

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

DQL

Support person present: No.

1. My name is DQL. My date of birth is 1974. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before boarding school

2. My parents are and . I was born in Ripon. I have two younger siblings. is four years younger than me and is nine years younger than me. I can remember living with my parents in Germany when I was about three or four years old. Both my parents were in the armed forces. My dad was a Scottish Soldier and my mum was also in the army. My mum left the service when she was pregnant with me. My dad remained in the army in Germany until I was fifteen years old.
3. I went to a few British schools in Germany including one in Dortmund. I was a bright lad, I was a year ahead in all my studies and the school advised my parents that as I was ahead of the curve they might want to get me into a boarding school and get that extra education. My dad would get posted to a new location every three or four years and so disruption to education was also very much in my parents minds. That combined with seeing forces children coming back to Germany from boarding school and playing cricket, which I didn't otherwise see in Germany, made it an attractive idea to me even at the age.

4. There was a very consultative process with my parents. It was a collaborative choice for me to go to boarding school. It wasn't that I was going off because I was unwanted. I remember looking at all the brochures for the different schools and rejecting the ones I didn't fancy going to. I was front and centre involved in deciding the type of school I went to.
5. There was an exam to get in to Queen Victoria School, which I passed, and there was a visit like an open day which I went to when I was ten years old. I remember the sound of the pipes and drums. There was a lot of noise and activity. I was shown the dormitories and I met Mr OLB, the Head of my House. It was after that it was agreed that the school would take me and we decided I would attend the school. It got real for me then. I remember the decision resting on me. My parents were keen for me to go to Queen Victoria School and there was a sense of wanting to please my parents.
6. In hindsight I think it was ridiculous for a ten year old child to make decisions about their long term education.

### **Queen Victoria School, Dunblane 1985 to 1992**

7. Queen Victoria School is quite a massive estate for a relatively small amount of boys. When you first arrived through the main gates, you went up a tree-lined promenade and came up to Queen Victoria School's main building. It was a very imposing military building. It was quite cold and unwelcoming. It is not a castle but it almost has that feel to it. There was a doctor's and dental facility, and a hospital ward. There was a purpose built housing estate for school staff. It was a self-sufficient place. Opposite the main old building was the school chapel. There was also a 1960's prefabricated extension which was the teaching block. The boys' dormitories were to the right of that at the very end.
8. The school was run by the Ministry of Defence. In charge was a Brigadier and there was a Sergeant Major. There were different teachers for the different departments. It

was originally set up to deal with orphans of Scottish soldiers killed in the Boer War. Even now the school is still true to its roots and when I was there, there were pupils whose fathers had been killed in the Falklands.

9. When you first arrived at the school you were called a Rookie. You were assigned someone who would be a year above you and they would look after you. They would sleep on the top bunk above you in the dormitory. I can't remember the name of the guy I had but he was decent enough.
10. When I was there the school catered for boys only, all boarders. The school dealt with pupils from primary six all the way through to secondary six. There were 40 boys in each year group so about 320 in total. There were four teachers for Primary pupils and about sixteen teachers for Secondary pupils.
11. I understand that the fees for the school were heavily subsidised by the Ministry of Defence. It is very much like the scheme for the Duke of York School in England. Every four months my father had to pay hundreds of pounds in fees, rather than thousands of pounds.

*Location / Layout / Staffing / Residents*

12. My first house was called Wavell House. It was right at the end of the extension that housed its dormitories. There were two live-in flats adjacent to the dormitories for staff. Graham Beattie was one of the teachers who lived in the flat just down from my first dormitory. He was a good man, he taught Primary School. OLB [REDACTED] was the head of Wavell House and he stayed in the other live-in flat for my dormitory. He also taught Primary School. He was not such a good man. The Heads of Trenchard, Cunningham, and Haig Houses lived on the three levels of the main building. The remaining teachers were accommodated in the school housing estate, the type of military housing I spent most of my childhood living in. There were a couple of grander houses dotted about the place for the Head Teacher, Julian Hankinson, and the Deputy Head teacher, Ian Patterson, and people like that.

13. In addition to OLB and Graham Beattie there were two other Primary School teachers. Ben Philip was my Primary 6 teacher and QYL was the other Primary 7 teacher. In the Secondary School Mr Laing taught Craft and Design, Mr Buchanan taught French, Mr Willman taught Latin, and Mr Gardener taught Maths, Mr Bovill taught Biology. I can't remember who taught English. The Headmaster was Mr Julian Hankinson throughout my time there.
14. You moved through the different Houses as you got older. I started off in Wavell House in Primary 6. I was in Lyndoch Dormitory then I was in Hopetoun Dormitory. After Primary 7, I moved to Cunningham House.
15. In Secondary School we were split into two groups of 20, with 20 going to Cunningham House, 20 going to Trenchard House, and three years later we were thrown in to Haig House together. I was in Cunningham House from Secondary 1 to Secondary 3, then Haig House for Secondary 4 to Secondary 5.

### **Routine at Queen Victoria School**

#### *First day*

16. I went to Queen Victoria School when I was ten years old. My brother would have been five years old at that time. My brothers and did not go to boarding school. They were much quieter, more introverted children.
17. I remember my parents dropping me off on my first day with my brown leather satchel. I was quite wide eyed, I was in shock thinking, "What is going on?" The first few days were about getting you to learn the rules. You were away from home and you had to stand on your own two feet. It was a very military approach.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

18. There was a bell for you when to get up in the morning and a bell to tell you when to go to sleep. There was a rule of no talking after lights out.
19. All the dormitories had the same layout. There were five bunkbeds on each side, so 20 boys in each dormitory. Each bunk had a little side locker and a full-sized locker. There was one dormitory each side of the central staircase. Down a few steps from the landing were the two flats for the live-in staff.
20. When you got up in the morning you got dressed and washed. I don't remember any issue with that side of things although the washing process wasn't very rigorous.
21. You went for breakfast then there was an inspection of the dormitories. We went to Chapel every morning about 8.30 am. It was about fifteen or twenty minutes of service and announcements for the school, like a school assembly. The Chaplain was a really nice guy called Mr Silcox.
22. There was a set time for lights out, but I can't remember when it was. You had to go and get milk and two biscuits from the canteen and then you were off to bed. That was about 8.00 pm or 8.30 pm. Then it was lights out until about 6.30 am or 7.00 am.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

23. The food was OK, it was always pretty good. It was the best aspect of how we were provided for at school, although I never got used to Scottish salted porridge. The majority of the people working in the kitchen were local people. The guy in charge was particularly avuncular.
24. The Primary School ate separately from the Secondary School. There might have been a slight overlap. Although the food was good there was hardly any milk. There would be a one pint square carton of milk between ten boys. I do look back though

and think they could have given us more than a glass of milk at night with two biscuits for supper.

25. In secondary school there was a bugle call for bringing people to meals because people could be spread out all over the grounds. We would stand in our respective years in a hall where they had all the pictures of the great and the good of the school. A bugle call would bring everyone to silence and then there would be announcements before we would all file in with whoever was leading that day. All the secondary school pupils ate together in that fashion. You joined the line at either side of the two serveries and picked up the food from there.
26. The teachers had their own dining room but there would be one or two masters on duty with the boys.

#### *Washing/bathing*

27. We would wash in the morning when we got up and we had a shower in the evenings.
28. I would say that the school was more concerned with the appearance of cleanliness than actual cleanliness. I remember going home and my mother hitting the roof because of the grime on my civilian clothes. We had to wash our civilian clothes ourselves at school and we used to ring them out through an old fashioned wooden mangle. We were not supervised when we were doing this and at ten years old I was not very good at doing washing. That's not what they had told my parents, they told them my clothes would be getting cleaned. All the school uniform we were provided with went to a laundry.
29. There were about six showers and there was no privacy at all. All the kids were trying to use the showers at the same time. The teachers by and large didn't come in to the showers, with the notable exception of Ben Philip. I remember boys putting a bench up against the door to try and stop him coming in.

### *Clothing/uniform*

30. For Primary School we wore what we used to call Dukes, which I think was a reference to the sister school The Duke of York. The Dukes would have been dark blue, almost purple. They were like cargo shorts but made of corduroy. They were thicker than our gym shorts which is why we had to change into our gym shorts if we were getting whacked with a plimsoll. We wore Dukes in the summer along with a shirt. In winter we wore trousers with a jumper. The shirts were grey. The jumpers were blue, like RAF jumpers. It was all military issue kit, even the socks and the shoes. We also had a kilt, a jacket, a Glengarry, and a Number 1 jacket, which is a red jacket of the type the Guards wear.
31. If you went into town, to Dunblane, you had to wear your kilt and all the kit. We wore a green jacket with the grey shirt and the school tie which I think was green, yellow, and red. You got treated differently in Dunblane dressed like that because you stood out. The local lads did have a pop at us but most people left us alone, they saw us more as a curiosity. I did have someone throw a can at me from a car as they drove past.
32. I remember I once spoke to a local girl and she said local parents used to threaten to send their children to Queen Victoria School if they misbehaved.

### *Leisure time*

33. After school finished about 4.00 pm we would have tea and then be left to our own devices. We could sit in the dormitory, watch TV, or go out and play in the grounds of the school jumping over burns and that kind of stuff but they didn't want you going out of the school grounds. You were pretty much left to your own devices at the weekend, compared with the regimented way the school was during the week.
34. On Fridays you could go to the local shop to buy sweets with the 50p or one pound they gave you. You queued for your money in strict order. If you missed your turn you didn't go out. We were pretty much confined to the grounds. We weren't walled-

in, there was just a fence and low stone walls to mark the boundary of the school grounds, there weren't any search towers. You weren't allowed out of the school to go into the town of Dunblane until you were considerably older.

35. During the winter months they would try and run some clubs in the evening. You didn't have access to toys and things. It was either watch TV or go and make your own fun. There wasn't organised football or anything out-with the Wednesday and Saturday sports. You could kick a ball about but it was difficult to get access to any sports equipment without a Master.

36. The friends that I had at Queen Victoria School were BXP [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. They were my close circle of friends. I was with them basically right through my time at Queen Victoria School, until BXP [REDACTED] got expelled for cigarettes and minor trouble.

37. It wasn't all bad living at Queen Victoria School. I had a lot of good friends there and while there were some aspects I didn't look forward to going back to after the holidays, I was always dying to get back to see my friends. That made up for the bad stuff.

#### *Trips and holidays*

38. For the school holidays at summer, Easter, and Christmas I went home to my parents in Germany. Pupils were allowed to go home to their parents at weekends too but mine were too far away. My parents were under the impression that my wider family were coming up to visit me and taking me away at weekends but that was certainly not the case for the entire seven years I was there. It appears that my extended family were not entirely honest with my parents about visiting me and that has been extremely upsetting for my parents.

39. If you did have family visiting and taking you out you could apply for a late pass, but I never had one. I actually thought it was called a Lake pass, I imagined that there



was a lake somewhere where families would go for a visit and I really yearned to see it.

40. There was a holiday that I spent in Bathgate and Boghall for about a week or ten days break. I had grandparents, aunts, and uncles in West Lothian. I couch surfed from one family to another. That happened every school year. Although I was quite close to my family, I would rather have been at home and was frequently bored and unhappy.
41. I did go on a couple of trips skiing and shooting competitions. I dropped out of drums and bugles so was not in the pipe band but the pipe band went to every rugby international at Murrayfield and on one occasion the Edinburgh Tattoo. They even went on a trip to Canada one year. I went on a trip to France and had my first try at skiing there.
42. My travelling picked up substantially when we were all required to join the Cadets. It was compulsory to join. The school had a military ethos. It had its own colours. I was in the Cadets from the age of thirteen or fourteen, right through until I left school.
43. We didn't do a lot in Cadets. It was really just playing toy soldiers. We had 7.62 mm high calibre rifles and 5.56 mm SA-80's. There was an armoury at the school and a firing range. It was very real. It was properly managed, it was highly disciplined and the safety element was impressed upon you in drills on the firing range. The two people with responsibility for weapons were the two most responsible people in the school. They were School [REDACTED] Berry who was ex-Black Watch. He was a good man. He was [REDACTED] QTR [REDACTED] who was not such a nice man. The other person in charge was the Padre Mr Silcox. There were no mishaps with the weapons at Cadets, the weapons were only handled by the correct people, not any other teachers.
44. I ended up going to Pirbright in Hampshire and took part in inter-school competitions. Sometimes these competitions were arranged outside term-time so I would fly to Hampshire and then fly back to Germany for the rest of the holidays.

### *Schooling*

45. The schooling at Queen Victoria School was quite traditional. They taught the traditional subjects, including Latin. The class structure was very simple. You were either in the Lower Tier or the Higher Tier. The tiers were divided according to aptitude. I changed between the two tiers for Maths as I was sort of in the middle. The classes were quite small so both tiers might be in the same room. For example, there were six or eight pupils in biology.
46. We started classes in the morning after Chapel. There were classes until lunchtime, then after lunch until about 4.00 pm. Although many of the days were ordinary school days it was a military institution so we had to military drill. It was like that from the start. The school Sergeant Major would show us how to march properly, that kind of thing.
47. You also had to pick a musical instrument for the military band. You either picked the pipes, the drums and the bugle, or you did highland dancing. I liked making a lot of noise so I went for the drums and the bugle. You spent some of the time during the school week getting instructions on your instrument.
48. On Wednesdays there was a half-day for sports. That was standard right across the school. It was pretty much rugby all the way through, with some other sports depending on the weather. Rugby matches would involve travelling to other schools on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We had to do some extra schooling on Saturday morning to make up for Wednesday afternoon.
49. I can't remember having Prep in Primary school but we had Prep in Secondary 1 through to Secondary 5. That meant for a fixed time in the evening, I believe it was 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm you would have to go back to the classroom and do work that had been set for you. The amount of Prep and the amount of time would increase the older you got. They would stagger supertime in accordance with when people

finished Prep. We were supervised by an older boy in the classroom and one master would go round checking the classrooms where Prep was taking place.

50. Although I had gone to Queen Victoria School because I had excelled at primary school in Germany, I quickly floundered. I lost a lot of momentum. I lost a lot of self-confidence. The subjects I was studying weren't ones I was interested in like Geography and History. We were taught Maths, English, Biology, Latin, Statistics, German and Modern Studies. I did Chemistry for a while too but I was starting to get into trouble a fair bit during class. I made artificial cigarettes and used a Bunsen burner to light them. As a result I sat in isolation in the school corridor during the chemistry lessons for the remainder of the school term.
51. My success or otherwise at Secondary school depended on the teachers I had. My Modern Studies teacher, Bill, was the only one who gave me a voice. Some of the teachers would squash any signs of individuality as soon as they saw them. I started losing faith in myself. There were periods when I was isolated and I couldn't phone home to speak to my parents. I started acting up. I would make loud comments and the teachers started referring to me as the one with the loud voice. This was picked up by some of the other boys. I started getting into more and more trouble. I think that loss of self-belief was happening all over the place because in Trenchard House I was aware of some boys self-harming with [REDACTED] and getting into trouble on a more serious scale. There were a handful of boys who did this at the same time. The self-harming cuts were clear as day, you saw it and people talked about it. The one boy who I specifically remember self-harming was called [REDACTED], possibly [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I can't remember how many boys in total were doing this or how often. It seemed to be happening in Trenchard House and I was in Cunningham House. You have to remember that some of those boys had been put there by their parents, as if they were unwanted. If they got themselves into big enough trouble, they would get expelled. For example, some boys broke into the tuck shop and were expelled.
52. Looking back I feel that the education I had was not fit for purpose, for me. It wasn't broad enough, it wasn't eclectic enough. It didn't take into account some of the natural academic passions that I might have. It was very prescribed. As with all

things in life if you are not enthused about something you are not going to do well in it, so there could be different outcomes depending on what kind of person you were. A good friend of mine, **BXP**, his great passion was for all things outside the education system. He was interested in things that were outside the school curriculum but he knew that he would never sit an exam in those things so the education system failed for him. But for those who had more traditional interests, for example those who loved Latin, then the system worked just fine for them. The teachers could tell from year one what you were going to be like. They had an attitude.

### *Healthcare*

53. If you were poorly you went to the school hospital. The nurse there would prescribe medication. I didn't see a doctor at the school the whole time I was there. I saw a doctor when I went to hospital in Stirling for my broken finger. I am aware other boys might have gone to the nurse for rugby injuries and that type of thing but that never happened to me as far as I can recall. I cannot remember if we had routine inoculations at Queen Victoria School.
54. There was a fully kitted dental surgery at the school but I can only recall seeing a dentist once. I can't recall there being regular check-ups.

### *Religious instruction*

55. Sunday at Queen Victoria School was the traditional day of rest. If you were Protestant you would go to the school chapel where Mr Silcox would give a service. If you were Catholic you had to walk to the local Catholic Church in Dunblane.
56. There was a sectarian divide at the school. That was the general attitude in Scotland at the time and it permeated through every element of society and so it permeated

through the school as well. I was not used to that having grown up and attended school in Germany.

57. The local Catholic priest would come up to speak to us but he would sit and stare at us like we were demented because some of the boys were quite rude to him, acting like monkeys. He moved on and then there was another priest who came in but after a while these visits eased off and stopped.

### *Work*

58. You had to make your own bed but you would have to dis-assemble your bedding and lay it out on the bed for inspection. You had to learn how to do hospital corners, and have a counter-pane down the middle. You were taught how to barrack your bed, which means laying everything out in a certain format for inspection. If you didn't do it properly you were punished, plain and simple. You would be made to do it again, and given detention, or struck with a plimsoll.
59. Our chores were mainly cleaning, cleaning the dormitory, the dining tables, and that kind of thing. If you didn't clean it right, your punishment was that you could be given detention, you could get a whack, and be made to do it again. I was a good lad so it didn't happen to me that often. It didn't happen to me as much as it maybe happened to others. When I was in Primary School, I would see this happening a couple of times a week, more when there was a blitz on. A blitz was a period of increased inspections. If there was a blitz on, there might be ten boys sent to get the plimsoll. The number of strikes with the plimsoll they got would depend on the severity of what they had done.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

60. My birthday was in school term but I cannot recall it ever being celebrated or acknowledged. It was just another day. Other boys' birthdays were not celebrated either. Pupils were not at the school at Christmas either so that was not celebrated.

### *Personal possessions*

61. You had a locker and a side locker beside your bunk. That's where you would keep all your personal stuff. I had a briefcase, a bible, some stationery, and some sweets. That was all I had. You could go and buy sweets in Dunblane. As you got older, depending on your behaviour, you were allowed more freedom outside school and you could get on a train and go to Stirling. When I got a girlfriend, it was a great incentive for me to behave at school so I was able to go out at weekends.

### *Bed Wetting*

62. That happened a lot to some children but it wasn't an issue for me. I think it was mainly because of stress and homesickness. It was not dealt with very sympathetically at all. In some cases it continued up until people were fifteen or sixteen years old. I remember one lad who was always getting ripped into for it by the other boys. It wasn't particularly malicious and you do learn to toughen up but I remember thinking how difficult it must have been for him. He wasn't a friend of mine but I felt compelled to speak to him about it but he was just resigned to his lot. I remember how miserable he was and in hindsight there was clearly something wrong there. The school had known about it all the way up from Primary School. Just being there without doing anything made me feel guilty about what was going on. My one redemption was the time I tried to speak to him. I just tried to ask him about how he was feeling.

63. There was a House Matron for each House. The Wavell House Matron was a battle-axe. I can't remember her name. She didn't have any patience for the kids, especially bed wetters. I suppose it meant extra work for her. I can't remember my House Matron's name.

*Running away*

64. Boys did run away. I ran away once, when I was about fifteen or sixteen years old. I ran away with [REDACTED]. I lasted until about 3.00 am but then it was too cold so I went back to the school. Ben Philip was asking where [REDACTED] was and they had to go out looking for him. I was taken into Ben Philip's flat which I was very nervous about, but nothing inappropriate happened there as I wasn't a little boy any more. They found [REDACTED] and brought him back.

*Visitors*

65. My parents visited me once at the school in seven years. I didn't get any other casual visitors either. My parents did pick me up from school to begin with but by the time I was fourteen years old I was getting the train and getting planes myself. I had two lives. I had my life at home with my family and my life back at school. The two were completely separate.

*External Inspections*

66. I am not aware of there being any external inspections of the school but I was aware of occasional external visitors. I knew when there were external visitors at the school because the teachers wore their best suits.

### *Family contact*

67. Initially we were taught how to write a letter home and we got letters from home. I don't know if our letters home were vetted by the school. In Secondary 2 we were allowed a fifteen minute phone call to home each week.
68. We used to have a thing at school at the end of summer term, called The Grand Day. There was a pipe band, VIP's including occasionally royalty, and it was open to all the pupils' families. My friends' families attended these events but my parents never came in the seven years I was at Queen Victoria School. It is that kind of unintentional emotional neglect that I am angry with my parents about. That feeling of abandonment for a large period of my life.
69. Even when I did go home to Germany for the holidays, I knew what it was like to have people feeling angry with me. My parents used to foster children but when I went home, the fostered children had to make room for me so they had to go somewhere else. This upset their friends who blamed me for coming home.
70. I didn't have any additional contact with my two siblings. My brothers were both educated in Germany. When the family returned as a unit to Swansea in south Wales we entered mainstream education there.

### *Discipline*

71. If you didn't follow the rules at Queen Victoria School they used corporal punishment. It was at the school that I was first confronted with the plimsoll as a means of dishing out punishment. The teachers had a choice of items they could use until corporal punishment was outlawed but the plimsoll was the go-to implement in primary school. They had the tawse which was available as a wide strap, or a narrow strap. I never got the tawse, but I certainly got the plimsoll.



72. There was an orchestrated campaign of hitting Primary School children called The Blitz. They would inform us in advance when it was a Blitz. You had to make sure you didn't put a foot wrong or you would get hit with the plimsoll. In the mornings and in the evenings we would get inspections of our kit and if anything was wrong we would have to get changed into our rugby shorts, go downstairs to the main office, join the queue, and just get hit. That's how it was. It was bizarre. The first time I got hit, I was asked a question and because I was panicking, I didn't know the answer and got sent to get hit anyway. I was very scared after that and tried to be perfect with my belongings thereafter.
73. A Blitz happened whenever the teachers thought the house standards were falling. If one dormitory failed an inspection and then another dormitory failed an inspection, you got the idea that a Blitz would be coming. The teachers would rag everyone with inspections for two or three days and aim for the miscreants who would then get a smack with the plimsoll. Then it would calm down again and go back to the normal routine with inspections once per week. This type of thing happened quite often and at that time it was perfectly legal.
74. A lot of the supervision in secondary school was handed over to the senior boys. The senior boys who were supervising were called Prefects and there were Prefects from every year. There were three seniors who were like Head Boy, they were called Monitors, with one Senior Monitor. At meals the Monitors would sit with the Master who was on duty at the top table that was set about two feet off the ground at the front of the hall.
75. The Monitors and Prefects had a range of punishments that they could give out which were sanctioned by the Masters. To be fair it worked quite well. I don't have any recollections of Monitors or Prefects being abusive.
76. If you got punished by prefects, as I did, it wasn't in the form of a beating or anything like that. You would be given one or two days where you would have to get up at about 6.00 am and get dressed in sports kit and do cross-country running. Even though it might sound quite benign to go for a run at 6.00 am I can tell you that it is

not pleasant when wearing shorts and T-shirt in the depths of a dark cold Scottish winter. The prefects could also order you to clean tables and things. The teachers were more involved with the more serious things.

77. By the time I got to secondary school, the corporal punishment that I had in primary school had been outlawed. The punishment we got instead was detention. Detentions could be quite hefty, with a requirement not to leave the school at all, or having your pass revoked. There was no more corporal punishment after it was outlawed.
78. For a while after corporal punishment was outlawed there was a bit of a breakdown of order at the school. Things got a little bit rowdy for a while but they calmed down again.

#### **Abuse at Queen Victoria School**

79. Most of the sexual abuse I suffered occurred in the first year. After that it was mainly violence for six years.
80. As I found out, if you were sensitive, even if you tried to avoid trouble, you were picked upon, you were an easy target. If Ben Philip picked up that you needed affection that's' when he would pay attention to you. If you tried to avoid trouble, other boys picked up on this. If you had sweets other children would be all round you pressuring you to give the sweets up.
81. The very first rule that was taught to me, informally, was "Don't sneak." Whatever happens, you don't tell. That was a rule that I was taught by the teachers as well, when I was only ten years old. It would have been OLB who told me this. Even a good teacher like QYL said that too. The only one who didn't say that was Graeme Beattie. I was a sensitive kid so it was natural for me to say something if I wasn't happy about something that was going on. But the teachers made it very clear that you don't sneak. It wasn't just something as mild as not telling tales that

they meant by this. If you were getting bullied, then you would be expected to fight back and not to say anything. I don't know why the teachers were like that, maybe they couldn't be bothered dealing with problems, but as a general rule they were complicit in the undercurrent of not saying anything.

82. I remember one teacher saying, "If you've got something you need to get sorted out, you go down to the Magic Circle and you sort it out down there." I can't remember which teacher said this. It wasn't said to me directly, it was said to a larger group of boys following an altercation between two other boys. The Magic Circle was a clearing down in the woods behind Wavell House. If you had a dispute with someone you were pressured to go to the Magic Circle and fight the other lad in front of everyone else. The teachers knew this happened and they did very little to prevent it happening. If you were challenged, you were compelled to go. If you didn't, the other boys would give you a hard time over it.
83. I remember cleaning a dining table in the main dining hall. When I was doing that some older lads made me fight another lad in the dining hall. I can't remember the name of the other lad I was made to fight, it might have been [REDACTED]. I can't remember the names of the older boys. I broke my finger, I dislocated a knuckle. Obviously there was the policy of don't sneak and that was encouraged by the older pupils at the table. I was trying to carry on with my cleaning duties lifting piles of plates. However, I couldn't support the weight of the plates I was carrying and they all fell on the floor and broke. I got more grief for that. I went to the hospital in Queen Victoria School first. Then I got taken to Stirling Hospital to get the bone reset. I can't remember who took me there but I remember they told the hospital staff that I had been fighting with another boy. My knuckle is still out of alignment to this day. In cold weather it aches and it is stiff to move.
84. I think there were a number of boys who were abused by Ben Philip in his classroom. He was my teacher in Primary 6. Ben Philip joined the school after working in a Young Offenders Institution. I remember he mentioned this when telling us some moral story in the Chapel once. Ben Philip was white, about 5 feet 9 inches

tall. He had dark, oily slicked-back hair, and a massive handlebar moustache. He had a friendly demeanour and dressed smart. He is dead now.

85. I was abused by Ben Philip from the age of ten or eleven. I would get called to his desk and he would put his hand up my shorts at the back and sides and down my waist bands. He would call each boy in turn over to his desk, one at a time to read to him. He was sitting down and no one else could see what he was doing. When he called other boys to his desk to read to him, I couldn't see what he did to them.
86. He used to lift up my shirt and put his hand down my trousers. It was totally inappropriate. He didn't touch my genitals but he almost did. It was like he was trying to see how far he could go, to see what he could get away with before I would start pulling away. I was too young to understand what was going on. In hindsight it was totally abhorrent.
87. I remember one occasion when Graham Beattie, the other Primary 6 teacher, came in through Ben Philip's classroom door. I was standing at Ben Philip's desk. I think Graeme Beattie might have clocked what was going on. Ben Philip attempted to tuck my shirt back into my shorts but my shirt remained ruffled as I went to sit down again at the back of the classroom. I remember after that incident I thought it was strange that Ben Philip's classroom door was kept open after that. I do not know who authorised that. I am almost certain that the other staff knew what he was like. However there wasn't any investigation or anything at the time. No teachers ever took me aside and asked me if anything had happened in his classroom.
88. Ben Philip's nickname was Bender. I know now that that word has negative connotations, but back then I thought he was called Bender because he used to bend the slipper before he hit you, but he was called that because of the sexual inference. Everyone knew his nickname was Bender, including all of the other teachers. I believe they were all complicit in allowing him to do what he did. It was only innocent naïve children like me who didn't know what Bender meant.

89. Ben Philip would concentrate on newcomers, pupils who were missing home, those who needed affection. There were two Primary 6 classes. If you went into the other class you were OK but if you were in his class you were abused, it was pure luck, plain and simple. I just had bad luck. I went to a different teacher in Primary 7 but Ben Philip was still involved in dealing with us. He would take charge of us at the swimming pool. He would make us change and get dried off in front of him and he would make us shower in front of him. I remember after showering he told us not to use our towels and to rub ourselves dry with our own hands. He would also stand really close to boys of any age. It would be to the point that the tip of his nose was almost touching you. He would walk towards the boy of his attention and force him back literally into a corner simply by being in close proximity to the boys' face. That was his standard practice, you could feel his breath on your face and he visibly enjoyed doing it.
90. Ben Philip headed up the senior pupils in Haig House, the pupils in Secondary 4, 5, and 6, although not many pupils stayed on to Secondary 6. I can remember one night in bed when I was eleven years old I felt like I was being touched. It felt like I was being rubbed over the covers. I almost knew he was there. I could sense his presence. I opened my eyes and I could sense that he was somewhere in the shadows. It is difficult to explain but I suspect he ducked, moved into the shadows, or just stayed motionless. For me, it was an isolated incident. It didn't happen every night and it remained at that level, it didn't get any worse. I seem to recollect he was unusually on duty in Wavell House that evening. I think he was filling in for another teacher. I didn't see him but I just felt it was him. I can't describe it any more clearly than that but it was him. I don't know if he did this to any other boys. I didn't know what was going on and I didn't know how to discuss this.
91. I remember sitting at the age of sixteen talking to one of my old school friends, [REDACTED] who had been in the other Primary 6 class and him being outraged when he heard what happened with Ben Philip because [REDACTED] didn't know, he had gone down the other path.

92. Ben Philip was a very charismatic man. He was a religious man. He could easily have been a man of the cloth. I remember him mentioning that he was from a religious family. He used to deputise for Mr Silcox at church services but actually he was a very bad man.
93. I don't know how long I was at Queen Victoria School before Ben Philip started abusing me. I think it was when the USA bombed Libya, which made me feel quite insecure. His abuse of me was definitely done in stages. He would touch my leg a bit and then progress a bit further. There was something that happened that made him stop. I think it was that interruption by Graham Beattie in Ben Philip's classroom. Ben Philip was still doing other things after that though, he was still watching boys in the showers and getting too close to them.
94. I was aware of my Housemaster at Cunningham House, Mr Glen Harrison, being removed from his post following his making a statement about allegations of bullying and sexual abuse at the school. His allegations included the alleged involvement of VIP's and Masons. He claimed children were being ferried away. He felt there was a high level conspiracy that everyone was involved in. My response to that at the time was that I was mystified by the allegations he was making. These certainly weren't my experiences but those were the allegations he went public with. I am not debunking what he said but as someone who was there at the time, that is not something I would identify with. I only know for certainty what happened to me.
95. However I do remember my friend [REDACTED], a Prefect, being questioned by Mr Harrison about his friendship with another pupil in [REDACTED]'s dormitory. I remember Mr Harrison confronting [REDACTED] about the nature of [REDACTED]'s friendship with the other pupil. [REDACTED] told me that he was accused of being inappropriate for having a younger pupil in his room. [REDACTED] was very upset about the allegations being made by Harrison and he moved out his single room on the right of the dormitory into the main dormitory. I got to move in to [REDACTED]'s room. [REDACTED] was placed in my old bed at one end of the dormitory and the younger pupil he was accused of being inappropriate with would have been at the other end of the dormitory, passed where the Prefects rooms were.

96. If there was any other sexual abuse in Queen Victoria School, I was not aware of it.
97. There was an incident where a boy called ██████ threatened to stick a knife in my leg because I was a Catholic. I think I was in Secondary 4 and he was in Secondary 6. He was two or three years older than me and he was an Orangeman through and through. He confronted me in my bed-space in the dormitory. He pulled a Skean Dhu out of his sock and pinned me up against the wall, held the tip to my thigh, and threatened to stab me. It was all pretty raw stuff for me, I hadn't experienced anything like it in my life before I came to Scotland. I had been brought up in Germany with a Scottish father and a Welsh mother. ██████ went on to become an officer in the parachute regiment. I didn't report ██████'s behaviour to anyone.
98. Another time ██████ gave me a leathering with snooker balls. I think that was also when I was in Secondary 4. He was playing snooker with a friend and he said something to me so I said something back. The next thing I knew, I was hit by a snooker ball, then another, and another. He hurled them at me with full force. I was on the floor after the first one. His was not the kind of anger of boys having fist fights. His was something darker.
99. Fist fights were not uncommon amongst pupils. The more things fell apart for me, as I got more angry and frustrated, I got into more fights. They were fist fights, not leatherings that would put people in hospital. It was always with people who were as aggressive as I was. I never got involved in a fist fight with anyone below my year group or above my year group. It was like this in every school year and there was a pecking order in each school year where people would give you space depending on how you had exerted yourself. That's the way it was for most people but you did tend to grow up and the older you got the more you could see it wasn't worth bothering about. Ever since, I have struggled with managing my aggression when dealing with aggressive situations with people outside my family unit.

100. Mr QTR the [REDACTED] from the Scots Guard was very aggressive. We used to make a ball out of socks and garters. You get quite inventive in a boarding school situation. Me and a friend were kicking this ball about indoors and QTR [REDACTED] came along and said we couldn't play there anymore. I can't remember if I was cheeky but he was nose to nose with me. QTR [REDACTED] was 6' 1" I am 5' 8".
101. QTR [REDACTED] grabbed me and ripped my shirt open, ripped the front clean down the middle. He did it in a fit of temper. He told me to go and cry to matron or whatever I wanted to do. I was worried about how I was going to pay for a new shirt because I didn't have any money. I did go to the matron but QTR [REDACTED] had already gone and spoken to her and told her that he had gripped me just a little too tightly and the shirt had given out in his hands. The matron issued me with a new shirt without charge.
102. Another time I made a noise outside the gym which was being used as an SCE exam room. I was about twelve or thirteen years old and I didn't know there was an exam going on at the time. As I sat on a wooden bench watching TV, an older lad who had been sitting the exam came in and repeatedly punched me. I remember reporting it to my Housemaster who told Ben Philip but nothing came of it. I can't remember who hit me.
103. When I was about fifteen years old I was on a trip to Bisley. I was competing in the school target shooting competition. At that time the Guard's depot was at Pirbright. We were put into Pirbright Guards depot because QTR [REDACTED] had just retired from the Guards. We were in a pub having a pint. I suppose most of the lads thought it was great to be doing that but I didn't feel comfortable being there so I went back to the camp early and alone. The guard at the checkpoint asked me for identification and I explained I was from QVS and that we were staying on the base. At that point the guard went into the guard room and said, "I've got him." And then they chucked me in jail, with proper holding cells for military personnel. They took the shoelaces out of my trainers. I was scared witless. I was put to work late at night. I was given a buffer, an old fashioned floor polisher, and told to polish the floor but



not to wake any prisoners. I was petrified. The skin came off the palms of my hands because I was gripping the buffer so tight. The cells were filled with drunks. I found them intimidating even though some were asleep. I came to the end of the corridor I was polishing and the guard NCO called me over and said, "Well done. Welcome to the real world." And he gave me my shoelaces back. I was profoundly upset when I left, I was miserable. I went back to my sleeping quarters. Nothing like that happened to any of the other boys coming back from the pub. The next day when QTR QTR found out he just laughed. He said he wanted to catch everyone, so he said. I had heard from a friend, [REDACTED], that QTR [REDACTED] had told him he out and out disliked me as a kid.

104. By the time I got to Secondary 4 and Secondary 5 I had lost interest in school. My father is the type who put great store on achieving high grades but my parents were not present enough to see what was going on, but nor did my parents ask why their bright boy was achieving lower and lower grades and was constantly in minor trouble.
105. There was a lot of general verbal abuse at Queen Victoria School. Teachers would say, "Sit at the back. You'll never amount to anything." And this was said to other people, not just to me. I think I realised how bad things were in Trenchard House when I saw that people were self-harming and doing other things that seemed way over the line, such as breaking into the House tuckshop and stealing food. The way the school dealt with pupils displaying this type of behaviour was just to get rid of them, to expel them. There was no underlying attempt to deal with any of the issues.
106. I remember a guy called [REDACTED]. I can't remember his first name, he was only at the school for a few weeks in Primary 6. He was a latecomer and he didn't join the school at the start of the year. I remember his mother brought him to school and just left him there. He was a troubled lad. He was in the bunk bed next to me. He was a bed-wetter and he also drew all over his bunk bed with a marker pen. OLB OLB just lost patience with him one day and shouted at him, "You're a disgrace to your father and his regiment." I was in my bed but I could hear the whipping noise and the cries out in the hall. It sounded like a belt [REDACTED] was hit with. I covered

my ears to try and block out the sound of his screaming, OLB shouting, and the noise of the striking. returned to his bed and I could hear him sniffing and crying. Shortly after that incident was removed from school.

107. The French teacher could be very cutting with his words depending on whether you were good at French or not. He was a typical example of the kind of teacher who would write a lot of people off and just concentrate on a few.
108. There were other teachers who were a bit more obvious in their disdain of some pupils but so much of that is probably true of life in general and is probably true of other schools.

### **Reporting of abuse at Queen Victoria School**

109. When I was about fifteen years old I started having some troubling thoughts and I went to speak to Mr Silcox. I subsequently found out that these thoughts were related to Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and I do not wish to expand upon that. I went in to his office and spoke to him and alluded to the fact that Ben Philip got too close to the boys. He nodded and adopted a contemplative expression as if to say, "That makes sense to me." There was no further comment about this and Mr Silcox did not make any notes. Mr Silcox advised me to pray to get support.
110. Because of the times and the school attitude of not sneaking, abuse wasn't something that was openly discussed with the teachers. Later on, amongst the lads, it was discussed but no formal reports were raised that I was aware of.
111. There was one time I was discussing abuse with my friends. Some of what they were saying was similar to what I experienced in Ben Philip's classroom. One of my friends I was speaking to was but he didn't suffer any abuse. said that Ben Philip would use innuendo to try to determine which pupils in the class were sexually aware. made reference to Ben Philip's use of the word

shaft in conversation. By chance Ben Philip overheard us. He came round the corner and had a visibly crest-fallen demeanour. He knew what we had been discussing, he knew what we knew. He was not a happy man at all but there were no repercussions about that. I don't think there was any parental awareness of the abuse at that time. I didn't discuss it with my parents or with my siblings when I was home.

### **Leaving Queen Victoria School**

112. I remember the guys I was hanging about with were either expelled, or they left having been more academically successful than I was. When I realised that, I tried to step things up a gear in terms of my performance at school. I did try again with my GCSE's in Secondary 5 but by that time I really couldn't wait to leave Queen Victoria School.
113. There was nothing particularly memorable about leaving Queen Victoria School, I just packed my bags for the last time. There was no fanfare, I just walked out and went home.
114. I felt quite low when I left Queen Victoria School. I think a lot of boys did. My friend [REDACTED], I believe he killed himself after he left school. After leaving school I learned that Ben Philip had died, he fell off a ladder. When I heard that I thought, "Well that's that then. It's time to move on."

### **Life after Queen Victoria School**

115. After leaving Queen Victoria School things did start to get better although when I first went to Swansea there was a period of gloom as Wales was very different to what I was used to. I had no friends and I had to readjust rapidly.
116. I had come back from Queen Victoria School with only a handful of GCSE's. Towards the end of my exclusion from Chemistry at Queen Victoria School I was

removed from the corridor and had to go to the classroom of the Deputy Head Teacher, Glen Paterson, who taught Physics. He informally got me interested in electronics to keep me occupied. In Secondary 5 I achieved a Scotvec in Electronic Construction. I think I was the only student to do so at Queen Victoria School. Ironically I built on this tiny achievement by attending college in Swansea and went on to complete a BTech in Electronics. It turned out I did have a bit of a brain contrary to how I felt when I left Queen Victoria School. It was this BTech Qualification that allowed me to join the RAF as an Avionics Technician.

117. When I left school waiting to start college, I went to work for my uncle, selling rugs. That was a turning point for me as I was earning money and I was around my family. I gained confidence, because you have to have confidence working in sales. I was in college as well as working for my uncle. My confidence grew as I made new friends in college too. However I realised I was going nowhere fast in sales. Eventually I applied to join the RAF. I am not saying I didn't have any issues during this time but between friends, family support, and a job that gave me a bit of money at the weekend I did a lot better than I did in school.
118. In January 1997 I joined the Royal Air Force and worked as an Avionics Technician. I worked on avionic systems on a variety of aircraft. I found that at the beginning, the military was just where I had left off in school. It was a mixture of people from all backgrounds, it was a robust culture. People were drinking a lot and falling out with one another and I fitted in. It felt like home from home for me. I knew my way around weapons, I knew how to barrack my bed like the military wanted, I was conditioned, and ready to do well in the military. I knew how to match aggression with aggression but one day it went too far and I ended up in a lot of trouble.
119. There was an altercation with two other members of military personnel. There were mitigating circumstances as one of the two individuals threatened to confront my family and my daughter who was only one day old. For my part in the altercation, although found guilty, I was admonished by the presiding officer Wing Commander Brown AFC. It was the pivotal moment in my life as I was expecting a custodial sentence but instead I was in effect forgiven and treated with kindness and

understanding. Notwithstanding the mitigation of the threats towards my family, I saw a mental health nurse at that time who felt that I displayed signs of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

120. I wanted to understand more about the situation I had gotten into. I studied law at the Open University. I also studied a few more courses that interested me, like Political Science. I was making a good name for myself in the RAF. I was getting promoted rapidly. I graduated from the Open University with a 2.1 degree. In 2009 I applied for a transfer and joined the intelligence branch of the air force. I served the remaining ten years of my military career in intelligence roles supporting operations such as in Afghanistan. During my service I was awarded two RAF commendations.
121. Towards the end of my time in the RAF I went to Cambridge University and undertook the post-graduate International Security Intelligence Course. The resultant academic paper was published within the Ministry of Defence. I am now retired from the RAF and now work as a civil servant within the Ministry of Defence.

### **Impact**

122. I feel that some of the major ways my time at Queen Victoria School impacted on me has been the ability to manage aggressive situations, and the fostering of anxiety which is linked to Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.
123. In June 2020, for the first time, I confronted my parents about the abuse I suffered at boarding school. They were very shocked and upset. I was very angry about it, even though I do love them. I asked them why they hadn't seen any signs of my decline in seven years. I realise this has placed extra stress on two elderly people but I had to tell them how I felt. My mother was admitted to hospital a few weeks later after suffering a seizure. She felt very angry about what happened to me and wanted to take action against those responsible. My dad has told me that he fell out with his own father about sending me to boarding school as my grandfather was apparently against it. It was difficult to tell my dad that his dad was right. My dad reminded me

that I wanted to go to boarding school but that brings me back to the point that it is not right for a ten year old child to be making long term decisions about their life. I now feel like I have hurt quite a few people. I have shattered their illusions that it was all a good time for me and that I really enjoyed myself at Queen Victoria School. They feel really badly when, arguably, it wasn't their fault.

124. It has also affected my relationship with my siblings. My younger brother, [REDACTED] lives with my parents and was naturally defensive of them when I confronted my parents. The result is that I am currently estranged from my family. I expect this to continue for the foreseeable future until things calm down and I work things out.
125. The impact on my mental health has been harder to deal with as time has gone on. When you are young, it is easy to deal with but as you get older it is harder to deal with and you need help. I now think I need extra help.
126. The people who are vicious to you are the ones to blame. These are the people who leave a lasting impression on you because they have been cruel and unkind. I do also blame the school though for not picking up on my decline, having arrived as a pupil who was a year ahead of his peers. The people in charge, particularly the school staff who lived in the school must have known what was going on. From my perspective, there was an utter failure by the school to protect children in their care.
127. I suffered close physical molestation in my first year at Queen Victoria School, in Primary 6. That was followed by episodic abuse in relation to the showers or physical assaults. I sometimes feel that I am taking up time talking about this and dealing with it when others have suffered much worse abuse.
128. I consider that my obsessive compulsive disorder started because of boarding school. I am trying to address that now so that I can move on with the second half of my life. I need to address some of my other issues that have grown as I have got older. I have learned to live with these issues but I would rather live without them.

129. People might think that I have done well in life, that I came through the boarding school system alright but undoubtedly there are long-term consequences, especially with respect to my mental health. Despite experiences in the armed forces which require me to remain calm, I can sometimes just feel really anxious. My first panic attack was on a plane heading back to boarding school. I can trace most of my anxieties right back to school. Despite all of this I continue to function at a high level and enjoy many blessings in life.

### **Treatment/support**

130. I found it difficult to get counselling but Future Pathways have been great in that they say they are going to help me, and help is what I need for the second half of my life. They are going to get me on a waiting list for counselling. I want to be free from the things that are holding me down inside.

131. I took my two daughters up to Scotland and I went to the school. It did bring back memories. It was cold and foreboding. It looked very austere. We went for a walk in the fields round the school. It was almost quite wistful.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

132. After I got in touch with the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, I spoke to Police Scotland in 2020. They told me that two people I was aware of as being abusers were dead. That was Ben Philip, and **OLB**. My understanding is there won't be any prosecution because they are dead. They did want to get a statement from me about **QTR** but I said I was only prepared to give that after I had been through the Inquiry process. I have previously reported to a mental health nurse who was treating me for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder that I was inappropriately touched but no further action was taken.

## **Records**

133. I wasn't aware of what records were being kept by staff. I am not aware of any records of punishment or discipline. There were school reports which were very candid and they were sent home to parents.
134. An example about the lack of record keeping at Queen Victoria School was when I had an altercation with a lad in the craft and design class. I went into the Head Teacher's office, I think it was Julian Hankinson. He was a very distant figure. This time in his office was the only time I spoke to him in seven years. The Head Teacher was in his gown talking to me and telling me that he would have put me on a plane home but it was too difficult for him to do so. I didn't see him documenting anything about what I had been sent to him for. I remember him saying, "I worry about you and other boys who are as angry as you are." He said he was worried about the impact my behaviour would have on me going forward and the impact for me on future relationships.

## **Lessons to be learned**

135. There should have been the ability for pupils at Queen Victoria School to raise any issues anonymously or talk about them. These days there are loads of helplines etc. and the safeguarding measures in place now are amazing, I don't think you could improve on them but back then, children should not have been left alone with an adult. The doors should not have been closed. There needed to be better mental health care for children, teenagers, and victims. In my mind children should be utterly protected and have access to the best support mechanisms available. I now think I was lucky to come through what I did and be in the place I am in now. A lot of kids just didn't come through it, they ended up with substance abuse issues and similar problems.



**Hopes for the Inquiry**

- 136. The stories need to be told, not just my story. The people responsible for abuse and even those who failed to act need to be brought to book and made to answer for what they did or what they failed to prevent.
  
- 137. I would like to see the Inquiry air all of this and where possible have the people come before the inquiry and explain themselves.
  
- 138. Finally, I think the Inquiry should acknowledge the hardships that me and people like me went through and the long-term consequences for the victims. For me, I would like an acknowledgement and an apology from the school but I don't know if that will ever happen. When **QTR** [redacted] falsely detained me in the guard room cells area, he probably thought he was doing me a good turn by frightening me or toughening me up but he did exactly the opposite. I don't want to see an old man prosecuted for that but I would have liked an apology from him if he was still alive. I could get some closure because it could place me in a position where I could understand and potentially forgive him. Again I suspect this will never happen hence I am seeing a counsellor to work everything out.

**Other information**

- 139. 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..... **DQL** [redacted] .....

06 October 2020

Dated.....