

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CKF

Support person present: No

1. My name is CKF My date of birth is 1966. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going to Queen Victoria School

2. I come from a military family and before going to Queen Victoria School in Dunblane, I lived with my parents, and my younger brother, and my younger sister, in a number of different places in the UK and overseas.
3. I lost interest in school when we returned to the UK after one of my father's postings abroad, and I had to repeat a year in primary school. Two postings later, we were still living in the UK and I was in P7 going into first year. This was in 1977. The primary school I was attending was just outside the barracks where we lived, but the secondary school I was moving on to was further away.
4. I then applied to go to Queen Victoria School in Dunblane and sat the entrance exam. I don't remember why the decision was made for me to apply to Queen Victoria. My dad tells me it was because my friends had applied and I wanted to join them, but I thought that it was his decision. In any case, I always wanted to be a soldier and wanted to make my dad proud.
5. I passed the entrance exam and started at Queen Victoria School in August 1977.

Queen Victoria School, Dunblane

6. Queen Victoria was a non-fee paying boarding school. It was subsidised by the MOD and my parents only had to pay £25 per term for my pocket money.
7. I was ten, about to turn eleven, when I joined the school. I had completed P7 at my previous school but for some reason I started in P6 at Queen Victoria. There were only about two hundred and fifty kids, all boys, in the whole school, ranging in age from P6 to sixth year.
8. The primary school was separate from the main school but there was just one headmaster for the whole school. The headmaster when I first arrived was Mr Melluish. He retired shortly after I joined and Mr Hankinson took over.

Layout

9. The primary school was housed in a building, Wavell House, separate from the main school. It was named after a high-ranking officer, General Wavell. There were three houses in Wavell House: Lindoch, which was on ground floor; Abercrombie on the middle floor; and Moore at the top. There were inter-house competition events and we wore colours to signify which house we belonged to. Moore was green, Abercrombie was red and Lindoch was blue.
10. You went in doors on the ground floor of Wavell House and the layout was the same on the three floors. The housemasters' flats, two dormitories, drying rooms and bathrooms, with toilets, were on each floor.

Staff

11. Mr CRC was the overall housemaster of Wavell House and also the housemaster of Moore House, which is the one I was in. Everyone called him CRC because apparently there was something odd about him. I don't know what it was.

12. The housemaster for Abercrombie was ^{OLB} and Ben Phillips was the housemaster for Lindoch. Ben's nickname was Bentley. The three housemasters were also primary school teachers and there was a fourth teacher called ^{QYL} ^{QYL}. His nickname was ^{QYL}.
13. ^{QYL} and Bentley were the youngest teachers. I think ^{OLB} was in his forties and ^{CRC} was the oldest. I think he was nearing retirement when I started. He died when I was there. All of the teachers lived in Wavell House, except ^{QYL} who had a house about 800 yards from the school. Ben Phillips and ^{CRC} were single. I think ^{OLB} was married with a kid. There was also a school matron. I don't think she lived in. I don't remember her name.

Routine at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane

First day

14. My mum, dad, sister and brother came with me to the school on my first day. My first impression was that it looked like a castle but also a prison. I can't remember if we went to the Porter's Lodge first, which was the main entrance to the secondary school, or Wavell House. I imagine I would have been introduced to a staff member but I don't remember who it was. It was probably ^{CRC}.
15. I remember being introduced to my seconder, who was the person in P7 chosen to show me the ropes. His name was ^{OLB}. He was a really intelligent guy. He was really only there to guide me for about a week. He was never a friend. Nobody in the year above you was your friend.
16. It was either ^{OLB} or a teacher that took me to the stores to get a bag full of kit on my first day. The everyday clothing was a blue corduroy jacket, corduroy knee-length shorts, black socks, grey shirt, school tie and a pair of black brogues. They were called your "blues". Your Number 2 uniform was a green jacket and kilt, and your Number 1 kit was a red tunic, glengarry and sporran. In your sports kit you had

red and green rugby tops, a couple of pair of shorts and a pair of socks. You also got a string vest, string pants, pyjamas, an Inverness Cape and a raincoat in the kit. Everything was brand new and supplied by the school.

17. I was taken to my dormitory and shown my bed. I had my own suitcase and my mum and dad helped me to unpack and hang my stuff up. We had to bring certain things ourselves that weren't part of the kit, such as swimming trunks, rugby and football boots and a tartan blanket. I also had my personal things, like a tape recorder, tapes, books and sweets. And my granny had given me a wee bag with an Airfix model, sweets and £10. The seconder told us that the beds had to be made in a certain way, with perfect hospital-style folds. He showed us how to do it and my mum made my bed up for me. You then put your own tartan rug on top so that all the beds didn't look exactly the same.
18. I changed out of my civvies and put my "blues" on. Everything was starched. It felt a bit weird going from wearing jeans and a denim jacket to these stiff, blue corduroy shorts. My parents then had to leave and I put on a brave face because there were all these other kids there and I didn't want them to see me upset. I lost the £10 my granny had given me on my first day and I was gutted.

Sleeping arrangements at primary school

19. I was in the Moore House dormitory throughout primary school. Half of the boys were P6 and half were P7. The P6s were called "the rookies". There were about twelve to fourteen beds in the dormitory and each had a locker and wee bedside cabinet next to it. I think my seconder was on one side of me and my best pal, [REDACTED] was on the other side. The beds were around the walls and there was a table tennis table in the middle of the room.
20. I remember some kids cried the first night in the dormitory and the older boys went round and punched them and told them to shut up. I saw this happen so I never cried. It went on for about the first month until the kids didn't cry any more.

Mornings

21. The school was run like it was the 1950s, not the 1970s. It was pretty tough. It was like joining the national service. You were thrown straight in at the deep end as a soldier. I was in P6 but I grew up pretty quickly. My parents knew it was a military school, but they wouldn't have known about all the chores that we had to do from a young age. I didn't talk to them about it. It was a military school and I just thought that this was how it operated.
22. The bell and the bugle got us up in the morning about seven o'clock. You got up and went for shower and then got dressed before going to the cookhouse for breakfast. You had duties to do in the morning before going to school, so you'd try to do as much as you could before breakfast. Just trying to get your kit ready took quite a while. You'd be doing something every single second. You'd try and get your bed "barracked", which was stripped and made, before breakfast.
23. The bugle would play again at about 7.20 or 7.30 am and we'd walk over to the cookhouse. When you got back from breakfast, your duty could be to sweep the dormitory, mop the bathroom area, or clean the toilets, sinks, baths or showers. There was a dormitory leader and he told you what duties you were on. I became the dormitory leader in P7. You also had to clean your own bed space, make sure your locker was tidy and polish your brogues on your polish board. Every morning there would be a dormitory inspection.

Dormitory inspection

24. There were lots of inter-house sports competitions but the biggest competition between the houses was for the best house of the year. That's why we did all that cleaning and there was a dormitory inspection every day. The four primary school teachers, and the chaplain Archie Orrick, would take turns of being the duty master for the whole of Wavell House. Whoever was on duty would do the dormitory inspections and he would be the duty master all day. He'd supervise breakfast, lunch, dinner and bedtime.

25. If you didn't perform well in the inspection and lost points, there would be a quick punishment from the other boys. It was usually a Queen Victoria School scrum. The boys in your dormitory would form a scrum and you would be the ball in the middle, getting kicked by everyone. You just stayed there until everyone stopped kicking. It didn't last long. You just took the kicking and that was it. It was just tradition. You'd have bruises but it was no worse than you'd get playing rugby. It only happened to me once. I don't know if the housemaster or duty master would have been aware that this was happening. The dormitory leader would have been the one who called for the scrum.

Bedtime

26. After supper in the cookhouse, we'd go back to the dormitory and get showered and ready for bed. Lights out was between 8.30 and 9.00 pm. The duty master would go round the dormitories after lights out to make sure everybody was in bed and okay. You could get up and go to the toilet if you needed to during the night.
27. On a Friday, and I can't remember if it was every Friday, after prep and just before going to bed there was an inter-house competition where the duty master would ring a bell and one of the boys from each dormitory would run downstairs and get told which uniform to change into. They then had two minutes to run back upstairs, change into the uniform and run back down. We all took a turn at this. It won you house points in the best dormitory competition. I think it was to get us accustomed to military life.

Mealtimes

28. All of our meals were eaten in the cookhouse, which was in the secondary school, and were supervised by the duty master. We were free to sit next to our friends at the table. We had a separate slot for meals to keep us apart from the secondary school pupils. We always had our tea around thirty or forty-five minutes before the secondary school. The meals were typical school dinners and not very good at all. It

was even worse if you were among the last in the queue because you got the dregs. The minute steak was mainly gristle and I remember eating a boiled egg which was off. I found pasta in my porridge one time as well.

29. Although the meals were pretty terrible, you lived for your food because you were doing a lot of exercise. I would eat anything, except of course the eggs. We only had a certain amount of time to eat our breakfast in the morning, so we wolfed it down so that we could get back to our dormitories to do our chores. Lunch was the best meal of the day because you got pudding and it was usually not too bad. Supper, which we got in the cookhouse after prep at night, was pretty good as well because we got cakes, although sometimes you'd go for a cake and find that someone had scooshed it with shaving foam.
30. I don't know who did the cooking when I was in P6 but a company called Sutcliffe's Catering took over in about 1978. I remember this because it was around the time that Peter Sutcliffe got caught and we were all making that connection.
31. You knew when someone important was coming to visit as the standard of food would be a little bit better. I remember the bread was always nicer and wrapped in cellophane.

Washing/bathing

32. There were open showers, two baths, sinks in the middle and toilets down the side in the bathrooms. The school matron showed us how to wash ourselves properly and brush our teeth, at some point during our first week. I don't think we were naked when she showed us how to wash. I think we had our shorts on.
33. The matron had a small room in Wavell House where she kept extra toiletries and things like that. As far as I know, she had no responsibilities for pastoral care. She'd go round at night time and inspect us to make sure we had washed behind our ears and brushed our teeth. She did this initially but once we were in P7 we were trusted to do it.

34. We would all go for a shower in the morning, both Moore 1 and 2 dormitories, and wait our turn. You got showered really quickly, or sometimes you didn't bother having a shower and just stood at the sink and washed yourself.

Leisure time

35. In primary school, you had about an hour to kill before teatime. You'd just chat to your pals in the dormitory or play music or read. We had the table tennis table in the dormitory so we could play that as well.
36. We did drill after tea in the first six weeks after I joined the school, and after the six weeks had passed we did hobbies after tea. There was a big list and you could choose a certain number of things to do. I did swimming, badminton, fly tying and squash. The main one was swimming. It was a popular one because you could go for all the different badges.
37. There was a TV room downstairs on the ground floor in Wavell House. We didn't watch much TV but you could go in there if there was any spare time. You could go in and watch Blue Peter before tea. It was dark and you could just hide away and kind of escape from it all in there.
38. On a Saturday night, ^{CRC} [REDACTED] would invite everyone in Moore who wanted to watch the Muppet Show into his flat. There would be about twenty of us in his front room watching the Muppets, which was great because the TV room downstairs would be jam-packed at that time with all the boys from the different dormitories and you'd hardly be able to watch the television with all the name-calling and that kind of thing going on.
39. You had classes in the morning up to lunchtime on a Saturday but there was a lot of free time after that. After the initial six-week period of joining the school, you were allowed to go into Dunblane and spend your pocket money. Your parents paid £25 pocket money at the start of the term so you had money to spend, although we also

had to buy soap, shampoo and letter-writing materials with that money. I think the housemaster had a tuck shop, but we could only spend so much on sweets.

40. I liked to get out of the school at the weekend. A group of us took up fishing just to get out. You had to sign out when you were leaving the school premises. We'd get a haversack with sandwiches, an apple, orange and crisps and we would stay out all afternoon on a Saturday, in the spring and summer. We'd miss tea but we had our rations. I liked fishing and did this a lot. I went on Sundays as well after chapel.
41. There was a theatre in the school where they showed films, like *Shout At the Devil* or a James Bond one, on a Sunday night. The whole school would be there. Usually the sixth form boys would run the equipment and they'd joke around, putting their hands up to obscure the kissing if there was a love scene.

Religion

42. You went to the chapel in the morning after dormitory inspection. Everybody went the chapel during the week regardless of what faith you were. On a Sunday, the Church of Scotland service was at the chapel and the Roman Catholics and Episcopalians went to services in Dunblane.

Birthdays and Christmas

43. My mum and dad sent me a birthday cake when I was in primary school and I had so many friends that day it was unbelievable. I told my mum not to send me one again, so I never celebrated another birthday at school. I was always at home with my parents at Christmas.

Trips/Holidays

44. The only trip we did in primary school was when we came to the end of P7 we all had a week away up at Rothiemuchus Lodge in Aviemore. We did adventure training and walked up Ben Macdui.
45. I usually went back home to see my parents during the school holidays. The only time I didn't was when my dad was in an overseas posting and it was too far to travel for the one-week October break. I'd spend the week with my friend at his parents' home in the UK during that time.

Peers

46. You didn't make friends with the boys in the year above you. The P7 boys picked on the younger ones. I just tried to keep a low profile.

Secondary school

47. When you moved onto secondary school you had to choose between Trenchard and Cunningham House. You talked to your pals before you made your choice. My best friend and I fancied Cunningham house so we choose that one. The housemaster was a Welsh man called QTQ
48. The main school building had many exits and entrances and is quite complicated to describe. Hague House, which was for fourth, fifth and sixth years, was on the first floor of the building. The next level up was Cunningham House, which was for first, second and third years, and on the top floor was Trenchard House, which was also for first, second and third years.
49. The Cunningham house dormitory was big and long. There was a dormitory leader, who was a third year pupil, and he had an assistant. You had been "King of the Castle" in P7 and now you were right back at the bottom again, and you were re-joining the boys that had moved on after P7.

50. The hardest part of secondary school was starting that first year. As part of the welcome, the older boys hung you out of a window, two floors up, by your ankles. It was just tradition. It didn't really bother me. I was more concerned about losing my money and my comb than I was about being dangled out of a window. I didn't think they were going to drop me.
51. You had to run the gauntlet as well, which was running the length of the dormitory, jumping over beds, while a group of kids waited to hit you. It was just dormitory life, back to square one again until you progressed through the years. I carried on just trying to keep a low profile. I was a kind of nobody, like the invisible man. I tried not to stand out. To me that was the best way to get on, but I could stand up for myself if I had to. Hague House, which was for the seniors, was much more relaxed.
52. The routine in the morning in secondary school was more or less the same as primary school. A bell rang in the morning to wake you up and by then you knew all the dodges if you wanted to skip having a shower. You still had dormitory inspection by the housemaster every morning because you were still competing with the other houses for the cup at the end of the school year.
53. Once you got to secondary school, you ate after the primary school kids and they had a system of serving the first year pupils last, so you ended up with the scraps a lot of the time. That changed as you progressed through the school years until eventually you were at the top and got served first.
54. One thing I remember well in secondary school is the situation with the laundry. The cord jacket and shorts only got washed once a term. I don't remember how often your pants and vest got washed, but I just remember being really stinking. Like I said, we lived for our food because of all the sports we did, and I remember my pal had a toaster and we used to buy bread and pinch the butter in wee packets from the cookhouse. You'd put them in your shirt pocket and forget about them so by third period or so, the butter had melted and you went around with this rancid smell of butter on your shirt until laundry day a few days later.

55. We used to have school debates/discos. We would either go to another school and have a debate there, or the pupils from another school would come to us. An all-girls school would come to us if we were hosting it and an away venue could be a mixed school like Dollar Academy. As long as there were girls that's all we were interested in.
56. We had our debates/discos in the theatre where the films were shown on a Sunday night. We'd do the debate first and then have a disco. Before the disco started, all the fourth years had to go in front of a panel of sixth formers and they'd put on three types of music - heavy metal, a smoochie and a bit of pop – and you'd have to dance in front of them. They'd throw stuff at you if you didn't make the grade. It was like the film *Animal House*. It was embarrassing. Everyone dreaded it. Luckily, I was a good dancer so I was okay.

Schooling - primary and secondary

57. The primary school classrooms were in a building bolted onto Wavell house. Ben Phillips was my class teacher in P6 and P7. He taught the standard subjects like English and arithmetic, and then we'd have classes with other teachers on subjects slightly different from the normal syllabus, like [REDACTED] with CRC [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with OLB [REDACTED]. We had school on Saturday mornings and the last period was always in Ben Phillips' flat listening to classical music. It was good because it wasn't work. We also did prep in the evenings, Mondays to Fridays, from 7.00 to 8.00 pm. This involved going back to your classroom to do your homework.
58. Once you got into secondary school, you got a number of different teachers for different subjects. We did prep in secondary as well. I didn't quite get the grades that others got. My favourite subjects were art and anything to do with PE.
59. The standard of education was not any better than mainstream schools. It was supposed to be better for me because I no longer had to move from one school to

another when my dad got new postings. The main difference in Queen Victoria was the military side of things. There was a lot of sport, marching, pipes and drums, which were all part of the curriculum. We did different sports depending on the season. In the afternoon, you could have a double period of rugby, football, swimming or cross-country running. I was good at all three.

Drill/CCF

60. For the first six to eight weeks of primary school we had to do drill with the school Sergeant Major after tea. We then had a passing out parade, which was just an internal ceremony with no parents there. Drill was a big thing because the school was preparing you for a future military career.
61. After you passed out on your drill, you took a trade like piper, drummer or highland dancer. I took up the drums. So you had your hobbies to do before prep, and also your trade. Depending how far you took it, you could end up in the pipe band.
62. I joined the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) in secondary school where I learned to be a soldier. I had already learned drill and done the piping and drumming in primary school. I reached the rank of sergeant in the cadets. If you were high up in the cadets, there was a good chance you would be a prefect at school. I became a prefect and was also one of the colour bearers in the Colour Party.
63. We had our annual camps in the cadets and went on adventure training weekends. I think we went to Kinloch Rannoch one weekend and we had annual camps in Werl and Sennelagar in West Germany.

Healthcare

64. There was a school hospital which was run by the school hospital matron. I think she was medically qualified. I don't remember her name. A doctor came when we first joined the school to do the cough and drop test and general health check. I think this might have been in the first week. The matron was a lovely woman. I suffered terribly with tonsillitis and I'd go to the matron and she'd give me an aspirin gargle and tell me to come back the next day. I didn't see a doctor for it.
65. I was in the school hospital for about two weeks in either P7 or First Year. I had been in contact with someone who had chickenpox during the holidays and came down with it when I went back to school. I was put in the isolation ward for two weeks and the matron looked after me. I got on quite well with her. I saw her quite often because of the tonsillitis and I also suffered from headaches.
66. I think it might have got to the point where I was in the school hospital for tonsillitis as well, because I remember being in the isolation ward but I also remember being in the main ward. I think I actually faked getting into hospital at some point too. Somebody told me that if you put toothpaste under your tongue it would knock the thermometer reading off, so I did that and went round to the matron and said that I wasn't feeling well.
67. I suffered terribly from really bad headaches. I was fine until I went to Queen Victoria School and then I started getting severe headaches. I still get them and know now that they're migraines. The matron used to take me into her room and massage oil into my head which would totally relax me. She was very kind.
68. I had to go to Stirling Hospital once when I was still in primary school after falling on an iced-over pond while skating. I landed on my nose and I think it was the house master ^{OLB} [REDACTED] who took me to the hospital to get treated.

69. I never looked after my teeth at school. You were supposed to clean your teeth but I just didn't bother. A dentist used to come to the school hospital to check our teeth. I broke a tooth eating a bar of Highland toffee in P6 and half my tooth was stuck in the toffee bar. It was a Saturday and when I went to the matron, she gave me some cloves and told me to come back on Monday when the dentist would be in.

Contact with family

70. You weren't allowed to see or phone your parents during the first six weeks after joining the school. Most of the kids' fathers were posted abroad so there was no chance of seeing your parents, but even those who had parents posted with the Territorial Army and living fairly close couldn't see them until after the initial six-week period had passed.
71. There was a phone box in the secondary school, at the Porter's Lodge, and you could use it after the six weeks had passed, but you needed your pocket money for sweets so you didn't tend to phone anyone. I remember one time in secondary school word got round that any money you put into the phone would pop back out so everyone was using it then.
72. There was letter-writing once a week, including during the initial six-week period, and you could write to your parents and tell them that you weren't enjoying it. I think a couple of boys did this and they were then taken out of the school .
73. I don't think the school had parents' nights as there weren't many parents who could attend. There was an end of term report sent to the parents to inform them of our progress. I think I might still have mine. My parents met Ben Phillips when he was my primary school teacher. My mum and dad would drive me down to the school in P7 at the start of each new term and come and collect me for the holidays.

Visits/inspections

74. At the end of every school year, there was a huge parade called Grand Day where all the different trophies, such as best house and best rugby player, were awarded. A dignitary would come and inspect all the boys on parade. I can't remember who the visiting inspectors were each year but it was always someone very high up in the military. A lot of politicians, majors and generals visited the school. I remember Sir George Younger coming.

Discipline

75. The punishment in primary school was a giant rubber plimsoll across the backside, either bare or with your shorts on. All of the housemasters would administer the plimsoll. I didn't get the plimsoll on my bare bottom. I just heard other boys saying this. I don't remember which masters did it to them. The plimsoll was called "softer" and then there was the belt and the cane for more serious things.
76. I got the plimsoll in primary school for doing something we called "water-babying". The sinks were in the middle of the bathroom and we made a sort of racing course round them. We would soak the entire floor in the bathroom and then we'd skite naked on our backsides round the sinks.
77. The bathroom would be a total mess and a healthy and safety risk for anyone coming in to use the loo. I got caught "water-babying" by Archie Orrick, the chaplain who was sometimes the duty master in Wavell House. He was a very nice guy and was as blind as a bat. He told me to get dressed and go and see him in the office next to ^{CRC} flat. I put my own shorts on and borrowed other boys' shorts before I went to see him. He didn't notice that I was wearing extra layers so I felt nothing when he hit me with the plimsoll. Some of the other teachers would notice the extra layers and you'd have to take them off, so the plimsoll could be pretty nippy.

78. You'd get the belt for fighting and the cane if you got caught stealing. I never got belted or caned in primary school. I don't think we were told what the punishment would be for different types of behaviour, I think it was just common sense. If you're going to fight and the teacher sees you, you know you're going to get into trouble.
79. The structure for punishment in secondary school was different to primary school. Prefects dished out punishment in secondary school for things like fighting or talking in prep. I was a prefect and always gave the pupil a choice. They could choose between a morning punishment of getting up before the bell and running two laps around the entire school in the summer time, or gym circuit training in the winter, or getting a smack over the knuckles with a ruler. That's the system the school operated.
80. You could also get the belt or cane from one of the masters in secondary school for more serious things. I got the belt for jabbing someone with a fork when they were picking on me at lunch. I got hauled out of the cookhouse and the duty master gave me three of the belt on each hand. I would say that all of the punishments administered were within what was acceptable in those days. It was fair enough to be punished if you stepped out of line. I didn't think it was draconian.
81. There was a lot of drinking and butane and glue sniffing in secondary school. The house masters would do locker searches to make sure there wasn't any contraband. You'd get the belt if anything was found. You'd get belted in the first instance and then caned if you were caught again with anything. You'd eventually be expelled, probably after a final warning, if you carried on doing it.
82. One of the boys got expelled for glue-sniffing. He had been belted and caned for various things throughout his schooling. I think he had been belted or caned for stealing in primary school. He was always stealing. He used to go to the local shop wearing the kit raincoat so that he could steal. He would stand in the shop with his back to the shop owner, looking like he had his hands in his pockets, and he'd poke his hands through the holes in the raincoat and pinch things. He'd steal stupid stuff like carrots. His nickname was [REDACTED] He just couldn't help himself.

Abuse

83. Ben Phillips was my teacher in primary school. I was pretty well behaved in class and would say that I was Ben's favourite. I liked him. He was a nice guy and was like a father figure to me. When your work was being checked in class, you went up to Ben's desk and stood beside him while he looked through it. He used to put his hands down my shorts and caress my bum when I stood at his desk. I thought it was odd but I thought that he must have known that I was a slightly nervous person and he was just trying to calm me. This happened during class time when all the other kids were there, so I thought that everyone else must have been getting the same treatment. I didn't say anything. I just kind of accepted it. I can't remember exactly when it started. It was in P6, either after the October break or the Christmas holidays, and it went on throughout my time in primary school.

84. In P7, after lights out, the duty master would come round to make sure everyone was in bed. When Ben Phillips was on duty, he would come in and speak to everyone and then, because I was dormitory leader in P7, he would come to my bed and sit for a while and he'd put his hands down my pyjamas and play with my penis. That went on through P7 whenever Ben was on duty. I don't know how I felt about it at the time. He was my teacher and my friend and he looked out for me at school.

85. Ben never said anything to me about what he was doing. When he came to the dormitory at night, he would sit and talk to me about what I'd been doing that day. I don't really remember what he'd talk about. I just remember that it was calming.

86. I didn't think about telling anyone. I told my wife when I first met her thirty years ago. I said it was really nothing but I wanted her to know just in case it affected our relationship. I didn't tell my dad until I went to the police a couple of years ago. He said he wished that I had told him as he would have taken action.

Peer abuse

87. The P7 lads gave out punishments to the younger ones. There was a punishment called "crucifixion". A broom handle would be put through the sleeves of your jacket and you'd get dangled up on the bars in the drying room while everyone went for lunch. There was no way you could get out of it yourself as you were too high up. You had to wait until they came back from lunch and took you down. I think this happened to me just once. I can't remember what it was punishment for, or who did it to me. It happened to a few others as well. It was just part of school life.
88. Another punishment dished out by the P7 boys was to put you in your kitbag and dangle you inside your locker, which they'd then lock and go off to lunch. Being dangled in the locker or in the drying room wasn't actually the problem, it was missing your meal. You'd be down a meal if you were at "crucifixion" or hanging in the kitbag. You could have a double period of rugby in the afternoon and you had to do it on an empty stomach. None of the duty masters did a roll call at lunch so nobody would have noticed if you weren't there. This was an almost daily occurrence, not to me but you saw it going on. It was just part of being at school. I don't think these things were always done as a punishment for doing something wrong. People just got picked on sometimes. I tried to keep my head down and be invisible.
89. Another thing they did was the gauntlet. You'd be in your kitbag and you had to get from one end of the table tennis table to the other and everyone would smack your legs with their brooms as you tried to make your way across. Or you had to go on top of your locker and everyone would throw their brogues at you and the only protection you could use was your polish board.
90. All of these things were just punishments during primary school. They didn't really bother me. They were just part of school life. I don't remember any of the names of the boys in P7 who did these things. The housemasters wouldn't be around when it

was happening and you couldn't go and tell anyone. It was a sort of code of practice at school that you could never sneak.

91. I could handle the physical stuff but there was a lot of name-calling and that was pretty hard going. The mental bullying really wore you down. You knew it if the older boys didn't like you. They would find something to pick on you about. There were a few lads in my year who were picked on terribly.
92. One lad used to wet the bed and his nickname was "wet-the-bed [REDACTED]". He wasn't in my dormitory. I don't remember anybody in my dormitory wetting the bed. When the lad [REDACTED] was in secondary, he got pushed a bit too far with the name-calling and he threatened to jump off the top floor of the school building. I think the fire brigade had to be called out because he was threatening to jump. Certain people were pushed too far. When I first heard of the shootings in Dunblane, I thought maybe one of the kids at Queen Victoria had been pushed too far and broken into the armoury in the school. It was just my initial reaction but it could never have happened because the ammunition wouldn't have been kept in the school. It would have been elsewhere on an MOD base. There were 303 bolt action rifles in the armoury. These were kept under lock and key.
93. I don't know if any of the teachers would have been aware of the bullying and my parents didn't know.

Leaving

94. I left Queen Victoria School when I was eighteen. I achieved 'O' Grades, Highers and SYS Certificates. The school had prepared us for a career with the Armed Forces. We used to gather in the theatre and forces personnel would come and talk to us about their experiences in the forces. I think about 40 to 50% of pupils joined the forces back then.

95. The school was a military establishment, which was tough-going, and the education was not any better than anywhere else. If I could turn back time, I would not choose to go to there, although I understand that it's totally changed for the better now.

Life after Queen Victoria School

96. I had always wanted to join the forces but I ended up rebelling when I left school. I went from the military to the other extreme, sort of punky looking. I grew my hair long, dyed it orange and wore punk clothes. I grew my hair to hide my face because the name-calling at school still affected me. I was hiding behind all this long hair. I was hoping to go to art college but I didn't get in at first so I went into further education for a year and met a nice bunch of "wannabe" art students. I was away from that regimental disciplined life and it was totally uplifting.
97. I went on to art college and then in my third year I joined the Territorial Army (TA) part-time. I had got the punk thing out of my system by this time. I needed the money and I liked physical exercise, so it made sense to go into the TA and get paid for running about daft and getting fit.
98. I then met and married my wife and we now have two children.

Impact

99. I started having migraines at Queen Victoria School, which have continued throughout my life and had a big impact on it. I suffer from cluster migraines and I think the problem stems from Queen Victoria School. I try not to let it take over my life and I never take time off work, but I usually suffer them during the night and I hardly get any sleep. I then have to get up and put a shift in at work the next day. I sometimes get them during the day as well and have to put on sunglasses and go and lie down.

100. I'm still conscious of my skin colour and my accent when I go out because of the mental abuse I suffered at school. I've always been a bit edgy among strangers and feel more confident and relaxed when I drink. I've hit the bottle quite a few times and got very, very drunk, and I've partied really hard over the years and haven't done myself any favours. I've lost some good friends through it. I've also got a scar to remind of an accident I had through drink. I'm not an alcoholic but sometimes I take one over the eight and I've sought help for it.
101. I never think back to what Ben Phillips did to me. I just kind of blanked it out. It could have been a whole lot worse. He was a lovely guy and I don't hate him. In fact, I kind of feel as if I am blackening his name by coming to talk to the Inquiry. I have never sought any treatment or support as a result of my experiences at school.

Reporting of abuse to the police

102. I read some things on the internet a few years ago about abuse having taken place at Queen Victoria School. Some of the stuff seemed really far-fetched, but I thought that I should maybe report to the police what had happened to me.
103. I didn't go to the police straight away. I got in touch with someone, Tom Minogue, who had put his contact details on the internet. I then started communicating with him. He suggested to me that I should go to the police. I was reluctant at first because I felt that the abuse I had experienced was really nothing compared to what other children had possibly gone through. Tom was of the view that I should talk to the police anyway. I sat on it for a while and then decided to talk to the police, even if it was just to give some credence to some of the things that other people were saying. This was about two years ago.

104. I spoke to the police in a specialist unit, which I think was based in Falkirk. A policewoman came to my house and took a statement about Ben Phillips. They investigated the matter for about six or eight weeks and then contacted me and said that they had spoken to some people who I had been friends with in school and they had come to a dead end and couldn't take the case any further. They said that Ben Phillips might just have been grooming me.

Records

105. I have never asked for a copy of my school records. I just left and moved on with my life. I used to keep all the school magazines that were produced every year for Grand Day, which listed the names of boys in the rugby teams, the pipes and drums, and the dormitory leaders, and also included poetry and artwork produced by pupils, but I have thrown all of these out now.

Other action taken

106. Tom Minogue got in touch with me again last year and asked me if I would like to give a quote to a reporter who was doing a newspaper story on Queen Victoria School. I said no at first but I changed my mind, out of a sense of duty, and then I spoke to a reporter from the Times. He wrote my story but I made sure he took a lot of information out that could have identified me. I haven't been in touch with Tom Minogue since.
107. I have never reported the abuse to the school. I went back for the Grand Day parade the first year after I'd left the school, then I went to the centenary one and I think one more after that. I didn't enjoy the last one. I met a guy I knew and he called me a name and it just took me right back there.

108. I went to the Remembrance Day service at the school last year, which was the first time I'd been back in a long time. Some of the people I had been at school with were there and they were speculating about the allegations of abuse and who might have been in touch with the police. I didn't take part in the conversation and pretended to know nothing about it.

Other information

109. I had no contact with Ben Phillips after I left Queen Victoria School. I received a postcard from him during the school summer holidays after I had finished primary school. I still have it. I've shown the Inquiry a photograph of it on my phone. He also sent a photograph which he had taken of me sitting in his flat, when we used to go there for the last period on a Saturday and listen to classical music. I always sat in the same spot all the time, next to an Olivia Newton-John poster on the wall. As soon as I went in, I went straight to that spot.

110. The postcard and photo were in an envelope addressed to me. He had written quite a sincere message. I thought it was nice of him to send it. I remember getting letters from pen friends at school and it was always really good to get post. I don't recall what my parents' reaction was to it. My mum had knitted him a jumper because he was my teacher and I liked him, so he thanked her for that and said that I was always welcome at his flat. But I never went back to the primary school after I moved up to the secondary school.

111. The message on the postcard says:

112. *"I hope you're enjoying your holidays despite the poor weather. Soon you will be returning to Queen Victoria to start senior school so I would like to wish you all the best for Form 1. I will be following your progress with great interest. Please remember you will always be welcome at Flat 1, Wavell House. Give my sincere thanks to your mother for the beautiful jersey she knitted me. I frequently wear it. Best wishes to you ^{CKF} and to also. BR Phillips."*

113. There is a little box on the other side of the postcard where he has written some more. The first bit is a bit blurred on the picture on my phone but you can make out the end bit that says: "*and your friend !!?*".
114. Although I never went back to visit him in primary school once I had moved onto secondary school, I would see Ben from time to time because it was a small school. The only time I had been in his flat when I was in primary school was when we went as a class to listen to classical music on Saturdays. I saw him once when I was in 4th or 5th year and he said that he'd heard his belt had eventually got me. I had been belted the night before by a new female teacher for talking in prep and she had apparently borrowed his belt because she didn't have one. He appeared to take great delight in telling me that it was his belt.
115. Ben Phillips died a few years ago. I thought it sounded a bit suspicious when I heard the circumstances of his death. He died when he fell off a ladder putting up Christmas decorations at the school. He was a fit guy in his forties who played rugby. The first thing I thought when I heard about it was that he'd maybe gone too far with a kid and he'd been pushed off the ladder. That was my instant reaction but I don't know anything about it.

Hopes for the Inquiry

116. I haven't come to speak to the Inquiry because of what happened to me. I don't know to what extent or how many other children were abused at Queen Victoria School, or whether Ben Phillips abused more than just me. I just hope that if any children suffered terribly, that they get some sort of justice.
117. I don't think anything could have been done back then to stop the peer abuse or Ben Phillips getting close to a child. I don't even think that putting more teachers in would have changed it. You can't police everyone.

118. As far as the peer bullying is concerned, only some of the kids were a problem and it was just their mind-set at the time. That's how it was back then. I think people's opinions now are changing for the better. The kind of thing that people would have got bullied for back then, like someone's sexuality, would not really be an issue now.
119. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.....
Dated.....

CKF

03 - 03 - 2020