belt and the normal punishment was six of the belt, three on each hand. That would be for something like an untidy desk.

- 206. The tuck shop was opposite Father **MFE** room so oddly enough, you had boys buying sweeties on one side of the corridor and boys lining up to be belted on the other.
- 207. That happened every day. I got it quite a lot, every boy did, you couldn't avoid it. It's funny to look back on but it was quite a fierce punishment and it was very painful.
- 208. That was considered a minor punishment, something that happened every day. There was a kind of grading for the punishments. So an everyday punishment would be twice three belts. For something more serious it might be twice four or twice six, which didn't happen terribly often.
- 209. So that was the beltings, but there was also the birching's. There was quite a lot of that. It would be administered by the housemaster. There was an element of cruelty as well, just like the belt and being told the day before. With the birch you would be told to go to the **SNR** office at bedtime after changing into your pyjamas.
- 210. The birch was a stick, a cane of some kind, and it was extremely painful, a very vicious punishment. It was usually six strokes but it could be up to ten. Boys were black and blue, absolutely black and blue with red weal's across their backsides.
- 211. You would be birched for smoking, looking at girly magazines or sneaking away to the village to by fags. On a three weekly a group of lads managed to set fire to a ruined old house, so they got very severely birched for that.
- 212. I have to say, in retrospect, I think there was some sexual gratification in that. It happened to me, I can't remember what it was for but I went down to the housemasters in my dressing gown and pyjamas.

- 213. We were told to kneel on a chair and bend over. This didn't happen to me but sometimes boys had to take their pyjama bottoms down, why was that, a pyjama bottom doesn't offer much protection. Draw your own conclusions from that.
- 214. The birch wasn't as regular as the belt, or stick as they called it, which went on all the time and for minor offences. The birch was more a high drama punishment but it was still reasonably regular.
- 215. The same medicine was meted out for academic performance as well, in a very unfair sort of way. The **SNR** Father **MFF** used to get weekly marks from all the teachers. He would pour over them every Monday and decide who wasn't performing up to scratch.
- 216. It always seemed, to me, that there were some particular boys he would focus on. Never me but certainly other boys were picked on all the time for perceived under performance or laziness.
- 217. There was never any help on offer, it was always punishment. The boy would be told he was wanted by Father MFF that's what we called MFF and there was an immediate feeling of dread as they knew what was coming.
- 218. The boy would get a warning first, then the next time they underperformed they would be summoned for punishment. Again, they would be told, perhaps after lunch, but the actual punishment would be at bedtime that night. It would be a birching and it was from Father MFF SNR The boy would have to traipse for miles from the dorm up to MFF office, in his pyjamas and dressing gown.
- 219. It didn't happen to me but I know of many boys that were punished, birched in that way, for perceived laziness with school work. It was something the boys talked about and it was always SNR that administered the punishment for academic performance.

- 220. There was arbitrary punishments as well sometimes. I remember an occasion in a Class, taken by Father MFE where a lad failed a test. The lad was a very good athlete and was very tough. It wasn't my class but everyone knew of the incident.
- 221. Whatever the lad had done, it really annoyed Father MFE and he took the boy into his room and gave him a terrible belting.
- 222. I remember seeing the boy immediately afterwards and he was doubled up in pain with his hands under his elbows and the tears were pouring down his face. He was a tough sixteen year old so that gives an indication of how vicious these punishments were.
- 223. Another incident, which is absolutely true because I was a victim, was on the day we went home at the end of term. I was getting ready to go for the train and there was a bit of a riot going on in the dorm. It was just all the excitement amongst the boys, as we were going home.
- 224. Father MFE stomped into the dorm and marched us all out the dorm and down to the house meeting room and birched everybody. Every one of us was birched and we all went home black and blue.
- 225. I believe, at some stage, boys did start to require medical attention from birching and they stopped the process for that reason. This was after my time but I heard somebody's wounds got infected after a birching and when the local doctor heard about it, he created a fuss. I don't know who the boy or the doctor were.
- 226. Bullying was institutionalised, all the Pots, the prefects, were bullies. They only did it because it was expected of them. Senior boys were highly discouraged from fraternising with the junior boys. There was none of the mentoring or buddying, that goes on nowadays, it was just the opposite.

- 227. They had 'fagging' but they didn't call it that, they called it 'skivvying' it's an English public school boy thing. A senior boy would have a junior boy as a slave, a skivvy, to do things for them. I was never a skivvy, I was never asked, but I would have said no. A skivvy was paid, ten shillings a term or something.
- 228. I was never aware of any sexual activities or abuse of that nature. I was quite a naïve boy but I was never aware of any sexual goings on of any kind.
- 229. From my point of view there was a lot of physical and emotional abuse. They may have thought it was character forming back then but, I would think, by today's standards, a lot if it would be considered abuse.
- 230. It was only on reading the old boys page on the website, many years later, that I started to get a whiff of some of the sexual stuff. I've since met people that have been victims and I was absolutely horrified and angered by that.
- 231. Having seen the unsavoury context of the place maybe one can understand why that might have happened.

## **Reporting of abuse at Fort Augustus**

- 232. I didn't ever tell my parents about any of the punishments I received. You just didn't do that. I don't think anybody did. That's just how it was, how life was, I didn't know any other schooling.
- 233. You were your own keeper at Fort Augustus. There was no recourse to support from anybody, you just had to learn to stand on your own two feet. Any weakness, of any kind, would be pounced upon.
- 234. You had to cut it in the rough and tumble with the lads, you had to cut it on the sports fields, you had to cut it academically, or life would be hell, that was about it.

- 235. There was nobody you could run to, there was no 'in loco parentis' at Fort Augustus. No counselling, or pastoring or mentoring, no one you could go to and say you were struggling, or you had academic problems or emotional problems or you were frightened.
- 236. The educator and author A.S. Neil, who had Summerhill school, said one or two things, some farfetched, but one was that Christian schools are full of hate and fear. I've often thought what a beautiful description that was of Fort Augustus.

## Life after boarding school

- 237. I left Fort Augustus when I was eighteen and it was time to leave. That was the end of my schooling. I drifted around aimlessly for a while. I stayed at home for a bit and I played the cello mainly. I got a lot of work playing the cello, not that I was paid very much, other than expenses. I had ideas of being a musician but they were a little vague.
- 238. I eventually got a job as a porter at Hospital in Dundee. I was putting dead bodies into the mortuary, helping people up and down flights of stairs and various other jobs. I liked that, because the company of the lads and other people in the hospital was such a refreshing change from all the fear and suspicion and regimentation that went on at Fort Augustus. It was great to get away from the bubble of horror that went on there.
- 239. My academic credentials were quite modest, however my mother, spotted an opportunity for me to enter hospital administration. I then became involved in that and I did quite well. I did that in Edinburgh for a couple of years. It wasn't well paid but it was great, to be with nice people and away from all the terrible goings on at Fort Augustus.

- 240. I then got a job with C&A. I went through the selection process in London and was appointed as a **second second** in the Manchester store. I was there for two or three years and I enjoyed that, it was okay.
- 241. I then found myself a girlfriend, who was a teacher, and what she was doing sounded far more interesting than working with C&A. Romance blossomed, it wasn't terribly long before we were married and I went to teacher training college.
- 242. I have two daughters from my first marriage, they're both in their forties now.
- 243. I became a primary school teacher and in later years I went on to complete an Open University teaching degree and my Master's Degree in Education and Psychology. I spent 34 years in primary education in Scotland and finished up as 
  I was there for the last 13 years of my working life.
- 244. Unfortunately, very tragically, I lost my first wife in a car accident many years ago, after ten years of marriage. I was then on my own for a time before I met my wife,

## Impact

- 245. Being at Carlekemp and Fort Augustus has definitely had an impact on me. I suppose, like everybody else, l'm a product of my time. I came out pretty confused and it took me a long time to find my feet.
- 246. I suppose it made me what I am, so I guess some of the things around my family home may have been affected by that, but I can't think of anything in particular.
- 247. I think one of the things that made me do interpretive teaching and affected my relationship with pupils was to do just the opposite of what was done to me. I felt the whole way of handling young people was all wrong at Fort Augustus, and my mission, if you like, was to do something a little more humane.

- 248. Why should school be such a hostile, cruel, nasty environment and not somewhere supportive and friendly. It should be a happy place for young people.
- 249. I would say I am very guarded. By nature I am quite private but I think, having had that experience, I tend to fall back on my own resourcefulness to cope with situations rather than go and find somebody to tell it all to. I'm not inclined to do that.
- 250. I really liked my work in teaching, it could drive me crazy at times and was demanding and stressful but, by and large, it was a great job for me. I really liked working with kids, I felt it was an important job and I was contributing.
- 251. I've rejected a lot of Catholicism. I thought the only way to make any sense of it was to move outside of it and look at it from a distance. I still don't understand most of it but I know there are good things within the Catholic message.
- 252. I have, possibly, had some post traumatic effects from the incident with MFC MFC in the classroom. I hadn't really thought about it until David Walls reminded me a few years ago, but I have had troubles with night terrors. I see these big black men terrorising me at night, and whether that has any connection with that particular incident, is highly speculative, but maybe it did.
- 253. David Walls is terrified of Carlekemp, he can't go near the place. I didn't have the same experiences as him.
- 254. **Example 1** tells me I shout in my sleep at night. It was a little amusing to start with but sometimes it can be quite horrific. She tells me it brings tears to her eyes and breaks her heart.
- 255. She describes me shouting out "no, no, no" and breathing very heavily, like someone who is very scared. I was aware of this as when I was bringing up my kids on my own, they would laugh about it. That was when my children were of primary school age.

- 256. What I didn't realise was how frequently it was happening. Apparently, it can be as much as two or three times a week, and I just wasn't aware of that.
- 257. I've not had any kind of counselling for my night terrors. **The second sec**
- 258. **Matching** discovered I'd been badly beaten when she reached out one day to touch my face and I dodged her. I did that on several occasions and she knew there had been something but I never spoke about it. Of course she knows now.
- 259. It doesn't distress me to think about what happened to me, it's all so long ago now. I do find it distressing to think about the damage that's been caused to the lives of some of the boys, from the experiences they had at these schools. It's absolutely awful. It has affected me but I'm not aware that it's significantly traumatised me, certainly not as it clearly has done to some others.

## **Reporting of abuse**

260. As I have said I didn't tell anyone about the punishments at Carlekemp or Fort Augustus. I've never spoken to anyone other than the punishment I've never made any reports to the police.

## Records

261. I'm not especially interested in getting my records. I'm not sure what records they would even have kept.

#### Lessons to be learned

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- 262. Don't send your child to a boarding school would be one good lesson. I didn't send mine to one.
- 263. If we are going to have these schools they need to be subject to very stringent transparency from the outside inspectorate and people like that. They just seemed to have a free licence to do what they wanted.
- 264. I'm not sure what the lessons to be learned are but it doesn't bear thinking about repeating the kind of experiences that my classmates and myself had at these places. This shouldn't be what schooling is about, it was all wrong and caused an enormous amount of unhappiness.

## Hopes for the Inquiry

- 265. Recognition should be given to those who went through these experiences and who were treated harshly and unfairly. In some cases they were the victims of criminal abuse, be it sexual, emotional or physical. That recognition is important to allow them to come forward, have their experiences listened to and to be believed.
- 266. To safeguard the future of generations to come. Children should be safeguarded from this kind of institution, where the ethos absolutely stank. Children paid the price by being at the mercy of this kind of insidious, evil, vicious culture.
- 267. It was all masked by saying that it was good for you to be treated like that, and that it will give you character and make a man out of you. That was all a lie.
- 268. I'm glad my mother wasn't alive to witness all the revelations that have come out about these Catholic institutions over the last few year. It would have absolutely shattered her, as she was a kindly, good person and was particularly concerned about the welfare of children.

269. There does need to be structures put in place that make sure these mistakes are not repeated for children in the future. I do support the efforts of all those who were seriously abused at Fort Augustus to get compensation, they deserve it, and more.

# Other information

- 270. I have written memoirs of my time at Carlekemp and Fort Augustus. I can make them available to the Inquiry if necessary.
- 271. One of the boys from a was a was a He was an academic, who went on to a was and he wrote a book. It was about his early years, and he devotes a chapter or two to his experiences at Fort Augustus. A read of those chapters is well worthwhile, as he says it as it was.
- 272. 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.

	MMG		
Signed			
Dated	14/5/201	19	•