

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Case Study no. 5

The provision of residential care in boarding schools for children in Scotland by **the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey** between 1948 and 1991 at Carlekemp Priory School, North Berwick, and Fort Augustus Abbey School, Invernesshire

Evidential Hearings: 18 July 2019 to 1 October 2019



This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.childabuseinquiry.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to information@childabuseinquiry.scot

Published August 2021

Produced by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA

| Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Case Study no. 5

The provision of residential care in boarding schools for children in Scotland by **the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey** between 1948 and 1991 at Carlekemp Priory School, North Berwick, and Fort Augustus Abbey School, Invernesshire

Evidential Hearings: 18 July 2019 to 1 October 2019

Contents

Foreword	v
Preface	vi
Summary	ix
1. Introduction	1
2. The Benedictine Schools in Scotland	3
History and ethos	3
Structure	4
Diocesan oversight	5
Presence in Scotland	8
Schools: Carlekemp Priory School and Fort Augustus Abbey School	10
Finance	19
Staffing	19
Training and Qualifications	21
Closure	22
The English Benedictine Congregation witnesses	22
Visitations	23
3. The regime	27
Introduction	27
Home	27
Denial of abuse	27
Positive aspects	28
Atmosphere of fear and violence	30
Transfer of monks	30
The Australian connection	33
Response to evidence about the regime	34
Conclusions about regime	35
4. Sexual abuse	36
Carlekemp Priory School	36
Known abusers at Carlekemp Priory School	37
Fort Augustus Abbey School	44
Known abusers at Fort Augustus Abbey School	44
Other sexual abuse	53
Response to evidence about sexual abuse	54
Conclusions on sexual abuse	54

5. Physical abuse	55
Attitudes to punishment of children prevalent over the period of this case study	56
The approach taken by the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey	56
Carlekemp Priory School	57
Fort Augustus Abbey School	66
Response to evidence about physical abuse	82
Conclusions about physical abuse	83
6. Emotional abuse	84
Carlekemp Priory School	84
Fort Augustus Abbey School	85
Response to evidence about emotional abuse	86
Conclusions about emotional abuse	86
7. Reporting	87
Carlekemp Priory School	87
Fort Augustus Abbey School	90
Response to evidence about reporting	96
Conclusions about reporting	97
8. Reflections	98
No compassion	98
Impact on adult lives	98
Catholicism and faith	99
Encouraging others	100
The EBC	101
9. Records	102
The Fort Augustus Abbey archive	102
Closure of the monastery in 1999	102
Inventories of the archive	104
Files relating to the schools	104
Some records of note	105
Attempts by former pupils to recover records	106
Response to evidence about records	107
Conclusions about records	109
10. Inspection reports	110
Carlekemp Priory School	110
Fort Augustus Abbey School	111
Conclusions about inspections	122
11. Other investigations	123
Independent Inquiry into Sexual Abuse	123
The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Sexual Abuse	123
"Sins of Our Fathers"	124

Appendix A - Terms of Reference	129
Appendix B - The parental right of chastisement, corporal punishment in Scottish schools, and related matters	131
Appendix C - Breakdown of numbers of children at Fort Augustus Abbey School and Carlekemp Priory School	137
Appendix D - Numbers of complaints, civil actions, police investigations, criminal proceedings and applicants to SCAI	142
Appendix E - Convictions of Michael Seed (Benedict Seed) and Denis Alexander	143
Appendix F - Roles	144
Appendix G - Notice of draft findings	146

*Readers are warned that [Chapter 5](#) of these findings contains an image that some may find upsetting.

Foreword

These are the fifth of my published case study findings and they relate to the provision of residential care for children by the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey at two boarding schools: Carlekemp Priory School, North Berwick, and Fort Augustus Abbey School, Invernesshire. They are the second in a series of three case study sets of findings in which the residential care of children provided by male religious orders in Scotland is examined.

During the hearings in this case study, I heard about many aspects of the Carlekemp Priory School and Fort Augustus Abbey School that were shocking and distressing. I appreciate how challenging it will have been for all witnesses—former pupils, monks and former monks, former members of staff, and others—to engage with and provide evidence to the Inquiry. I am very grateful to them for their assistance and co-operation and for their valuable contributions.

In reaching the stage of publication of these findings—from detailed analysis to the final document—I have had the benefit of being supported and assisted by some quite exceptional teamwork. I would like to record my gratitude to the Inquiry counsel who led in this case study and the members of staff involved at each stage; their diligence and commitment has been remarkable.

Applicants and other witnesses continue to come forward to the Inquiry with relevant evidence about the care provided by the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey and this will be considered as part of a continuing process.

I would encourage anyone who has relevant information on any aspect of our work to get in touch with our witness support team. We want to hear from you.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Smith', written in a cursive style.

Lady Smith

Preface

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry ("SCAI")

SCAI's Terms of Reference ("ToR") require it to "investigate the nature and extent of abuse of children in care in Scotland" during the period from within living memory to 17 December 2014 and to create a national public record and commentary on abuse of children in care in Scotland during that period.

The requirement is to investigate sexual, physical, psychological, and emotional abuse and, at my discretion, other types of abuse including unacceptable practices (such as deprivation of contact with siblings) and neglect. There is also a requirement to make findings about the impact of abuse.

SCAI is also to consider the extent to which any form of abuse arose from failures in duty by those with responsibility for the protection of children in care. In particular, SCAI requires to consider whether any abuse arose from systemic failures and the extent to which any such failures have been addressed. It is to make findings and recommendations for the effective protection of children in care now and in the future.

A copy of SCAI's ToR is at [Appendix A](#).

An "applicant" is the term SCAI uses for a person who tells SCAI that he/she was abused in circumstances that fall within the ToR.

Public hearings

In common with other public inquiries, the work of SCAI includes public hearings. They take place after detailed investigations, research, analysis, and preparation have been completed by SCAI counsel and SCAI staff. That stage can take a long time. The public hearings of SCAI include—importantly—the taking of oral evidence from individuals about their experiences as children in care and the reading of a selection of evidence from some of their written statements. The evidence also includes accounts of the impact of their having been abused as children in care, including in boarding schools. During and following the evidential hearings into case studies, applicants and other witnesses may come forward with further relevant evidence and such evidence will be taken into account.

I am aware that children were abused in a substantial number of institutions in Scotland and were the subjects of migration programmes that involved an outcome of abuse. It is not realistic to present every institution and instance of abuse at a public hearing; were SCAI to do so, an Inquiry, which will of necessity in any event be lengthy, would be unduly prolonged. Accordingly, with the assistance of SCAI counsel, I will continue to identify particular institutions and matters that are representative of the issues being explored by SCAI and thus appropriate for presentation at a public hearing in "case studies."

Section 21 Responses

Under section 21 of the Inquiries Act 2005, as Chair of this Inquiry, I have the power to require persons to provide evidence to SCAI. Institutions targeted by SCAI as part of its investigations have been issued with various section 21 notices, including requiring them to respond in writing to questions posed by the SCAI team. These questions were divided into parts–A, B, C, and D (Parts A-D section 21 notice). The Fort Augustus Abbey no longer existed but it had been a member of the English Benedictine Congregation (the “EBC”) for much of its existence. The EBC was asked to respond, separately on behalf of each of the EBC, Carlekemp Priory School¹ (hereinafter referred to as “CK”), and Fort Augustus Abbey School (hereinafter referred to as “FA”) and it did so. The response to Parts A and B relating to the EBC is dated 28 April 2017.² Responses relating to CK are dated 28 April 2017 (Parts A and B)³ and 19 July 2017 (Parts C and D).⁴ Responses relating to FA are dated 28 April 2017 (Parts A and B)⁵ and 19 July 2017 (Parts C and D).⁶

In the months leading up to the case study, SCAI requested from the EBC an updated Part D response in relation to both schools. Certain elements of the Part D responses

relating to the schools were updated by the EBC, and submitted to SCAI on 29 March 2019.⁷

Private sessions

Applicants and other witnesses can tell members of the SCAI team about their experiences as children in care and any other relevant evidence at a “private session”. They are supported throughout this process by SCAI’s witness support team. After the private session, a statement is prepared covering those matters spoken about which are relevant to the ToR. The applicant, or other witness, is asked to check the statement carefully and to sign it if they are satisfied that it accurately records their evidence, but only if and when they feel ready to do so.

This case study

The scope and purpose of this case study was to consider evidence about:

- The nature and extent of any relevant abuse at CK and FA, boarding schools run by the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey,
- Any systems, policies and procedures of that institution, their application and effectiveness, and
- Any related matters.

-
- 1 Carlekemp Priory School was located at North Berwick. It was the successor to an earlier school–St Andrew’s Priory School, in Edinburgh–ran by Fort Augustus Abbey from 1931 to 1939. See English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#): BEN.001.001.0152.
 - 2 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Organisational](#): BEN.001.001.0091, covering letter at BEN.001.001.0090.
 - 3 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Carlekemp](#): BEN.001.001.0125, covering letter at BEN.001.001.0090.
 - 4 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts C and D response to section 21 notice, Carlekemp and Fort Augustus](#): BEN.001.001.0217, with related appendices at BEN.001.001.0308, BEN.001.001.0310 and BEN.001.001.0311, covering letter at BEN.001.001.0307.
 - 5 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#): BEN.001.001.0152, covering letter at BEN.001.001.0090.
 - 6 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts C and D response to section 21 notice, Carlekemp and Fort Augustus](#): BEN.001.001.0217, with related appendices at BEN.001.001.0308, BEN.001.001.0310, and BEN.001.001.0311, covering letter at BEN.001.001.0307.
 - 7 English Benedictine Congregation, Part D response to Section 21 notice, updated appendices relating to both schools, 29 March 2019, at BEN.001.003.7077-7079, and index, at BEN.001.003.7076; Letter from Clyde & Co to SCAI, 29 March 2019, at BEN-000000007.

Leave to appear

Leave to appear was granted to the following in relation to this case study, in whole or in part:

- The English Benedictine Congregation
- In Care Abuse Survivors (INCAS)
- Bishops' Conference of Scotland
- Police Scotland
- The Lord Advocate
- The Scottish Ministers
- Father Benedict Seed
- Dom Christopher David Yeo

Whilst the Congregation of the Christian Brothers also applied for, and were granted, leave to appear in this case study, they did not take part in the proceedings, nor were they invited to make submissions.

Numbers

The former pupils who have provided evidence to SCAI in relation to their time at CK and FA do not represent every person who has made a complaint over the years relating to their experiences at those schools. It must also be appreciated that many former pupils have described not only what happened to them, but also the treatment they witnessed being afforded to other children. [Appendices C-E](#) set out, in relation to CK and FA, the numbers of:

- Children who appear to have been cared for by the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey,
- Complaints of alleged abuse received by the EBC,
- Civil actions raised against the EBC, and
- Relevant SCAI applicants to the date specified in [Appendix D](#).

The evidence of any former pupils and other witnesses who have come forward since the evidential hearings began is not referred to in these findings but it will be carefully considered by SCAI as part of a continuing process.

Carlekemp Priory School and Fort Augustus Abbey School

Although there were children who had some positive experiences at CK and FA, I find that the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey's contribution to residential childcare in boarding schools in Scotland was one that exposed children in their care to risks of sexual, physical, and psychological danger. For many children, those risks materialised.

This case study as compared to my findings in relation to the findings of Case Studies nos 1, 2, 3, and 4

The abuse that I find to have taken place at CK and FA is, in some respects, similar to the abuse I found to have taken place at the establishments run by the female religious orders under examination in case studies 1 and 2; voluntary homes run by Quarriers, Aberlour, and Barnardo's under examination in case study 3; as well as the residential institution run by the Christian Brothers, in case study 4. There are also some similarities in relation to causative factors such as: the undue autonomy afforded to the schools, monks and staff who lacked appropriate qualifications and/or training, monks and staff who lacked anger management skills, inappropriate recruitment policies (if any), and inappropriate supervision of monks and staff. I will, accordingly, at times, use language in these findings similar to the language I used in the previous findings.

Summary

Children were abused whilst in the care of the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey at CK and at FA.

- Monks and staff at CK and FA abused children in their care. That abuse included sexual, physical, and emotional abuse.
- At CK, a group of paedophilic, abusive monks preyed on vulnerable children, each targeting children according to their individual sexual predilections. Sexual abuse included masturbation and other inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- At FA, children were sexually abused by monks who groomed their victims by employing physical brutality alongside gentle affection. Sexual abuse included masturbation, oral sexual activity, and rape.
- A lay teacher at FA sexually abused pupils; the abuse included photographing naked children in states of sexual arousal.
- The movement of monks between CK and FA afforded sexual predators the opportunity to target children at both schools.
- A child at FA complained to the headmaster of having been sexually abused by a monk. He was accused of lying, and it was not reported to the police. The child complained of the abuse to his parents, who subsequently contacted the headmaster. The child was then physically punished by the headmaster for complaining to his parents.
- Another child at FA complained to his parents that he was being sexually abused by a monk, and they complained to the headmaster. The perpetrator was sent to Australia.
- No warnings were given when known sexual abusers left or were transferred from FA. One of those abusers went on to abuse children in Australia.
- A former monk at FA, Denis Alexander, has been convicted of sexual offences against children at FA.
- The monks pursued regimes of brutal treatment at both schools. This included public floggings, the mass beating of children, indiscriminate punching, and the use of implements to beat them.
- Children were beaten when naked or partially naked; this practice was sadistic and sexually motivated.
- Children suffered injuries as a result of physical abuse including bruising, bleeding, and swelling.
- Both schools engendered cultures of violence. Bullying was rife, and was facilitated through the prefect system.
- For many children, their experiences of the environments at both schools were dominated by fear.
- At both schools, there was a policy of delayed punishment, which exacerbated the trepidation and fear felt by children awaiting punishment.
- A former monk at FA, Benedict Seed, has been convicted of assaulting a child at FA.
- Some children complained to monks in positions of responsibility about being abused. They received either non-existent or inadequate responses.

- Knowing that they would not be believed, other children refrained from complaining about abuse. Complaints made to devout-Catholic parents were rejected because they would not accept it was possible that Catholic monks would abuse children.
- The emotional scars caused by the trauma associated with sexual abuse, physical violence, and the denigration of children, were, for some, long-lasting and debilitating, blighting their adult lives.
- The monks were not trained to look after children on a residential basis. They lacked the capacity and ability to do so. The notion that untrained monks could care for school-aged children at CK and FA was seriously flawed.
- Although some children benefited from the education provided, others did not.
- Some children who suffered abuse also had positive memories of their time at CK and/or FA. One child—who attempted suicide while at FA—was saved by the kindness shown to him by a particular monk.
- Some children had positive experiences at the schools. Many children, whether with positive or negative experiences—or both—went on to lead fulfilling and fruitful adult lives.
- The EBC, as the body of which Fort Augustus Abbey was a member, acknowledged that children were abused at CK and FA, and that the monks of Fort Augustus Abbey were a dysfunctional group, incapable of providing adequate care to children. The EBC accepted that children were deprived of the education to which they were entitled. The EBC accepted that lasting damage was caused to children and to families because of the abusive regimes that dominated children's lives at CK and FA.
- The EBC offered a genuine apology for the abuse experienced by children entrusted into the care of the monks of Fort Augustus Abbey, at both CK and FA.

1

Introduction

At the close of the case study, I undertook to publish my findings as soon as was practicable. Whilst these findings will, in due course, be taken into account when I analyse systemic failures and decide what recommendations I should make, I am not, at this stage, making any recommendations. It is too soon to do so.

The findings that I am able to make on the evidence presented in the case study are set out in this document. I am doing so to make applicants, witnesses, and members of the public aware, as soon as possible, that I am satisfied that children were abused when in the care of the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey and the nature and extent of that abuse.

Where applicants have waived anonymity, I have normally used their real names. Otherwise, in accordance with my restriction order, they are referred to by their chosen pseudonyms, and the dates as pupils at the schools. In relation to dates at the schools, "CK" indicates the dates the pupil was at Carlekemp Priory School and "FA" indicates the dates the pupil was at Fort Augustus Abbey School.

In this case study, I have decided to preserve the anonymity of most living persons against whom findings of abuse have been established, unless that person has been convicted of abusing children. Also, the norm will be that when persons against whom findings of abuse have been established is deceased, they will be named.

When a former monk or staff member is mentioned, the likely dates they were at the schools are usually provided. While great care has been taken to compile that information, it may be incomplete or inaccurate in part due to the nature and paucity of surviving records recovered. Where there is conflicting information about such dates, the most contemporaneously recorded source has, in the main, been used.

Children were abused

I find that children were abused whilst in the care of the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey at CK and at FA.

Evidence

In these findings, reference is made to some parts of the evidence of individual witnesses where I have found them to be particularly illustrative of the main aspects of what was happening. They are, however, of necessity, a limited selection. The fact that a particular piece of evidence is not referred to or discussed does not mean that it has not been accepted or that it has not helped to build the overall picture of the substance of the experiences of many children in the care of the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey over the period of investigation.

In making these findings, I have applied the standard of proof explained in my decision of 30 January 2018, namely that:

*"...when determining what facts have been established in the course of this Inquiry, it is appropriate that I do so by reference to the civil standard of proof, namely balance of probabilities. I will not, however, consider myself constrained from making findings about, for example, what may possibly have happened or about the strength of particular evidence, where I consider it would be helpful to do so."*⁸

For the avoidance of doubt, I have not applied the criminal standard of proof in making these findings. The criminal standard of proof is a higher standard of proof, namely proof beyond reasonable doubt.

The period covered in evidence ranged from about 1948⁹ to 1991,¹⁰ around two years prior to the ultimate closure of FA. All oral evidence was given on oath or under affirmation. Where the evidence relied on is drawn from witness statements, the statements have been signed by witnesses after having been reviewed by them and they having confirmed them as true accounts.

In describing what happened in these two boarding schools, I have quoted from some of the evidence of former pupils that I have accepted as establishing what happened. I do this so as, amongst other things, to ensure that their voices are now heard.

8 [Standard of Proof – Lady Smith’s Decision](#).

9 [Transcript, day 151](#): read in statement of “Fred”, at TRN.001.006.3550-3559.

10 [Transcript, day 146](#): “Liz”, at TRN.001.006.2798-2848.

2 The Benedictine Schools in Scotland

FA—with its imposing Gothic buildings by the Caledonian Canal in the Great Glen and breath-taking views of Loch Ness—gave ready access to the beautiful, open Highland countryside. CK, in North Berwick—contained in a magnificent stone building, set in a four-acre site—gave easy access to lovely East Lothian beaches. Whilst the beauty of the buildings and locations of these two Benedictine boarding schools in Scotland was undeniable, their locations provided a stark contrast to the dreadful abuses that many children suffered whilst there. As a CK applicant observed: “I’ve often said that school could have been an idyllic place for youngsters to live and learn”,¹¹ yet the harsh reality was so different for too many children at both schools.



Aerial view of Fort Augustus village, with abbey and schools at the background, 2007
(DP 025493 © Crown Copyright: HES).



Carlekemp Priory School, 1953
(SC 1438152 © Crown Copyright: HES).

History and ethos

For much of its existence, and throughout the period under consideration here, the Benedictine monastery at Fort Augustus was a member of the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC). The EBC is one of a number of Benedictine Congregations within the Roman Catholic Benedictine Confederation. The EBC has its origins in the legislation of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 and the legislation of Pope Benedict XII.¹² Worldwide—and within the United Kingdom—there are many Benedictine communities of monks and nuns, all within the broader Benedictine Confederation.

11 [Transcript, day 142](#): David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2180.

12 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Carlekemp](#): BEN.001.001.0125.

Ground norms

The Benedictine Confederation has two “ground norms”, the Rule of St Benedict and the Constitutions.¹³

The Rule was written by St Benedict and pre-dates his death in 547 AD. It is from the Rule that every Benedictine Congregation derives its inspiration.¹⁴ By way of example, the following excerpt highlights how the Rule is rooted in the Gospel:

“God then directs these words to you: If you desire true and eternal life, keep your tongue free from vicious talk and your lips from all deceit; turn away from evil and do good; let peace be your quest and aim.”¹⁵

The Constitutions are comprised of a number of sections, including the General Norms and Statutes, and develop how monks should behave, how a monastery should be run, and the relationship a monastery should have with the broader Benedictine Congregation.¹⁶ A fundamental general norm of the Constitutions provides that “each monastery of the Congregation retains its own autonomy and its freedom to develop its own life according to the diversity of the gifts of God”.¹⁷

The Constitutions also stipulate that a Benedictine monk “chooses to follow Christ in a life of celibacy...At his profession, the monk vows to persevere in a state of celibate chastity.”¹⁸ In addition to the vow of chastity, Benedictine monks and nuns take vows of poverty and obedience.¹⁹

Structure

The Benedictine Confederation

The EBC can be described as a Monastic Congregation of Pontifical Right.²⁰ According to canon law, this means two things. Firstly, as a Monastic Congregation, the EBC is a confederation of several independent monasteries under the same superior.²¹ Secondly, being of “Pontifical Right” signifies that the EBC is exclusively subject to the power of the Apostolic See in regards to internal governance and discipline.²² A diocesan bishop has no jurisdiction over the internal life of a pontifical monastery, but exercises some power over the works of the apostolate carried out by monks and Sisters.²³

Based in Rome, the abbot primate acts as the coordinator of the Benedictine confederation.²⁴

13 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4523.

14 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.0021.4532.

15 The Rule of St Benedict, at BEN.001.001.0001.

16 English Benedictine Congregation, The Constitutions, 1986, BEN.001.001.0190-0208.

17 English Benedictine Congregation, The Constitutions, 2013, paragraph 2, at BEN.001.001.0044.

18 English Benedictine Congregation, The Constitutions, 2013, paragraph 81, at BEN.001.001.0054; Responses to questions from SCAI, Sister Nancy Bauer, at BEN.001.003.7203.

19 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4532.

20 English Benedictine Congregation, The Constitutions, 2013, paragraph 1, at BEN.001.001.0044; [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4526.

21 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Carlekemp](#): BEN.001.001.0125; Response to questions from SCAI, Sister Nancy Bauer, at BEN.001.003.7203.

22 Response to questions from SCAI, Sister Nancy Bauer, at BEN.001.003.7203.

23 [Transcript, day 154](#): Sister Nancy Bauer, at TRN.001.006.4010; Response to questions from SCAI, Sister Nancy Bauer, at BEN.001.003.7203.

24 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4519.

The abbot president is the superior of the EBC. He is selected every four years, and has only limited jurisdiction in relation to the autonomous member monasteries in the EBC.²⁵ The abbot president does, however, carry out a four-yearly inspection of each monastery to ensure that the Rule of St Benedict and the Constitutions are being observed.²⁶

The members of each separate monastery (such as Fort Augustus Abbey), elect their own abbot or abbess.²⁷ The abbot or abbess is in charge of both the spiritual life of the community and the material possessions of the monastery.²⁸ The monks and nuns of each monastery form the Chapter of the monastery—each of which assist the abbot or abbess in governing the monastery.

The EBC

The governing body of the EBC is the General Chapter. The Constitutions provide that the abbot president, an abbot or abbess from each monastery—along with a delegate from each monastery—shall act as members of the General Chapter with voting rights.²⁹ The General Chapter is held every four years in one of the monasteries of the EBC.³⁰ The General Chapter, whilst sitting, “is the supreme legislative authority” of the EBC, and is subject to the right of the Holy See “to approve changes in the Constitutions.”³¹

When “grave necessity” requires, an “Extraordinary General Chapter” can be convened outwith the four-year interval.³²

The abbot president also has a council of three assistants, elected by the General Chapter from the ruling abbots, whose duty is to help the abbot president by advice and action in the government of the whole congregation.³³

Diocesan oversight

A diocesan bishop had no jurisdiction over the internal life of a monastery in his diocese (with the very limited exceptions referred to in the next paragraph), as monastic members of the EBC are religious institutes of pontifical right. In fact, he was obliged to safeguard its internal autonomy.³⁴

If a bishop became concerned that a monk was causing “scandal or other problems within the diocese”, he could bring it to the attention of the abbot.³⁵ A bishop could also prevent a monk from residing in his diocese, but only for a “most grave cause”, and only if the abbot failed to address the problem. In such a case the bishop’s remedy was to report the matter to the Holy See.³⁶

-
- 25 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Organisational](#): BEN.001.001.0091; Response to questions from SCAI, Sister Nancy Bauer, at BEN.001.003.7205.
- 26 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Organisational](#): BEN.001.001.0091.
- 27 Response to questions from SCAI, Sister Nancy Bauer, at BEN.001.003.7205.
- 28 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4531; Response to questions from SCAI, Sister Nancy Bauer, at BEN.001.003.7205-06.
- 29 English Benedictine Congregation, The Constitutions, 2013, paragraph 116, at BEN.001.001.0203.
- 30 English Benedictine Congregation, The Constitutions, 2013, paragraph 116, at BEN.001.001.0203.
- 31 English Benedictine Congregation, The Constitutions, 2013, paragraph 120, at BEN.001.001.0204.
- 32 English Benedictine Congregation, The Constitutions, 2013, paragraph 126, at BEN.001.001.0204.
- 33 English Benedictine Congregation, The Constitutions, 2013, paragraphs 129-131, at BEN.001.001.0205.
- 34 Response to questions from SCAI, Sister Nancy Bauer, at BEN.001.003.7203.
- 35 Response to questions from SCAI, Sister Nancy Bauer, at BEN.001.003.7204.
- 36 Response to questions from SCAI, Sister Nancy Bauer, at BEN.001.003.7204.

Visitations

As aforementioned, the abbot president visits each EBC monastery every four years. He can delegate that task to another Benedictine monk. The Constitutions describe this form of supervision as a “Visitation”.³⁷ The purpose of the visitation is described in the Constitutions in the following way:

*“The purpose of the Visitation is the preservation, strengthening and renewal of the Religious Life, including the laws of the Church and our Constitutions. The Visitor shall therefore make careful enquiry into the spiritual and temporal state of the monastery, especially in regard to its community life and the observance of the vows, and the carrying out of the recommendations of the previous Visitation.”*³⁸

The abbot president has oversight, but not direct authority: he does not have the power to “go in himself and give orders”, but he does have the power to order the abbot to address a particular problem.³⁹ Dom Christopher David Yeo, abbot president of the EBC from 2001 to 2017, described the role as one where he “had a responsibility for ensuring that Fort Augustus was properly run. But that’s not the same thing as the responsibility for running Fort Augustus.”⁴⁰

According to Dom Yeo, if there was a particular issue that needed to be addressed, the abbot president would first seek to correct the position informally.⁴¹ Ultimately, he might have to issue an act of visitation—a precept—which is a decree that is binding by the vow of obedience.⁴² If that too failed, it would be necessary to remit the matter to the Holy See.⁴³ This was the way in which monasteries were held accountable.⁴⁴ Whilst less formally structured than the strict hierarchies of some other religious institutions, it should be noted that this formed a limited accountability that rendered the abbot of an English Benedictine monastery answerable to the Holy See.⁴⁵

During the visitation, each member of the community would be interviewed with the aim of exploring individual spiritual development, and to find out “if they were aware of good things or bad things” happening within the community.⁴⁶

When initially asked what the abbot president would have done if—during a visitation interview—one of the monks told him he suspected that another monk was abusing children at the school, Dom Yeo’s answers were unimpressive: “Probably [the abbot president] would go in the first place to the Abbot, almost certainly he would go

37 English Benedictine Congregation, *The Constitutions*, 2013, Chapter 4: Visitations, at BEN.001.001.0207.

38 English Benedictine Congregation, *The Constitutions*, 2013, paragraph 150, at BEN.001.001.0207.

39 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4538.

40 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4537.

41 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4535.

42 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4535.

43 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4536.

44 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4531.

45 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4536-4540.

46 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4572.

in the first place to the Abbot and ask for his opinion. The next stage of the visitation is the Abbot President speaking to the council of the monastery...whether he would mention this at the council or not, I don't know...It would really be up to the Abbot...First of all I would want to find out what the Abbot knew and I would want to inform the Abbot that this had been said. That's the most important thing...I would expect [the abbot] to do something. Whether he would speak to the person, whether he would make enquiries before speaking to the person, I would expect the Abbot and the Abbot President to discuss it together...the headmaster of the school would have to be brought in...and measures would have to be put in place...it would probably be keeping an eye on the person, ensuring that they weren't in a position to abuse—sorry, that their work was so organised that opportunities for abuse didn't arise...if this was to happen today, you would probably have to bring the safeguarding services and the police into the discussion at an early stage...At that time [during Fort Augustus' existence] it would have depended very much on the Abbot and the headmaster."⁴⁷ There was no mention of there being any need to take decisive measures to protect children or to ensure that those who may have been abused were appropriately supported. His response did not inspire confidence.

At a later hearing, Dom Yeo said he had made a "complete mess" of answering this question at the earlier hearing.⁴⁸ His new

answer—that if it was in England, the matter would be reported as soon as possible to the police if there was an immediate risk of harm, and otherwise to the safeguarding authorities—was, however, given under reference to guidelines that did not exist prior to the closure of the schools run by the monks of Fort Augustus Abbey.⁴⁹ Nothing he said indicated that appropriate steps would have been taken at the time.

Visitation purposes

The purpose of a visitation was not to inspect the schools. Discussions with monks who worked at the schools were in relation to their membership of the monastery, not their work with the children—or indeed, the welfare of the children. I had the clear impression that the overriding priority was to ensure commitment to the monastic life. The abbot president would be interested in whether the life of the school was impinging on the life of the monastery, but not vice versa.⁵⁰

It may have been assumed that if the monks' spiritual life was as it should be, then all would be well with the school. I do not suggest that there was anything wrong with trying to ensure that the monks were attending to their spiritual well-being. However, the visitation system failed to take advantage of this opportunity to go further and investigate the needs of the school and the welfare of pupils, including being alert to any possibility that those children were being abused.

47 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4572-4574.

48 [Transcript, day 149](#): Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3223.

49 Supplementary statement of Dom Christopher David Yeo, at BEN.001.001.0299.

50 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4579-4580.

No visitation uncovered any instance of child abuse, yet, children were physically and sexually abused at CK and FA over at least three decades.

Because the visitation was directed at monastic life, CK was not directly included in the visitation process. The abbot at Fort Augustus Abbey remained answerable for the Fort Augustus monks who were based at CK.

No visitation uncovered any instance of child abuse, yet children were physically and sexually abused at CK and FA over at least three decades.⁵¹

The Constitutions also provided that the abbot president or his representative could carry out an extraordinary visitation when that was considered necessary. The impetus for an extraordinary visitation could come from the monastic community itself, provided that a “third part of the Community shall have asked for it and given sufficient reason.”⁵²

Surprisingly, it does not appear that any extraordinary visitation took place, or was requested, as a consequence of allegations of abuse—despite several allegations of abuse being made throughout the years during which CK and FA were in operation.

Presence in Scotland

The monastery

The monastery at Fort Augustus, Fort Augustus Abbey (also known as St Benedict’s Abbey), was founded in 1876 with the help of the Scottish Catholic hierarchy and aristocracy.⁵³ The land was leased from the Lovat family on a 999-year lease, with finance provided by the Marquis of Bute and other benefactors.⁵⁴ It was another member of the Bute family, Major Michael Crichton-Stuart, who later (in about 1947) enabled another male religious order (the Christian Brothers) to establish St Ninian’s School, Fife, by gifting Falkland House to them, together with some land and funds to help to convert it into a residential school.⁵⁵

The Fort Augustus Abbey was founded with the intention of continuing two earlier monasteries, and to represent the beginning of a Scottish Benedictine Congregation.⁵⁶ According to Dom Yeo, this was “a fairly unrealistic hope” as those “involved in the foundation of Fort Augustus weren’t the right people really to do something as grand as that.”⁵⁷

51 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.1521.

52 English Benedictine Congregation, *The Constitutions*, 1986, Chapter 4: Visitations, paragraph 149, at BEN.001.001.0207.

53 [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 19, at BEN.001.004.4360; Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0460-0461.

54 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0156; Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0461.

55 See Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, [Case Study no.4: The provision of residential care for children in Scotland by the Christian Brothers between 1953 and 1983 at St Ninian’s Residential Care Home, Falkland, Fife](#). (February, 2021), p.6.

56 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0152; [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4540.

57 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4541.

The founder of and first prior at Fort Augustus was Dom Jerome Vaughan, a Downside monk who was said to have “adopted the ideal of ‘monastic reform’ because it was the ‘in-thing’ to do”.⁵⁸ The desire for reform led to the monks requesting permission from the Holy See to separate from the EBC.⁵⁹ This request, endorsed by nearly all Scottish Bishops, was granted in 1882.⁶⁰ Until 1909, the Fort Augustus Abbey was not part of any Benedictine Congregation. Rather, it was immediately subject to the Holy See.⁶¹

In 1887, Dom Leo Linse was appointed prior of Fort Augustus Abbey.⁶² He had previously been prior of the Beuronese monastery at Erdington. Under his influence, monastic life at Fort Augustus Abbey was reshaped according to the model of the Abbey of Beuron in Germany.⁶³ He became abbot in 1888, when Fort Augustus was raised to the rank of abbey.⁶⁴

Influenced by the Beuronese Congregation, Dom Leo Linse established a monasticism that was stricter and more formal than that found in English Benedictine monasteries.⁶⁵ This way of life was of a more austere character, and favoured stricter enclosure of the monks.⁶⁶ Thus, in contrast to other monasteries in the EBC, Fort Augustus Abbey did not engage in apostolic work nor develop its own parishes away from the monastery.⁶⁷ Its primary purpose was prayer and the daily monastic routine, with the abbot being “a sort of exalted, distant figure.”⁶⁸

Towards the end of Dom Leo Linse’s 23-year rule “some discontent began to appear in the community: there was little active work; the community was virtually living on its capital; there had been no Visitation”.⁶⁹ In 1909, a visitation took place and the General Chapter of the EBC accepted Fort Augustus Abbey back as one of its members.⁷⁰ To

-
- 58 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0461.
- 59 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Organisational](#), at BEN.001.001.0092; Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0461-0462.
- 60 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0461-0462.
- 61 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0153.
- 62 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0461-0462.
- 63 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0462; [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3917-3918.
- 64 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0461.
- 65 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3917-3921; [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 19, at BEN.001.004.4360.
- 66 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3918; [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 19, at BEN.001.004.4360.
- 67 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3921.
- 68 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3919-3921.
- 69 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0463.
- 70 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Organisational](#), at BEN.001.001.0092; Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0463.

effect the re-entry an Ampleforth monk, Dom Hilary Wilson, was appointed as prior.⁷¹

Fort Augustus Abbey remained a member of the EBC until its closure in 1999.⁷² During the intervening years several attempts were made to reform Fort Augustus Abbey's liturgical customs to be more in line with other English Benedictine monasteries.⁷³ Nevertheless, the Beurenese influence continued and Fort Augustus Abbey remained "a sort of fortress separated from the rest of the Benedictine world".⁷⁴

Schools: Carlekemp Priory School and Fort Augustus Abbey School

Fundamental to the mission of both schools was to attract children with a background in the Roman Catholic faith.

They were independent, fee-paying schools. Some children's places were facilitated through the government-funded Assisted Places Scheme, and some with the assistance of bursaries.⁷⁵

FA catered for boys, but the Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey recorded that in 1975 there were "6 day girls" enrolled at the school,⁷⁶ and in 1976 there were "5 day girls".⁷⁷ In the final year of the existence of FA one girl was admitted as a day pupil.⁷⁸

Fort Augustus Abbey School

FA was founded in the early 1920s as a residential school.⁷⁹ A "high-class Boarding School" had previously been run there by the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey between 1878 and 1894.⁸⁰ Although the age ranges at FA varied at times, pupils were generally between 12 and 18 years old.⁸¹

The school was seen as providing suitable work for some of the monks at the Abbey, as well as offering a Catholic education to boys in Scotland.⁸² The Abbey also needed to generate an income for its own financial

-
- 71 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0464.
- 72 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Organisational](#), at BEN.001.001.0092.
- 73 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0463-0471.
- 74 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3909.
- 75 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0169. See also the section on [Finance](#).
- 76 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey 1961-1996, Christmas Term 1975, at BEN.001.001.4404.
- 77 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey 1961-1996, Christmas Term 1975, at BEN.001.001.4438.
- 78 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0169.
- 79 The school was likely founded between 1920 and 1923. See English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0153; and also NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED, Inspection of Secondary (and Preparatory) Schools, Form H (4), at SGV.001.005.9567.
- 80 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED, Inspection of Secondary (and Preparatory) Schools, Form H (4), at SGV.001.005.9567. The exact dates of this earlier school's operation are unclear. According to Edward Delepine's "Recollections" the school was opened in 1880 and faded out once Abbot Leon Linse came into office. It then became an "alumnate" for boys who wished to become monks. This only lasted a few years. See Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0475-0476.
- 81 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4549. However, there were some pupils under the age of 12 at times; see [below](#), and also NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED, Inspection of Secondary (and Preparatory) Schools, Form H (4), at SGV.001.005.9567.
- 82 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Organisational](#), at BEN.001.001.0093; English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0154.

Any sense of vocation to care for children in a residential setting did not feature in the mission of the Fort Augustus monks.

support.⁸³ Any sense of vocation to care for children in a residential setting did not feature in the mission of the Fort Augustus monks. When asked why the Fort Augustus monks felt they had the competence to be responsible for managing the residential care of children, Dom Yeo's view was that the question would not have occurred to anyone at the time.⁸⁴ The Fort Augustus monks would have seen that other monasteries in the EBC "were running successful schools and assumed that they could do the same."⁸⁵ From that response, I take it that this fundamentally important question was never addressed by these members of an autonomous congregation. As such, it was not as if, in this new venture, the Fort Augustus monks were going to be directed, assisted, or guided by the EBC either.

There was a deliberate separation of the school at Fort Augustus from the monastic abbey, possibly because of the strong Beuronese influence.⁸⁶ When establishing

the school under this influence, the emphasis was on the monastic life, rather than on the education of children.⁸⁷ Furthermore, "[n]ot all the resident Community were involved in the school which meant that for the Community as a whole, the school was not their only priority."⁸⁸

A "house system" was introduced in the senior school at FA in December 1940.⁸⁹ The two senior houses, Vaughan and Lovat, commemorated "the foundations of the monastery by Prior Jerome Vaughan and the donation of the land and buildings by Lord Lovat."⁹⁰ Each house was under the charge of a housemaster, who would have responsibility for the care of over 50 pupils, aged 12 to 18 years old. The large number of pupils and the age range "must have made it difficult for two housemasters to manage."⁹¹

The preparatory school was treated as a separate house, initially under Dom Oswald Eaves.⁹²

83 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Organisational](#), at BEN.001.001.0093; English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0154; [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4545.

84 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4550.

85 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4550.

86 [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 19, at BEN.001.004.4360.

87 [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 20, at BEN.001.004.4360.

88 [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 19, at BEN.001.004.4360.

89 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0467.

90 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Prospectus, at SGV.001.006.0012.

91 [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 31, at BEN.001.004.4363.

92 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0467.

The building

Fort Augustus Abbey was built on the site of an old fort, erected in 1729 on the margins of Loch Ness.⁹³ The original school block was erected in 1878, with parts of the old fort incorporated into the school building.⁹⁴

In the 1930s, an outdoor swimming pool and a science laboratory were added to the school.⁹⁵ After a fire in 1936 destroyed

the gym and theatre, a pre-fabricated building was purchased and housed the gym and theatre until the school's closure.⁹⁶ In the 1960s, a modern block was added with six classrooms, physics and chemistry laboratories, a biology room, library, a hall with a stage, and some study bedrooms for senior pupils.⁹⁷ In 1969, a block of 22 rooms was taken over by the school from the monastery.⁹⁸



Fort Augustus Abbey and School, general view from North East, 1999 (SC 1506643 © Crown Copyright: HES).



Fort Augustus Abbey and School, Fort Augustus Abbey from North East, 1984 (SC 1823212 © Crown Copyright: HES).



Fort Augustus Abbey and School, view of cale-factory, 1999 (SC 1506723 © Crown Copyright: HES).

93 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Brochure, at SGV.001.006.0003.

94 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Prospectus, at SGV.001.006.0011.

95 SED Inspection Report, Session 1934-35, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3492.

96 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0466.

97 SED Inspection Report, Session 1971-72, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3528; see also NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Brochure, at SGV.001.006.0003.

98 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Brochure, at SGV.001.006.0003.

By 1972, the older part of the school building contained residential, dining, and administrative accommodation, two classrooms, a geography room, a study hall for supervised 'prep', three small play rooms, one large room with billiards and table tennis, and two musical practice rooms.⁹⁹ There was also an Army Cadet hall, and an

old gymnasium.¹⁰⁰ Toilet, washing, changing, and drying facilities were found in the basement of the old part of the building.¹⁰¹ In the school grounds there were playing fields, which included a cricket pavilion and pitch, three rugby and two hockey pitches, and tennis courts, as well as the swimming pool.¹⁰²



Fort Augustus Abbey and School, view of school canteen, 1999 (SC 1506744 © Crown Copyright: HES).

99 SED Inspection Report, Session 1971-72, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3528.

100 SED Inspection Report, Session 1971-72, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3528.

101 SED Inspection Report, Session 1971-72, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3528.

102 SED Inspection Report, Session 1971-72, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3528.

Sometime in the 1980s, work began to convert the original hospice block into study bedrooms “to replace and augment older dormitory-style sleeping accommodation.”¹⁰³ The new wing of the school opened in 1988.¹⁰⁴

The school roll

Records held by the EBC showing the number of pupils resident at FA are incomplete. According to estimates provided by the EBC, the number of pupils resident at FA between 1935 and 1993 ranged from nine, in 1944, to 133, in 1980.¹⁰⁵



Fort Augustus Abbey and School, view of dormitory, 1999 (SC 1506747 © Crown Copyright: HES).



Fort Augustus Abbey and School, detail view of dormitory, bed enclosure, 1999 (SC 1506749 © Crown Copyright: HES).



Fort Augustus Abbey and School, view of student twin bedroom, 1999 (SC 1506753 © Crown Copyright: HES).



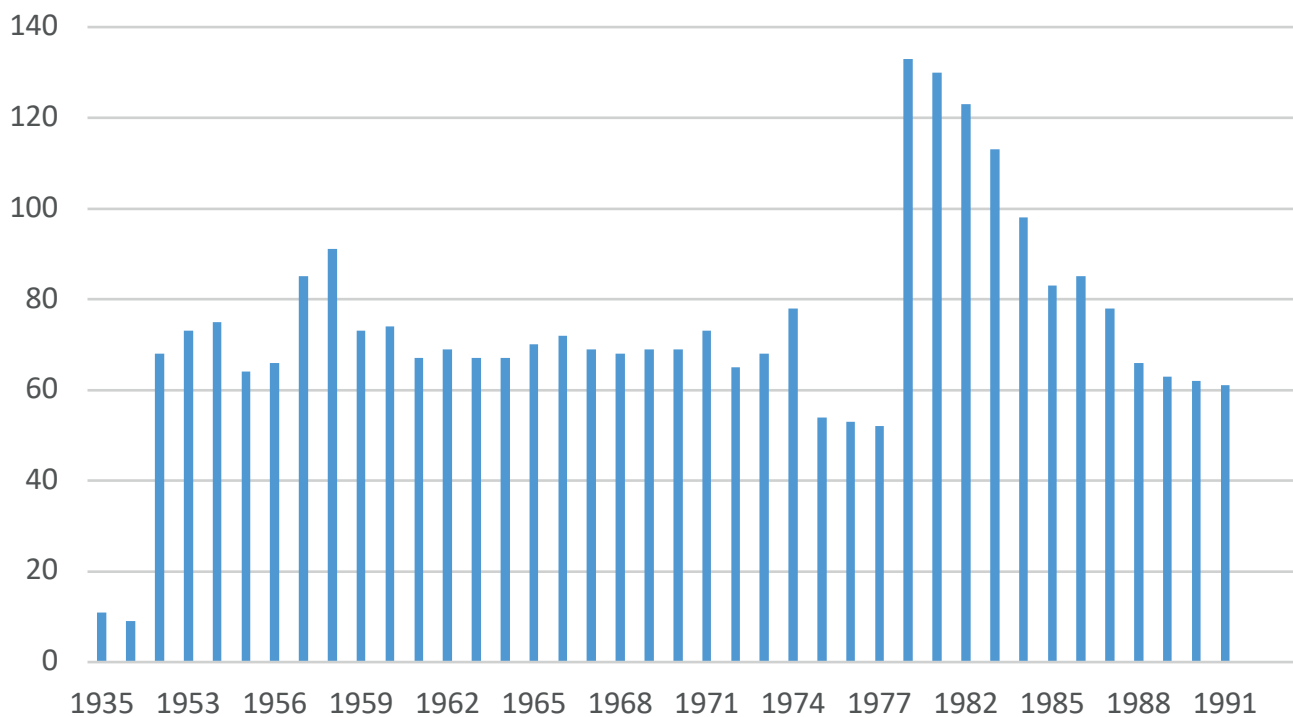
Fort Augustus Abbey and School, view of Old School to New School bridge, 1999 (SC 1506751 © Crown Copyright: HES).

103 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Prospectus, at SGV.001.006.0011.

104 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Prospectus, at SGV.001.006.0021.

105 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0166. Note that in 1944 in addition to the nine pupils attending Fort Augustus, a further 39 pupils, who were attending the prep school previously located in Edinburgh, were resident at Fort Augustus. See also [Appendix C](#).

Figure 1: Number of pupils attending FA, 1935-1991



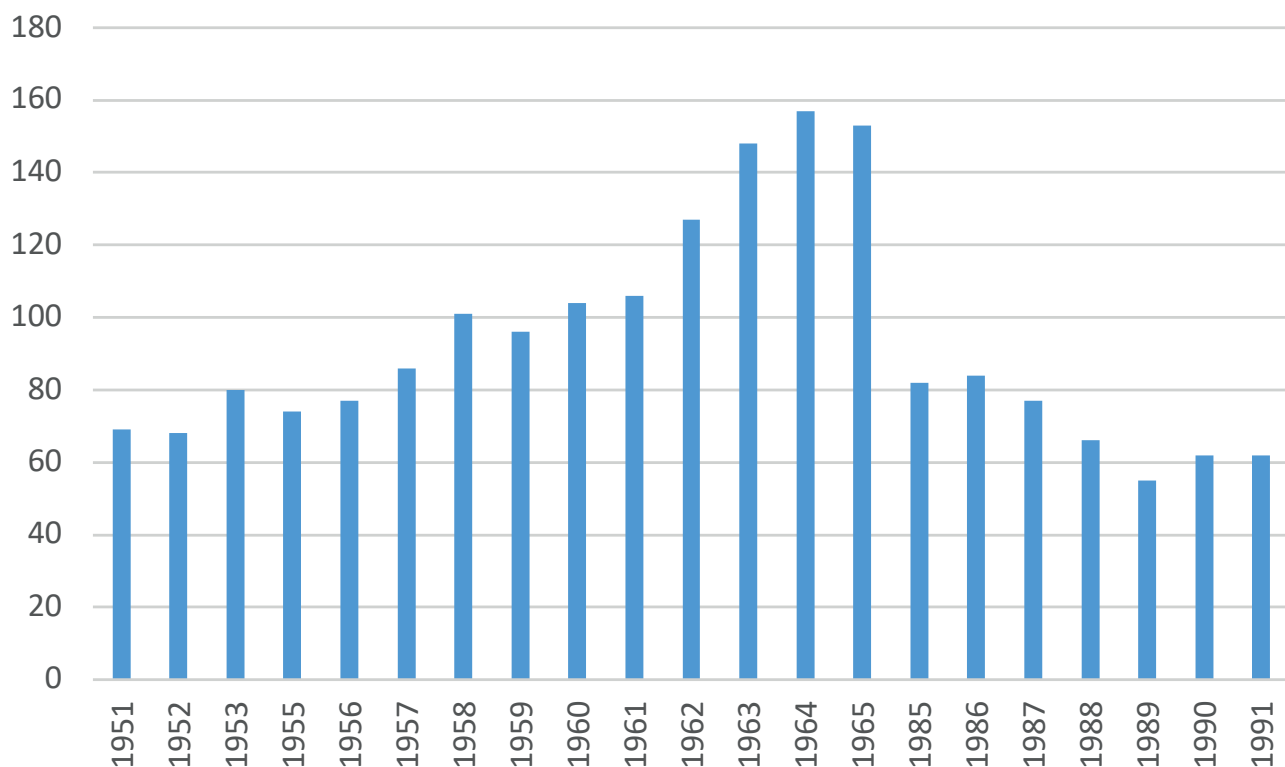
Analysis of the Chronicles indicate that for most years the number of pupils attending FA was higher than the numbers provided by the EBC in its Section 21 response to the Inquiry.¹⁰⁶

Similarly, records from the Scottish Education Department (SED) on the number of pupils on the registers of FA provide higher numbers of pupils than those noted on Figure 1 above.¹⁰⁷ Some of this difference may be explained by the fact that the SED figures included some day pupils.

¹⁰⁶ See [Appendix C](#).

¹⁰⁷ See [Appendix C](#).

Figure 2: Number of pupils attending FA, 1951-1991, according to SED records



Closure

The school roll had been declining, and “[b]y 1984 the Abbot was convinced that the school should be closed down” because it was no longer economical for it to remain open.¹⁰⁸ This created a surge of support for the survival of the school, leading to the formation of an Action Committee that later became the Fort Augustus Advisory Board.¹⁰⁹ Financial assistance was provided by the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB), allowing the school to embark on a large-scale project to modernise the

accommodation provided to pupils.¹¹⁰ That proved to be merely palliative, and by the early 1990s the school was no longer economically viable. It closed in 1993.¹¹¹

Carlekemp Priory School

In 1931, Fort Augustus Abbey established a “Dependent Priory” in Canaan Lane, Edinburgh, as a house of studies for young monks who were attending the University of Edinburgh.¹¹² A school for children of all ages was also established initially as a day school,¹¹³ known as St Andrew’s Priory

¹⁰⁸ [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4556.

¹⁰⁹ [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4556; Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0471.

¹¹⁰ Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0471; NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, “Board removes head of troubled Abbey School”, Glasgow Herald, 4 July 1988, at SGV.001.006.0055; “Reversing the tide for Abbey School, 3 August 1988, at SGV.001.006.0056.

¹¹¹ English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0167.

¹¹² Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0478.

¹¹³ Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0478.

School.¹¹⁴ After a few years it became a preparatory school for younger boys aged between eight and 13 years old.¹¹⁵ At the start of the Second World War (1939-1945), the school was temporarily moved to Fort Augustus Abbey for safety reasons.¹¹⁶ This meant that the FA premises, for a period, accommodated children as young as six.¹¹⁷ In October 1945, the preparatory school for younger boys relocated to North Berwick, East Lothian under the name “Carlekemp Priory School”.¹¹⁸ It was a residential, fee-paying school.¹¹⁹ Carlekemp Priory School was a dependant house of the monastery at Fort Augustus Abbey.

Although CK was seen as a feeder school for FA, children did not invariably transfer from CK to FA. It was the Fort Augustus monks who were primarily responsible for the care and education of the children at CK.

The building

Carlekemp house was built in 1898 on the outskirts of North Berwick, surrounded by woodlands, and in close proximity to Broadsands Beach. The buildings comprised a main house, stables, a lodge, and a garden house.¹²⁰ Originally designed as a private home, during the First World War it was rented by the government as a convalescent home for officers.¹²¹



Detail of the entrance front, Carlekemp House, 1898
(SC 696398 © Crown Copyright: HES).



Hall, Carlekemp House, 1898
(SC 696399 © Crown Copyright: HES).

114 ED 32/259 Independent Schools, East Lothian, Carlekemp Priory School, 1934-1955, SED Inspection, 12 and 13 July 1934, at SGV.001.005.9455.

115 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0154.

116 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0478.

117 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479.

118 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0478; English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0154.

119 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4549.

120 [Canmore](#), “North Berwick, Abbotsford Park, Carlekemp House.” Retrieved 5 September 2020.

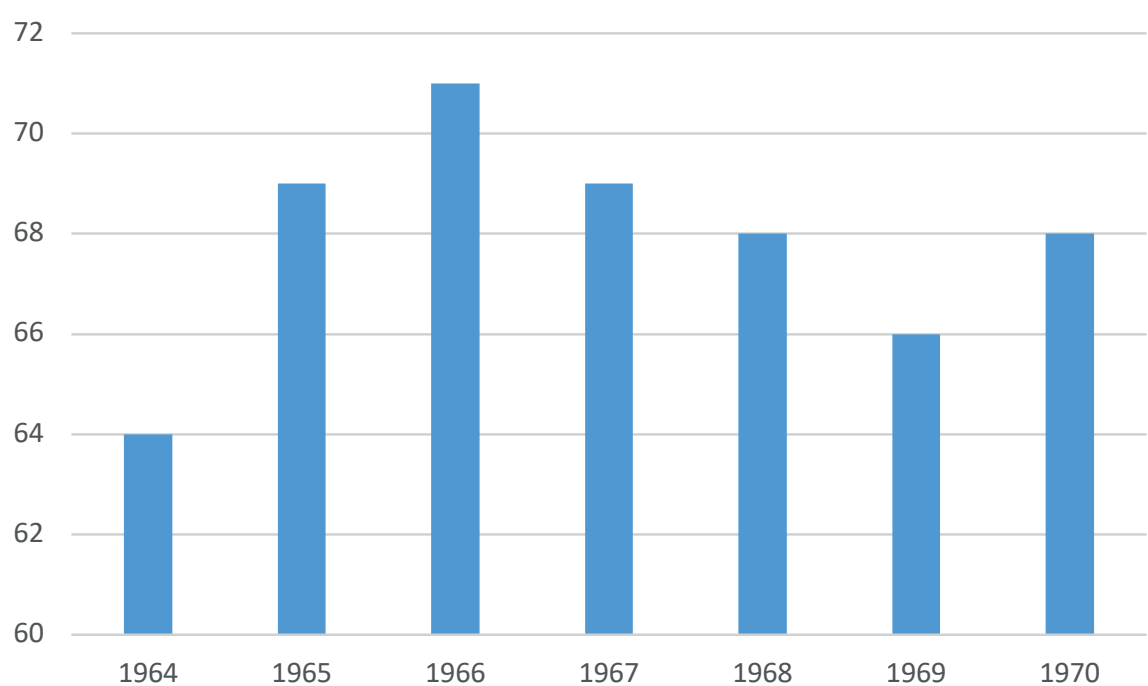
121 [Canmore](#), “North Berwick, Abbotsford Park, Carlekemp House.” Retrieved 5 September 2020.

The property was purchased by the Fort Augustus monks in 1945 from “an Old Boy of the Old School” when it became clear that the property at Canaan Lane would be needed by the army for some time.¹²² In 1965, “the stable block was converted into the ‘Priory’ for the monks to live in away from the noise of the school proper.”¹²³

The school roll

The EBC was unable to provide any information on the numbers of children who had been accommodated at CK, but there is some evidence that the average number of boys was around 65 until near the end of its existence.¹²⁴ Analysis of the Carlekemp School Chronicle provides an indication of how many pupils may have attended the school between 1964 and 1970.¹²⁵

Figure 3: Number of pupils attending CK, 1964-1970, Carlekemp School Chronicle



122 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479.

123 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479.

124 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479.

125 See [Appendix C](#); Carlekemp School Chronicle, at BEN.001.003.3555-3620.

Closure

By the late 1970s, the number of boys attending CK and the number of monks were both falling.¹²⁶

*"In 1977 Abbot Nicholas (and the Abbot President!) came to the conclusion that it would be best for the Fort to amalgamate the two schools: It would save man-power at the Fort since this was beginning to become difficult with the shrinkage of the community; and would save over-heads as well financially. It was noticed, too, that numbers were dropping in the school at Carlekemp. Also Abbot Nicholas had began [sic] to feel that Carlekemp had become a 'refugium peccatorum' for discontented monks. So in that summer chapter agreed to the closure of Carlekemp."*¹²⁷

In referring to the "Refuge of Sinners", Abbot Nicholas may not have had in mind the sinful behaviour described in these findings, but—given the abuse that was happening—there is a remarkable irony in that description.

CK was therefore officially closed in 1977.¹²⁸ Following its closure, CK pupils transferred to FA—as did the monks.¹²⁹ Several of the monks who transferred to FA had been abusing children at CK.

Finance

It is important to note that Fort Augustus Abbey had financial autonomy, and therefore its school fee income was a critical component of its financial survival. Both CK and FA were fee-paying schools and dependent upon pupil attendance for their existence. Crucially, the finances of the monastery and the school were not separated. With few other sources of income, the monastery was largely dependent upon the school for its survival.

In its later years, the Assisted Places Scheme played a significant part in the continued existence of FA.¹³⁰ Of the 65 pupils enrolled at FA in 1989, 40 were being supported by the Assisted Places Scheme.¹³¹ By November 1990, at least 50 pupils were being supported by it.¹³² The school could not, however, survive the impact of the dwindling pupil roll and rising costs. It closed in 1993.

Staffing

At FA some, but not all, of the monks at the monastery worked at the school.¹³³ Two or three monks were also housemasters with pastoral duties.¹³⁴ At CK, between four and five monks were involved in the education

126 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0154; Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479; [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4560.

127 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479.

128 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0154.

129 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4556.

130 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0156. The Assisted Places Scheme provided financial assistance to families in accordance with their income to cover day or tuition fees (including the costs of books) for secondary education. It did not cover the cost of boarding. NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Assisted Places Scheme: A brief guide for parents, at SGV.001.006.0046-0047. See also [Appendix C](#).

131 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, January 1989, at BEN.001.001.4684.

132 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, 8 November 1990, at BEN.001.001.4756.

133 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4552-4553; [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 9, at BEN.001.004.4358-4359.

134 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4553.

The monks struggled to manage the complexities of managing a boarding school.

and care of the children.¹³⁵ Whilst Dom Yeo said that the headmaster at both schools was always a monk,¹³⁶ FA had a lay headmaster between 1930 and 1938.

With the exception of certain monks who had come to Scotland from Australia, many of the monks had themselves been pupils at one or both of the schools and had joined the Benedictines when young.¹³⁷ As a result, many had little or no experience of the wider world, and the locations of the schools—particularly FA—were such as to seclude them from it.¹³⁸ The number of monks being professed, and joining the profession, at Fort Augustus started declining from the end of the Second World War, “a phenomenon which put further strain on the relationship between the Abbey and its school, as the pool of monastic manpower for the school was reduced and those holding positions in the school were forced to continue.”¹³⁹

The abbot expected all the Fort Augustus monks, including those who worked in the school, to attend the Abbey church several times each day, to attend meals in the monastery, and to attend a meeting of the Abbey community at least once each day.¹⁴⁰

The monks struggled to manage the complexities of managing a boarding school. Vision, strategy, and forward planning were absent. There were no clear lines of accountability. Much of the practice at the schools remained unstructured and informal. A man could be accepted as a trainee monk on the basis of no more than an informal interview if he was already known to the community. He could then move into leadership roles, such as housemaster or headmaster, without further scrutiny. This was despite directives to the contrary, concerning recruitment, in the Constitutions of 1931 and 1978.¹⁴¹

Lay staff

Both schools employed a matron. At FA, other support staff, such as kitchen and cleaning staff, were also employed and shared with the Abbey.¹⁴² A number of lay teachers were also employed at both schools.¹⁴³

The appointment process for lay staff lacked rigour. For example, Seamus Coleman’s interview for the position of art teacher at FA in the mid-1980s involved no more than him visiting Fort Augustus, being given a tour of the school, meeting staff, and seeing

135 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4564; [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 9, at BEN.001.004.4358-4359.

136 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4552.

137 See for example, [Transcript, day 153](#): Benedict Seed at TRN.001.006.3802; Inspection report 1938-39, at BEN.001.001.3508; [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 25, at BEN.001.004.4361-4362.

138 [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 25, at BEN.001.004.4361-4362.

139 [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 32, at BEN.001.004.4364.

140 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4580.

141 [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraphs 53-54, at BEN.001.004.4368.

142 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4566.

143 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4564.

“...monks seem generally to have known only one school, in some case as pupils and later as teachers. The valuable features of older monastic educational tradition could become replaced by unacceptable behaviour, a fall in acceptable standards, and abusive practices...as a result of individualistic monk teachers doing their own thing...and having little awareness of any need for accountability.”

generally how the place worked.¹⁴⁴ The art teacher—who was leaving—had called the college where Seamus Coleman was finishing his studies, on its last day of term, to find a replacement.¹⁴⁵ Seamus Coleman was appointed to teach both art and French. He had not, however, studied French beyond Higher level at school.¹⁴⁶ Seamus Coleman was handed two books and told to teach from them: “as long as I was a couple of pages ahead of the boys I could cope.”¹⁴⁷ Further, whilst this was his first teaching job, he was alone in—and responsible for—the art department, and given no advice or guidance by the school.¹⁴⁸ He looked outwith the school for that, but that was on his own initiative, not due to any help from the school.

Training and Qualifications

Neither monks nor lay teachers at the schools were required to have teaching qualifications.¹⁴⁹ Staff had not, as a rule, been exposed to a variety of teaching experiences or trained in how to handle groups of children. The schools were out of touch with modern practices and did not introduce the

fundamental curricular reforms that were needed.¹⁵⁰ Abbot Geoffrey Scott concluded that: “monks seem generally to have known only one school, in some cases as pupils and later as teachers. The valuable features of the older monastic educational tradition could become replaced by unacceptable behaviour, a fall in acceptable standards, and abusive practices which were allowed to develop as a result of individualistic monk teachers doing their own thing over a lengthy period and having little awareness of any need for accountability. This ignorance of the norms which increasingly governed 20th century British schools seems to have been perpetuated at the Fort by a long-term decline in the Community’s numbers which led to monks hanging onto senior pastoral positions for many years without any in-service training...and with little hope of their being replaced and succeeded by a younger generation of monastic teachers more conversant with modern educational philosophy and standards.”¹⁵¹ Risks of failure and abuse were not recognised or addressed.

144 Written statement of Seamus Coleman, paragraph 6, at WIT.001.002.6709.

145 Written statement of Seamus Coleman, paragraph 5, at WIT.001.002.6709.

146 Written statement of Seamus Coleman, paragraphs 8-9, at WIT.001.002.6710.

147 Written statement of Seamus Coleman, paragraph 8, at WIT.001.002.6710.

148 Written statement of Seamus Coleman, paragraph 9, at WIT.001.002.6710.

149 Transcript, day 12: Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4564-4565.

150 Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott, paragraph 26, at BEN.001.004.4362.

151 Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott, paragraph 25, at BEN.001.004.4362.

As for training in how to care for the children for whom they were responsible, there was none. Father Benedict Seed, explained: “Basically, my training was passing through the whole experience myself”.¹⁵² He had been a pupil at FA in the 1940s (between the ages of about 10 and 17 or 18 years old), and joined the order in 1950, at 17 years old. I do not accept that that was an appropriate substitute for being trained to take care of the children in a residential school. He subsequently held the posts of teacher, housemaster (1983-85), and headmaster (1985-88) at FA.

There was also no system in either school for identifying or responding effectively to abuse. Take, for example, the experience of Seamus Coleman, a teacher at FA between 1986 and 1993. He saw a boy being assaulted by the physics teacher, an “arrogant man” who “thought he could lord over everyone”.¹⁵³ The teacher was in a rage, had pinned the boy down, and was swinging his arms at him.¹⁵⁴ Seamus Coleman intervened to pull the teacher off the boy, and reported the incident to the headmaster, Benedict Seed, who said he would “look into it”, but nothing happened.¹⁵⁵ This was despite the school supposedly having, by then, discontinued the use of corporal punishment.

Closure

After the closure of the school at Fort Augustus in 1993, the monastery ran what was, in effect, a tourist business.¹⁵⁶ A cessation in trading led to the closure of the monastery and its suppression as a monastery in 2010.¹⁵⁷ When the monastery was suppressed, the land and buildings at Fort Augustus reverted to the Lovat estate.¹⁵⁸ Other assets were transferred to the EBC.

The English Benedictine Congregation witnesses

Two witnesses gave evidence on behalf of the EBC.

Dom Christopher David Yeo gave oral evidence on two occasions, firstly on 23 June 2017.¹⁵⁹ At that time he was the abbot president of the EBC and was asked about aspects of the EBC’s position on Parts A-D of the section 21 response. The second occasion was on 12 September 2019.¹⁶⁰ At that time, he was no longer the abbot president and was referred to as Dom Richard Yeo. He addressed a number of issues that had arisen during the evidence, and sought to clarify some of his earlier evidence.

Dom Geoffrey Scott gave oral evidence on the final day of evidence on 20 September 2019.¹⁶¹ At that time, he was the first assistant abbot of the EBC. He addressed, in particular, allegations of abuse made by applicants and other failures that had emerged.

152 [Transcript, day 153](#): Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3802.

153 [Written statement of Seamus Coleman](#), paragraph 37, at WIT.001.002.6718.

154 [Written statement of Seamus Coleman](#), paragraph 35, at WIT.001.002.6717.

155 [Written statement of Seamus Coleman](#), paragraph 37, at WIT.001.002.6718.

156 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4590.

157 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4590.

158 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4591.

159 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4516.

160 [Transcript, day 149](#): Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3208.

161 [Transcript, day 154](#): Dom Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3890.

Visitations

A number of documents were recovered from the EBC in relation to visitations carried out between 1933 and 1994.¹⁶² They show that the monastery had a troubled history. Dom Yeo explained that there had been problems from “very early days”.¹⁶³ Both Dom Yeo and Abbot Geoffrey described the monastic regime as “dysfunctional”.¹⁶⁴ Abbot Geoffrey went on to explain that “it was dysfunctional, and therefore the school, by extension, would have had problems”.¹⁶⁵ Dom Yeo agreed that a dysfunctional monastery would impact on the school.¹⁶⁶

An administrator was required to be appointed to the monastery on three occasions, in 1917, 1940, and 1968 or 1969.¹⁶⁷

In 1917, following a series of setbacks, the abbot resigned.¹⁶⁸ With several of the monks being “away as chaplains to the forces, it was decided that an election was not possible” and a “Prior Administrator” was appointed.¹⁶⁹ He remained in post for two years. Following

a visitation in November 1939, the abbot president carried out an extraordinary visitation in November 1940 at the request of a number of the Fort Augustus monks.¹⁷⁰ The request described the level of monastic observance as “deplorably low”, and the abbot was described as “difficult of approach, and those who venture to approach are invariably disappointed.”¹⁷¹ Seeking to defend his position, the abbot referred to the “conceit” of two monks and favouritism shown to them by the “Junior master”, a person who “always had this weakness of making favourites.”¹⁷² The abbot also mentioned the discontent of the headmaster of the preparatory school who found himself, following the move of the preparatory school to Fort Augustus (on the outbreak of war), under his junior—his room had “become the focus of those who think they are aggrieved.”¹⁷³ The abbot resigned, and an administrator was appointed.¹⁷⁴ In the visitation report the following instruction was given to the community:

162 Acts of Visitation, 1846-1905 and 1905-1961, at BEN.001.001.1983-1997; Acts of Visitation, 1965-1994, at BEN.001.001.1998-2007.

163 Transcript, day 149: Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3220.

164 Transcript, day 149: Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3220; Transcript, day 154, Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3928.

165 Transcript, day 154: Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3928.

166 Transcript, day 149: Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3221.

167 Transcript, day 12, Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.006.4546. Whilst in evidence Dom Yeo mentioned that four administrators had been appointed, Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections state that the monk appointed as prior in 1909 was not there as an administrator, but to effect the re-entry of Fort Augustus into the English Benedictine congregation. Also, according to Delepine, the third administrator was appointed in 1968 rather than 1969 as stated by Dom Yeo. Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0464, 0467, and 0469.

168 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0464.

169 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0464.

170 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0467; Acts of Visitation, 1846-1905 and 1905-1961, at BEN.001.001.1985.

171 Fort Augustus Visitation 1939, letter, 18 October 1940, at BEN.001.003.5469.

172 Fort Augustus Visitation 1939, letter, 6 November 1940, at BEN.001.003.5489.

173 Fort Augustus Visitation 1939, letter, 6 November 1940, at BEN.001.003.5489.

174 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0467; Fort Augustus Visitation 1939, letter, 3 December 1940, at BEN.001.003.5502.

*"None of the brethren, except those to whom the abbot may have given special permission, may bring a guest or any secular to his cell. By this rule we bind even the Cellarer, who should conduct business with seculars in a suitable place, within the enclosure but quite removed from the cells of the brethren."*¹⁷⁵

This indicates that "guests" were being invited to monks' cells.

Following a visitation on 21 November 1967,¹⁷⁶ a report by the abbot president described the situation at Fort Augustus Abbey as a "serious one", and that "there was a want of unity, charity, slackness in religious life" and that "[a]n atmosphere of suspicion prevailed".¹⁷⁷ Whilst the abbot was described as "a good and kindly man" it was also noted that "during his years of office a deterioration of community life seems to have taken place."¹⁷⁸ The report concluded:

"...a Superior should be appointed. An election under these circumstances would be unwise.

To lessen the influence of the mischief-making party, it would be wise if one or two of the more active ones could be persuaded to reside elsewhere for a considerable time. I realise the difficulty of effecting this. To make martyrs of them would not help the cause...

A very serious effort should be made to give the Community a purpose in life. Their isolated position tends to make them in-thinking and out of touch with reality. There are golden opportunities for an exemplary religious life in Scotland, and perhaps spells of parochial work away from the Abbey might open out their spirits.

*A charitable and strong warning should be given by the Congregation to sink all personal embitterments [sic] and show a more generous and co-operative spirit."*¹⁷⁹

Once again the abbot was replaced by an external appointment, Dom Nicholas Holman, from Downside Abbey. He features in an important episode addressed later in these findings. The appointment was made in December 1967.¹⁸⁰

Many visitation reports are short, and repeat the same advice that is dedicated to the spiritual well-being of the monks.¹⁸¹ The report of a visitation carried out on 15 October 1986 is mainly concerned with the financial position of the monastery and described the position as being "a cause for anxiety."¹⁸²

Systemic problems

The visitation system focused on the lives and spiritual well-being of the monks. Those who carried them out did not concern themselves with what was happening in the schools. Abbot Geoffrey recognised that that was a deficiency in the system.¹⁸³

175 Fort Augustus Visitation 1939, 13 November 1940, at BEN.001.003.5492. According to the Rule of St Benedict the "Cellarer" was to be "like a father to the whole community. He will take care of everything, but will do nothing without an order from the Abbot", The Rule of St Benedict, at BEN.001.001.0021.

176 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0469; Acts of Visitation, 1965-1994, at BEN.001.001.2000.

177 Fort Augustus Visitation 1967, Summary of Father President's Report on his Visitation of Fort Augustus, at BEN.001.003.5554.

178 Fort Augustus Visitation 1967, Summary of Father President's Report on his Visitation of Fort Augustus, at BEN.001.003.5554.

179 Fort Augustus Visitation 1967, Summary of Father President's Report on his Visitation of Fort Augustus, at BEN.001.003.5555.

180 Fort Augustus Visitation 1967, Letter, 28 December 1967, at BEN.001.003.5566.

181 See, for example, Acts of Visitation, 1965-1994, at BEN.001.001.2000-2005.

182 Acts of Visitation, 1965-1994, at BEN.001.001.2005.

183 Transcript, day 154: Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3930.

Leadership problems

With the running of the schools being secondary to the monastery, no tradition of good, effective leadership was established. Further, no such tradition was established in the monastic life at Fort Augustus; rather, it was problematic and dysfunctional. As Abbot Geoffrey observed, the dysfunctional monastic regime impacted on the schools; Dom Yeo agreed with that assessment.¹⁸⁴

The abbot of the Abbey was ultimately in charge, but he was a remote figure and not involved with the schools. He appointed the headmaster of the schools from amongst the monks in the community, and the persons appointed were not required to have any qualifications: “it was the age of the gifted amateur, wasn’t it? It was assumed that a person who had a general competence would be able to run a school.”¹⁸⁵ Dom Yeo said that he would be “very surprised” if any of the headmasters at FA were qualified teachers.¹⁸⁶ Also, although the headmaster ran the school, he did not have control of one of the most important aspects: finance. The abbot retained financial control.

An example of the lack of adequate leadership by the abbot is illustrated in the way in which monks were able to leave the monastery without permission: at least two monks—who were sexual abusers—served as chaplains on ships transporting migrant children to Australia, without the abbot’s knowledge. Correspondence shows that

the abbot at Fort Augustus had lost touch with one particular monk and had to write to a representative of the National Council of Migration to seek information on his whereabouts.¹⁸⁷ Dom Yeo described this as “bad practice”;¹⁸⁸ his reaction appeared to be a serious indictment of the monastic regime that prevailed at Fort Augustus.

Benedict Seed joined the order in 1950, at 17 years old, and he subsequently held the posts of teacher, housemaster, and headmaster—his “training” being that he had passed through FA as a pupil himself.¹⁸⁹ Whatever he learnt from his long experience in the school, it was not how to be a good leader—not that I heard any evidence that the headmasters he succeeded had been good leaders. Benedict Seed was an ineffective leader as exemplified by his handling of three distinct matters.

The first matter concerned his own indecent sexual behaviour with two children in the 1980s, during which time he held leadership roles, namely housemaster (1971-85) and headmaster (1985-88).¹⁹⁰ This was abusive conduct. Nonetheless, Benedict Seed continued in both his school roles and in his public ministry. He failed to address his behaviour until years later, in 2013, when he first disclosed it—to both Father James Bell and Bishop Hugh Gilbert.¹⁹¹ A good leader would have stepped down and removed himself from the environment even if he had not self-reported to his superiors.

184 [Transcript, day 149](#): Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3221.

185 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4558.

186 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4558.

187 Letter from Rt. Rev. R.C. Haworth, O.S.B., Abbot to Canon Harvey, 15 May 1965, at BEN.001.003.5974.

188 [Transcript, day 149](#): Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3246.

189 [Transcript, day 153](#): Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3802.

190 [Transcript, day 153](#): Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3837-3839; [Transcript day 153](#): Bishop Hugh Gilbert, at TRN.001.006.3868.

191 [Transcript, day 153](#): Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3836; [Transcript day 153](#): Bishop Hugh Gilbert, at TRN.001.006.3868.

The second matter was his handling of the interventions by the Scottish Education Department (SED) in 1985 and 1986, when he was headmaster. Inspectors had serious reservations about the quality of much of the education provided at FA, the arrangements for pupil guidance, and about several aspects of its organisation and management.¹⁹² Benedict Seed's reactions and responses—as demonstrated in letters he wrote to the Scottish Council of Independent Schools, the SED, and his MP, and his contemporaneous handwritten notes on correspondence—show that he was at a loss to know what to do.¹⁹³ He failed to appreciate the legitimacy of some of the criticisms, such as staff not having the appropriate qualifications, the need for written job descriptions, the need for staff training, the need for a formal programme for the personal guidance of pupils, and the statutory requirement for pupils in the third year of secondary school to learn a foreign language. His letters and notes confirm that the inspectors' criticisms were well-founded.

Benedict Seed was told by the inspectors: "Remember...we are in earnest. Real change for the better must be evident by 15th December."¹⁹⁴ He, however, thought that all matters raised were "a question of degree" and whilst they could be better, queried whether they were critically defective.¹⁹⁵

The third matter concerned Benedict Seed's treatment of lay teachers that resulted in the school being put "on probation" by the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) because of its poor industrial relations with its teaching staff.¹⁹⁶ The school had lost five lay teachers during the three years in which Benedict Seed was headmaster, and, according to the EIS, there had been complaints that teachers had been dismissed without just cause. The EIS was recorded as saying that they had been in touch with the school and were "surprised at some of the practices in which they had been indulging...We were concerned about their standards of management. In the light of the assurances from the headmaster and from the Independent Schools' Association, we will wait to see if there are improvements and we will then consider what action would be proper."¹⁹⁷ Benedict Seed was removed from his post as headmaster in 1988.¹⁹⁸

Benedict Seed was out of his depth. An effective leader would not have been; children were being failed, and a good leader would have been deeply concerned about that. An effective leader would have engaged constructively and decisively with the inspectors, and with the staff of the school with a view to achieving rapid improvement. He failed to do so.

192 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, letter from D.A. Osler, HM District Inspector of Schools, to Benedict Seed, 15 September 1986, at BEN.001.002.1916.

193 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, see for example letter from headmaster Benedict Seed to SCIS joint secretary, 09 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1930-1934. See also [Chapter 10](#).

194 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Benedict Seed to SCIS joint secretary, 09 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1930.

195 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Benedict Seed to SCIS joint secretary, 09 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1930.

196 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, "Board removes head of troubled Abbey School", 4 July 1988 (likely in the Glasgow Herald), at SGV.001.006.0055; "EIS keeps watch on Abbey School", 4 July 1988 (likely in the Glasgow Herald), at SGV.001.006.0057.

197 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, "EIS keeps watch on Abbey School", 4 July 1988 (likely in the Glasgow Herald), at SGV.001.006.0057.

198 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, "Board removes head of troubled Abbey School", 4 July 1988 (likely in the Glasgow Herald), at SGV.001.006.0055; "EIS keeps watch on Abbey School", 4 July 1988 (likely in the Glasgow Herald), at SGV.001.006.0057.

3

The regime

Introduction

Children were sexually abused at CK and FA. A number of monks were serial sexual predators and, because of the movement of monks between FA and CK, they were able to target victims at both schools. A lay teacher at FA also lured children to his home and sexually abused them there.

Children were cruelly beaten by sadistic monks at both schools, and some beatings had sexual overtones. Children were humiliated, and punished inappropriately and excessively. The brutal treatment of children caused injuries.

Children were emotionally abused at both schools. A prime example was the practice of delayed punishment.

Home

Whilst boarding schools may not, at the time, have been expected to replicate the love and warmth that the children might have received in their own homes, families trusted the monks to care properly for their children and—at the very least—to keep them safe. Instead, abuse was what dominated the lives of many children at CK and FA.

Denial of abuse

Benedict Seed said he did not see any evidence of sexual abuse. As for physical abuse, he did not consider that any punishment he administered went beyond what was normal in most schools of the time.¹⁹⁹ During his oral evidence, this passage from his written statement was put to him: “There is, however, the possibility of some former pupils having other issues and/or having unconsciously exaggerated their memories of past circumstances relating to the abuse they allege.”²⁰⁰ In his oral evidence, he developed his position: “Pupils could vie with each other as having had a worse punishment than their neighbour. You know, they could sort of compete with their stories and they would exaggerate or embroider their story to make it more impressive.”²⁰¹ He also suggested that evidence of abuse given by applicants could be influenced by the prospect of compensation.²⁰²

In the closing submissions on behalf of the EBC, the EBC did not challenge the evidence of abuse provided by former pupils, and disassociated itself from Benedict Seed’s evidence on this issue.²⁰³ The EBC also, on another issue, challenged Benedict Seed’s evidence as “neither credible nor reliable”.²⁰⁴

199 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3883-3884.

200 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3884.

201 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3884.

202 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3884-3885.

203 Closing Submissions for the English Benedictine Congregation, at BEN-000000001, paragraph 8, p.5.

204 Closing Submissions for the English Benedictine Congregation, at BEN-000000001, paragraph 8, p.5.

I reject Benedict Seed's evidence. There was clear evidence of abuse, and no evidence of collusion, exaggeration, or of anyone being motivated by the prospect of compensation. Rather, what was striking was the dignified manner in which former pupils gave evidence about events, even though doing so revived memories that were obviously unhappy and distressing ones.

As aforementioned, in 2013, Benedict Seed confessed to inappropriate sexual behaviour in connection with children at FA in the 1980s.²⁰⁵ In 2017, Benedict Seed was convicted, after trial, of having assaulted a pupil (aged between 14 and 15) at FA, sometime between September 1980 and September 1982.²⁰⁶

Positive aspects

Some former pupils of CK and FA had positive experiences at the schools. Others found some aspects of their experiences positive despite suffering abuse and bullying. Some were able to build on their positive experiences to develop successful adult lives.

Children were able to derive positive experiences from the friendships forged at both schools. David Walls (CK 1955-58), despite the abuse and bullying culture he experienced at CK, was able to cultivate strong and lasting friendships.²⁰⁷ "Ian" (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75) also regarded as a

positive legacy the friendships he formed as "the kind of kinship between boys that survived" the CK abuses.²⁰⁸ In a similar fashion, "James" (FA 1961-63) survived the fearful environment that he was exposed to at FA because "when you have friends, you stick together, and when you are together in groups, it's surprising what you can actually withstand."²⁰⁹

"Fred" (CK 1948-54, FA 1954-59) described his time at both schools as "some of the happiest days of my life."²¹⁰ He provided a glowing tribute to his teachers and said that he had retained "a lifelong admiration and respect for many of [his] teachers that has not changed even with the benefit of hindsight."²¹¹

Desmond Austin (CK 1955-58, FA 1958-62) emphasised that "some of the monks and the priests at the two schools were all right, they weren't all bad."²¹² Desmond was keen to point out that he was "by no means" miserable at the school all of the time.²¹³ He said that there were some good men at FA.²¹⁴

"Harry" (CK 1954-59, FA 1959-62) said that: "I don't have any bad initial memories of Carlekemp; it was quite a happy place to be, initially at least. It was very tiny as a school, there were only I think about 60 boys there, so one got to know everybody very, very quickly."²¹⁵

205 [Transcript, day 153](#): Bishop Hugh Gilbert, at TRN.001.006.3868.

206 Indictment of Benedict Seed, at JUS.001.001.1157 and JUS.001.001.1177; See [Appendix E](#).

207 [Transcript, day 142](#): David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2180.

208 [Transcript, day 151](#): "Ian", at TRN.001.006.3471.

209 [Transcript, day 143](#): "James", at TRN.001.006.2277.

210 [Transcript, day 151](#): read in statement of "Fred", at TRN.001.006.3550.

211 [Transcript, day 151](#): read in statement of "Fred", at TRN.001.006.3550.

212 [Transcript, day 145](#): Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2661.

213 [Transcript, day 145](#): Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2672.

214 [Transcript, day 145](#): Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2673.

215 [Transcript, day 142](#): "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2048.

George Campbell (FA 1965-70) told the Inquiry he got on well with the other boys and the monks alike, and his "experience at Fort Augustus was broadly positive."²¹⁶

Colin Bryce (FA 1971-78) recalled having a "very positive experience at Fort Augustus".²¹⁷ He described the school as "hard but fair... you knew the routine and because there was corporal punishment at the time you knew the boundaries of what you could do."²¹⁸ He also said, that, "in general, the punishments were given if you did something wrong. They weren't often given out without having done something to require the punishment to be given to you".²¹⁹

"Michael" (FA 1977-84) explained that "[o]ne of the motives for my coming [to SCAI]... [is] saying, hang on, we didn't all live in fear, it wasn't as bad as it is being made out [in the media], although there were isolated incidents."²²⁰

"Simon" (FA 1978-80) was at FA for two years, when he was between 16 and 18 years old. He described his time there as follows: "For me, Fort Augustus was a very positive experience. I gained a sense of discipline and an appreciation for others. I became less self-centred. It was very helpful for the formation of my character."²²¹

"Daniel" (FA 1978-83) said that there was bullying, but he saw "it mostly as banter and making fun. You just had to toughen up."²²² His position was that his time at FA "was a positive experience that set [him] up for life."²²³

"Frankie" (FA 1981-1987) provided very similar evidence, saying that "Fort Augustus was a positive experience that benefited [him] greatly."²²⁴

Some children were fortunate to evade the sexual predators who plagued the lives of others, and to avoid the brutality that terrorised many. Some children who suffered abuse seem to have managed to put it behind them, but many did not. "Ian" (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75), who experienced abuse at CK and FA, offered this insight: "Their oppressive and unjust regime may have bred a few warriors who learned to endure or evade their abuse, but at what horrendous cost?".²²⁵ The "horrendous cost" was the loss of life and "many decades of pain" experienced by those who were abused and those close to them.²²⁶

216 [Transcript, day 150](#): George Campbell, at TRN.001.006.3363.

217 [Transcript, day 150](#): Colin Bryce, at TRN.001.006.3390.

218 [Transcript, day 150](#): Colin Bryce, at TRN.001.006.3391.

219 [Transcript, day 150](#): Colin Bryce, at TRN.001.006.3391-3392.

220 [Transcript, day 145](#): "Michael", at TRN.001.006.2553.

221 [Transcript, day 151](#): read in statement of "Simon", at TRN.001.006.3567.

222 [Transcript, day 151](#): read in statement of "Daniel", at TRN.001.006.3566.

223 [Transcript, day 151](#): read in statement of "Daniel", at TRN.001.006.3566.

224 [Transcript, day 151](#): read in statement of "Frankie", at TRN.001.006.3581.

225 [Written statement of "Ian"](#), paragraph 128, at WIT.001.002.8475; [Transcript, day 151](#): "Ian", at TRN.001.006.3501.

226 [Transcript, day 151](#): "Ian", at TRN.001.006.3501.

Atmosphere of fear and violence

For many children at CK and FA, the prevailing climate at both schools was one of fear and violence.

“Joseph” (CK 1954-61, FA 1961-66) was six or seven years old when he started at CK in 1954, and experienced “adult violence” in “an atmosphere of fear.”²²⁷ For “Ian” (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75), CK represented “a fearful environment from the start”²²⁸—“the culture at the school, was not to encourage a boy to open up and develop, it was to crush the spirit”.²²⁹

At FA, a “culture of fear”²³⁰ was promoted, and “[t]he underpinning philosophy of the school was violence. Violence was [everywhere] throughout the day.”²³¹ For “Ian” (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75), FA “was a violent place. There was a psychosis of fear throughout the school.”²³² It was “a sink or swim environment.”²³³

Violence begets violence. Bullying flourishes in such an environment, and the EBC accepted that, certainly at FA, bullying was “rife”.²³⁴

On one occasion, the violent regime at FA prompted an eruption of violence by children. They set upon a monk who was in the habit of inflicting cruel treatment on

children. Having been victimised by this monk in a meaningless exercise, a group of over 30 children “descended on” him “and rained kicks and punches...stripped him to his orange underpants...So that made him a figure of fun.”²³⁵ This attack inflicted serious injuries and could have been even more serious if “Ian” (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75), having witnessed “some very heavy army-booted kicks to the head”,²³⁶ had not gone to his aid by pulling children away. This attack was witnessed by at least one other teacher and was known to the school, yet there were no repercussions. As “Ian” surmised, with so many children having been involved, a mass expulsion of children would probably have been “the economic end of the school”.²³⁷ Moreover, there was no investigation to find out why this explosion of violence by children in their care had occurred.

Transfer of monks

Some of the monks who abused children were moved between the two schools, and some moved abroad.

Father Denis Chrysostom Alexander arrived at Fort Augustus towards the end of 1955.²³⁸ He taught at FA between 1962 and March 1965.²³⁹ In April 1965 he sailed to Australia as a chaplain aboard a ship

227 Transcript, day 143: “Joseph”, at TRN.001.006.2223-2224.

228 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3447.

229 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3473.

230 Transcript, day 143: “James”, at TRN.001.006.2277.

231 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2717.

232 Written statement of “Ian”, paragraph 74, at WIT.001.002.8460.

233 Written statement of “Ian”, paragraph 128, at WIT.001.002.8475.

234 Closing Submissions for the English Benedictine Congregation, at BEN-000000001, p.3.

235 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3495-3496.

236 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3496.

237 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3497.

238 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Chrysostom Alexander, at BEN.001.004.2705.

239 Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4050, 4100, and 4133.

taking child migrants to Australia.²⁴⁰ From September 1965 to 1968, he was a teacher at CK.²⁴¹ By 1969, he had returned to FA to teach.²⁴² During his time at FA he was also a housemaster.²⁴³ He left Scotland for Australia in 1978.²⁴⁴ He returned to Scotland in January 2020.²⁴⁵ On 11 June 2021 he pled guilty to and was convicted of sexually abusing children at FA in the 1970s.²⁴⁶

Father “Andrew Jones”, who was a pupil at St Andrew’s Priory School and FA (1943-49) and trained at the monastery at Fort Augustus, went to CK to teach in September 1957, where he remained until 1961.²⁴⁷ After a period studying in Rome he returned to Fort Augustus to teach in 1963, remaining there until 1971.²⁴⁸ From 1972 to 1977 he taught at CK. He returned to FA in 1977, where he remained until August 1988, when he left for Canada.²⁴⁹ “Andrew Jones” returned to Scotland in February 2020.²⁵⁰

Father Douglas Aidan Duggan arrived at Fort Augustus from Australia in July 1954 to teach in the school.²⁵¹ He moved to CK in July 1955, where he remained for four years.²⁵² He was recalled to Fort Augustus in December 1959, where he again taught in the school.²⁵³ Between 1965 and 1970 he was chaplain at Stanbrook Abbey in Yorkshire.²⁵⁴ Between 1971 and 1974, he was back at Fort Augustus Abbey as Novice Master and Parish Priest. In September 1974, he left to take up Parish work in Bass Hill, Sydney, Australia where he groomed and sexually abused John Ellis over a number of years.²⁵⁵ Aidan Duggan died in 2004.²⁵⁶

Father Andrew John Baptist McBride arrived at Fort Augustus in 1933.²⁵⁷ He taught at FA between 1941 and 1949. In April 1949 he was sent to CK. He returned to Fort Augustus in August 1952, where he taught at the school, and ran the sailing programme.²⁵⁸

-
- 240 Letter from The Very Reverend Canon Philip Harve, Secretary, National Council of Migration, to Father Abbot Haworth, 19 May 1965, at BEN.001.003.5976.
- 241 Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4153, 4183, and 4205.
- 242 Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4229.
- 243 English Benedictine Congregation, Part D response to section 21 notice, Carlekemp and Fort Augustus, appendix 2, at BEN.001.001.0310.
- 244 Letter from Denis Chrysostom Alexander to the Most Holy Father, n.d., at BEN.001.003.6001.
- 245 Letter from Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) to SCAI, 25 January 2021, at CFS-000005539.
- 246 See [Appendix E](#) relating to convictions.
- 247 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom “Andrew Jones”, at BEN.001.004.2694.
- 248 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom “Andrew Jones”, at BEN.001.004.2694.
- 249 Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4649.
- 250 Letter from COPFS to SCAI, 25 January 2021, at CFS-000005540.
- 251 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Aidan Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2696.
- 252 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Aidan Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2696; Staffing returns extracts from FA 120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, at BEN.001.004.4151.
- 253 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Aidan Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2696.
- 254 Civil proceedings correspondence, at BEN.001.002.0309.
- 255 Civil proceedings correspondence, at BEN.001.002.0309; Aidan Duggan Biographical Notes, 10 November 2016, at WIT.003.002.0169-0171.
- 256 Police Scotland, Record A163, at PSS.001.002.7703.
- 257 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Father John Baptist McBride, at BEN.001.004.2687.
- 258 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Father John Baptist McBride, at BEN.001.004.2687-2688.

He returned to CK in January 1960 to teach and look after the accounts. When CK closed in 1977 he returned to Fort Augustus, where he taught at the school and was a junior master.²⁵⁹ In 1997 he was transferred from Fort Augustus to the infirmary in Ampleforth.²⁶⁰ He died in 1998.²⁶¹

Father Allan Fabian Duggan arrived at Fort Augustus from Australia in September 1955.²⁶² He taught at FA between 1960 and 1961,²⁶³ and at CK between 1961 and 1971.²⁶⁴ He took a leave of absence, returning to Fort Augustus in December 1972.²⁶⁵ He returned to the diocese of Sydney, Australia in 1973, where he worked until 1992.²⁶⁶ He died in 2013.²⁶⁷

Father Gregory Brusey went to study at FA in 1924.²⁶⁸ Once he completed his studies he joined the community and trained at the monastery at Fort Augustus.²⁶⁹ In the early 1930s he was sent to St Andrew's Priory School in Edinburgh to help in the school, and study music at the university.²⁷⁰ After a period studying abroad, he returned to Fort Augustus Abbey, and from 1941 he taught at St Andrew's Priory School.²⁷¹ He was one of the founding community when CK moved to North Berwick.²⁷² He taught music and religion at CK from 1945 to 1964.²⁷³ He was then a teacher at FA from September 1964 until at least 1986.²⁷⁴ In 1998, he was still at Fort Augustus Abbey as an elderly monk. In 2000, he was incardinated into the community of St Laurence at Ampleforth.²⁷⁵ He died in 2001.²⁷⁶

259 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Father John Baptist McBride, at BEN.001.004.2688.

260 Confidential Memorandum to the Regimen and Inspector, Monastery of St Benedict's Abbey, 29 January 1998, at BEN.001.001.5993.

261 Box 21 A File 3 Standard prosecution report, at CFS.001.010.9942.

262 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Fabian Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2702.

263 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Fabian Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2702; Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4039.

264 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4301.

265 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4315 and 4340.

266 Email from Katrina Lee, Director of Catholic Communications, Archdiocese of Sydney, to Mark Daly, 12 August 2013, at BBC.001.001.0145.

267 Email from Katrina Lee, Director of Catholic Communications, Archdiocese of Sydney, to Mark Daly, 12 August 2013, at BBC.001.001.0049.

268 Gregory Brusey, Obituary notes, available from English Benedictine Congregation History, plantata.org.uk, accessed on 27 Aug 2013, at PSS.001.003.3826.

269 Gregory Brusey, Obituary notes, available from English Benedictine Congregation History, plantata.org.uk, accessed on 27 Aug 2013, at PSS.001.003.3826.

270 Gregory Brusey, Obituary notes, available from English Benedictine Congregation History, plantata.org.uk, accessed on 27 Aug 2013, at PSS.001.003.3826.

271 Gregory Brusey, Obituary notes, available from English Benedictine Congregation History, plantata.org.uk, accessed on 27 Aug 2013, at PSS.001.003.3826.

272 Gregory Brusey, Obituary notes, available from English Benedictine Congregation History, plantata.org.uk, accessed on 27 Aug 2013, at PSS.001.003.3826.

273 Gregory Brusey, Obituary notes, available from English Benedictine Congregation History, plantata.org.uk, accessed on 27 Aug 2013, at PSS.001.003.3826.

274 Extracts from staff returns, Details of Teaching Staff Employed as at 23 September 1986, Fort Augustus School, at BEN.001.004.4168.

275 Diocese of Aberdeen, Letter from Rt Rev Francis Rossiter to Cardinal Eduardo Martinez Somalo, September 2000, at BEN.001.004.1007.

276 Police Scotland, Scottish Intelligence Database, Intelligence Report, 20 June 2014, at PSS.001.004.0838.

Figure 4: Transfer of alleged abusers

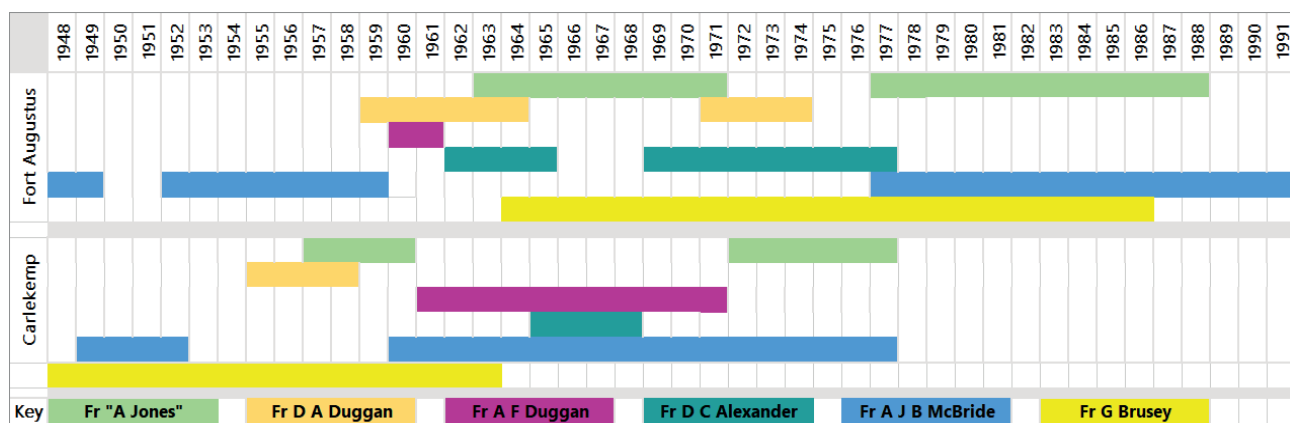


Figure 4 seeks to capture the movements of these sexual abusers between the two schools. It shows that there were periods when abusers were present at the same time at the schools. For example, it appears that John MacBride, Denis Alexander and Fabian Duggan were present at CK at the same time between 1965 and 1968.

Senior counsel to the Inquiry submitted that, with these movements of abusers, it was difficult to believe that the monks did not know that children were being sexually abused at both schools. I accept that some of the monks must have been aware that sexual abuse of children was taking place, including at least one of the abbots, Abbot Nicholas Holman. Also, physical abuse was so rife at both schools, I accept that whilst details may have been kept secret, its practice must have been known about.

Sexual activity by monks would have been contrary to their vows of chastity; hence, no doubt, the impetus to move them away from where it was occurring. But—other than in one case where a monk who had been sexually abusing children elsewhere was moved to Fort Augustus Abbey after the school had closed (and therefore to where he would not come into contact with children)²⁷⁷—I heard no evidence of any thought being given to the need to protect children from these abusers in their new environments.

The Australian connection

Three monks who were serial abusers at CK and FA were Australian: Aidan Duggan (born 1920), Fabian Duggan (born 1930), and Denis Alexander (born 1935).²⁷⁸ They had originally been attached to the Holy Trinity Benedictine Abbey, New Norcia, Western Australia.

²⁷⁷ Transcript, day 12: Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4546-4547. This was Father Christopher David White, also known as Nicholas White. He was convicted of sexually abusing children at Downside Abbey School in the 1980s and sentenced to five years imprisonment by an English court in 2012, but had been known, at the time, to be abusing children.

²⁷⁸ FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Aidan Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2696; Dom Fabian Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2702; Dom Chrysostom Alexander, at BEN.001.004.2705.

“I would like to offer a sincere apology personally and on behalf of the Congregation, for the suffering and sadness that I have witnessed over the last few weeks.”

Aidan Duggan arrived at Fort Augustus in July 1954.²⁷⁹ His brother, Fabian Duggan, arrived at Fort Augustus in September 1955.²⁸⁰ Following some correspondence between Denis Alexander and the then abbot of Fort Augustus in 1954/1955,²⁸¹ Denis Alexander arrived at Fort Augustus in the later part of 1955.²⁸² When based at New Norcia he was under “the immediate guidance” of Aidan Duggan, who at that time was the “Master of Novices and Prefect of Students”.²⁸³ Clearly, those three abusive monks were connected, even before their arrival at Fort Augustus.

Response to evidence about the regime

The EBC did not challenge any of the accounts given by former pupils of the schools, and accepts that abuse was perpetrated at both CK and FA. The EBC’s position was that the “core truth” is that many children were “robbed...of their childhoods.”²⁸⁴ I agree.

Abbot Geoffrey, on behalf of the EBC, listened to much of the evidence and said that he had been “impressed to hear the suffering that many ex-pupils have experienced, and particularly I think I’ve been impressed by members of the families who have come forward and been interviewed here. I would like to offer a sincere apology, personally and on behalf of the Congregation, for the suffering and sadness that I have witnessed over the last few weeks.”²⁸⁵

Bishop Hugh Gilbert, himself a Benedictine monk,²⁸⁶ and in whose diocese Fort Augustus was located, offered this expression of regret: “It is a most bitter, shaming and distressing thing that in this former Abbey School a small number of baptised, consecrated and ordained Christian men physically or sexually abused those in their charge”.²⁸⁷

279 Staffing returns extracts from FA120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, Independent Schools Staffing Return, Session 1954/55, at BEN.001.004.4145.

280 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Fabian Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2702.

281 Letter from Denis Alexander to Father Abbot, 25 March 1954, at BEN.001.003.5920-5921; Letter from Denis Alexander to Rt. Rev. Oswald Eaves OSB, 31 July 1955, at BEN.001.003.5923-5924; Letter, unsigned to Denis Alexander, 7 August 1955, at BEN.001.003.5925-5926.

282 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Chrysostom Alexander, at BEN.001.004.2705; Letter from Denis Alexander to Father Abbot, 31 August 1955, at BEN.001.003.5948.

283 Letter from Denis Alexander to Father Abbot, 25 March 1954, at BEN.001.003.5920-5921.

284 Closing Submissions for the English Benedictine Congregation, at BEN-000000001, p.8.

285 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3898.

286 A member of a monastery in the Subiaco Congregation. See [Transcript, day 153](#): Bishop Hugh Gilbert, at TRN.001.006.3857.

287 [Transcript, day 153](#): Bishop Hugh Gilbert, at TRN.001.006.3865.

Conclusions about regime

Bishop Gilbert referred to there having been a “small number” of men involved in the abuse, and I can accept that that is a fair comment. However, that should not be understood to downplay the wide reach they had; these were men in positions of trust in relation to children. They had a free rein and they breached that trust appallingly.

Children were betrayed by these breaches of trust and, for many, they caused lasting damage. Both schools cultivated cultures of sexual, emotional, and physical abuse. Sexual predators had easy access to vulnerable children and, as I discuss later, reports of sexual abuse were not properly responded to. Sadistic monks terrorised children and promoted serious bullying.

Serious deficiencies in training and monastic existences insulated monks from gaining real life skills, and contributed to depriving children in their care from having positive childhood experiences. That, in turn, undermined many children’s prospects of realising their potential.

4 Sexual abuse

I find that pupils at both schools were sexually abused by monks. A lay teacher at FA sexually abused children. The movement of monks between the two schools facilitated sexual abuse, including voyeuristic practices, indecent assaults, lewd practices, oral sex, and forcible anal penetration. Some of the physical abuse inflicted had sadistic and sexual overtones.

Carlekemp Priory School

Although there were instances of children attending CK who were younger than eight years old, generally the ages ranged between eight and 14 years old. These pupils were particularly vulnerable children and easy targets for those monks who were sexual predators.

Whilst some of the sexual abuse was perpetrated in secret, abuse also occurred in circumstances where it must have been obvious to others.

Mr "A"

In 2017, around four years after the broadcast of the BBC programme "Sins of Our Fathers", the programme's producer, Murdoch Rodgers, spoke to, and had email communications with, Mr "A", a former lay teacher at CK.²⁸⁸ Mr "A" taught at CK for approximately two years, from 1967 to 1969.²⁸⁹ Critically, he confirmed what Murdoch Rodgers had already been told by former CK pupils, namely that the sexual abuse of children was "absolutely rife".²⁹⁰ The source of Mr "A's" information was contemporaneous reports made to him by boys at CK.²⁹¹ He implicated several monks in the abuse, corroborating the evidence of many applicants to the Inquiry. In these communications, he detailed how John MacBride, Fabian Duggan, and Denis Alexander "divided the boys"²⁹² when they were at CK together—by which he meant they respectively targeted boys of different age groups.²⁹³ Mr "A's" account reflects applicants' evidence of sexual abuse provided by former CK pupils as to the identity of their abusers at particular points in time.

288 "Sins of Our Fathers" is a BBC documentary examining allegations of abuse at CK and FA. Murdoch Rodgers, a freelance producer and director, worked closely with Mark Daly, a BBC investigations correspondent, in the production of the documentary, which was broadcasted in Scotland on 29 July 2013. See [Chapter 11](#). The Inquiry were unable to contact Mr "A" notwithstanding the helpful assistance provided by Murdoch Rodgers.

289 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3764.

290 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3777.

291 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3780.

292 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3779.

293 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3778-3779.

Known abusers at Carlekemp Priory School

Father Douglas Aidan Duggan (Born 1920)

Father Aidan Duggan was at CK from July 1955 to December 1959.²⁹⁴ He was a serial sexual abuser, with a penchant for fondling and touching children. He died in 2004.²⁹⁵

Dormitory practices

A number of applicants described how boys would gather in one of the CK dormitories in the evening to hear Aidan Duggan read scary ghost stories by torchlight.²⁹⁶ Aidan Duggan would lie on a child's bed, beside the child, and was joined there by other children.²⁹⁷ This would happen two or three nights a week.²⁹⁸ As explained by David Walls (CK 1955-58), on these occasions Aidan Duggan would "fondle" the boy who was in the bed.²⁹⁹ He targeted the younger boys. "Joseph" (CK 1954-61, FA 1961-66) explained: "From my reading of it, he was more into what I would call the younger boy...particularly one boy I think he was attracted to, he would slip his hands under the bed covers and I suppose play with him".³⁰⁰

Aidan Duggan frequently visited a particular pupil in a dormitory during the night, when "hushed voices and mutterings and mumblings" could be heard.³⁰¹ He had no reason for carrying out such frequent visits during the night, and having regard to the clear evidence of his sexual predilections I have little hesitation in concluding that his motive was improper, and his intention was to abuse.

"...when you sat beside Father Aidan, you had to watch because his hand went up your trouser leg. Everybody treated it as a joke, but it isn't a joke".

Inappropriate touching

This practice of inappropriate touching was not confined to the dormitories. At the dining table "the joke was that when you sat beside Father Aidan, you had to watch because his hand went up your trouser leg. Everybody treated it as a joke, but it isn't a joke, you know".³⁰² At that time the children wore short trousers. It was well known that Aidan Duggan indulged in this behaviour "as it was well-known that he did it to everyone".³⁰³

294 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Aidan Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2696; Staffing returns extracts from FA 120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, at BEN.001.004.4151.

295 Police Scotland, Record A163, at PSS.001.002.7703.

296 [Transcript, day 142](#): "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2068-2069, [Transcript, day 142](#): David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2154; [Transcript, day 143](#): "Joseph", at TRN.001.006.2328-2332; [Transcript, day 145](#): Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2647.

297 [Transcript, day 142](#): David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2154.

298 [Transcript, day 142](#): David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2154.

299 [Transcript, day 142](#): David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2154.

300 [Transcript, day 143](#): "Joseph", at TRN.001.006.2329.

301 [Transcript, day 143](#): read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2354.

302 [Transcript, day 142](#): David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2178.

303 [Transcript, day 143](#): read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2352.

“Funnily enough, the violence you could almost sort of take. That sounds odd, but you just got kind of used to it and accepted it as part of the routine.”

While waiting in the queue to make his confession to Aidan Duggan, Christopher Walls heard some boys say they “had received a big sloppy kiss from Father Duggan”.³⁰⁴ These boys were “laughing and joking about” what had happened.³⁰⁵ In the confessional, Father Duggan gave Christopher a “great big sloppy kiss on the lips.”³⁰⁶ Christopher described his reaction at the time; “I froze and all I remember was looking at his habit, which I thought was very old and shiny”.³⁰⁷ Aidan Duggan also sexually abused Christopher in the confessional by putting his hand inside his trousers and touching his penis. Christopher also thought that, on one occasion, Aidan Duggan digitally penetrated his anus.

Grooming practices

David Walls was targeted by Aidan Duggan in other ways. For a period of time Aidan Duggan behaved in a violent way towards him but “[f]unnily enough, the violence you could almost sort of take. That sounds odd, but you just got kind of used to it and accepted it as part of the routine.”³⁰⁸ There then came a time when his attitude changed and “he’d start cuddling me and being very

nice to me, basically”.³⁰⁹ That was the prelude to sexual abuse.

David Walls became a server at mass for Aidan Duggan. At the end of the mass, when he was alone with Aidan Duggan, David was “pulled in towards...[his] genital area. And hugged close”.³¹⁰ This practice was well known about by other children.³¹¹ Occasionally he would be kissed on the forehead.³¹² David Walls was, on one occasion, invited to Aidan Duggan’s room; the reason given was so they could play a recorder duet.³¹³ He remembers sitting on the bed with Aidan Duggan sitting beside him. His next memory is being in the corridor going away from Aidan Duggan’s room. He knows something happened; I infer that it was something bad. He became markedly upset while giving this evidence and explained that he had “no idea what happened. But you can see that it has an effect on me. So that’s all I can say”.³¹⁴

David Walls summarised his experience of life at CK, and his involvement with Aidan Duggan, in the following way: “I spent a lifetime in education and I’ve studied psychology...I can’t get my head round

304 Transcript, day 143: read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2352-2353.

305 Transcript, day 143: read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2353.

306 Transcript, day 143: read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2353.

307 Transcript, day 143: read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2353.

308 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2170.

309 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2172-2173.

310 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2174.

311 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2174.

312 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2174.

313 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2176.

314 Transcript, day 142, David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2176-2177.

some of the actions of some of the staff at Carlekemp. But it would be naive to suggest that he wasn't grooming me specifically by making my life very miserable for a while and then doing good cop/bad cop, or bad cop/good cop. I distinctly remember the feeling of total relief when he started hugging me and...actually feeling affection for the man... which sounds difficult to understand...just a real feeling of gratitude that that misery was over".³¹⁵

Father "Andrew Jones" (Born 1932)

Father "Andrew Jones" was at CK from 1957 to 1961 and again from 1972 to 1977.³¹⁶ He had been a pupil at FA (1943-49) before joining the monastery.³¹⁷ He, too, was a sexual abuser at CK and FA. In [Chapter 5](#), where I address physical abuse, it is apparent that "Andrew Jones" derived some sexual gratification from the manner in which he inflicted pain on children.

Grooming practices

At CK, "Andrew Jones" engaged in sexually inappropriate behaviour with "Patrick" (CK 1955-62, FA 1962-65).³¹⁸ This developed from when he offered "Patrick" extra maths tuition and progressed to a point where "Patrick" had to stand between "Andrew Jones"' legs or sit on his thigh and be kissed on his lips. This abuse lasted for about a year.

"Andrew Jones" sought to establish a relationship with "Patrick's" family. Whilst "Patrick" was still attending CK, "Andrew Jones" asked the family if he could spend a

week with them in their house in Scotland during the school holidays: "The very first day—he came in the afternoon and had tea and then off to bed. The very next morning, my mother said... 'Go and wake up Father ["Andrew Jones"] and tell him breakfast's ready'. I went into the bedroom and he was still lying in bed. He was awake and he got up on an elbow and he said... 'please stay a little while', and I said, 'No, no, come down to breakfast, breakfast is ready'. I had this sort of revulsion, I don't know what it was...but a really creepy feeling was there. So I scurried out...and that was it. Then afterwards, there was a sort of distance between us, even when we went back to the school."³¹⁹ "Andrew Jones" adopted a similar pattern of behaviour in relation to "Stuart's" (CK 1969-73, FA 1973-unknown) family—another child whom he sexually abused.

Father Andrew John Baptist MacBride (Born 1913)

Father John MacBride was at CK from 1949 to 1952 and again from 1960 to 1977.³²⁰ Several applicants gave credible evidence of having been sexually abused by John MacBride. He died in 1998.³²¹

Inappropriate touching

John MacBride put his hands inside "Henrik's" (CK 1967-72) trousers and made contact with his genitals. He did the same with another boy. In both cases he pretended he was checking whether their testicles had dropped, appropriately described by "Henrik" as "quasi-medical rubbish".³²²

315 [Transcript, day 142](#), David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2179-2180.

316 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom "Andrew Jones", at BEN.001.004.2694.

317 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom "Andrew Jones", at BEN.001.004.2694; "Fort Augustus Abbey School: Ordination of Three Old Boys", *The Inverness Courier*, July 17 1956, at BEN.001.003.4987.

318 [Transcript, day 143](#): "Patrick", at TRN.001.006.2237-2238.

319 [Transcript, day 143](#): "Patrick", at TRN.001.006.2249-2250.

320 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Father John Baptist McBride, at BEN.001.004.2687.

321 Box 21 A File 3 Standard prosecution report, at CFS.001.010.9942.

322 [Transcript, day 144](#): "Henrik", at TRN.001.006.2380.

“The sight of his erect penis made me frightened straightaway but his words were encouraging and soothing and he asked me to stroke his penis...I panicked...and ran for the door.”

John MacBride was also in the habit of having boys place their cold hands between his thighs, on his bare skin. This could involve two or three boys when working in the kitchen. If they protested, they were told: “Come on, it’s the warmest place in the body, don’t be so silly, this is normal”.³²³

Boys in his room

“Ian” (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75) was called into John MacBride’s room at CK and the door was locked. “Ian” thought he may have been aged 10 at the time. John MacBride told “Ian” that he wanted to talk to him on the subject of love, saying that love could exist between two men. MacBride opened his cassock and placed “Ian’s” hand on his erect penis. “Ian” explained: “The sight of his erect penis made me frightened straightaway but his words were encouraging and soothing and he asked me to stroke his penis...I panicked...and ran for the door”.³²⁴

“Ian’s” younger brother became a pupil at CK, arriving in 1969.³²⁵ Later in life, “Ian’s” brother told him that he, too, had been sexually abused by John MacBride when aged nine or 10.³²⁶ Unlike “Ian”, who managed to escape, his brother “submitted to what was being asked”, a discovery that “Ian” found “shattering”.³²⁷

Taking advantage of links with a child’s family

Another young boy entrusted into MacBride’s care was Hugh Russell (CK 1966-71), who was abused by a number of monks. There was an existing link between John MacBride and the Russell family and “[h]e was always portrayed as the man to trust: it’s okay, its Father John and he’s a good guy”.³²⁸ Towards the end of Hugh Russell’s time at CK, at about age 12, Hugh was called into John MacBride’s room where “he grabbed hold of me and...pulled my hands inside his habit on to his erect penis. I was then old enough, really, to know...that’s the one event which I remember reacting to with complete shock and revulsion. I think there had been a period when I was no longer being sexually interfered with and I felt I was kind of moving out of this, probably, but the real shock was here is the one person in whom I’d invested—I felt I could still trust and he too was joining the party.”³²⁹ The reference to previous sexual abuse is the abuse Hugh Russell suffered at the hands of Denis Alexander (abuse which probably also involved Fabian Duggan).

These were serious breaches of trust by a Benedictine monk towards young boys in his care. For many years at CK, sexual predator John MacBride had ready access to vulnerable young children, grossly abusing his position of trust.

323 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3452.

324 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3461.

325 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3446.

326 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3463.

327 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3463-3465.

328 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3170.

329 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3172.

Father Denis Chrysostom Alexander (Born 1935)

Father Denis Alexander was at CK as a teacher from 1965 to 1968.³³⁰

Favourites

Denis Alexander had favourites at CK. "Ian" (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75) said he pitied them "being in the company of someone so severe to the rest of the world. His demeanour was so cold and hard."³³¹

Hugh Russell (CK 1966-71) was one of the children targeted by Denis Alexander. He was sexually abused by him at the age of eight or nine. Hugh Russell provided photographs of himself as a child. These photographs vividly confirm his self-description as being "kind of wide eyed and innocent, and... sensitive, kind of gentle...and was possibly, as a result of that, a target for bullying".³³² He provided this insightful analysis: "So I think the initial targeting was something to do with: right, here's somebody who's going to respond to physical contact, here's somebody who's going to seek out adult company because they need support, because they need friendship, because they need a bit of love."³³³ The abusers targeted "the vulnerable members of the herd."³³⁴

The opportunity for abuse arose during chanter practice, when Hugh was either sitting on Denis Alexander's knee or standing

between his legs.³³⁵ These were positions where, as Hugh Russell explained, "[y]ou're immediately trapped and vulnerable".³³⁶ The abuse included Denis Alexander rubbing Hugh Russell's penis, and developed into a "pattern of behaviour" before Hugh was able to extricate himself from the situation.³³⁷

This "pattern of behaviour" included Hugh's experiences as an altar boy, where the "interference" became "normalised".³³⁸ Hugh described how "[w]hen you are kneeling in front of a priest with his hand on your head giving you a post-Mass blessing you are very vulnerable to having your head pulled into his groin."³³⁹

"So there I was getting physical contact, which is something I craved, but the physical contact was wrong."

Hugh Russell's description of his initial reaction demonstrates how sexual predators like Denis Alexander take advantage of young children's need for physical comfort: "it feels massively shameful that a victim of abuse kind of remembers some level of comfort. This was adult company, physical contact. My mother was a very huggy sort of person and physical contact for a small child is important. So there I was getting physical contact, which is something I craved, but the physical contact

330 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4153, 4183, and 4205; FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Chrysostom Alexander, at BEN.001.004.2705; Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0477.

331 Transcript, day 151: "Ian", at TRN.001.006.3473.

332 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3159.

333 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3159.

334 Written statement of Hugh Russell, paragraph 38, at WIT.001.001.4581; Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3159.

335 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3161.

336 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3161.

337 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3165.

338 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3167.

339 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3166-3167.

Fabian Duggan “would have these little young kids sitting... in between his legs basically, and he would have his hands down the front of their trousers and he would be just playing with them...He was quite overt about it...he was just untouchable...he could do whatever he wanted.”

was wrong. But it's difficult at that stage, particularly within the mental mindset, the cultural framework, where this is a priest, this is a monk, he is right, he is chosen by God and is superior to the rest of us, he is a saintly figure and I am directed by the catechism to be like this person, to aspire to be this person.”³⁴⁰ Hugh Russell's family trusted the Fort Augustus monks to take good care of him—that trust was exploited by Denis Alexander.

Father Allan Fabian Duggan (Born 1930)

Father Fabian Duggan taught at CK from 1961 to 1971. He died in 2013.³⁴¹

Post-Mass abuse

Fabian Duggan also indulged in the post-Mass abuse practised by other monks—the altar boy became “vulnerable to having [their] head pulled into his groin.”³⁴² Hugh Russell (CK 1966-71) also had a distinct memory of being in Fabian Duggan's room, despite there being no reason why he should have been there. “I was there with him and I have no justification for being there other than there being something happening,

and I don't know what that might have been. I can't access it.”³⁴³ Hugh Russell blocked out what happened: “Weirdly, it's not too important to me because it is behind a wall. I don't really look back. I look forward.”³⁴⁴ It seems likely that, whatever did happen, it was a traumatic experience.

Favourites

Fabian Duggan behaved affectionately towards children, tickling boys and giving them female nicknames; this behaviour was directed towards “a few favourites”.³⁴⁵ He particularly targeted the younger boys. “Henrik” (CK 1969-72) explained: “he gave me the impression he was looking at the younger boys...in a way that was different, that I had never really experienced.”³⁴⁶

“Henrik” also recounted how Fabian Duggan “had a little room which was quite near the refectory”.³⁴⁷ On more than one occasion “Henrik” went into this room and found “very young boys on [Fabian Duggan's] knee... and he would have these little young kids sitting sort of on his—in between his legs basically, and he would have his hands down the front of their trousers and he would be

340 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3162.

341 Email from Katrina Lee, Director, Catholic Communications, Archdiocese of Sydney, to Mark Daly, 12 August 2013, at BBC.001.001.0049.

342 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3167.

343 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3169.

344 Written statement of Hugh Russell, paragraph 48, at WIT.001.001.4583.

345 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3474-3475.

346 Transcript, day 144: “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2398.

347 Transcript, day 144: “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2398.

just playing with them. You would have to go into the room and then you would have to negotiate whatever you were doing in that room, like giving him something or asking him for something, and he would just be like continually doing what he was doing. He was quite overt about it...he was just untouchable...he could do whatever he wanted".³⁴⁸ From "Henrik's" perspective, even at a young age and not fully understanding what was happening, he thought that "it was appalling and the boys—they were just little. I felt they were absolutely lost souls, just little boys that had nothing, no sort of punch, no sort of fight or spirit. They were just lonely, and very homesick."³⁴⁹

It appears that other monks were aware and did not intervene. "Henrik" had "just inferred by that stage that they all knew about it and they were turning a blind eye to it like they were turning a blind eye to the violence and the conclusion that I was drawing by that stage was that they were all at it and they were all in it together and they were covering their backs."³⁵⁰

This account supports the allegations Mr "A" disclosed to Murdoch Rodgers. I am in no doubt that there was a paedophile ring of monks operating at CK during the periods covered by the evidence.

Father Gregory Brusey (Born 1912)

Father Gregory Brusey taught music and religion at CK from 1945 to 1964.³⁵¹ He died in 2001.³⁵²

Favourites

David Walls (CK 1955-58) described how Gregory Brusey had a number of "pet boys" and that he was "very touchy-feely with certain pupils, always cuddling and holding them".³⁵³ This behaviour was tolerated because "when that kind of thing happened to me, it was a relief. You felt, oh gosh, they actually like me, instead of hitting me round the head all the time. I suppose other kids felt that as well. But certainly he only hugged certain boys".³⁵⁴

Cricket practice abuse

"Patrick" (CK 1955-62, FA 1962-65) felt there was a sexual element to the way in which Gregory Brusey helped him to bat during cricket practice: "Brusey was the cricket master...He was the specialist. When he wanted to show you how to bat, he would come behind you [and make contact with you]...at the time you don't understand the context, sexual or otherwise, you just feel it's really creepy".³⁵⁵ Looking back, "Patrick" said he "absolutely" considers there was a sexual context.³⁵⁶

348 Transcript, day 144: "Henrik", at TRN.001.006.2398-2399.

349 Transcript, day 144: "Henrik", at TRN.001.006.2399.

350 Transcript, day 144: "Henrik", at TRN.001.006.2400.

351 Gregory Brusey, Obituary notes, available from English Benedictine Congregation History, plantata.org.uk, accessed on 27 Aug 2013, at PSS.001.003.3826; Extracts from staff returns, Details of Teaching Staff Employed as at 23 September 1986, Fort Augustus School, at BEN.001.004.4168.

352 Police Scotland, Scottish Intelligence Database, Intelligence Report, 20 June 2014, at PSS.001.004.0838.

353 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2169.

354 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2169.

355 Transcript, day 143: "Patrick", at TRN.001.006.2235.

356 Transcript, day 143: "Patrick", at TRN.001.006.2235.

Fort Augustus Abbey School

The movement of monks between CK and FA allowed monks to sexually abuse children at both schools. Although for a period between 1939 and 1945 and after the closure of CK in 1977, younger children were accommodated at FA, FA pupils were generally older during the period examined in evidence. They were though, still vulnerable. An older child may be better able to repel sexual advances, however, a vulnerable child, of any age, is always a likely target for a skilled sexual predator—which many of the monks at Fort Augustus unarguably were.

Known abusers at Fort Augustus Abbey School

Father Douglas Aidan Duggan (Born 1920)

As well as spending several years at CK (from July 1955 to 1959),³⁵⁷ during which time he sexually abused children, Aidan Duggan taught at FA between 1954 and 1955, and between December 1959 and April 1965 (disappearing from the school for a period in 1962).³⁵⁸ He died in 2004.³⁵⁹

Failed promise

Aidan Duggan perpetrated a serious act of sexual abuse at FA. His victim was Donald MacLeod (FA 1961-65), who arrived at FA in 1961 from Australia. His mother met Aidan Duggan in Australia and she asked him to “look out for [Donald] and she felt, you know, [that Donald] would be in safe hands because of the connection.”³⁶⁰

It is clear that Aidan Duggan groomed Donald MacLeod when supposedly helping him with the Scottish curriculum, and private piano tuition. Even at the time, Donald recognised the warning signs of grooming. Aidan Duggan began the sexual abuse by putting “his hand on” Donald, which Donald initially thought “quite...kindly”.³⁶¹ When Aidan Duggan started “sliding his hands up [his] legs and stuff”, Donald pushed him away.³⁶² That did not deter Aidan Duggan and, as Donald explained, “the next time he would try it again and at the time I knew it was wrong but on the other hand I thought he was being friendly. I can’t describe the emotion. Looking back it is ridiculously stupid but that is the way I thought at the time.”³⁶³

Aidan Duggan offered to help Donald develop films in the school darkroom: “[h]e asked me to get some chemical from under the bench, and when I bent down he forced me so I was sort of stuck under the bench and then he pulled his trousers down— my trousers and his and raised his cassock, or whatever he was doing behind me, and I felt severe pain as he forced himself into me... It was very sore and frightening because I actually was very naive...I had this white blood which I thought was really scary as well”.³⁶⁴ This was an opportunistic attack on an unsuspecting, innocent victim by a priest who had promised Donald’s mother that he would “look out for” him.

357 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Aidan Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2696; Staffing returns extracts from FA 120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, at BEN.001.004.4151.

358 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2878-2879.

359 Police Scotland, Record A163, at PSS.001.002.7703.

360 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2866-2867.

361 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2868.

362 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2868.

363 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2868.

364 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2870.

Donald reported this sexual abuse to the headmaster at the time, Father Augustine Grene. Donald was accused of lying and told that “it was a mortal sin to lie about a priest and [he] would go to eternal damnation.”³⁶⁵ In short, there were no repercussions.³⁶⁶

**Father Augustine Grene
“told me it was a mortal
sin to lie about a priest
and I would go to
eternal damnation.”**

Aidan Duggan remained in post until he served as a chaplain to the English Benedictine nuns at Stanbrook between 1965 and 1970.³⁶⁷ Between 1971 and 1974, he was back at Fort Augustus as Novice Master and Parish Priest. He returned to Australia in September 1974.³⁶⁸ He became attached to the Christ the King Catholic Church, Bass Hill, Sydney, where he groomed and sexually abused John Ellis (aged 13) over a lengthy period of time. John had spoken to another person who told him he had been sexually abused by Aidan Duggan in the period after Aidan Duggan had left the Bass Hill parish.³⁶⁹ This had a significant impact on John’s life, but he managed to develop a philosophy that provided him with a platform to help other survivors of abuse.³⁷⁰

**Father Denis Chrysostom Alexander
(Born 1935)**

Denis Alexander was one of several Australian monks who arrived at Fort Augustus in the 1950s.³⁷¹ He taught at FA between 1962 and March 1965,³⁷² and from 1969 to 1978, when he returned to Australia.³⁷³ He was also in Australia for a period from late 1975 to early 1976.³⁷⁴

“Rory’s” late brother “Doug” (CK 1960-65, FA 1965-69) was sexually abused by Denis Alexander at FA.³⁷⁵ “Doug” told “Rory” in later life that Denis Alexander had interfered with him whilst he was lying in the sick bay and that he put his finger into “Doug’s” anus and left it there for some time before being interrupted by a noise outside the room.³⁷⁶

Grooming practices

“Peter” (FA 1973-75) was frequently targeted by Denis Alexander, who was his housemaster. Although “Peter” tried to avoid him, he did not succeed, and Denis Alexander would regularly ask “Peter” to see him privately.³⁷⁷ Peter would then have to go to Denis Alexander’s room, remove all his clothes, and bend over with his hands placed on a chair or desk.³⁷⁸ Denis Alexander would then rub Peter’s backside before striking him, four or more times, with a cane; this would

365 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2873.

366 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2873.

367 Civil proceedings correspondence, at BEN.001.002.0309.

368 Civil proceedings correspondence, at BEN.001.002.0309; Email from/to Murdoch Rodgers, Aidan Duggan Biographical Notes, 10 November 2016, at WIT.003.002.0169-0171.

369 [Transcript, day 152](#): John Ellis, at TRN.001.006.3608.

370 [Transcript, day 152](#): John Ellis, at TRN.001.006.3638-3640.

371 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Chrysostom Alexander, at BEN.001.004.2705.

372 Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4050, 4100, and 4133.

373 Letter from Denis Chrysostom Alexander to the Most Holy Father, n.d., at BEN.001.003.6001.

374 Chronicles of the St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, 1975, at BEN.001.001.4408 and 4426.

375 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Rory”, at TRN.001.006.2965-2968.

376 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Rory”, at TRN.001.006.2965-2966 and 2968.

377 [Transcript, day 144](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2425 and TRN.001.006.2428-2429.

378 [Transcript, day 144](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2425.

often result in bruising.³⁷⁹ “Peter” recalled how, at the time, he “thought that was normal...People got caned. How they got caned, I don’t know, but this was normal for me.”³⁸⁰ It was, of course, sadistic behaviour that was far from normal, and clearly had sexual overtones.

By way of contrast, there were occasions when “Peter” was not caned, but instead treated to buttered toast, occasions when Denis Alexander would say “how nice it is that we are together”.³⁸¹ Those that turned out to be buttered toast occasions were a “huge relief” because “Peter” did not know in advance whether he was being summoned by Denis Alexander for toast or to be caned.³⁸² “Peter” looked upon the buttered toast occasions as special: “Even to this day the smell of toast and butter is a nice feeling.”³⁸³

“Socials”

The occasions when Denis Alexander gave “Peter” buttered toast were private occasions,³⁸⁴ but there were other occasions—known as “socials”—when Denis Alexander invited a number of boys to his room to listen to classical music and have toast and tea.³⁸⁵

Hugo Kennedy (FA 1974–76) was one of the children invited to these events, until he rebuffed an advance in the dormitory; after that Denis Alexander’s behaviour towards

him was violent.³⁸⁶ Hugo was asleep in bed when he realised that Denis Alexander had slipped his hand “underneath the duvet and started to interfere” with him.³⁸⁷ Hugo was “shocked” and “tried to turn (his) back on him”.³⁸⁸ While Hugo managed to avoid further sexual abuse by Denis Alexander on that occasion, the cost to him was unexplained beatings; he would be taken from his bed in the middle of the night to Denis Alexander’s room, where he was told to remove his pyjamas and, whilst bending over a chair, was struck six to eight times on his bare skin with a cane.³⁸⁹ Often on these occasions, Denis Alexander had been drinking alcohol: “He seemed to have more courage when he was drinking.”³⁹⁰

The period involving removal from the dormitory for canings and exclusion from socials came to an abrupt end for Hugo as “all of a sudden he started to be nice to me again and he would suggest one-to-one, things like learning how to play the chanter... going to yoga sessions.”³⁹¹ Some of these yoga sessions took place in the monastery, an area normally off limits for the children.³⁹² On the second occasion when Hugo was invited alone to a yoga session, he felt: “quite relieved that the treatment had gone from being so nasty to being quite favourable towards me. [Denis Alexander]...

379 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2425-2427.

380 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2428.

381 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2429.

382 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2429.

383 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2430.

384 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2430.

385 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2906.

386 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2912-1913.

387 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2913.

388 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2913.

389 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2915-2916.

390 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2915.

391 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2917.

392 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2917.

took me back to the same yoga room, loose flannelette shorts he had on...and [he] put me [on] a headstand and then he started to interfere with me. He put his penis in my mouth, pulled my head forward.”³⁹³ This ended when Denis Alexander ejaculated in Hugo’s mouth: “I was shocked. I didn’t know what to think, really...You feel very isolated and alone...it’s not the sort of thing you go back to your classmates and tell about because it would have been a source of an awful lot of ridicule and bullying”.³⁹⁴

Denis Alexander “took me back to the same yoga room...and then he started to interfere with me. He put his penis in my mouth, pulled my head forward.”

Reflecting on Denis Alexander’s abusive behaviour, Hugo provided this insight: “I now understand this to be some form of grooming where you’re being softened up for something that’s coming later.”³⁹⁵

Reporting abuse

Hugo reported the abuse to the headmaster, Father Francis Davidson, and Denis Alexander appears to have spent a period from October 1975 to February 1976 in Australia, ostensibly to visit his parents.³⁹⁶ However, notwithstanding that report of serious sexual

abuse, Denis Alexander was, astonishingly, allowed to return to FA again in the role of housemaster, a role that provided ready access to children, including Hugo, who was still there as a pupil.³⁹⁷ There was no system in place to prevent that happening.

On 11 June 2021 Denis Alexander pled guilty to and was convicted of two charges of sexually abusing children at FA. One of the charges related to Hugo. Denis Alexander pled guilty to and was convicted of sexually abusing Hugo, including penetrating Hugo’s mouth with his penis.³⁹⁸ On 30 July 2021 Denis Alexander was sentenced to four years and five months imprisonment and ordered to be deported to Australia on completion of his sentence.³⁹⁹

Bathing practices

Another former pupil, “Peter” (FA 1976-81), arrived at FA in September 1976 and was targeted by Denis Alexander. In one of his early encounters with Denis Alexander “Peter” was made to feel uncomfortable whilst bathing because Denis Alexander was looking at him and “it wasn’t just a stare, he was examining me.”⁴⁰⁰

Sexual abuse and taunting

In his first term at the school, “Peter” was asked to go to Denis Alexander’s room.⁴⁰¹ Denis Alexander masturbated and performed oral sex on “Peter” and then “[Denis Alexander] told me to kneel down

393 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2918-2919.

394 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2919.

395 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2914.

396 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2920-2921; Chronicles of the St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, 1975, at BEN.001.001.4408 and 4426.

397 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2923-2925; Letter from Denis Chrysostom Alexander to Father Abbot, 9 February 1976, at BEN.001.003.5991-5992; Chronicles of the St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, 1975, at BEN.001.001.442.

398 See Appendix E relating to convictions.

399 “Former monk Denis Alexander to be deported after child abuse sentencing”, BBC Scotland, 30 July 2021. Retrieved 2 August 2021.

400 Transcript, day 147: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3001-3002.

401 Transcript, day 147: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3002-3003.

“I just said that [Denis Alexander had] made me suck his cock and he sucked my cock...but [the priest] said he didn’t want to know and he told me to leave.”

and he got his penis out. He had a cassock on, but he rolled it up, and then I was forced to put my mouth on his...his penis into my mouth and then he came.”⁴⁰² When finished, Denis Alexander told “Peter” to “[g]et out of here, you bastard, don’t tell nobody”.⁴⁰³ There was also a subsequent encounter when “Peter” was made to masturbate Denis Alexander.⁴⁰⁴

“Peter” told other boys about what had happened; this proved disastrous as the subsequent teasing he was subjected to made his life miserable.⁴⁰⁵ As “Peter” explained, “everybody knew what happened”.⁴⁰⁶ Children composed a ditty (Chrissy suck, suck. Suck Chrissy suck, suck, suck”), much to “Peter’s” upset.⁴⁰⁷ This was a “vicious time” for “Peter”.⁴⁰⁸ “Michael” (FA 1977-84) recalled how “Peter”, who was two years above him at school, was “taunted pretty mercilessly” within the context of Denis Alexander’s known sexual abuse.⁴⁰⁹ This is how “Michael” described “Peter’s” existence at FA: “There were rhymes, there were songs, [“Peter”] might stand up in the

study hall and there would be sucking noises made. It was pretty brutal.”⁴¹⁰

Staff and priests were aware of what was being said, but took no action.⁴¹¹ When “Peter” told Father Vincent Pirie Watson that he had been sexually abused by Denis Alexander Father Vincent “just smirked”.⁴¹² “Peter” also told a Benedictine priest in confession about the sexual abuse in quite a graphic way “I just said that [Denis Alexander had] made me suck his cock and he sucked my cock...but he said he didn’t want to know and he told me to leave.”⁴¹³

“Peter” asked Denis Alexander after the first occasion of abuse whether he had done the same to anyone else, to which Denis Alexander said “[y]es, a boy before you”.⁴¹⁴

Denis Alexander was a danger to children; he was a remorseless sexual predator.

When “Peter” went home during the next holiday period, he told his parents that he had been sexually abused.⁴¹⁵

402 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3003.

403 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3003.

404 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3003-3004.

405 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3004-3006.

406 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3005.

407 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3006.

408 [Written statement of “Peter”](#), paragraph 90, at WIT.001.002.7775; [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3006.

409 [Transcript, day 145](#): “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.2542.

410 [Transcript, day 145](#): “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.2542.

411 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3006.

412 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3007.

413 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3007.

414 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3010.

415 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3018.

Repeated abuse

Hugo Kennedy (FA 1974–76) strongly believes “that there was a bit of ‘pass the parcel’ going on between the abusers.”⁴¹⁶ This belief is driven by the fact that as soon as the abuse by Denis Alexander stopped, Hugo was sexually abused by William Owen, a lay teacher.⁴¹⁷

The FA regime facilitated Denis Alexander’s pursuit of his sexually abusive practices. The monks’ tolerance of his propensities to abuse children was a serious breach of their duty to protect children in their care.

Father “Andrew Jones” (Born 1932)

“Andrew Jones” had been a pupil at St Andrew’s Priory School and, subsequently, at FA between 1943 and 1949.⁴¹⁸ He is a prime example of a Benedictine monk who had had little exposure to life outside monastic life. After time spent at CK and then abroad, “Andrew Jones” was at FA from 1963 to 1971, in a position where he had ready access to children.⁴¹⁹ This time was interrupted by a further period at CK. Following the closure of CK, he returned to FA in 1977 where he remained until 1988, when he left for Canada.⁴²⁰

Voyeuristic behaviour

“Andrew Jones” indulged in voyeuristic behaviour by regularly watching boys in the open showering area. He also instructed boys to shower with other boys, ostensibly on the basis that there was limited hot water.⁴²¹

Favourites

“Stuart” (CK 1969-73, FA 1973-unknown) was seven years old when he became a boarder at CK.⁴²² “Andrew Jones” took a personal interest in “Stuart” and assured the boy’s mother that he would take good care of “Stuart” and his brother.⁴²³ In 1973, “Stuart” moved from CK to board at FA.⁴²⁴ Before taking his own life in 2014, “Stuart” told his sister “Jean” that he had been sexually abused by “Andrew Jones” over a period of time, culminating in rape.⁴²⁵

“Andrew Jones” had a “relationship” with “Duncan” (FA 1986-89 and 1990-91) for two years, when “Duncan” was 11 to 13 years old.⁴²⁶ This relationship involved Duncan regularly spending time in “Andrew Jones’s” study, and the receipt of many gifts from him, including money.⁴²⁷ “Andrew Jones” visited “Duncan’s” home on several occasions and stayed there.⁴²⁸ “Duncan” described how the

416 Written statement of Hugo Kennedy, paragraph 33, at WIT.001.002.1897; Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2925.

417 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2925.

418 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom “Andrew Jones”, at BEN.001.004.2694.

419 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom “Andrew Jones”, at BEN.001.004.2694.

420 Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4649.

421 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2715-2717.

422 Written statement of “Jean”, paragraph 5, at WIT.001.002.5157.

423 Transcript, day 144: “Jean”, at TRN.001.006.2450.

424 Transcript, day 144: “Jean”, at TRN.001.006.2451-2452.

425 Written statement of “Jean”, paragraph 2, at WIT.001.002.5156; Transcript, day 144: “Jean”, at TRN.001.006.2457-2461.

426 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2746.

427 Written statement of “Duncan”, paragraphs 97 and 99, at WIT.001.002.3651; Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2734-2735.

428 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TNR.001.006.2737-2739.

relationship began: "I think, when I look back in retrospect, he identified very quickly how lonely I was, so I became very quickly his favourite".⁴²⁹ Unknown to "Duncan", his parents were, for a time, unable to pay the school fees, and these were paid by "Andrew Jones" himself.⁴³⁰

Although there was much physical contact (such as hugging), Duncan did not recall any direct sexual contact.⁴³¹ On one occasion, when Duncan had pain in his testicles, "Andrew Jones" offered to examine him but Duncan declined.⁴³² On many occasions, "Andrew Jones" locked the door and proceeded to slowly undress to his underpants in front of "Duncan". "Duncan" said that his reaction was to avoid "eye contact and just pretend this wasn't happening."⁴³³

"Andrew Jones" went to Canada in 1988 and wanted "Duncan" to visit and stay with him.⁴³⁴ Thereafter he wrote several letters to "Duncan" and to "Duncan's" mother.⁴³⁵ "Duncan" has unearthed a "large cache" of these letters. As an adult, he reflected: "To be blunt...looking through [these] letters, it's like someone with a crush, it's like a lovesick teenager at times".⁴³⁶ That seems to be a fair description of the contents of some of the

letters. I am in no doubt that "Andrew Jones"' habit of undressing in "Duncan's" presence was sexually motivated, and that "Andrew Jones" became fixated with "Duncan".

Father Andrew John Baptist MacBride (Born 1913)

John MacBride sexually abused children at CK, where he taught from April 1949 to 1952, and from January 1960 until the school's closure in 1977.⁴³⁷ He taught at FA between 1941 and 1949, between August 1952 and January 1960, and again from 1977.⁴³⁸ He died in 1998.

'Nursing' practices

MacBride's reputation at FA was that he was a "bit too touchy-feely".⁴³⁹ Although it was the matron's responsibility to care for children in the infirmary, he would take it upon himself to rub Vicks cream on a child's chest.⁴⁴⁰ This practice was well known and children joked "here comes Johnny with the Vicks".⁴⁴¹

"Michael" (FA 1977-84) developed haemorrhoids when he was 14 or 15 years old.⁴⁴² John MacBride who, at that time, was his housemaster, invited him to his office. "Michael" was told to take his trousers down and John MacBride rubbed cream over his

429 Transcript, day 146: "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2728.

430 Transcript, day 146: "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2752; letter from "Andrew Jones" to "Duncan's" parents, 15 June [no year], at WIT.003.001.9411-9412.

431 Transcript, day 146: "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2742-2743.

432 Transcript, day 146: "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2741-2742.

433 Transcript, day 146: "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2740.

434 Transcript, day 146: "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2752-2753.

435 Transcript, day 146: "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2753-2757.

436 Transcript, day 146: "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2757. For example, see letter, from "Andrew Jones" to "Duncan's" parents, 4 June 1990, at WIT.003.001.9410.

437 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Father John Baptist McBride, at BEN.001.004.2687.

438 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Father John Baptist McBride, at BEN.001.004.2687.

439 Written statement of "Michael", paragraph 31, at WIT.001.002.4965.

440 Transcript, day 145: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.2529-2530.

441 Transcript, day 145: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.2529.

442 Transcript, day 145: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.2530-2531.

Gregory Brusey “would ask if we gave each other oral sex. Whilst asking these questions he would masturbate.”

backside.⁴⁴³ This happened on two or three occasions. Initially, “Michael” thought that John MacBride was being helpful.⁴⁴⁴ However, when Father Francis Davidson entered the office on one such occasion, his view changed: “So it clicked when I was in his office Francis Davidson came in and pretty much walked out straightaway”.⁴⁴⁵

Subsequently “Michael” was asked some “searching questions” by another monk, and “it was at that point I thought, right, this was wrong and Davidson knows about this and Johnny was up to his antics.”⁴⁴⁶

Pornographic material

“Michael” also described how some junior boys found some pornographic material—gay bondage magazines—in the science laboratory where John MacBride taught.⁴⁴⁷ This was drawn to the attention of the headmaster, Francis Davidson. Davidson reported later that John MacBride had explained that the magazines had been received as part of a random mailing system.⁴⁴⁸ That, of course, did not explain why he had kept them.

“Roberto” (FA 1983-87) provided evidence that he was shown sadomasochistic pornographic material by John MacBride.⁴⁴⁹

Confession abuse

“Roberto” (FA 1983-87) was aware of John MacBride touching himself through his trousers while hearing confession.⁴⁵⁰

John MacBride’s behaviour was sexually driven, and it is clear that other monks were aware of his abusive behaviour. There is no evidence of any protective action being taken.

Father Gregory Brusey (Born 1912)

In addition to his time at CK, Gregory Brusey was at FA from September 1964 till at least 1986.⁴⁵¹ He died in 2001.⁴⁵²

Inappropriate touching

Gregory Brusey enjoyed rubbing boys’ backs.⁴⁵³ As “Peter” (FA 1973-75) recalled: “We took it as a joke, it was just something...I didn’t at the time think it was malicious... he just enjoyed...rubbing his hands on your back and would sometimes try and get

443 Transcript, day 145: “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.2532.

444 Transcript, day 145: “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.2531.

445 Transcript, day 145: “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.2532.

446 Transcript, day 145: “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.2532.

447 Transcript, day 145: “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.2538-2539.

448 Transcript, day 145: “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.2539.

449 Transcript, day 151: read in statement of “Roberto”, at TRN.001.006.3535.

450 Transcript, day 151: read in statement of “Roberto”, at TRN.001.006.3524.

451 Extracts from staff returns, Details of Teaching Staff Employed as at 23 September 1986, Fort Augustus School, at BEN.001.004.4168.

452 Police Scotland, Scottish Intelligence Database, Intelligence Report, 20 June 2014, at PSS.001.004.0838.

453 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2417.

underneath your rugby shirt, but we just thought, 'Oh, that's Father Brusey'."⁴⁵⁴ This was a regular occurrence and something which the boys "all joked about".⁴⁵⁵

Gregory Brusey asked inappropriate questions and touched himself through his trousers while hearing confession: "He would ask if we gave each other oral sex. Whilst asking these questions he would masturbate. I could see his hands making the movement."⁴⁵⁶

William Owen (Born 1931)

William Owen was a lay teacher who taught at FA between 1961 and 1969. He died in 1983.⁴⁵⁷

Off-campus abuse

William Owen took children from the school to his home further up the shores of Loch Ness, where he sexually abused them. That abuse included taking photographs of naked boys in a state of sexual arousal, and other more direct sexual acts.

"Michael" (FA 1973-76) was invited to William Owen's home to watch a film.⁴⁵⁸ Owen gave him a glass of whisky and ginger ale and asked whether he wanted to watch a pornographic film.⁴⁵⁹ Not having

seen a pornographic film before, "Michael" agreed. Whilst watching the film William Owen "forced ["Michael"] to touch him and he tried several things" with "Michael".⁴⁶⁰ He told "Michael" that "this was a bit of fun, it was quite normal, that loads of boys from the school came to see him, this was something that went on all the time" and that he had photographs of boys from the school.⁴⁶¹ Although William Owen wanted to take photographs of him, "Michael" resisted. "Michael", "was deeply shocked about what had happened" and "didn't know how to deal with it".⁴⁶² He explained: "I eventually kind of filed it. I literally just put it away. I couldn't wallow in it because I had no one to talk to or discuss it with. I realised that there was nothing to be done."⁴⁶³ The only thing "Michael" could do was to avoid William Owen.⁴⁶⁴

William Owen also took Hugo Kennedy (FA 1974-76) and another boy to his home.⁴⁶⁵ He showed them pornographic photographs of naked boys and asked if they were "aroused by them".⁴⁶⁶ Hugo explained: "The other lad and I were...not very comfortable, and he could see that, so he sort of backed off on that first occasion and took us back".⁴⁶⁷

454 Transcript, day 144: "Peter", at TRN.001.006.2417.

455 Transcript, day 144: "Peter", at TRN.001.006.2417.

456 Transcript, day 151: read in statement of "Roberto", at TRN.001.006.3524.

457 Police Scotland, Box 5.D116 Legal Executor Document Copy Ref. Estate of William Owen, at PSS.001.003.3836.

458 Transcript, day 148: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.3056-3062.

459 Written statement of "Michael", paragraph 125, at WIT.001.002.7907.

460 Transcript, day 148: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.3060. See also Transcript of Recorded Police Interview of "Michael", at PSS.001.008.4914.

461 Transcript, day 148: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.3062.

462 Written statement of "Michael", paragraph 130, at WIT.001.002.7908. See also Transcript, day 148: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.3064-3065.

463 Written statement of "Michael", paragraph 130, at WIT.001.002.7908.

464 Written statement of "Michael", paragraph 131, at WIT.001.002.7909.

465 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2926-2927.

466 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2927.

467 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2927.

Hugo was, however, taken there on a number of subsequent occasions.⁴⁶⁸ On the second occasion, William Owen asked him to strip naked. Then, having got Hugo into a state of arousal, William Owen photographed him.⁴⁶⁹ He was shown photographs of other FA boys in a state of arousal: “[William Owen] had hundreds of photographs of boys”.⁴⁷⁰ On other occasions, Hugo was also asked to perform sexual acts on William Owen.⁴⁷¹ Hugo was aged 11 or 12 when this abuse started.⁴⁷² After Hugo left FA, he continued to be abused by William Owen for another year, until Hugo was about 13 years old.⁴⁷³

William Owen “had hundreds of photographs of boys”.

William Owen was another sexual predator and the abusive environment at FA afforded him the opportunity to lure children to his home.

Other sexual abuse

In addition to abuse by those named above, other instances of sexual abuse took place at FA over the period examined including on occasions by unknown or unnamed individuals, even into the late 1980s and early 1990s, shortly before the school closed.

While “Duncan” (FA 1986-89 and 1990-91) was lying in the sick bay, an unknown person came in, lowered the bed covers and stood

at “Duncan’s” back breathing heavily “for what then seemed like an eternity”.⁴⁷⁴

After he had left FA, “Alex” (FA 1990-91) disclosed to his mother, “Liz”, that he had been sexually abused at the school. It was dreadful abuse, including that he had been made to perform oral sex on a priest hearing confession, and that he had been sexually abused by other boys. In relation to the abuse, he told her that there was “a culture in the school because the monks were doing it and it percolated down.”⁴⁷⁵ “Alex” spoke to his mother about taking his own life. He told her that he had spent a long time “fighting the demons that Fort Augustus had foisted on him”. He committed suicide in 2009.⁴⁷⁶

Father Colin Geddes, who was at FA from 1988 to 1992 as bursar and housemaster, was present in 1991/92 when detectives from Inverness police station came to Fort Augustus in relation to allegations against John MacBride. He did not know the details, and was not told. The boy making the allegations was in Aelred Grugan’s house, and Colin Geddes was asked to sit in while Grugan spoke with the detectives. The police sought permission to speak to one of the boys, and that permission was granted. Colin Geddes did not know what happened after that and was not provided with any feedback. He commented that “[y]ou would have thought there would be some sort of feedback somewhere in the system.”⁴⁷⁷ He also recalled a 14- or 15-year-old boy making

468 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2927.

469 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2928.

470 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2928.

471 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2929.

472 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2928.

473 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2930-2932.

474 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2743-2744.

475 Transcript, day 146: “Liz”, at TRN.001.006.2830-2833.

476 Transcript, day 146: “Liz”, at TRN.001.006.2836 and 2839.

477 Transcript, day 154: read in statement of Colin Geddes, at TRN.001.006.3977.

a complaint about Father MacBride but did not specify if this was the same boy.⁴⁷⁸ It may, however, be an occasion when “Liz’s” son, “Alex” (FA 1990-91), told her “in a whispered conversation on the school telephone” that his friend had reported abuse to the police in Inverness. He told her the police told the boy to “stop saying nasty things about the monks.”⁴⁷⁹

Response to evidence about sexual abuse

At the conclusion of the case study the EBC accepted that children at CK and FA were sexually abused.⁴⁸⁰ The EBC suggested that it could be concluded on the evidence that by the late 1970s, at least the headmaster and the abbot were aware of sexual abuse being perpetrated at FA.⁴⁸¹ When he returned to give evidence, Dom Yeo was no longer the abbot president, but he did say he was “very sorry that abuse should have been committed and that so many people should have been badly damaged.”⁴⁸² Abbot Geoffrey spoke on behalf of the EBC at the conclusion of the case study and offered a “sincere apology...for the suffering and sadness” that had emerged from the evidence of the applicants.⁴⁸³

Conclusions on sexual abuse

Children were sexually abused at CK and FA over many years. Both schools were havens for paedophiles where they had easy access to their chosen victims. In addition, some monks groomed their victims’ families.

There was a range of sexual abuse, including oral sex and sodomy. Chapter 4 of the Rule of St Benedict instructs monks to “[l]ive by God’s commandments every day; treasure chastity”.⁴⁸⁴ That instruction was blatantly ignored; the sexual abuse by monks was a desecration of their vows. It is striking that monks in positions of responsibility were not only aware of it, but participated in it. The traumatic effects of the sexual abuse suffered by some children were considerable and long-lasting.

478 [Transcript, day 154](#): read in statement of Colin Geddes, at TRN.001.006.3977-3978.

479 [Written statement of “Liz”](#), paragraph 25, at WIT.001.002.5147-5148.

480 Closing Submissions for the English Benedictine Congregation, at BEN-000000001, p.2.

481 Closing Submissions for the English Benedictine Congregation, at BEN-000000001, p.4.

482 [Transcript, day 149](#): Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3357.

483 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3898.

484 The Rule of St Benedict, at BEN.001.001.0007.

5 Physical abuse

Children were physically abused at both CK and FA, often brutally, throughout the period examined in this case study. Children suffered injuries because of sadistic treatment. Bullying was prevalent, tolerated, and encouraged by some monks.

The physical abuse was usually inflicted under the guise of it being punishment.

Two sets of reflections by applicants who boarded at both schools encapsulate the inherent contradiction in the prevailing violent culture, and provide some insight into why brutal treatment of children became the norm.

“Harry” (CK 1954-59, FA 1959-64) became a teacher in adult life. His experience of both distressing physical abuse and the apparent Christian ethos of the schools, became a conundrum: “I never was able to reconcile in my years at Carlekemp and Fort Augustus the message of the Gentle Carpenter of Nazareth on the one hand and all the belting and beating and cruelty that went on on the other. I could never sort that out. You know, I think I was quite devout in my Catholic belief during these years, but the contradiction of that really left me in a state of considerable confusion”.⁴⁸⁵

Desmond Austin (CK 1955-58, FA 1958-62) felt there was institutionalised violence—on the facts I find to have been established, that is a fair description.⁴⁸⁶ He attributed the institutionalised violence to the headmaster (possibly the only lay headmaster) of FA between 1930 and 1938, Commander Gilbert Farie: “His ideas of discipline had been formed on the TS Mercury, the naval training ship for 12-15-year-old boys, run by the sadistic Beatrice Fry, wife of C B Fry—a brutal regime of lashing and floggings. The culture of violence was firmly established. The qualifications from now on for the three senior positions at Fort Augustus—two housemasters and one headmaster—appear to be that the candidates had to have gone through the same regime, been a former pupil of the schools. What chance was there for this cycle of violence to stop, unless it was recognised and action taken by someone, some organisation from outside the schools? The opportunity was there for the English Benedictine Congregation to do something. They did nothing.”⁴⁸⁷

485 [Transcript, day 142](#): “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2122.

486 [Transcript, day 145](#): Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2694.

487 [Written supplementary statement of Desmond Austin](#), at WIT.003.001.9978. The headmaster’s reign was described by John Martin Robinson, in his book *Grass Seed in June*. One of the lessons learned by the author was “hate”, and his experience was such that it took him “decades to recover from the academic disabilities” from the “philistine” atmosphere. The Training Ship Mercury was founded in 1885 by Charles Arthur Christopher David Hoare. His mistress, Beatrice Holme Sumner, became involved in the management of the training ship. Following Hoare’s death, Beatrice married C.B. Fry, a famous English sportsman, in 1888. C.B. Fry became the captain superintendent, though Beatrice continued to manage the training ship. See Ronal Morris, *The Indomitable Beatie: Charles Hoare, C.B. Fry and the Captain’s Lady*, (1985), London: Lume Books.

Attitudes to punishment of children prevalent over the period of this case study

Throughout most of the period examined in this case study, corporal punishment was permitted in Scottish schools.⁴⁸⁸ Under Scots law, teachers were invested by the common law with the power to administer corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure. That power was considered to derive from the teacher's relationship with the children, and its use was largely a matter left to an individual teacher's discretion—provided, importantly, that the punishment was not excessive, in which case it constituted an assault. Teachers also had to comply with any terms in their contract of employment. [Appendix B](#) sets out relevant information in relation to the parental right to chastisement, corporal punishment, and related matters.

The approach taken by the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey

Although the use of corporal punishment of children by their parents and in institutional settings was permitted by law during most of the period under consideration in this case study, there were clear conditions as to when such punishment could be administered, by whom, and in what manner. With changes in attitudes towards children during the post-war years, the phasing out of corporal punishment in schools in Scotland was increasingly encouraged, and was eventually abolished in 1986. During the period examined in this case study there is little evidence that the Fort Augustus monks

took any serious notice of the legislation and regulations in place, or the changing attitudes towards corporal punishment—or child care practices more generally.

The Fort Augustus monks did not give any consideration as to whether what might have been acceptable by way of punishment during the school day—in relation to the delivery of education—might not have been acceptable during out-of-school hours. The question of whether classroom discipline was required or justified within the 'house' setting was not addressed. The regime was the same throughout, and no distinction appears to have been drawn. Many abusive punishments were inflicted at night whether the cause was school related or not, although for some victims the cause was unknown.

No school rules seem to have been produced for CK. School rules appear to have been first produced for FA in September 1988.⁴⁸⁹ Nonetheless, it seems that for most of their existence, the position in both schools was that "the code of rules was really largely unwritten".⁴⁹⁰

Benedict Seed said that, in about 1983, there was a vote on whether to phase out corporal punishment. However, as he explained "we never reached a decision to end corporal punishment at the staff meetings that I recall. I'm very embarrassed to say that as headmaster, I think I assumed we weren't doing it anymore and I didn't bring it up at staff meetings."⁴⁹¹ This is woeful. His assumption and lack of follow up was a serious failure of management

488 For a fuller discussion on the lawfulness of corporal punishment of children in Scotland see Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart From Their Parents](#) (November 2017), pp.346-357.

489 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, School Rules, September 1988, at SGV.001.006.0027.

490 [Transcript, day 153](#): Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3804.

491 [Transcript, day 153](#): Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3810.

There was a culture of violence at both schools that terrorised many children.

and leadership, and confirms the impression I formed that the Fort Augustus monks did not engage with the legislation and regulations governing schools and residential settings for children, or the changing attitudes in relation to the care of children, including the use of corporal punishment.

The Rule of St Benedict (“the Rule”) is also relevant when seeking to understand why the regimes were dominated by physical violence. The Rule sanctioned that “[c]hildren are to be whipped” if they made a mistake in the reading of a psalm.⁴⁹² Abbot Geoffrey in evidence contended that in their study of the Rule, “the novices at Fort Augustus would have been told time and time again that this extraordinary document is noted for its moderation”⁴⁹³ and he went on to suggest that “even the most savage monks wanting to...beat boys” would have placed those comments into a historical context.⁴⁹⁴ I agree with Abbot Geoffrey that “savagery” should not have been on a monk’s agenda, but “savagery” is a description that aptly summarises how children were treated at both schools. There was a culture of violence at both schools that terrorised many children. The visitations conducted by the EBC, with their focus on the lives of the monks, failed to alert the EBC to the serious failures in care that dominated the children’s lives at these schools.

Carlekemp Priory School

From at least the mid-1950s to the closure of CK in 1977, boys as young as seven to those aged 13 suffered physical abuse at the school. Physical abuse was presented to the victims as punishments even although, on occasion, the reason for the punishment was not apparent to the child. Punishment could be delayed for many days. It was also administered for poor performance in classwork. Although it was monks who perpetrated most of the physical abuse, lay staff also participated.

The regime was one in which the use of violence towards children was deemed by the monks involved to be acceptable and was commonplace.

I am satisfied that excessive discipline was resorted to and it amounted to physical abuse. I find that the events described by former pupils of CK took place. Their evidence exemplifies what happened to many boys during the relevant period. The regime was one in which the use of violence towards children was deemed by the monks involved to be acceptable and was commonplace.

492 The Rule of St Benedict, at BEN.001.001.0028.

493 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3954.

494 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3954-3955.

Sometimes the physical abuse involved a brutal level of violence and cruelty. It included vicious and excessive use of tawses and canes that left boys marked and injured, and blows to their heads with hands, fists, blackboard dusters, and rulers. It included children being called from bed during the night to be physically abused. It included children being physically punished in public: "It was summary and quixotic in nature. People were victimised".⁴⁹⁵ The monks "were all cold and hard men and they hit with a vengeance."⁴⁹⁶

Father Ethelbert McCoombes (Born 1909)

Ethelbert McCoombes was headmaster at CK from 1952 to 1959.⁴⁹⁷ He died in 1960.⁴⁹⁸

"The stick"

Ethelbert McCoombes's leather strap was known as "the stick". It was "a piece of solid, very solid black leather" about eight millimetres thick and a foot long.⁴⁹⁹ Other members of staff reported children to Ethelbert McCoombes for any infringement of the rules. Children were then "put in his diary", and it could be three days later before he administered the punishment.⁵⁰⁰ "[I]t was quite a frightening experience to get the stick. It was not pleasant, it was extremely painful...you worried about it" and "[y]ou always came out with...red marks and, on occasion...people had marks up their arm, or

if you moved, then of course you were given another one."⁵⁰¹

These were young children and this was brutal treatment. The associated practice of delayed punishment was deplorable, yet it was also adopted by Ethelbert McCoombes' successor.

Positive evidence

There was, however, some positive evidence in relation to Ethelbert McCoombes. Some children, such as Desmond Austin (CK 1955-58, FA 1958-62), had no problems with him: "I actually found him all right. I didn't have any issues with him."⁵⁰² Christopher Walls (CK 1955-58) felt that "the stick" was "probably [not] worse than any school of its time. I would suggest that it was very painful but not excessively cruel."⁵⁰³ One view was that at least the beltings were not as frequent as at FA: "only the headmaster used the belt and you had to go and get it from the headmaster, so you had to go to his study and be belted...But that wasn't so common at Carlekemp, whereas it was an everyday occurrence at Fort Augustus."⁵⁰⁴

Father Thomas McLaughlin (Born 1914)

Thomas McLaughlin became headmaster and prior of CK in 1959, taking over from Ethelbert McCoombes who had become unwell.⁵⁰⁵ When Thomas McLaughlin himself became unwell, he was relieved as prior by

495 Transcript, day 151: "Ian", at TRN.001.006.3458.

496 Transcript, day 151: "Ian", at TRN.001.006.3459.

497 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479.

498 Research n325 Father Ethelbert Headmaster at Carlekemp School 1950s, at PSS.001.003.1453.

499 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2146.

500 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2147-2148.

501 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2146-2148.

502 Transcript, day 145: Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2646-2647.

503 Transcript, day 143: read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2348.

504 Transcript, day 142: "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2067.

505 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479.

Dom Edmund Carruth, but continued as headmaster.⁵⁰⁶ In February 1975, he resumed the office of prior, and “Andrew Jones” became headmaster of CK.⁵⁰⁷ He returned to FA on the closure of Carlekemp in 1977. Thomas McLaughlin died in 1979.⁵⁰⁸

Violent abuse

Thomas McLaughlin was “the stern figurehead...He was the one person that meted out physical punishment, corporal punishment. It became strangely ritualised.”⁵⁰⁹

He was a violent man and children were subjected to his brutality over a lengthy period—17 years. He physically abused boys at CK, and did so viciously. He was described as a “sadist who got a great deal of joy from bullying and punishing the boys”.⁵¹⁰

“Kneeling out”

At CK, one of the punishments was known as “kneeling out.” It was, of itself, an abuse by Thomas McLaughlin of his dominant position in relation to young children. He would have boys taken out of their beds, sometimes after they had gone to sleep, to kneel in a corridor outside his room. There could be as many as 12 children kneeling there at one time.⁵¹¹ The process of “kneeling out” could result in a child being away from the dormitory from between half an hour and two hours, at a time when they should have been left to sleep.⁵¹² They would eventually

be called in, one by one, to be given a “double six” (namely six of the strap on each hand); they were then required to thank him. Often they would not know why they were being punished or why they were given the number of strokes meted out: “there seemed to be some kind of arbitrary tariff.”⁵¹³ The emotional impact was abusive: “kneeling and waiting was dreadful.”⁵¹⁴

Brutality

Children usually received four strokes on each hand from Thomas McLaughlin, but sometimes it was six. When Hugh Russell (CK 1966-71) was giving evidence about these punishments, he described his hands as “tingling...just to think of it.”⁵¹⁵ These were young boys being punished by a grown man and “he didn’t hold back when he hit you.”⁵¹⁶

Thomas McLaughlin “didn’t hold back when he hit you.”

The punishments that followed the “kneeling out” process were violent and frightening. As “Henrik” (CK 1969-72) explained: “It was always in his room...bringing you outside his room and waiting for him...periodically during the night, in the dark after lights out... there would be some names called out... if your name was picked, you would then be asked to get out of bed, and proceed downstairs in the middle of the night in

506 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479.

507 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479.

508 Attachment – Benedictines, at PSS.001.003.0006.

509 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3149.

510 Transcript, day 152: Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3777.

511 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3150.

512 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3451.

513 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3153.

514 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3154.

515 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3153.

516 Written statement of “Henrik”, paragraph 40, at WIT.001.002.3668.

“[It] was very humiliating...[Thomas McLaughlin phoned my parents]...to tell them he was going to hit me...I think it was quite disturbing because you were...questioning the trust, not only of these adults...but...questioning the love of your parents.”

darkness to the corridor outside of Father McLaughlin's door...You were told to say your rosary, and there was a little sort of group of lads kneeling saying the rosary in the middle of the night—you could vaguely hear the chanting of the monks upstairs where they were doing...their prayers...and we would wait for them...Father McLaughlin would come into his room...he would take in the boys and then he would mete out his punishment...I was always the last one to go in, so you saw [other boys] go in, they were terrified, and then they came out and they were in bits, and they were terrified, and then they would have to go bed...you obviously knew what was coming, and you sort of braced yourself. I always found it a fairly... sinister because [Thomas McLaughlin] was sort of skirting around the reasons why you were there...you are a ten-year-old in front of a man who is basically much bigger than you, in a gown, standing over you, and he is going to hit you. So the whole process is quite frightening...he then proceeded to do the double-six business...he would ask me to sort of thank him for doing this, and I hated that. I just tried very often not to say thank you, because he was trying to justify what he had done was for my good, which was just absolute rubbish. I hated having to say thank you, so I would mumble something under

my breath and try to get out of the room as quickly as possible.”⁵¹⁷

For some children, these episodes progressed to strapping or caning on their bare backsides. Things could escalate: “from this double-six on the hand and...it got into you getting your pyjama bottoms taken down” and birched.⁵¹⁸ When this happened to “Henrik”, Thomas McLaughlin had telephoned “Henrik's” family in advance to tell them he was going to be hit: “[it] was very humiliating...he phoned them to ask... to tell them that he was going to hit me...I think that was quite disturbing because you were...questioning the trust, not only of these adults that were supposed to care for you, but...questioning the love of your parents.”⁵¹⁹

Thomas McLaughlin's abuse caused quite significant and debilitating injuries. “Henrik” suffered visible injuries: “Sometimes your hands were so swollen you could hardly hold a pen.”⁵²⁰ “Henrik” did not inspect the damage to his buttocks, “but [he] could feel it when [he] sat down.”⁵²¹

“Ian” (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75) had a younger brother who suffered “repeated brutality” at CK.⁵²² His brother and another boy had to report to Thomas McLaughlin each day for seven days to be strapped as

517 Transcript, day 144: “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2382-2385.

518 Transcript, day 144: “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2385.

519 Transcript, day 144: “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2385-2386.

520 Transcript, day 144: “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2387.

521 Transcript, day 144: “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2387.

522 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3457.

“The cane was what [Edward Delepine] usually brought with him...a long garden cane...quite thick... You had to bend over the end of your bed and he... gave you one, two, three...[o]n your backside”.

a punishment for smoking. “Ian” saw the “red, black and blue injuries” on his brother’s hands and wrists.⁵²³

Father Gregory Brusey (Born 1912)

Father Gregory Brusey taught music and religion at CK from 1945 to 1964.⁵²⁴ He died in 2001.⁵²⁵

Gregory Brusey was described as a “brutal teacher.”⁵²⁶ He would hit children on the back of the hand with a wooden ruler with sufficient force as to cause blistering. He would also inflict painful blows to their heads.⁵²⁷

Also, he behaved with appalling cruelty during piano lessons. One pupil “had to be careful because [Brusey] slammed the piano...keyboard protection down on his hands if he made too many mistakes”.⁵²⁸

Father Edward Delepine (Born 1918)

Father Edward Delepine taught French and history at CK from 1945 to 1957.⁵²⁹ He died in 2013.⁵³⁰

Edward Delepine was “a brute of a man”, and “extremely liberal with his hands” to the extent that “he would have been quite at home in a boxing ring.”⁵³¹ His favourite punishment was to clip children on their ears with the edge of his hand. He subjected children to mass canings. He frequently hit children with slaps and punches, and would patrol the junior dormitory to cane boys over their pyjamas for talking.

Edward Delepine “would clump you on the top of your head with a clenched fist” and “[h]e hit you hard enough to see stars.”⁵³² Christopher Walls (CK 1955-58) explained that they were small boys and, in his view, this treatment was abusive.⁵³³ I agree.

Edward Delepine was in the habit of taking his cane with him when he went to the dormitories: “The cane was what he usually brought with him. He had quite a long garden cane and it was quite thick... You had to bend over the end of your bed and he went round the dormitory and gave

523 [Transcript, day 151](#): “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3459.

524 Gregory Brusey, Obituary notes, available from English Benedictine Congregation History, plantata.org.uk, accessed on 27 August 2013, at PSS.001.003.3826; Extracts from staff returns, Details of Teaching Staff Employed as at 23 September 1986, Fort Augustus School, at BEN.001.004.4168.

525 Police Scotland, Scottish Intelligence Database, Intelligence Report, 20 June 2014, at PSS.001.004.0838.

526 [Transcript, day 145](#): Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2649-2650.

527 [Transcript, day 143](#): read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2349, [Transcript, day 145](#): Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2649-2650.

528 [Transcript, day 143](#): “Patrick”, at TRN.001.006.2233.

529 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479; Staffing returns extracts from FA 120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, at BEN.001.004.4148-4149; FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Edward Delepine, at BEN.001.004.2690.

530 Carry out Research and Create Nominal Profile for Edward Delaphine (sic), at PSS.001.002.7716.

531 [Transcript, day 143](#): “Patrick”, at TRN.001.006.2223.

532 [Transcript, day 143](#): read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2348.

533 [Written statement of Christopher Walls](#), paragraph 19, at WIT.001.001.0125.

you one, two, three, whatever...[o]n your backside...You certainly could feel a lump...or two or three lumps...Nowadays it would be called physical assault and people would be charged for inflicting that kind of injury on anyone.”⁵³⁴ Caning by him of entire dormitories “happened regularly”.⁵³⁵

Edward Delepine “created an atmosphere of fear in the whole of the school.”⁵³⁶ As “Patrick” (CK 1955-62) explained: “Depending on how attentive you were...he would nicely come up behind you and give you the most appalling whack on the head with his hand. That was really the first thing of brutality that I experienced at the school...getting whacked by this guy”.⁵³⁷ This went on to become a regular occurrence, and “Patrick” would cry. Other boys suffered similar treatment. “Patrick” was only seven years old when exposed to this form of abuse.⁵³⁸

Father Douglas Aidan Duggan (Born 1920)

Father Aidan Duggan was at CK from July 1955 to December 1959.⁵³⁹ He died in 2004.⁵⁴⁰

Aidan Duggan tended to use implements like a ruler, a blackboard duster, a cane/stick, and even the tassel of his girdle to inflict pain on his chosen victims at CK.

As part of grooming practices

Aidan Duggan was violent, and he used violence as a prelude to sexual abuse. This abuse was routine. In the case of David Walls (CK 1955-58), “[i]t was almost...as if he enjoyed upsetting you or setting you up for bullying, that kind of thing...it would be a ruler or blackboard duster thrown at you...He would generally have some sort of weapon”.⁵⁴¹ Aidan Duggan had a propensity for “violent rage[s]”.⁵⁴²

Classroom punishments

Aidan Duggan was “a nasty man”.⁵⁴³ He was “cruel with some boys in class...he used to wield a ruler and you’d get a clunk across the head”.⁵⁴⁴ For maximum impact he always used the edge of the ruler.⁵⁴⁵ “Harry” (CK 1954-59, FA 1959-64) was targeted in this way. Aidan Duggan hit “Harry” so hard over the back of his knuckles with the ruler that he injured “Harry”, and on one such occasion, he broke the glass on “Harry’s” watch.⁵⁴⁶ “Harry” was not his only target. Aidan Duggan would hit other boys as well.⁵⁴⁷

534 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2151.

535 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2152.

536 Transcript, day 143: “Patrick”, at TRN.001.006.2224.

537 Transcript, day 143: “Patrick”, at TRN.001.006.2223-2224.

538 Transcript, day 143: “Patrick”, at TRN.001.006.2224.

539 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Aidan Duggan, at BEN.001.004.2696; Staffing returns extracts from FA 120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, at BEN.001.004.4151.

540 Police Scotland, Record A163, at PSS.001.002.7703.

541 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2170-2171.

542 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2154.

543 Transcript, day 143: “Joseph”, at TRN.001.006.2328.

544 Transcript, day 143: “Joseph”, at TRN.001.006.2328.

545 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2061.

546 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2061.

547 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2067.

The first time Christopher Walls (CK 1955-58) suffered the brunt of Aidan Duggan's wrath was when he provided a wrong answer in class: "He descended on me with a stick, which was a bit longer than a foot long and about an inch thick. It was like a swagger stick. He hit me all about the body in what I would describe as being a frenzied attack."⁵⁴⁸ Attacks of this kind meant that Christopher would be covered in bruises. He did not draw these injuries to anyone's attention, although he did not "know why."⁵⁴⁹

Aidan Duggan was "a sadist for sure"⁵⁵⁰ whose "speciality was a cane...a bamboo cane about 40 centimetres long, and he'd whip us with it...it was not answering correctly to questions...and he'd swing at you with this cane...a lot of us were striped from the lower back, the buttocks, the top of the thighs, the back, the calves, with weals, bruised weals... He'd draw out...his cane and he'd put on the desk...and look at us, and we were shaking in our wellies...this terrified us, all of us...He was a great man for the beatings."⁵⁵¹

Aidan Duggan "hit me all about the body in what I would describe as being a frenzied attack."

This is a reminder of one of the instructions in the Rule of St Benedict—that the whipping

of children was permitted if they made mistakes.⁵⁵²

Aidan Duggan would "draw out...his cane and he'd put on the desk...and look at us, and we were shaking in our wellies...this terrified us, all of us."

The tassel on Aidan Duggan's girdle also became a convenient weapon: "Inside the tassel is a lump of wood, probably the size of an old curtain rail...[Aidan Duggan] came into our classroom—it was a Latin lesson—and he mercilessly beat the boy...round the classroom with this...it's very strange that he would bring something that he'd used to celebrate Mass in as a punishment."⁵⁵³

Father "Andrew Jones" (Born 1932)

Father "Andrew Jones" was at CK from 1957 to 1961 and again from 1972 to 1977.⁵⁵⁴

Quick to violence

During his time at CK, "Andrew Jones" was quick to use violence when he lost his temper, which he often did. This would be the result: "he basically beat me up... When I reflect on it, he really did lay into me, absolutely....Slapping and possibly even

548 [Transcript, day 143](#): read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2350-2351.

549 [Transcript, day 143](#): read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2351.

550 [Transcript, day 143](#): "Patrick", at TRN.001.006.2242.

551 [Transcript, day 143](#): "Patrick", at TRN.001.006.2242-2243.

552 The Rule of St Benedict, at BEN.001.001.0028.

553 [Transcript, day 142](#): David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2171-2172.

554 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom "Andrew Jones", at BEN.001.004.2694.

“...the problem as well with a lot of the punishment was there was never any explanation of why this was going to happen or any sort of justification.”

punching. I was only a little boy. I was sitting at my desk, he came up towering over me in his black robes and really laid into me...I think a lot of it was on my head. I had to... protect myself...it wasn't just a slap, it was... really quite an uncontrolled attack...it was a flurry of blows.”⁵⁵⁵

“I was only a little boy... [Andrew Jones] came up towering over me in his black robes and really laid into me...really quite an uncontrolled attack... it was a flurry of blows.”

“Andrew Jones” behaved in the same way with “Ian’s” (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75) brother. “Andrew Jones” “would grab [him] by the hair and drag him out of the refectory, the dining room, and I think hit him with a bunched fist in the back. He was a frightening figure for the fact that he had a combination of a really foul temper, a very, very quick temper, which I describe...as ‘a red mist’. I don’t think he was in control of himself when he got angry.”⁵⁵⁶

“Andrew Jones” used “the same type of cane” as Aidan Duggan; the areas targeted were “the buttocks and the backs of the legs and calves.”⁵⁵⁷ He also would patrol the corridors at night to intercept boys who came out of the dormitory to go to the toilet

and take them to his study: “He would ask the boy to go over in a corner of the room and drop his pyjamas and bend over and he told the boy...don’t look back, and he’d come and smack him on the bottom with a hairbrush or whatever, some weapon”.⁵⁵⁸

I am in no doubt this behaviour was sexually motivated, and that these were terrifying experiences for the victims of “Andrew Jones”.

Public floggings

There was an occasion after “Ian’s” brother went onto the roof at CK with another boy. “Andrew Jones” subjected them to a public flogging in the school study hall, flogging them with a tawse on their bare backs and buttocks, drawing blood and leaving them with bruises. The boys were about 10 years old at the time.⁵⁵⁹

Another “public flogging” administered by “Andrew Jones” also involved two boys: “we were all called into the hall and a couple of boys were brought in to what...looked like a sort of a raised platform...they brought these boys in, and then they hit them. It was in front of the whole school...I was obviously very shocked by that. I hadn’t seen anything like that before and it was a ritual. It was something that was sending us a symbolic message out to everyone. We never actually got told exactly what had happened...the problem as well with a lot of the punishment was there was never any explanation of why this was going to happen or any sort of

555 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2065-2066.

556 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3469.

557 Transcript, day 143: “Patrick”, at TRN.001.006.2248.

558 Transcript, day 143: “Patrick”, at TRN.001.006.2241.

559 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3466-3468.

justification...these boys got hit on stage basically and I felt really sorry for them... Father Thomas McLaughlin was...around. [Father John MacBride] was there...[Father "Andrew Jones"] did the punishment. I think they were caned...on the backside...They were just completely humiliated and...just distraught."⁵⁶⁰

The school nurse at CK saw injuries sustained by children after physical abuse, but did not accept that these injuries were caused by monks. She thought the cause was sporting injuries, a conclusion that was no doubt motivated by an unquestioning faith in the monks.⁵⁶¹ Given the nature and extent of the injuries, her conclusion was woeful.

Lay teachers

Some former pupils provided evidence of physical abuse by lay teachers during the period examined.⁵⁶²

One particular lay teacher caned children in their pyjamas, demanding his victims to pull their pyjamas' bottoms as tight to the skin as possible. This treatment caused injuries in the form of welts on the child's buttocks.⁵⁶³

Bullying

There was a pervasive bullying culture at CK. A significant amount of the bullying was attributed to prefects, though other boys also engaged in this behaviour.

David Walls (CK 1955-58) was bullied regularly by other boys, sometimes in the presence of monks who allowed the bullying to continue. He said that "[y]ou couldn't

defend yourself against it...it was part of daily life that [the monks] thought would toughen you up...it happened in front of them."⁵⁶⁴

"Ian" (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75) explained that prefects "had an incredible amount of authority. As an 8-year-old, coming into a school, I think pretty much all the new boys were frightened of prefects, who were five years older and were...on the verge of becoming young men...there was a lot of bullying by the prefects on the younger boys, so it was a fearful environment from the start."⁵⁶⁵ Boys "had to be very careful about not crossing a prefect because he could send you for punishment to either Father Thomas, the headmaster, or Father John or he could rough you up himself...that made them very powerful...on a prefect's word, a boy would be strapped by the headmaster who'd not seen the event himself."⁵⁶⁶

"...there was a lot of bullying by the prefects on the younger boys, so it was a fearful environment from the start."

A substantial amount of credible evidence was provided about the role played by older boys who were prefects, and the position of power they tended to have in the hierarchy of the schools, including in relation to discipline, although this related more to FA than to CK. Sadly, even at CK, the older boys did not look out for the younger ones. Rather, many of

560 Transcript, day 144: "Henrik", at TRN.001.006.2394-2396.

561 Transcript, day 144: "Henrik", at TRN.001.006.2372.

562 See, for example, Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2158.

563 Transcript, day 143: read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2350.

564 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2140.

565 Transcript, day 151: "Ian", at TRN.001.006.3446-3447.

566 Transcript, day 151: "Ian", at TRN.001.006.3447.

“...a regime of corporal punishment where the minimum punishment is six strokes of a leather belt and the maximum punishment is ten strokes of a stick...goes beyond cruel. It’s really barbaric...it meant that the school was ruled by hate and fear.”

them had to endure an abusive environment and did not find solace from older boys in the school even though they had been exposed to the same environment themselves.

Fort Augustus Abbey School

There was extensive physical abuse at FA from the 1950s (and probably earlier) into the early 1990s, shortly before the closure of the school. The physical abuse included:

- children being hit excessively with a cane and a tawse, sometimes on their bare backsides, often causing injury and leaving marks,
- children being physically punished in their night clothes,
- children having to queue and wait to receive their punishment,
- children being physically punished in front of other children, and
- children having items such as wooden-backed blackboard dusters thrown at them.

Children were subjected to violent and sustained attacks, and suffered injuries as a result. Although it was monks who perpetrated most of the physical abuse, lay staff also physically abused children.

I find that the physical abuse described by former pupils of FA took place. Their evidence exemplifies what happened to

many boys during the relevant period. The regime was one in which the use of violence towards children was acceptable and commonplace.

“Harry” (CK 1954-59, FA 1959-64) was correct when he pointed out that “a regime of corporal punishment where the minimum punishment is six strokes of a leather belt and the maximum punishment is ten strokes of a stick of some kind on the bare backside... goes beyond cruel. It’s really barbaric. Of course, it meant that the school was ruled by hate and fear.”⁵⁶⁷ “Duncan” (FA 1986-89 and 1990-91), who attended the school almost 30 years later, thoughtfully articulated how the violence had been perpetuated: “The underpinning philosophy of the school was violence. Violence was everywhere throughout the day. In your class there was no safety. In the dormitories it would manifest itself”.⁵⁶⁸ “Tom” (FA 1976-84) regularly saw other children being physically abused, and “[t]his added to the frightening nature of the place. It meant that I was always scared and on edge about what might happen next. It was like walking on eggshells all the time.”⁵⁶⁹

When “Maxwell” (FA 1960-64) was about 14 years old, and in his first few weeks at FA, he saw a monk dragging a boy from his desk to the front of the class by the lapels of his jacket, lifting the boy by his jacket and wiping the blackboard with the boy, as

567 [Transcript, day 142](#): “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2111-2112.

568 [Transcript, day 146](#): “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2717.

569 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2954.

“The monks went overboard with discipline...Minor infringements were dealt with by disproportionate and inconsistent punishments, always of a physical nature.”

if the boy were a duster. The monk turned the boy upside down and around, so his face was pressed into the blackboard. He wiped the boy across the board from left to right, and a line of spittle was smeared across the blackboard each time. The monk then dropped the boy on the floor, where he remained for a while in a heap crying.⁵⁷⁰

Headmasters and housemasters also used a birch when they wanted to inflict a more painful punishment than the tawse would inflict, such as when a headmaster punished boys for poor academic performance. The birch was similar to a walking stick. Some witnesses used the terms “cane” or “caning” and “birch” or “birching” interchangeably, often using the former when it was apparent that they were in fact referring to birching.



Tawse

During Mark Dilworth’s time as headmaster (1959-63), “there was a great fear of being told by somebody, ‘[y]ou’re wanted by [Dilworth]’ because he was a distant figure and a feared figure. And being wanted by [him] would almost inevitably sooner or later result in a birching of some kind.”⁵⁷¹

Housemasters administered the birch late at night. Boys were instructed to go in their pyjamas and dressing gown to be birched. They were told to go into the housemaster’s room, take off their dressing gown, kneel on a chair, and bend over it. Quite often, they had to lower their pyjama bottoms before being hit with the birch. They would be injured: “you had what was called stripes... Sometimes just bruises, sometimes a bit of blood. It varied.”⁵⁷²

Although the housemasters and headmaster were at the forefront in inflicting such punishments, some of the monks were prone to fly “into fits of temper... [and used] any instrument that was nearby”.⁵⁷³ They too physically abused boys: “The monks went overboard with discipline. Whenever I objected to something being unfair it would bring problems for me, including beatings. It did not pay to complain... Minor infringements were dealt with by disproportionate and inconsistent punishments, always of a physical nature. Rarely were we ever given lines or detention. We were ordered to see the housemaster at

570 [Transcript, day 144](#): read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.005.2506-2507.

571 [Transcript, day 142](#): “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2109.

572 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2862.

573 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2864.

set times for punishment...There would be a dull nagging pain at the bottom of my stomach worsening as the time got closer. There was often a [queue] outside the housemaster's room where lots of boys would also be waiting for their punishment. This waiting added extra cruelty."⁵⁷⁴ "Maxwell" (FA 1960-64) went on to say: "By the end of my first year I realised I was in a living hell from which there was no escape except death or the school holidays."⁵⁷⁵ He still has scars from being hit with the strap.⁵⁷⁶

Physical abuse of the type described above persisted throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and into the 1980s. For the majority of his time at the school, "Peter" (FA 1976-81) often noticed in the showers scrapes on boys' wrists and red marks and bruises on boys' bottoms: "it was normal. It was accepted. You never talked about it...you just accepted it and got on with it."⁵⁷⁷

A March 1986 report, apparently written by the school's headmaster for the SED, stated that punishments for misdemeanours were lines, detention, and manual work.⁵⁷⁸ The document recovered includes a deleted sentence stating that corporal punishment could be used by Housemasters "in serious matters for S4 and below."⁵⁷⁹

That, however, was not correct. In a letter from the headmaster to Scottish Council Independent Schools (SCIS) dated October 1986, he stated that housemasters could still administer corporal punishment, but that: "Notice was given two weeks ago of its phasing out. It is very rare. It will be ended by 15th December, the end of term, and even now is virtually at an end."⁵⁸⁰

Physical abuse at FA was widespread and ingrained in the culture. Below, I set out some findings in relation to particular monks.

Discipline

School Rules and House Rules are published in the School. In the first instance, discipline is in the hands of the three Housemasters. School and House Prefects are appointed from Sixth Form to assist the Headmaster and Staff in the day-to-day routine of the School. The punishments available for misdemeanours are lines, detention and manual work. ~~Corporal punishment can be used by the Housemasters as a final resort in serious matters for S4 and below.~~

574 [Transcript, day 144](#): read in statement of "Maxwell", at TRN.001.006.2490-2491; [Written statement of "Maxwell"](#), paragraphs 47-48, at WIT.001.002.6268.

575 [Written statement of "Maxwell"](#), paragraph 53, at WIT.001.002.6270; [Transcript, day 144](#): read in statement of "Maxwell", at TRN.001.006.2493.

576 [Written statement of "Maxwell"](#), paragraph 74, at WIT.001.002.6275; [Transcript, day 144](#): read in statement of "Maxwell", at TRN.001.006.2501.

577 [Transcript, day 147](#): "Peter", at TRN.001.006.2999-3000.

578 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, report, March 1986, at SGV.001.006.0070.

579 NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, report, March 1986, at SGV.001.006.0070.

580 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Benedict Seed to SCIS joint secretary, 9 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1930.

Mark Dilworth “seemed to focus on certain boys who were presumably perceived as being lazy...and these boys were birched quite often to make them work and to make them achieve better results.”

Father Mark Dilworth (Born 1924)

Father Mark Dilworth had attended St Andrew's Priory School (the forerunner of CK) and transferred as a pupil to FA in 1937. He taught at CK from 1952 to 1955. He returned to FA in summer 1955 and taught French.⁵⁸¹ He was headmaster at FA from August 1959 to December 1963.⁵⁸² In 1968/69, soon after Abbot Nicholas Holman arrived, Mark Dilworth was reappointed as headmaster of FA.⁵⁸³ In 1972, he “requested to be relieved” as headmaster, and was replaced by Francis Davidson.⁵⁸⁴ Mark Dilworth was elected abbot in April 1991, a post he held until 1998.⁵⁸⁵ He died in 2004.⁵⁸⁶

Canings and birchings

Mark Dilworth violently beat boys with a birch, including for poor performance in their schoolwork. Benedict Seed confirmed that there was “one stage in the school when the headmaster made it his duty to use the cane to persuade the boys to apply themselves to their studies...more assiduously and more productively”.⁵⁸⁷ It seems likely he was referring to Mark Dilworth's headship.

In the late 1950s into the 1960s, Mark Dilworth warned the boys that if they did not improve their performance and get better weekly marks that they would be beaten.⁵⁸⁸ Inevitably, some of them did not manage to improve their marks so they were summoned to Mark Dilworth. It was very often the case that they were summoned after lunch and told that they would be beaten at bedtime. This delaying of punishment was emotional abuse.

After being summoned at bedtime, they each had to kneel on a chair in Mark Dilworth's room, bend over, and (very often) remove their pyjamas bottoms to be birched: “the strokes of the birch could be anything from four up to ten. They were birched black and blue...It happened to me too, but I saw these boys in the showers and their buttocks were a mass of bruises with sort of red or pinkish stripes across them. It was vicious.... He seemed to focus on certain boys who were presumably perceived as being lazy...who I imagine he thought could do better but just weren't bothering themselves and these boys were birched quite often to make them work and to make them achieve better results.”⁵⁸⁹

581 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Mark Dilworth, at BEN.001.004.2692; Staffing returns extracts from FA120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, List of Staff Fort Augustus Abbey School, November 1962, at BEN.001.004.4154.

582 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Mark Dilworth, at BEN.001.004.2692, Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0477.

583 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0477.

584 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0477.

585 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0471-0772.

586 Appendix – Benedictines, at PSS.001.003.0006.

587 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3808.

588 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2109-2111.

589 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2110-2111.

On one occasion, Mark Dilworth punished a group of boys for talking in the study hall.⁵⁹⁰ A group of approximately six boys were taken to his study and had to queue outside. Whilst waiting, Sean O'Donovan (FA 1961-65) heard the other boys receive between six and eight strokes of the cane. He received four strokes, which he put down to the fact that he was younger than the others. When he checked in the bathroom later, he "was absolutely staggered by the sheer depth and width of the bruising that had been left on [him]."⁵⁹¹

Mark Dilworth's cane was "a piece of ash or birch rod...about three feet long, about half an inch thick at least, more like a walking stick than a cane."⁵⁹² Sean O'Donovan had found a photograph online of injuries caused by a caning. Comparing this photograph to the injuries he suffered, he said: "This is much, much lighter...the stripes that I was left with were much broader, deeper and blacker."⁵⁹³



Example of bruises sustained by pupil at Court Lees, an approved school in England.⁵⁹⁴

Mark Dilworth would hit "James" (FA 1961-63), with six strokes on his bare backside each time he did so. For maximum impact, Mark Dilworth used both his hands: "two hands, backhanded. Unbelievable. I've never seen anybody like it. I've been at three schools where they used caning and [this was] the only time I have ever seen somebody use a two-handed backhander to cane you."⁵⁹⁵

"I've been at three schools where they used caning and [this was] the only time I ever seen somebody use a two-handed backhander to cane you."

The injuries inflicted were obvious to other children when the victims returned to the dormitory, as blood could be seen "seeping through" their clothing.⁵⁹⁶

Sexually-motivated beatings

Mark Dilworth was well known for "his naked canings".⁵⁹⁷ I accept, as was suggested by "Harry" (CK 1954-59, FA 1959-64), that they involved sexual motivation: "[B]ecause pyjama bottoms couldn't have provided much protection against the severity of these punishments, so why did they have to take their pyjama bottoms down? To humiliate them? Possibly. Or because the perpetrator enjoyed it? I am suspicious."⁵⁹⁸

590 [Transcript, day 145](#): Sean O'Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2594-2596.

591 [Transcript, day 145](#): Sean O'Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2595-2596.

592 [Transcript, day 145](#): Sean O'Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2593-2594.

593 [Transcript, day 145](#): Sean O'Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2594; see also [Written statement of Sean O'Donovan](#), paragraph 54, at WIT.003.002.3870.

594 The Sunday Times Magazine, 31 December 1967.

595 [Transcript, day 143](#): "James", at TRN.001.006.2292-2293.

596 [Transcript, day 143](#): "Joseph", at TRN.001.006.2336.

597 [Written statement of "Maxwell"](#), paragraph 55, at WIT.001.002.6270.

598 [Transcript, day 142](#): "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2113-2114.

“Each time a boy got to the chair Mark Dilworth didn’t cane them straight away, he took a while, he was looking at the boy...I think there was a sexual thing and the same with one in the dormitory.”

Mark Dilworth engaged in beating several boys in a dormitory at the same time on one occasion. The boys were required to strip naked and kneel over the back of the bed holding on to it. They had to stand and watch each be beaten one after the other. “First of all, Dilworth demonstrated how we were to do it...Dilworth knelt down and said, ‘This is how I want you.’ The first boy knelt down and Dilworth moved the boy’s hands and buttocks, this way and that way into the right place. He didn’t do that with everyone. He might have moved one boy with the cane, like prodding cattle. When Dilworth started caning, after the fourth or fifth blow, a strange thing happened. Every boy’s legs fell out from underneath them and the boy went on to the ground, hanging on to the bed...Dilworth kept going, hell for leather...Dilworth gave me ten strokes. There was blood going down my leg.”⁵⁹⁹ This may also have involved sexual motivation as “Maxwell” (FA 1960-64) suggested.⁶⁰⁰

Following the beating, Vincent Pirie Watson, the housemaster, came into the dormitory and punished all the boys again, having heard them talking: “All of us got six on each hand, right there and then. We were still naked. There is no doubt that the housemaster was waiting outside the dormitory for our caning to finish and then he was going to come in and get us.”⁶⁰¹

Mark Dilworth also made “Maxwell” strip before being caned on an occasion when he was in his first year at school. He and two other boys had been caught throwing balls of paper at other boys’ heads in church. Again, there appears to have been sexual motivation: “Mark Dilworth told us to see him after lunch. We thought we in for a strapping but when we got into his office, Mark Dilworth told us to take our trousers and underpants off. In the office, the chair had been set up in the right position for the first boy. The first boy knelt on the chair, his backside was where we could all see it. Mark Dilworth went to do the first caning and the boy’s shirt fell down on his bum. Mark Dilworth told us all to take our shirts off, so there we were again, all of us naked. Mark Dilworth appeared to like other boys watching whilst he caned a boy. Each time a boy got to the chair Mark Dilworth didn’t cane them straight away, he took a while, he was looking at the boy. Why would you take such a long time, looking? I think there was a sexual thing and the same with one in the dormitory. I never thought about it at the time, we were so terrified. The place had been prepared. This guy was looking for his jollies. Other boys spoke of the same thing: how Dilworth took his time to look at them before he caned them.”⁶⁰²

599 Written statement of “Maxwell”, paragraphs 58-60 at WIT.001.002.6271; Transcript, day 144: read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2494-2496.

600 Written statement of “Maxwell”, paragraph 64, at WIT.001.002.6272; Transcript, day 144: read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2498.

601 Written statement of “Maxwell”, paragraph 62, at WIT.001.002.6272; Transcript, day 144: read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2497.

602 Written statement of “Maxwell”, paragraphs 63-64, at WIT.001.002.6272-6273; Transcript, day 144: read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2498.

Mark Dilworth conducted reigns of terror during the periods of his tenure as headmaster at FA. Discipline characterised as punishment was, in fact, disgraceful physical and sexual abuse.

Father Vincent Pirie Watson (Born 1934)

As a boy, Father Vincent Pirie Watson attended St Andrews Priory School.⁶⁰³ When the school was evacuated in 1939, he was sent to FA as a boarder at the age of five. He transferred to FA in 1945. In 1951 he entered the novitiate at Fort Augustus. In 1956 he became the junior games master at FA, and from 1959 he also taught geography. He served as a housemaster from 1960 until his sudden death in 1983.⁶⁰⁴

Canings

As housemaster of Vaughan House, Vincent Pirie Watson regularly caned boys on their bare bottoms, causing injuries. It seems no coincidence that his approach to inflicting pain on children mirrored, in large measure, the Dilworth-approach: "You'd wait to be called in, you'd then have to lower your trousers, bend over a chair, and you'd be beaten on your bare backside with a bamboo cane. Normally, six, sometimes 12 [times]...you would have weals across your backside...you'd have to report to his study at a certain time for that. You knew it was going to happen."⁶⁰⁵ Such treatment was dished out for "any minor breach of rules" that Vincent Pirie Watson may have seen or

was reported to him by another monk or prefect.⁶⁰⁶

In the 1970s, Vincent Pirie Watson was still beating children in this manner.⁶⁰⁷ It usually involved six strokes of the cane and left "a very raised, red weal on your buttocks. Occasionally there would be blood as well."⁶⁰⁸ Whilst in some instances "Michael" (FA 1973-77) felt that the punishment was somewhat justified, he "was caned on a number of occasions for something [he] hadn't done." He would protest his innocence, but when "it became evident that [he] wasn't the perpetrator of whatever crime [he] was being punished for...the attitude was: well, it won't have done you any harm anyway."⁶⁰⁹

Vincent Pirie Watson caned "Peter" (FA 1976-81) on many occasions throughout his time at the school.⁶¹⁰ He would make "Peter" bend over on a chair and beat him on the backside, three to six times, with the cane. This resulted in "Peter" being injured and, on some occasions, bleeding—on one occasion, Vincent Pirie Watson gave him "three of the cane on the backside and I says, can we stop, please, and then he deliberately caned me so my testicles got the brunt of it three times."⁶¹¹ "Peter" sought medical help on this and other occasions, but little was done as the nurse "just gave you lotion to rub...she was useless, she did nothing—and neither did the doctor...he knew what was going on and he did nothing."⁶¹²

603 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Vincent Pirie Watson, at BEN.001.004.2700.

604 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0477; Appendix - Benedictines, at PSS.001.003.0006.

605 Transcript, day 143: "James", at TRN.001.006.2290-2291.

606 Transcript, day 143: "James", at TRN.001.006.2291.

607 Transcript, day 148: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.3052-3053.

608 Transcript, day 148: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.3053.

609 Transcript, day 148: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.3053-3054.

610 Transcript, day 147: "Peter", at TRN.001.006.2990-2992.

611 Transcript, day 147: "Peter", at TRN.001.006.2991.

612 Transcript, day 147: "Peter", at TRN.001.006.2992.

“...we were all birched and we all went home black and blue...they would administer these punishments with no compunction, no fear that we would go home and complain to our parents”.

The school nurse/matron was told on occasions about the beatings from Vincent Pirie Watson. She does not seem to have taken matters further. She just provided lotion for the injuries.⁶¹³

Father Lawrence Kelly (Born 1915)

Father Lawrence Kelly was the first housemaster of Lovat.⁶¹⁴ He was housemaster at FA from 1940 until July 1965, when he was appointed bursar.⁶¹⁵ He inflicted excessive punishments on children in his care, sometimes *en masse*. He died in 1987.⁶¹⁶

Mass punishments

Monks like Lawrence Kelly considered themselves untouchable.⁶¹⁷ As “Harry” (CK 1954-59, FA 1959-64) described: “there was a bit of a rumpus going on early in the morning...[Lawrence Kelly] stomped into the room, marched the whole dormitory down to the house meeting room and birched the whole dormitory...There must have been about 30 of us...we were all birched and we all went home black and blue...In a way, it shows that they would administer these punishments

with no compunction, no fear that we would go home and complain to our parents, that he could do it on the very last morning of term.”⁶¹⁸

‘Sadomasochism’

Lawrence Kelly was described by Sean O’Donovan (FA 1961-65) as a “sadomasochist”.⁶¹⁹ He “could tell from the way [Lawrence Kelly] looked when he was wielding the strap that he was enjoying this mightily.”⁶²⁰ Lawrence Kelly would be “slack-jawed and drooling” with “absolute delight” whilst punishing the boys.⁶²¹ Donald MacLeod (FA 1961-65) described Lawrence Kelly as “a bit of a sadist”:⁶²² “[I]t’s difficult to explain but you can sometimes tell if people are really enjoying it...there [were] times when he was quite gleeful about giving us the cane.”⁶²³

“...there [were] times when [Lawrence Kelly] was quite gleeful about giving us the cane.”

613 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2992.

614 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0477.

615 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0477.

616 Appendix – Benedictines, at PSS.001.003.0006.

617 [Transcript, day 142](#): “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2115-2116.

618 [Transcript, day 142](#): “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2115.

619 [Written statement of Sean O’Donovan](#), paragraph 56, at WIT.001.002.3871; [Transcript, day 145](#): Sean O’Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2599.

620 [Transcript, day 145](#): Sean O’Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2600.

621 [Transcript, day 145](#): Sean O’Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2600-2602.

622 [Written statement of Donald MacLeod](#), paragraph 96, at WIT.001.002.3575; [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2863.

623 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2863.

Random nature of punishments

Although Lawrence Kelly was usually “fixed” in his approach to punishing boys, punishments could also be “totally random” and “whimsical”.⁶²⁴ For example, there was an occasion when Lawrence Kelly came into a classroom where there had been some noise: “he didn’t bother asking who had made the noise, he simply determined that the entire form would be beaten”.⁶²⁵

Lawrence Kelly “had a reputation for being a bully and always having a bad temper. He picked on the smaller boys, often without notice.”

Lawrence Kelly “had a reputation for being a bully and always having a bad temper. He picked on the smaller boys, often without notice.”⁶²⁶ He was particularly brutal to the younger boys.”⁶²⁷ On one occasion, when “Maxwell” (FA 1960-64) was walking past Lawrence Kelly’s room with one hand in his pocket—contrary to the rules—the monk

“lashed out with his leather strap across my head. [He] grabbed my hair and said I was lucky I didn’t have two hands in my pockets. [He] had cut me on my tongue and lips. I could not eat or talk properly for more than a week.”⁶²⁸

Lawrence Kelly was known for standing at his door looking for targets, usually new boys from another house.⁶²⁹ One day “Maxwell” “found a younger boy bleeding from his ear and crying in a corridor. [Lawrence Kelly] had hit the boy on his ear with his strap as the boy was walking past his room. The boy had no idea what he had done wrong. I took the boy to matron.”⁶³⁰

Father “Andrew Jones” (Born 1932)

“Andrew Jones” had been a pupil at St Andrew’s Priory School and, subsequently, at FA between 1943 and 1949.⁶³¹ After time spent at CK and then abroad, “Andrew Jones” was at FA from 1963 to 1971.⁶³² After a further period at CK, he returned to FA in 1977 where he remained until 1988, when he left for Canada.⁶³³

624 Transcript, day 145: Sean O’Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2602.

625 Transcript, day 145: Sean O’Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2603.

626 Written statement of “Maxwell”, paragraph 11, at WIT.001.002.6260; Transcript, day 144: read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2478.

627 Written statement of “Maxwell”, paragraph 78, at WIT.001.002.6276; Transcript, day 144: read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2503.

628 Written statement of “Maxwell”, paragraph 78, at WIT.001.002.6276; Transcript, day 144: read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2503.

629 Written statement of “Maxwell”, paragraph 78, at WIT.001.002.6276, Transcript, day 144: read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2503.

630 Written statement of “Maxwell”, paragraph 78, at WIT.001.002.6276, Transcript, day 144: read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2503.

631 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom “Andrew Jones”, at BEN.001.004.2694.

632 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom “Andrew Jones”, at BEN.001.004.2694.

633 Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4649.

“Andrew Jones” “had an aggressive demeanour and most of the boys...were scared stiff of him.”

Excessive punishments

“Andrew Jones” inflicted excessive punishments on children at FA. He “had an aggressive demeanour and most of the boys...were scared stiff of him.”⁶³⁴

“Tom” (FA 1976-84) was regularly belted by “Andrew Jones” at FA:⁶³⁵ “On each occasion, you would be given a minimum of three strikes of the belt on [the] outstretched palm of each hand...Sometimes it could be six strikes on each hand. Sometimes Father [“Andrew Jones”] would hit you in quick succession, raising his hand to shoulder level. Sometimes, if he was in a bad mood, he would use more force”.⁶³⁶ On one occasion, when “Andrew Jones” was very angry with “Tom”, he hit him “with all his might, raising his hand above his shoulder.”⁶³⁷ On another occasion, when he was “raging with anger”, “Tom” was “left with terrible marks all the way up [his] wrists and arms.”⁶³⁸

“Tom’s” brother and another boy were sent to “Andrew Jones” to be punished for fighting.⁶³⁹ He belted “Tom’s” brother first, and the other boy “dropped to the floor and grabbed Father [“Andrew Jones”] by the legs” in an attempt to stop him.⁶⁴⁰ “Andrew Jones” “went mad and proceeded to belt [this boy] all over his body as [the boy] fell onto his legs, sobbing and pleading with him.”⁶⁴¹

“Andrew Jones” belted a boy during a “social”, a weekly event held at the housemaster’s office.⁶⁴² The boy, who had been sent to “Andrew Jones” for misbehaving, was punished in front of the other boys. “Father [“Andrew Jones”] started to belt the boy but the boy would not take it and fell to the floor...Father [“Andrew Jones”] then proceeded to lay into him whilst he was on the floor. I remember being absolutely terrified watching this. Afterwards, Father [“Andrew Jones”] carried on as if nothing had happened.”⁶⁴³

634 [Written statement of “Tom”](#), paragraph 11, at WIT.001.002.6931; [Transcript, day 147](#): read in statement of “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2951.

635 [Written statement of “Tom”](#), paragraph 13, at WIT.001.002.6931; [Transcript, day 147](#): read in statement of “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2951.

636 [Written statement of “Tom”](#), paragraphs 14-15, at WIT.001.002.6931-6932; [Transcript, day 147](#): read in statement of “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2952.

637 [Written statement of “Tom”](#), paragraph 19, at WIT.001.002.6933; [Transcript, day 147](#): read in statement of “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2953.

638 [Transcript, day 147](#): read in statement of “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2956.

639 [Written statement of “Tom”](#), paragraph 22, at WIT.001.002.6933; [Transcript, day 147](#): read in statement of “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2954.

640 [Written statement of “Tom”](#), paragraph 22, at WIT.001.002.6933; [Transcript, day 147](#): read in statement of “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2954.

641 [Written statement of “Tom”](#), paragraph 22, at WIT.001.002.6933; [Transcript, day 147](#): read in statement of “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2954.

642 [Written statement of “Tom”](#), paragraph 24, at WIT.001.002.6933; [Transcript, day 147](#): read in statement of “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2955.

643 [Written statement of “Tom”](#), paragraph 24, at WIT.001.002.6933; [Transcript, day 147](#): read in statement of “Tom”, at TRN.001.006.2955.

"Andrew Jones" took a personal interest in "Duncan" (FA 1986-89 and 1990-91). When "Duncan" was sent to "Andrew Jones"' room for punishment "Andrew Jones" "couldn't bring himself" to do it—though he made it clear to "Duncan" that he would belt other boys.⁶⁴⁴ "Andrew Jones" told "Duncan" that he had stopped using the cane on boys: "He... explained the reason he had stopped caning was he put a boy in hospital...I have no idea of the veracity of this, but that is certainly what he told me. By way of mitigation he explained to me this was because...the boy had a medical condition that the skin around his buttocks was too thin."⁶⁴⁵

Father Aelred Grugan (Born 1951)

Father Aelred Grugan was a teacher at FA from 1980.⁶⁴⁶ From 1985 he was housemaster of Vaughan and between 1992 and the closure of the school he was headmaster.⁶⁴⁷ He died in 2019.⁶⁴⁸

Excessive punishments

Aelred Grugan hit children with the belt and also with a cane, regularly administering

"twice-six with the Lochgelly tawse or up to six with the cane."⁶⁴⁹ Two boys in the same year as "Duncan" (FA 1986-89 and 1990-91) "had regular visits to [Aelred Grugan] for punishment and the state they would be in when they would come back, clutching their hands having had up to twice-six...I saw the welts on their hands. They were in a bad way. They would talk about...having been caned on their bare buttocks, but they didn't show those welts."⁶⁵⁰

Father Benedict Seed (Born 1933)

Father Benedict Seed joined St Andrew's Priory School in 1942—which had been evacuated to FA in 1939.⁶⁵¹ He was a pupil at FA from 1943.⁶⁵² In 1950 he entered the novitiate at Fort Augustus.⁶⁵³ He taught Latin and maths at FA between 1957 and 1958.⁶⁵⁴ Between 1958 and 1960/61 he was studying for a degree at St Andrew's University.⁶⁵⁵ In 1961 he returned to FA to teach philosophy, as well as maths and sciences.⁶⁵⁶ Other than a period of leave of absence to study in 1969-72, he remained at the school.⁶⁵⁷ In 1972 he became housemaster of Vaughan

644 [Transcript, day 146](#): "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2780.

645 [Transcript, day 146](#): "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2780-2781.

646 Staffing returns extracts from FA120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, Details of Teaching Staff Employed as at 23 September 1986, Fort Augustus Abbey School, at BEN.001.004.4168.

647 Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0477.

648 Section 21 response, Part D, updated appendices relating to both schools, at BEN.001.003.7078.

649 [Transcript, day 146](#): "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2720-2721.

650 [Transcript, day 146](#): "Duncan", at TRN.001.006.2721.

651 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Benedict Seed, at BEN.001.004.2698.

652 Written statement of Benedict Seed, at WIT.003.002.2873.

653 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Benedict Seed, at BEN.001.004.2698.

654 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Benedict Seed, at BEN.001.004.2698; Staffing returns extracts from FA120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, Annual Teacher Returns 1992, Fort Augustus Abbey School, at BEN.001.004.4197.

655 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Benedict Seed, at BEN.001.004.2698; Staffing returns extracts from FA120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, Annual Teacher Returns 1992, Fort Augustus Abbey School, at BEN.001.004.4197.

656 FA 95/11 Dilworth biographical notes on monks, Dom Benedict Seed, at BEN.001.004.2698; Staffing returns extracts from FA120 Corres with the SED 1938 to 1993, Details of Teaching Staff Employed as at 22 September 1986, Fort Augustus Abbey School, at BEN.001.004.4182.

657 Written statement of Benedict Seed, at WIT.003.002.2873.

Benedict Seed “was prone to outbursts of what can only be described as psychotic rage. He was a thug and a bully who should never have been allowed near children.”

house.⁶⁵⁸ Between 1985 and 1988 he was headmaster.⁶⁵⁹ He remained at Fort Augustus Abbey until 1999.⁶⁶⁰ He died in 2020.⁶⁶¹

Excessive punishments

Benedict Seed could not control a classroom of boys. The result was that “[h]e would lose his temper and he’d throw things like board dusters, he might clip you round the ear.”⁶⁶² He “was prone to outbursts of what can only be described as psychotic rage. He was a thug and a bully who should never have been allowed near children.”⁶⁶³

Benedict Seed belted children by targeting their wrists: “Peter” (FA 1976-81) had a friend who showed him his bloody wrists.⁶⁶⁴ “Peter” saw another boy with a black eye and bruising, having been “beaten up badly” by Benedict Seed.⁶⁶⁵ “Roberto” (FA 1983-87) was belted on numerous occasions by Benedict Seed, suffering severe bruising to his hands, wrists, and forearms, to such an extent that he was unable to write or to open and close his hands because of the bruising and swelling.⁶⁶⁶

Canings

Benedict Seed had a practice of caning children at night: “You would be terrified all day, knowing you were going to get caned...The cane was about six feet long. He would say, ‘I’ve oiled it for you’.”⁶⁶⁷ “Roberto” complained several times to Father Francis Davidson that Benedict Seed was picking on him: “I requested a move out of Lovat House so I wouldn’t get beaten by Father Benedict Seed. Father Francis Davidson said it was up to Father Benedict Seed how he chose to discipline me.”⁶⁶⁸

“You would be terrified all day, knowing you were going to get caned.”

Positive evidence

A number of former pupils provided positive evidence about Benedict Seed. George Campbell (FA 1965-70) said that Benedict Seed “had a good sense of humour and was

658 [Transcript, day 153](#): Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3800. In Delepine’s Recollections Benedict Seed became housemaster in 1983. See Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0477.

659 [Transcript, day 153](#): Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3803; Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine’s Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0477.

660 Written statement of Benedict Seed, at WIT.003.002.2873.

661 Letter from Clyde & Co to SCAI, 23 April 2020, at BEN-000000005.

662 [Transcript, day 143](#): “James”, at TRN.001.006.2282.

663 [Written statement of “Roberto”](#), paragraph 81, at WIT.001.002.8164; [Transcript, day 151](#): read in statement of “Roberto”, at TRN.001.006.3531-3532.

664 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2993.

665 [Written statement of “Peter”](#), paragraph 61, at WIT.001.002.7767; [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2994.

666 [Written statement of “Roberto”](#), paragraph 81, at WIT.001.002.8164; [Transcript, day 151](#): read in statement of “Roberto”, at TRN.001.006.3532.

667 [Written statement of “Roberto”](#), paragraph 84, at WIT.001.002.8165; [Transcript, day 151](#): read in statement of “Roberto”, at TRN.001.006.3532-3533.

668 [Written statement of “Roberto”](#), paragraph 48, at WIT.001.002.8157; [Transcript, day 151](#): “Roberto”, at TRN.001.006.3520.

quite well liked...I always got on well with him."⁶⁶⁹ Similarly, Colin Bryce (FA 1971-78) stated: "I got on very well with Father Benedict. I had no issues with [him]. He was fair...Very occasionally he would lose his temper...But he was generally fair and I got on well with [him]."⁶⁷⁰ "Simon" (FA 1978-80) said that Benedict Seed: "could be very kind; I remember going salmon fishing with him one day on Loch Ness. He looked after you, but he was also a justly strict and sound disciplinarian."⁶⁷¹

Running away

Some boys ran away from FA. When they returned to the school, they were punished very severely. No thought was given to the possibility that the boys ran away because they were miserable. One boy was "caned by both the headmaster and the housemaster" upon his return.⁶⁷² One unhappy boy, around 12 years old, ran away to his home and he was given six of the cane by the headmaster, Father Mark Dilworth, when he returned to the school. "Rather than addressing the problem, they were providing the discipline...You saw [while getting changed for sport] the bruised backside that he had as a result...You could quite clearly see the lines...you could see the six lines across his backside."⁶⁷³

Prefects and older boys

The older boys, particularly prefects, played an important and powerful role in the daily life of FA throughout the period examined.

It facilitated sexual, physical, and emotional abuse.

"The whole ethos of the school was extremely authoritarian and any fraternisation between the older senior boys and the junior boys was strongly discouraged."

There was a hierarchal system: "The whole ethos of the school was extremely authoritarian and any fraternisation between the older senior boys and the junior boys was strongly discouraged...the junior boys were referred to as 'the kids', and the prefects were strongly discouraged by the monks and the school authority from fraternising with the kids."⁶⁷⁴ Father Lawrence Kelly would openly refer to junior boys as "'the scum of the earth'"⁶⁷⁵ and "any fraternisation between the different ranks in the school was strongly discouraged. I suppose it was seen as a threat to the authoritarian ethos of the place. The concept of seniority was very, very strong: the senior boys could tell you what to do and you had to do it."⁶⁷⁶

If the prefects caught one of the other boys doing something wrong, they would send the boy to his housemaster for punishment.⁶⁷⁷ Furthermore, the prefects could influence the level of punishment to be inflicted—it was for them to decide whether

669 Transcript, day 150: George Campbell, at TRN.001.006.3371.

670 Transcript, day 150: Colin Bryce, at TRN.001.006.3397.

671 Transcript, day 151: read in statement of "Simon", at TRN.001.006.3575.

672 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2858.

673 Transcript, day 150: Colin Bryce, at TRN.001.006.3403-3406.

674 Transcript, day 142: "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2106.

675 Transcript, day 142: "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2106.

676 Transcript, day 142: "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2017.

677 Transcript, day 150: George Campbell, at TRN.001.006.3377-3379.

“The school prefects and the house prefects...ran the discipline within the school to a certain extent...[they] issued the discipline for most offences and would send the boys to the housemaster for the more serious offences.”

boys got lines or the belt. Prefects did not, however, have the power to recommend the “top punishment”, namely the cane or birch—that was for housemaster to decide.⁶⁷⁸

“The school prefects and the house prefects had roughly the same responsibilities. They ran the discipline within the school to a certain extent...The prefects issued the discipline for most offences and they would send the boys to the housemaster for the more serious offences.”⁶⁷⁹ Prefects had the authority to punish the children in various ways, such as a punishment of leaf raking, which was “soul-destroying because the leaves would just fall down again 10 minutes later”, or sending boys to “go and push the roller round the cricket pitch”, or lines or a cold shower.⁶⁸⁰ For more serious offences, the prefects sent boys to the housemaster, but they would try and manage much of it themselves.⁶⁸¹

Some prefects inflicted physical punishment themselves: “Whether they were given this officially or not, [prefects] used sports shoes or hockey sticks to rap boys on the backside, just very informally...in the guise of: well, I have the authority to do this. The boy can’t

question or may not want to question, might want a quiet life and take it and move on...

Whether they had the authority to do that, I don’t know...I just know that they were quite free in dishing out physical punishment.”⁶⁸²

A particular punishment sometimes used by prefects was known as “the Gorgie”. This involved them using “a fist with a prominent knuckle, middle knuckle, and that on your head is...extremely sore, or on your back”.⁶⁸³

Prefects “had quite an influence over the school. They were used to sort of police prep times...meal lines, et cetera. ...they were probably what you would call bullies...It was not uncommon to have boys beaten up by elder boys in the school.”⁶⁸⁴ Monks knew that prefects “had carte blanche”.⁶⁸⁵

Into the 1980s, some were still being physically violent towards younger boys, whether or not they had authority to do so. One dreadful practice was known as “Gray treatment”.⁶⁸⁶ Boys were held with their arms and legs forced apart and “the prefect would come from behind and ram the hockey stick as hard as possible between your legs...[it was] exceptionally painful.”⁶⁸⁷ Before he died, “Alex” (FA 1990-91), had told his mother,

678 Transcript, day 150: George Campbell, at TRN.001.006.3378.

679 Transcript, day 150: Colin Bryce, at TRN.001.006.3400.

680 Transcript, day 150: Colin Bryce, at TRN.001.006.3401.

681 Transcript, day 150: Colin Bryce, at TRN.001.006.3402.

682 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3478-3479.

683 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3488.

684 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2907.

685 Transcript, day 147: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2999.

686 A treatment that may have been named after the hockey stick manufacturer, Gray.

687 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2718.

"Liz" about it; he was hit with hockey sticks "usually on the genitals".⁶⁸⁸

There was no recognition of the risks inherent in affording prefects the powers to punish that some of them evidently had, particularly in circumstances where they had grown up in a school where adults, rather than being good role models, openly engaged in the physical abuse of children.

Bullying

There was a culture of bullying at FA, as the monks were aware. Some of them actively encouraged it. It was physically and emotionally abusive.

"[Bullying] was institutionalised. The authoritarian and highly structured nature of the place...and the admiration for strictness meant that those who had power were expected to use it. So the prefects were expected to use it by the housemasters and they used it. And then there was the discouragement of fraternisation with the younger boys. So I think it was institutionalised. It was also a place where there was constant pilfering of your personal possessions by seniors mostly."⁶⁸⁹

"[Bullying] was institutionalised."

Sean O'Donovan (FA 1961-65) was bullied throughout most of his time at FA: "I was subjected mostly to ostracism. There was a little bit of physical [abuse] but it wasn't so much what they actually physically did but what they were threatening to do the whole time. You were living under threat and under

fear and I was bullied...It was a group of my own classmates...they were copying what the school did. The school held pupils up to ridicule, so they basically held me up to ridicule...in fact Father Lawrence Kelly had been known to opine that bullying was good for you, made a man of you. Didn't say what sort of a man, mind you, but it made a man of you."⁶⁹⁰

"Father Lawrence Kelly had been known to opine that bullying was good for you, made a man of you. Didn't say what sort of a man, mind you, but it made a man of you."

Donald MacLeod (FA 1961-65) agreed that: "There was a system where...among the boys there was bullying...the elders bullied the youngsters...older boys could bully, particularly the new intake, when they had what were called 'fags'. That was an accepted thing, that the older boys would have a fag from the new intake who would do all their things for them and...it was common for boys to pick on younger boys...boys would pick on younger boys and hold them up...pin them against walls, beat them...for possibly very little reasons".⁶⁹¹ This behaviour was sanctioned by the monks and staff: "the attitude I think among a lot of the monks and teaching staff was this [is] part of the way of making a man out of you, so it wasn't really stamped down on in the way I think one would expect today."⁶⁹²

688 Transcript, day 146: "Liz", at TRN.001.006.2830.

689 Transcript, day 142: "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2117.

690 Transcript, day 145: Sean O'Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2580-2583.

691 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2864-2865.

692 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2865-2866.

“You had to learn really how to stand on your own two feet pretty quickly at Fort Augustus. If you were deemed to be weak in any way...you could be preyed upon... You had to find a way of fitting in very quickly”.

The bullying culture continued into the 1970s. Colin Bryce (FA 1971-78) said that “bullying was prevalent, especially in the earlier years, where the older boys would pick on younger boys and push them around and punch them.”⁶⁹³ Similarly, “Peter” (FA 1973-75) explained that “[t]here was a lot of bullying always...People always got bullied.”⁶⁹⁴ Children could be heard “crying all through the night because they hurt or were crying for their mother or also when it was lights out, sometimes it is payback time. I can recall people being dragged from the beds and pulled up in the middle of the corridor by a group of boys and you daren’t say anything.”⁶⁹⁵ “Peter” was certain the monks were aware of what was going on “because they could hear noises in the dormitory and they saw things...If they did something [about it], I wasn’t aware of it. Nothing improved.”⁶⁹⁶ The bullying continued throughout the time “Peter” was at the school; it was a daily occurrence.⁶⁹⁷

In a rare instance of appropriate action being taken, a bully who had attacked “Ian” (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75) was expelled. The older boy attacked “Ian” after he had refused his invitation to sit at his table: “[I]t was a cowardly attack on me...it was from behind without warning...his boot hit me in the nose and I just

went immediately unconscious, there was no fighting back, and I regained consciousness in a pool of blood in the study hall...That was in front of all the other boys. He was a scary figure...He was expelled that very day for that attack on me. My nose remains broken.”⁶⁹⁸

Bullies preyed on the vulnerable: “You had to learn really how to stand on your own two feet pretty quickly at Fort Augustus. If you were deemed to be weak in any way, emotionally weak or physically weak, you could be preyed upon...You had to find a way of fitting in very quickly and you either became particularly good on the academic side or pretty good on the sports side.”⁶⁹⁹

“Duncan” (FA 1986-89 and 1990-91) was bullied by other children, particularly because of their perception of his relationship with “Andrew Jones”. For example, when he was 12 years old, he was set upon at the swimming pool.⁷⁰⁰ He could not swim, and a number of boys took hold of him near the pool, stripping him down to his underwear: “which sadly was a little bit holey...and I had a rather large hole in my Y-fronts, which...I well recall the gathered crowd explaining this was where “Andrew Jones” inserted his penis. They then held me over the pool and starting dipping me

693 Transcript, day 150: Colin Bryce, at TRN.001.006.3408.

694 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2432.

695 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2432.

696 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2432-2433.

697 Transcript, day 144: “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.2433.

698 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3489.

699 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2908-2909.

700 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2775-2777.

in and out of the pool, and I was begging, crying...after being thrown in, one of these individuals jumped in and stood on me under the water at the bottom, and all I particularly recall is staring up at...this figure, this individual who was in perhaps third or fourth year—I remember him very clearly... laughing as he held me”.⁷⁰¹ Fortunately for “Duncan”, the head boy intervened. “Andrew Jones” witnessed this event, but did not intervene; rather, he just told “Duncan” that he “had to stand on [his] own two feet”.⁷⁰²

Response to evidence about physical abuse

The EBC accepted that pupils at both CK and FA were physically abused. It was stated on their behalf at the end of the case study that “in relation to corporal punishment, even making allowances for the standards of the time, which permitted its use, it was used in both schools in an arbitrary and excessive manner such that it could not properly be characterised as punishment.”⁷⁰³

Nor did the EBC dispute that the prevailing climate at both schools was one of fear.⁷⁰⁴

It was accepted on behalf of the EBC, in relation to CK, that discipline was arbitrary and—in many instances—disproportionate to the conduct that was being sanctioned.⁷⁰⁵

The latter point was emphasised in respect of the young age of the boys at CK. In relation to FA, it was accepted on behalf of the EBC

that discipline was again disproportionate in many instances, and that bullying appeared to have been rife within the school.⁷⁰⁶

This was not, however, echoed by those former Fort Augustus monks who gave evidence.

Benedict Seed, who was convicted of having assaulted a child at FA some time between September 1980 and September 1982,⁷⁰⁷ said he administered corporal punishment to boys in Lovat House, when he was housemaster, the maximum punishment being “twice three”, which was three strokes on each hand. He could not recall giving corporal punishment to boys outwith Lovat, and said that if it did happen “there must have been some sort of urgency about the situation”.⁷⁰⁸ He said that the cane was used “very seldom” by himself and others.⁷⁰⁹

When he did use the cane he would ask the boys “to bend over a table, put their hands on a table and bend over, and they would get, say, three strokes of the cane on their behind. That was through their normal clothing and you just hoped they hadn’t put some books down there in preparation”.⁷¹⁰ Benedict Seed said he did not witness any physical abuse of boys, and did not hear any reports of it.⁷¹¹ He said prefects could issue some forms of discipline, but could not issue physical punishment themselves.⁷¹² However, he could not recall telling them as much.

701 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2776-2777.

702 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2777.

703 Transcript, day 155: Closing submissions by Mr Reid on behalf of the English Benedictine Congregation, at TRN.001.006.4104.

704 Transcript, day 155: Closing submissions by Mr Reid on behalf of the English Benedictine Congregation, at TRN.001.006.4104.

705 Transcript, day 155: Closing submissions by Mr Reid on behalf of the English Benedictine Congregation, at TRN.001.006.4105.

706 Transcript, day 155: Closing submissions by Mr Reid on behalf of the English Benedictine Congregation, at TRN.001.006.4106.

707 See Appendix E.

708 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3807.

709 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3807.

710 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3808.

711 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3804-3816.

712 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3805-3806.

His view was that prefects: “picked up the unwritten code of discipline just by being through it in their junior years...it was so sort of firmly embedded in the sort of spirit of the school that...It wasn’t a problem.”⁷¹³ It is true that the prefects picked up the unwritten code of discipline at the schools, but that was a code which permitted, and even encouraged, dreadful physical violence against and bullying of the most vulnerable.

Father Colin Geddes joined the Benedictines in 1982.⁷¹⁴ He was at FA from 1988, becoming the housemaster of Vaughan House a couple of years later.⁷¹⁵ He said that when he joined the school in 1988, corporal punishment was still legal, and that the “tawse belt” was used at FA with its use having to be “entered into a register”.⁷¹⁶ He never saw anyone “abusing the children in any way” nor did he “hear of any allegations of abuse against them”.⁷¹⁷ He said the prefects were part of the governing body of the school, and while they had a degree of autonomy, they were not allowed to give any physical chastisement.⁷¹⁸ He did not have concerns about the operation of the prefect system or the behaviour of any member of staff—his concern being “about how the school could continue financially.”⁷¹⁹

Conclusions about physical abuse

I am satisfied that the regimes at CK and FA were ones where boys were regularly physically abused. Former pupils provided the Inquiry with clear and credible evidence of examples of that abuse. It went far above and beyond what ought to have been acceptable in any school or residential setting. The evidence consistently demonstrated that the Fort Augustus monks frequently did not recognise appropriate boundaries when purporting to punish children. These punishments constituted the physical abuse of children and subjected them to brutal assaults, often inflicting injury.

Bullying was rife in both schools, especially at FA. Monks were aware that bullying was prevalent. They failed to control the bullying; on the contrary, there was clear and credible evidence that bullying was encouraged.

The nature and extent of the physical abuse meant that many children at the schools lived in constant fear.

713 [Transcript, day 153](#): Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3806.

714 Written statement of Colin Geddes, paragraph 2, at WIT.001.002.7543.

715 Written statement of Colin Geddes, paragraphs 9 and 33, at WIT.001.002.7545 and 7550; [Transcript, day 154](#): read in statement of Colin Geddes, at TRN.001.006.3962.

716 [Transcript, day 154](#): read in statement of Colin Geddes, at TRN.001.006.3971.

717 [Transcript, day 154](#): read in statement of Colin Geddes, at TRN.001.006.3963.

718 [Transcript, day 154](#): read in statement of Colin Geddes, at TRN.001.006.3973.

719 [Transcript, day 154](#): read in statement of Colin Geddes, at TRN.001.006.3973.

Emotional abuse

Environments contaminated by sexual and physical abuse at CK and FA inevitably had an impact upon children's emotional well-being, which, for some, was both devastating and long-lasting. Emotional abuse was inherent in some of the physical abuse, such as the delayed punishments. It was inherent in some of the bullying. It was inherent in the habit some monks had of humiliating children.

Some children were "groomed" by monks, a practice involving manipulation and exploitation of their emotions. At CK and FA, children often felt isolated in the absence of loving carers, and the false comfort offered by paedophile monks created emotional conflicts that, for some, have persisted into adulthood.

Sean O'Donovan (FA 1961-65) attempted to commit suicide as a child because of his experiences at FA. He told the Inquiry about his suicide attempt at the school, and that he was only dissuaded from further attempts because of the excruciating pain he suffered when he stepped off a toilet with a rope around his neck, and the feeling that one of the monks who had been kind to him would have been badly affected by his death.⁷²⁰ After the monk's death, Sean dedicated a poem to his memory; it includes these lines: "The humblest of monks, dearest brother,

saved a frightened small child on that day. You gave me a gift like no other, such a gift I could never repay."⁷²¹ Kindness from the Fort Augustus monks was rare and generally lacking at both schools, but when it did emerge, it left an indelible mark.

However, on the whole, the Fort Augustus monks lacked any sensitivity for children's feelings; they lacked the capacity to care for children.

Whilst examples of emotional abuse can be found throughout these findings, what I set out below are a few further examples of how children were victims of emotional abuse.

Carlekemp Priory School

There were incidents that fuelled the regime of fear, such as the one that amounted to a public flogging of two boys.⁷²² It was a humiliating and painful experience for the victims, and it must also have been frightening for the audience of young children watching.⁷²³

The "kneeling out" practice at CK was emotionally abusive, being designed to instil fear into very young children awaiting punishment—kneeling as though in supplication, during the night, knowing that there would be no mercy, only the infliction of pain and resulting injury.

720 [Transcript, day 145](#): Sean O'Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2585-2586.

721 [Transcript, day 145](#): Sean O'Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2588.

722 [Transcript, day 151](#): "Ian", at TRN.001.006.3466-3468.

723 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3150-3151.

“The type of mistreatment I received varied widely... to a point where I could not be sure whether it was sexual, physical, psychological, emotional, verbal, social, cultural or even spiritual abuse.”

The lasting psychological impact of this “kneeling out” process should not be underestimated, with one applicant saying: “we very rarely wear [a] dressing gown and slippers these days because they bring back a memory of—dressing gown and slippers were the order of dress for receiving punishment.”⁷²⁴

The “ridiculing [of children] was a matter of course” at CK.⁷²⁵ Children’s tears, in front of the other children, did nothing to deter a monk from humiliating a child by subjecting him to a “great haranguing” in front of the whole school.⁷²⁶

The matron set out deliberately to humiliate a boy on one occasion. She held up the girls’ underpants his mother had bought as part of his uniform, instead of kilt trews, showing them to the other boys.⁷²⁷ She called a boy and his brother “charity cases”, because his school fees were paid as part of his father’s salary package: “Matron did not like [my brother] and I to forget this and constantly reminded us in front of the other pupils.”⁷²⁸ She also made the boy clean his classmates’ shoes.

Fort Augustus Abbey School

The culture of abuse at FA was summarised in this way: “The type of mistreatment I received varied widely. The abuse was mixed to a point where I could not be sure whether it was sexual, physical, psychological, emotional, verbal, social, cultural or even spiritual abuse.”⁷²⁹

“...sometimes the anticipation of getting the cane was worse than the actual cane”.

FA also promoted the practice of delayed punishment, with children regularly queueing outside monks’ rooms waiting for their beating. The anticipation of a beating could be worse than the beating itself. Lawrence Kelly saw Donald MacLeod with his hands in his pockets, and as punishment made him follow him around the school while he told him “come and get the cane boy” before ending back where they started and administering the cane: “sometimes the anticipation of getting the cane was worse than the actual cane, and this was why he did that, to put the fear of God into me.”⁷³⁰

724 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3151.

725 Transcript, day 145: Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2650.

726 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.001.2063.

727 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN0010062160-2161.

728 Transcript, day 143: read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2350.

729 Transcript, day 144: read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2492-2493.

730 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2860-2862.

Naked beatings, that were designed to inflict not only pain, but humiliation, were a feature of life at FA.

The practice of requiring boys to say “Thank you, Father” at the end of their beating was demeaning.⁷³¹

There was also little sympathy for children when, for example, they were ill or receiving bad news. A boy, who was in tears having been told that his brother had been killed in a road accident, was chided by Edward Delepine and threatened with being sent to the headmaster for punishment: “There was no one to console him or put an arm round him.”⁷³² Another boy, whose illness was characterised as a ruse, ended up in hospital with a real risk of his leg being amputated.⁷³³

Response to evidence about emotional abuse

In the concluding submissions on behalf of the EBC there was a general acceptance that “the core truth remains that pupils at both Carlekemp and Fort Augustus schools were subject to abuse and a schooling which robbed many of their childhoods. It has caused lasting damage to both the pupils and their families.”⁷³⁴

The EBC accept that the prevailing regimes at both CK and FA were abusive, and adversely impacted children’s emotional well-being.

Conclusions about emotional abuse

Children were emotionally abused at both schools, in a variety of ways. For some, the abuse suffered at school caused them lasting, debilitating harm. Many who went on to lead fulfilling lives, nevertheless, live with painful memories of this form of abuse.

731 [Transcript, day 144](#): read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2491.

732 [Transcript, day 144](#): read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2502-2503.

733 [Transcript, day 151](#): “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3485-3486.

734 Closing Submissions for the English Benedictine Congregation, at BEN-000000001, page 8.

7

Reporting

Most of the boys abused at CK and FA did not report the abuse at the time. There were various reasons for this including: that as children, they accepted the abuse as normal; they did not want to upset parents who were usually paying fees and often devout Catholics; there was nobody in whom they could confide; they feared that reporting would make things worse; and they feared they would not be believed. Another common theme was that as children, they simply did not have the language to explain the nature of the abuse, particularly sexual abuse. Some children did report the abuse, but a successful outcome was far from guaranteed. These reasons all, in the circumstances, make perfect sense.

Carlekemp Priory School

Reporting to parents by letter

Organised letter-writing to parents was a feature of life at CK, but children were not able to write about problems, such as abuse, because their letters were censored by the monks. The privacy of their letter writing was not respected.

The censoring process involved taking the letter to “the teacher or the monk supervising and the monk supervising read them through. So before you were finished...the letter was seen and approved.”⁷³⁵

On one occasion, Christopher Walls (CK 1955-58) managed to circumvent the system by posting an uncensored letter to his father in which he pled to be removed from the school. In later life, he discovered his father had responded by phoning the headmaster, Father Ethelbert McCoombes, who “had told my father that I was happy as a lintie and that he could see me playing outside as he was speaking...He told my father that it was momentary homesickness and that everything was okay. My father seemed to accept that. The beatings at school did not stop.”⁷³⁶ Christopher’s father ultimately, however, removed Christopher and his brother from CK in 1958.⁷³⁷

“You’d hand your letter in and a [monk or priest] would comment and say, ‘Your mother wouldn’t want to know that.’”

Boys’ letters home continued to be strictly censored throughout the 1960s and 1970s: “You’d hand your letter in and [a monk or priest] would comment and say, ‘Your mother wouldn’t want to know that.’”⁷³⁸ Also, boys like Hugh Russell (CK 1966-71) were under emotional pressure. He had the strong impression that he must not write saying he

735 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2054-2055.

736 Transcript, day 143: read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2356.

737 Transcript, day 143: read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2357-2358.

738 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3147.

“I was mentally, physically and sexually abused by priests...I could find no escape...I certainly could not tell my mother, she being a faithful Catholic. I am sure my father suspected something...but I had no vocabulary, lexicon or frame of reference in which to express my situation”.

was unhappy and wanted to go home because that would only upset his parents: “you don’t want to do that, so you just say something positive or something anodyne”.⁷³⁹

“Henrik” (CK 1969-72) wrote letters home in which he—apparently without internal censorship—told his parents of his concerns. However, when later he saw the letters at home, he discovered that parts of his letters had been redacted with explanations given such as “in the interests of clarity” and “appalling spelling we have decided to omit this”.⁷⁴⁰

Reporting directly to parents

Some children attempted to disclose some aspects of the abuse to their parents, whilst others did not. In all the circumstances, I am in no doubt that abusers were confident that their status as Benedictine monks would protect them from accusations of serious abuse being made or, if made, believed.

“Ian” (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75) did not complain because he did not want to upset his parents: “we did not [tell]. I did not and I’m sure my brother did not. We lived in India and in a place that seemed like paradise: a rural setting, a tea garden, a lovely house, an

ambience of love. That paradise contrasted so starkly with the school we were at...So we didn’t go into the nitty-gritty of what was happening at school unless there was good news to report because we didn’t want our parents to be sad.”⁷⁴¹

Hugh Russell (CK 1966-71) could not find the words, as a child, to explain what was happening to him, and, in any event, his mother’s devout Catholicism meant there was no question of him confiding in her: “Between the ages of 8 and 12 I was mentally, physically and sexually abused by priests...I could find no escape, locked as I was into the closed system of the Catholic faith...I certainly could not tell my mother, she being a faithful Catholic. I am sure that my father suspected something was seriously amiss but I had no vocabulary, lexicon or frame of reference in which to express my situation”.⁷⁴²

The assumptions made by devout Catholics meant that when “Henrik” (CK 1969-72) told his mother (whom he assumed also told his father) that boys were being “fiddled with” and that he was being “beaten”, “they didn’t want to believe it because they thought the Catholic Church didn’t behave like that. In the 1970s, nobody even thought that would

739 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3147.

740 [Transcript, day 144](#): “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2401.

741 [Transcript, day 151](#): “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3456-3457.

742 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3188-3189; see also [Written statement of Hugh Russell](#), paragraphs 56-58, at WIT.001.001.4585.

“...the culture at the school, was not to encourage a boy to open up and develop, it was to crush the spirit and to rebuild it maybe in some other image that is not of the boy’s own nature.”

be at all possible, it was just a stupid little boy who was obviously having problems at school and was making it all up, it was all rubbish. Nobody thought that [the monks] were capable of what they were doing.”⁷⁴³

Reporting at school

At CK, the normalisation of abuse made it even harder to report. It could be that the person to whom a boy might consider speaking to was himself an abuser. And there was a pervasive culture of silence that prevented children from disclosing abuse. Children did not dare to “clipe”: “There was a real culture of not telling. That was one of the worst crimes that you could commit among your peers, was telling on somebody who’d done something or whatever. You’d be called a clipe. And then the bullying got worse. Cliping was probably the worst sin you could commit.”⁷⁴⁴

“There was a real culture of not telling. That was one of the worst crimes that you could commit among your peers...You’d be called a clipe. And then the bullying got worse.”

Further, children simply felt unsupported: “It wasn’t in loco parentis in any sense. You very quickly realised that you were on your own in Carlekemp and perhaps even more so in Fort Augustus, that you had to fall back on your own resources. There wasn’t a sense that there was somebody you could go to and you could tell your worries to...you just got the sense that you’d come to a place where things were going to be challenging and you just had to match up to the challenge. Any call for help would be seen as weakness and you didn’t want to appear weak in front of your peers, so you learnt to cope.”⁷⁴⁵ “The whole school, the culture at the school, was not to encourage a boy to open up and develop, it was to crush the spirit and to rebuild it maybe in some other image that is not of the boy’s own nature. That’s my memory.”⁷⁴⁶

For a child brought up in the Catholic faith, the privacy of the confessional could have provided a sanctuary where they could disclose abuse. However, as happened to Hugh Russell (CK 1966-71), the confessor could be the child’s abuser. Hugh, instead of being listened to and supported, was blamed for the abuse, a process that “offload[ed] and reaffirm[ed] the guilt in yourself...it became ritualistic that you went and did your penance and then you made it through another week.”⁷⁴⁷ Priests abused

743 Transcript, day 144: “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2401-2402.

744 Transcript, day 142: David Walls, at TRN.001.006.2155.

745 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2059-2060.

746 Transcript, day 151: “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3473.

747 Transcript, day 148: Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3175.

their privilege of hearing confessions and the confessional became a shield for abusers.

“I never told anyone about [the sexual abuse by Aidan Duggan] at the time. I don’t think that I understood what was going on and I didn’t know what words to use to describe what was happening to me.”

Commonly, young children do not realise they are being abused, and abusers exploit their ignorance. Like Christopher Walls (CK 1955-58), they don’t understand what is happening to them: “I never told anyone about [the sexual abuse by Aidan Duggan] at the time. I don’t think that I understood what was going on and I didn’t know what words to use to describe what was happening to me.”⁷⁴⁸

Fort Augustus Abbey School

Reporting to parents by letter or telephone

The children at FA were older, and therefore could generally be thought to have been better equipped to report abuse. Nevertheless, similar to CK, letter writing was strictly controlled, with letters censored by the monks. Letters to parents had to be left in an unsealed envelope.⁷⁴⁹ If the particular monk supervising the letter-writing process did not approve of what was written, it would be crossed out.⁷⁵⁰

There was a telephone, at least in the later period, that boys could use to phone home, but access to it was limited, so boys had to queue to use the phone.⁷⁵¹ There was “a real problem with trying to communicate out of the school.”⁷⁵² With only one telephone available to the boys: “we only had the break times, which were about 15 minutes, to use them. You couldn’t use them after your last study.”⁷⁵³

Reporting directly to parents

Many children did not tell their parents about the abuse at FA: “It was stiff upper lip...you just didn’t do it. I don’t think anybody did. My mother would never have believed anything bad or negative about the holy monks—most Catholic mothers of that time wouldn’t have either. I have heard other boys say exactly the same.”⁷⁵⁴ “Harry” disclosed that he had never before spoken to anyone other than his wife about his experiences at either school.⁷⁵⁵

“My mother would never have believed anything bad or negative about the holy monks – most Catholic mothers of that time wouldn’t”.

Some parents were blinded by devotion to the Catholic Church and absolute trust in the integrity of the monks. Typical of such circumstances was what happened when “Maxwell” (FA 1970-74) reported being

748 Transcript, day 143: read in statement of Christopher Walls, at TRN.001.006.2353-2354.

749 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2856.

750 Transcript, day 144: “Jean”, at TRN.001.006.2453.

751 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2767-2768.

752 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2767.

753 Transcript, day 146: “Duncan”, at TRN.001.006.2767.

754 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2119.

755 Transcript, day 142: “Harry”, at TRN.001.006.2124-2125.

“The disbelief that anything had happened to us was very hurtful. When your parents don’t believe you it knocks you around. That is a big thing in any relationship.”

cruelly treated to his parents: “My mother was a devout Catholic who would not believe that men of God could do such things...she used to dismiss it outright. My mother would say I was making it up or I was a liar. Often there was proof, marks or bruises...The disbelief that anything had happened to us was very hurtful. When your parents don’t believe you it knocks you around. That is a big thing in any relationship. After a while you don’t want to say too much to your parents because you know what they will say.”⁷⁵⁶

“Michael” (FA 1973-77) did not report the sexual abuse by William Owen to his parents because he: “had no idea really how to deal with what had happened and I kind of filed it. I couldn’t deal with it, I didn’t know how to deal with it...We didn’t have the language then. I wouldn’t have known how to explain to my parents what had happened...I was possibly a bit concerned that they might think that I’d instigated it and in some way it was my fault. I didn’t know how to deal with it, didn’t know who to turn to, so I didn’t.”⁷⁵⁷

Some boys reported bullying by other boys to their parents with mixed success. Sean O’Donovan (FA 1961-65) complained to his parents about the bullying he was suffering. It was reported to the headmaster who, it appears, did nothing: “My father complained to the headmaster who did absolutely

nothing, apart from telling my father he had stopped it all. He hadn’t.”⁷⁵⁸

“Michael” (FA 1973-77) told his father about bullying. His father reported it to the housemaster: “I contacted my father, I phoned him, when I got to a point where I couldn’t take it any more and told him what had happened. He just said to leave it with him.”⁷⁵⁹ Soon afterwards his housemaster, Father Vincent Pirie Watson, called “Michael” in and told him he was going to deal with it, and the bullying stopped. Michael explained that “there were no repercussions and none of the boys involved knew that I had made that phone call...[Vincent Pirie Watson] was quite strict and could be quite intimidating and I suspect he laid down the law and people listened.”⁷⁶⁰

Reporting at school

Many boys did not report abuse to anyone within FA. Some did not understand what was happening to them at the time, others accepted it as normal, and some did not feel there was anyone to whom they could speak about it. As in CK, a culture of silence prevailed. Housemasters were, largely, unapproachable. Some children did report abuse to monks, including headmasters.

Desmond Austin (CK 1955-58, FA 1958-62) did not report the abuse. He thought it was

756 Transcript, day 144: “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2507-2510.

757 Transcript, day 148: “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.3065.

758 Transcript, day 145: Sean O’Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2581.

759 Transcript, day 148: “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.3049-3050.

760 Transcript, day 148: “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.3049-3050.

a normal part of school life and, in any event, he did not know who he would tell: "I mean I had no idea what was going on in other schools so, yes, we just accepted that as what happened in schools...There was nobody that was pointed out to us that we could go to...nobody."⁷⁶¹

"Harry" (CK 1954-59, FA 1959-64) "would have never dared" to report abuse to anyone in authority at the school.⁷⁶² They were just expected to cope: "There would have been nobody [at the school] that I would have felt confident raising a concern with...I would have felt that that would be a sign of weakness to go to anybody and I don't think such counselling or pastoring or whatever was really offered to you. I think the expectation was that you would simply cope with whatever was thrown at you and you'd keep a stiff upper lip and be a good chap and so on and so forth."⁷⁶³

"...my housemaster, was really there to ensure that the school ran properly, the house ran properly, that discipline was meted out. He wasn't approachable, you couldn't go and have a chat with him."

"Michael" (FA 1970-74) would not have known how to talk to his housemaster, Vincent Pirie Watson, about the sexual abuse by William Owen. As far as "Michael" was

concerned, "the housemasters, or certainly my housemaster, was really there to ensure that the school ran properly, the house ran properly, that discipline was meted out. He wasn't approachable, you couldn't go and have a chat with him."⁷⁶⁴ Furthermore, as his abuser was a respected member of the staff, he "was very concerned that no one would take [him] seriously."⁷⁶⁵

When "Maxwell" (FA 1970-74) confided in a monk (who had been brought into the school during a religious retreat) about the beatings, he was told "to pray for the monks who were beating [him] so that the beatings would become less painful."⁷⁶⁶ That response is breathtaking, but also demonstrative of the Order's inability to look after the children for whom they were responsible.

Some specific instances of sexual abuse being reported at Fort Augustus Abbey School

Father Douglas Aidan Duggan

On the day that Donald MacLeod (FA 1961-65) was raped by Aidan Duggan, he began telling the headmaster, Augustine Grene, about it, but the man flew into a rage. He accused Donald of lying, and told him "it was a mortal sin to lie about a priest and... [Donald] would go to eternal damnation."⁷⁶⁷ Augustine Grene pulled Donald's trousers down, but did not cane him.⁷⁶⁸

Donald had the impression that some of the other monks knew something had been said against Aidan Duggan: "[T]here were some monks that were very kindly...Father

761 Transcript, day 145: Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2670-2671.

762 Transcript, day 142: "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2119.

763 Transcript, day 142: "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2120.

764 Transcript, day 148: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.3074.

765 Transcript, day 148: "Michael", at TRN.001.006.3066.

766 Transcript, day 144: "Maxwell", at TRN.001.006.2508.

767 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2873.

768 Transcript, day 146: Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2873.

[Delepine]...He was terribly kind to me after that", which was out of character for him.⁷⁶⁹

During the Christmas holidays, Donald told his parents about some aspects of the sexual abuse. He told his mother about Aidan Duggan putting his hand on his knee, but not about the rape. His mother told him "not [to] lie because...Her belief [was] that priests just were holy men and just wouldn't do that sort of thing."⁷⁷⁰

Donald's mother, however, contacted Augustine Grene; it is clear that she at least mentioned that Donald had made a complaint. On his return from holiday, Donald was summoned to see Augustine Grene, who accused him of lying to his parents and punished him for so doing by caning him.⁷⁷¹ A headmaster caning a 14-year-old boy for reporting sexual abuse was a serious dereliction of duty. From the point of view of a child in Donald's position, it was an endorsement of the abuse.

Shortly after that, Aidan Duggan "disappeared" from FA.⁷⁷² It appears that he returned in 1965, shortly before Donald left the school, but Donald had very little to do with him.⁷⁷³

No report was made to the police at the time. Donald felt that "if they had gone to the police at the time, in my particular case [F]ather Aidan would have been prosecuted and if he had been found guilty, it would all

have died...By 'died' I meant he would have been found guilty...He would not have gone on to abuse other boys".⁷⁷⁴ The incident also seems not to have been disclosed to the Catholic authorities in Australia at the time of Aidan Duggan's transfer to the parish of Bass Hill in Sydney in 1974. If that information had been communicated the sexual abuse of other children may have been prevented.

Father Denis Chrysostom Alexander

Hugo Kennedy (FA 1974-76) was sexually abused by Denis Alexander. Hugo reported the sexual abuse to the headmaster, Father Francis Davidson, because he realised that what had happened was wrong. Francis Davidson was "quite dismissive...I felt as though I was in the wrong for telling him... He was very dismissive of it. Nothing actually happened after I told him, nothing happened at all."⁷⁷⁵

Denis Alexander then left FA to return to Australia for a period of time. Hugo heard that another boy had also made a similar report to Francis Davidson.⁷⁷⁶ The Fort Augustus Chronicles record that in October 1975 Father Chrysostom sets off to see his parents in Australia, Fr Francis [Davidson] will fill his place as Junior-House master".⁷⁷⁷ Other records show that Denis Alexander returned to FA in February 1976.⁷⁷⁸ I find that Denis Alexander was removed from FA for a period in 1975 following the

769 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2875.

770 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2877.

771 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2878.

772 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2878-2879.

773 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2886.

774 [Transcript, day 146](#): Donald MacLeod, at TRN.001.006.2891-2892.

775 [Transcript, day 147](#): Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2921.

776 [Transcript, day 147](#): Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2921-2922.

777 *Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996*, October 1975, at BEN.001.001.4408.

778 Letter from Denis Chrysostom Alexander to Father Abbot, 9 February, 1976, at BEN.001.003.5991; *Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996*, at BEN.001.001.4420-4421; [Transcript, day 147](#): Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2923.

disclosure to Francis Davidson by Hugo, and possibly another boy, but that he was allowed to return after a period. He did so notwithstanding the fact that he was a known risk to children.

As well as reporting to Francis Davidson, Hugo also told his stepmother of the abuse by Denis Alexander. At some stage after he came back from Australia, Denis Alexander visited Hugo's stepmother, and "he... convinced her there was nothing to worry about, and [Hugo] was sent back to the school."⁷⁷⁹

Denis Alexander went on to sexually abuse "Peter" (FA 1976-81). "Peter" made a number of reports to different people about the abuse. He told Vincent Pirie Watson he had been sexually abused by Denis Alexander. The response was: "He just smirked at me."⁷⁸⁰ "Peter" told a priest attached to the school, in confession, about the abuse: "I just said that [Denis Alexander] made me suck his cock and he sucked my cock...I told him [Denis Alexander] had done it but he said he didn't want to know and he told me to leave."⁷⁸¹

"Peter" told his parents during the next holiday period about some of the sexual abuse by Denis Alexander: "I told them that he'd sucked me off, but I didn't tell them the rest."⁷⁸² This disclosure prompted a train

of events: "Peter's" father phoned Francis Davidson. He also wrote to Francis Davidson, and although the letter is dated April 1976, the correct date is likely to have been April 1977. The letter reads that "I consider ["Peter"] should tell you in his own words how this happened...The victim in this kind of case can always be...felt to be in some way responsible. I'm not suggesting this is your viewpoint...there is a medical aspect to consider...I must ask you to confirm that Fr Chrysostom is free from any infection".⁷⁸³

"Peter" had blood tests and a physical examination by a doctor "to see if he'd had any sexually transmitted infection".⁷⁸⁴ The doctor wrote to Francis Davidson in April 1977 saying, "I am pleased to inform that the tests are all negative and therefore ["Peter"] is not suffering from any infection."⁷⁸⁵

"Peter" and his parents had a meeting with Francis Davidson at FA.⁷⁸⁶ In the interim Francis Davidson had spoken with Denis Alexander, and at the meeting Francis Davidson suggested to "Peter's" parents that "Peter" may have enjoyed what went on. "Peter's" father was furious at this suggestion and shouted at Francis Davidson. "Peter" was asked to leave the room, but he could hear what was being said from the corridor. Francis Davidson was heard to say that

779 [Transcript, day 147](#): Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2922-2923.

780 [Transcript, day 147](#): "Peter", at TRN.001.006.3006.

781 [Transcript, day 147](#): "Peter", at TRN.001.006.3007.

782 [Transcript, day 147](#): "Peter", at TRN.001.006.3018.

783 Letter from "Peter's" father to Father Francis Davidson, at PSS.001.003.6511; Transcript of letter, at INQ.001.004.2690; [Transcript, day 148](#): "Jane", at TRN.001.006.3094-3096.

784 [Transcript, day 148](#): "Jane", at TRN.001.006.3100.

785 Letter from Dr JM Hamilton to Father Davidson, April 1977, at PSS.001.003.6510; Transcript of letter, at INQ.001.004.2689; [Transcript, day 148](#): "Jane", at TRN.001.006.3096-3100.

786 Documents produced to the Inquiry both claim that Francis Davidson did not attend a meeting with "Peter's" parents about the abuse perpetrated by Denis Alexander, but they lack credibility. Dom Yeo correctly points out that Francis Davidson knew that abuse had taken place, but he was overly generous in suggesting that Francis Davidson may have been mistaken when he claimed that he had not been at the meeting. See Letter from Pannone to Dom Yeo, 28 August 2013, at BEN.001.002.0106; Letter from Brian Rayner to Dom Yeo, 28 October 2004, at BEN.001.002.0313, and [Transcript, day 149](#): Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3252.

“Peter” should stay at the school because if he “went to another school, these things would spread because other people would get to know that [he had] been abused through the grapevine.”⁷⁸⁷ Francis Davidson told “Peter” and his parents that Denis Alexander had been removed from the school and had gone back to Australia.⁷⁸⁸ The records suggest that he left in April 1977.⁷⁸⁹

Following the meeting with Francis Davidson, there was a separate meeting held in the cloisters of the abbey attended by “Peter”, his parents, Francis Davidson, Abbot Nicholas Holman, and a number of other priests. “Peter” had understood the purpose of that meeting was for him to receive an apology, but that did not happen. The allegations were briefly discussed, and “Peter” understood that those in attendance were aware of the allegations. There was no mention of police involvement.⁷⁹⁰

“Peter” remained at the school, but received no support in relation to what had happened, despite the fact that the majority of the school heard about it, and his life became plagued by the bullying I have described in [Chapter 4](#).⁷⁹¹

Although the matter was reported to the headmaster, Francis Davidson, and to Abbot Nicholas Holman, a report was not made to the police. According to “Peter’s” sister,

“Jane”, the school had made that a condition of him being allowed to return: “mum recalls that it was a condition of Peter’s return that they allowed it to be dealt with internally and didn’t go to the police...I think that was the agreement. I think that’s what they were advised to do and recommended to do...I don’t know the conversations that took place.”⁷⁹²

Denis Alexander wrote a letter of apology to “Peter’s” parents from Australia.⁷⁹³ The letter is undated, but “Peter” assumes it was written in the academic year after the abuse took place, which was 1977. He found the letter in his father’s safe and ripped it up. Unbeknown to “Peter”, his father recovered it and taped it back together, something “Peter” discovered many years later. “Peter” was angry that Denis Alexander wrote to his parents. “I was angry...that he’d written to my mum, and dad...Trying to say he apologises for the incidents...I think he clearly admits that the abuse took place.”⁷⁹⁴

Failure to inform

After his return to Australia in 1977, Denis Alexander remained attached to the community at Fort Augustus. However, many years later, in 1999, he was dispensed from his monastic vows, and by arrangement with the Archdiocese of Sydney he became a priest in that Archdiocese.⁷⁹⁵

787 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at at TRN.001.006.3020-3021.

788 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3022.

789 *Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996*, at BEN.001.001.4454; [Transcript, day 149](#): Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3239.

790 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3023-3024.

791 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3024.

792 [Transcript, day 148](#): “Jane”, at TRN.001.006.3103.

793 Letter from Denis Chrysostom Alexander to “Peter’s” parents, at PSS.001.004.1787; typed letter from Denis Chrysostom Alexander to “Peter’s” parents, at WIT.003.002.3098.

794 [Transcript, day 147](#): “Peter”, at TRN.001.006.3026-3032.

795 [Transcript, day 149](#): Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3242-3244.

In 2013, through his involvement in the “Sins of Our Fathers” programme, Dom Yeo became aware that the Archdiocese of Sydney had not been told about Denis Alexander having abused children. By letter, dated 25 July 2013 to Cardinal George Pell (the then diocesan archbishop), Dom Yeo acknowledged that the Archdiocese of Sydney had never been told that Denis Alexander had been “accused of the sexual abuse of minors” and he apologised for that omission.⁷⁹⁶

In 1998, when the monastery was no longer viable, Francis Davidson, by then the Prior Administrator, had in fact arranged for Denis Alexander’s acceptance into the Archdiocese of Sydney. He also wrote to Cardinal Pell in August 2013 acknowledging that he, too, had omitted to mention Denis Alexander’s record of sexual abuse, and offered “a sincere apology” for that omission.⁷⁹⁷

The stark truth is that a confessed child abuser was allowed to return to his home country and to continue to work in a position where he had access to children.

Response to evidence about reporting

Those monks to whom reports of serious abuse were made, in particular headmasters Augustine Grene and Francis Davidson, and also Abbot Nicholas Holman, are deceased. The monks and lay teachers who gave evidence said that no reports of abuse by boys were made directly to them.

Colin Geddes (FA 1988-92) “never received any report from pupils or staff suggesting any physical assault or abuse...If [he] had received such a report, [he] would have reported the matter to the headmaster.”⁷⁹⁸ Seamus Coleman (FA 1986-93) said that “[a]t no time did I have a boy speak to me about being abuse[d]. Likewise, I didn’t hear about anyone going to another teacher about being abused, although that would have been confidential anyway.”⁷⁹⁹ Benedict Seed (FA 1983-88) said that “nobody ever came to me complaining they were being bullied or abused.”⁸⁰⁰ He accepted that the housemaster ought to have been the first “port of call” if a boy was being abused. He considered himself and the other housemasters (himself in Lovat, Vincent Pirie Watson in Vaughan and Denis Alexander in the junior house) approachable: “you were always available in your office, in your room. I think we were approachable, yes.”⁸⁰¹

The submissions made on behalf of the EBC contradict that contention: “The evidence from [Benedict Seed] that he and the other housemasters were ‘approachable’ is not credible.”⁸⁰² The concession was well made.

796 Letter from Dom Richard Yeo to Cardinal George Pell, 25 July 2013, at BEN.001.002.0288.

797 Letter from Francis Davidson to Cardinal George Pell, 17 August 2013, at BEN.001.004.0959.

798 Transcript, day 154: Colin Geddes, at TRN.001.006.3974.

799 Transcript, day 154: Seamus Coleman, at TRN.001.006.3997-3998.

800 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3817.

801 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3817.

802 Written submission on behalf of English Benedictine Congregation, at BEN-000000001, page 3.

Conclusions about reporting

Many of the boys abused at CK and FA did not report what was happening to them at the time. Some felt they should accept their lot and keep “a stiff upper lip”. Some considered there was no one at the schools they could safely report to. Some did not want to upset their parents, while others were of the view that their parents would not believe them. In some instances they were proved right—devout-Catholic parents were blinded by their faith in the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, some boys did report the abuse at the schools to parents and to monks, including headmasters. Some serious reports by children, which called for investigation, were not taken seriously or investigated. In some cases, action was taken, usually moving the monk on, sometimes to return after a period. None of the reports of serious abuse made to headmasters, including rape, were passed to the police at the time. The failures by the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey to respond to allegations of abuse in a manner designed to protect children exposed to abuse was serious and systemic. It exposed children to further abuse.

8

Reflections

As in other case study findings, some applicants and other witnesses offered thoughtful and insightful reflections. In doing so, applicants have been prepared—in the public interest—to disclose highly personal information, sometimes for the first time. A consistent message is their genuine hope that children of the future will not suffer similar abuse. Further, in doing so, they are not seeking vengeance.

Below are extracts from some of these reflections.

No compassion

Monks and teachers lacked compassion. Sean O'Donovan (FA 1961-65) remembered how, during Mass, they used to sing a hymn with the refrain "Jesus Lord. I cry for mercy. Let me not implore in vain".⁸⁰³ He then went to say that "[a]t Fort Augustus, we implored in vain because there was no mercy".⁸⁰⁴ This lack of compassion was also identified by other applicants.

Impact on adult lives

Neglect and abuse in childhood is likely to have long term consequences: "Every child needs to be valued for whatever, just for being who they are even, and the failure to value children means that they don't value

themselves. This causes problems in their lives for them and these problems can lead to all sorts of damage and unhappiness."⁸⁰⁵ Such failures can be destructive: "These people shattered the self-belief boys had in themselves or didn't allow it to sprout and develop into people who are confident... in themselves."⁸⁰⁶ They can also, though, it has to be recognised, have some positive impact. "Harry" (CK 1954-59) had a career in teaching and regarded it as a "mission to right the wrongs of Fort Augustus".⁸⁰⁷

"Every child needs to be valued for whatever, just for being who they are... and the failure to value children means that they don't value themselves."

A major theme was that having experienced abuse at school, applicants found that not only was their ability to trust others destroyed, but also their relationships with their own families were harmed; the latter was a consequence described as "unforgivable".⁸⁰⁸ When children complained to parents and were not believed, that "disbelief was hurtful".⁸⁰⁹

803 Transcript, day 145: Sean O'Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2641.

804 Transcript, day 145: Sean O'Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2641.

805 Transcript, day 142: "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2123-2124.

806 Transcript, day 151: "Ian", at TRN 001.006.3501.

807 Transcript, day 142: "Harry", at TRN.001.006.2124.

808 Transcript, day 151: "Ian", at TRN.001.006.3502.

809 Transcript, day 144: read in statement of "Maxwell", at TRN.001.006.2510.

“In my testimony I hope to validate the experiences of others, who like my own brother, find it impossible to share their experiences”.

“Stuart” (CK 1969-73, FA 1973-unknown) was sexually abused by “Andrew Jones”. His sister “Jean” saw how that abuse destroyed her brother’s sense of trust. His alcohol abuse “was his only method of keeping that pain at bay. It was the only thing he had left to do.”⁸¹⁰ He took his own life in adulthood.

Like many others, “Ian” (CK 1967-73, FA 1973-75) wanted to be sure that the Inquiry was fully aware that victims of abuse, such as his brother, find it very hard to articulate that abuse, even as adults: “In my testimony I hope to validate the experiences of others, who like my own brother, find it impossible to share their experiences”.⁸¹¹

A legacy of the regimes at CK and FA is that much of the “human potential” that they could have nurtured and inspired was “shattered”, a consequence that had an impact not only on the individuals themselves, but also on their families.⁸¹²

Catholicism and faith

The abuse impacted not only on long-term physical and mental health, but also, for many individuals, their faith. Disillusionment with the Catholic faith seems to have been commonly attributed to having been

abused by the Fort Augustus monks. Hugh Russell (CK 1966-71) felt it had “killed [him] spiritually”.⁸¹³

The stark contrast between an outlook and value system that included taking fearful children from their beds in the dark and subjecting them to the “kneeling out” process, yet included the perpetrators regularly “singing hymns and celebrating Christ”, was “abhorrent” to “Henrik” (CK 1969-72).⁸¹⁴ It left him “very critical of value systems and ideologies of any sort.”⁸¹⁵

Hugh Russell (CK 1966-71) offered some very powerful reflections, provoked by a priest who is reported as having frankly said that he “used confession to clean the slate”.⁸¹⁶ In response, Hugh invoked these words of Pope Francis: “To those who abuse minors, I say this: convert and hand yourselves over to human justice and prepare for divine justice.”⁸¹⁷ Confession affords the abuser’s victims neither solace nor future protection, and Hugh added that: “The church must recognise that this repeating cycle of abuse, confession, absolution, back to abuse is unforgiving and inexcusable.”⁸¹⁸ Whilst he could live with a Catholic priest who was an abuser receiving absolution, proper

810 [Transcript, day 144](#): “Jean”, at TRN.001.006.2470.

811 [Written statement of “Ian”](#), at WIT.001.002.8475; see also [Transcript, day 151](#): “Ian”, at TRN.001.006.3500.

812 [Written statement of “Ian”](#), at WIT.001.002.8475.

813 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3200.

814 [Transcript, day 144](#): “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2408.

815 [Transcript, day 144](#): “Henrik”, at TRN.001.006.2408.

816 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell at TRN.001.006.3197; see also Marie Keenan, *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church: Gender, Power, and Organizational Culture* (2011), Oxford: OUP.

817 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3198.

818 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3197.

contrition ought, he suggested, to also involve the abuser handing themselves over to the human justice, saying “right, I’m sorry enough to go to prison.”⁸¹⁹

A Judge of the Court of Appeal of England and Wales, Sir Charles Haddon-Cave, gave a speech at the “Piper 25” Oil and Gas Conference on 19 June 2013 entitled “Leadership and Culture, Principles and Professionalism, Simplicity and Safety-Lessons from the Nimrod Review”.⁸²⁰ Hugh Russell became familiar with it in relation to a matter of training design policy for the military and its implementation. He was particularly struck by the advice that, to be effective, any safety culture must question assumptions and must recognise the importance of simplicity, the latter having been captured in these terms by E.F. Schumacher: “Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex and more violent. It takes a touch of genius and a lot of courage, to move in the opposite direction.”⁸²¹ Thus, Hugh feels strongly that it was wrong to assume that a Catholic priest or monk could be absolutely trusted because of their status and, further, that the complexity of the catechism, running to “thousands of paragraphs of unnuanced direction” operated so as to provide a comfort blanket for priests whilst, at the same time, validating their absolute power.⁸²²

After having given evidence, Hugh Russell wrote to me in October 2019. He drew on something Pope Francis had said that month about “clericalism”: “Clericalism arises from an elitist and exclusivist vision of vocation, that interprets the ministry received as a *power* to be exercised rather than a free and generous *service* to be given”.⁸²³ “*Clericalism is a perversion and is the root of many evils in the Church*: we must humbly ask forgiveness for this and above all create the conditions so that it is not repeated”.⁸²⁴ However, it is clear to me that the Fort Augustus monks subscribed to the form of clericalism denounced by Pope Francis, and they used their positions of power to abuse children entrusted into their care.

Encouraging others

Many applicants hoped that, by coming forward to the Inquiry, other victims of abuse would be encouraged to come forward. As “Michael” (FA 1977-84) commented: “If we can all chip into the inquiry then I hope it can help all of us collectively rather than individually.”⁸²⁵

Allied to that call for help was the need to promote public awareness of the nature and extent of abuse, to instruct the nation’s conscience so that lessons could be learned.

819 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3198.

820 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3193-3194. See Speech by The Hon. Sir Charles Haddon-Cave, 19 June 2013, “Leadership & Culture, Principles & Professionalism, Simplicity & Safety—Lessons from the Nimrod Review”, at WIT.003.001.4966. The review investigated the loss of a Nimrod helicopter and its entire crew of 14, on a mission over Helmand Province in Afghanistan.

821 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3193-3194.

822 [Transcript, day 148](#): Hugh Russell, at TRN.001.006.3193-3194.

823 [Address by His Holiness Pope Francis at the Opening of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment](#), 3 October 2018, as cited by Hugh Russell’s letter to SCAI, 31 October 2019, at WIT-3-000000342, p.3. Emphasis in the original.

824 [Address by His Holiness Pope Francis at the Opening of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment](#), 3 October 2018, as cited by Hugh Russell’s letter to SCAI, 31 October 2019, at WIT-3-000000342, p.3. Emphasis in the original.

825 [Transcript, day 148](#): “Michael”, at TRN.001.006.3076.

“I wish to help...future generations to learn about the nasty practices of the past and to show that such acts of evil are capable of being committed by apparently pious men in positions of trust, right under our noses”.

For “Maxwell” (FA 1960-64) the answer to the question “What is the purpose of coming forward to this inquiry?” generated this unequivocal answer: “There is a purpose. I believe the truth about what happened must be exposed. It is important to send a signal out to others about this unacceptable conduct. This will be a deterrent and provide some sort of redress for the victims. Exposure like this can also help to change our world towards a better place...I wish to help towards providing an opportunity for future generations to learn about the nasty practices of the past and to show that such acts of evil are capable of being committed by apparently pious men in positions of trust, right under our noses”.⁸²⁶

The EBC

As I mentioned earlier, Abbot Geoffrey Scott listened to many days of evidence. The experience of listening to applicants affected him personally.⁸²⁷ He assured me that the apology he made on behalf of the EBC was “from the heart.”⁸²⁸

In [Chapter 6](#) I referred to Sean O’Donovan’s suicide attempt, and the poem he dedicated to one of the monks. Here is a further extract from it in which he captures the path that the monks *should* have taken: “In all my life, in all the miles I have travelled, amongst all the people I have met, spoken to, heard of, read about, never have I met a man who so wholly and totally embodied the teachings of Christ.”⁸²⁹

826 [Transcript, day 144](#): read in statement of “Maxwell”, at TRN.001.006.2513.

827 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3926.

828 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3926.

829 [Transcript, day 145](#): Sean O’Donovan, at TRN.001.006.2588.

As part of its investigations in this case study, SCAI requested and recovered documents from a number of sources. The Inquiry is grateful for the diligent input and invaluable assistance provided in this regard, in particular by the EBC, and also by others who were issued with notices in terms of Section 21 of the Inquiries Act 2005.

The Fort Augustus Abbey archive

Fort Augustus Abbey held its own archive prior to its closure. That archive contained documents relating to the abbey itself, CK, and FA.⁸³⁰

In 1986, Abbot President Geoffrey Scott was sent to Fort Augustus by the English Benedictine History Commission to inspect the disposition of the historical collections at the Fort Augustus Archive.⁸³¹ The History Commission was “concerned that...

Fort Augustus was always so remote and monks, members of the community, rarely came to meetings. It was a sort of fortress separated from the rest of the Benedictine world, really.”⁸³² The History Commission’s concern was influenced by the fact that there were important historical records at Fort Augustus.⁸³³

Abbot Geoffrey described what he found during his visit: “It was a bit shocking, really, because [the records] were housed in a sort of stone cellar, which archivally is very, very bad for archives because of damp, et cetera. But nevertheless, they were there.”⁸³⁴ At that time, Abbot Geoffrey’s interest was not in the school, but in the historical collections.⁸³⁵ Nonetheless, he remembered “how little there was in it regarding the school. It was predominantly an historic monastic collection.”⁸³⁶ Some of the historical records went back centuries, with some medieval material.⁸³⁷ Abbot Geoffrey explained: “[t]his is a tiny, declining community, and their priorities are not archival collection, they come down lower, I’m afraid, in the order of priorities. Therefore, as things declined [at] Fort Augustus, the care of the archives didn’t receive massive attention.”⁸³⁸

Closure of the monastery in 1999

When the monastery closed in 1999, the Trustees of St Benedict’s Abbey, Fort Augustus, transferred the whole archive to the care of the English Benedictine Trust. The ownership of the archive was formally transferred when St Benedict’s Abbey Trust

830 Letter from Clyde & Co to SCAI, 12 October 2018, at BEN.001.001.1931.

831 [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 7, at BEN.001.004.4358.

832 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3909.

833 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3909.

834 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3909-3910.

835 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3910.

836 [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 10, at BEN.001.004.4359.

837 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3911.

838 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3910.

was dissolved in 2011. After the closure of the monastery, the archive was initially kept at the Scottish Catholic Archives at Columba House in Edinburgh, where it was sorted and catalogued by Dr Christine Johnson, keeper of the Scottish Catholic Archives.⁸³⁹ In 2001, the annalist of the EBC and the prior administrator of Fort Augustus visited Columba House to decide on the future of the archives.⁸⁴⁰ During that visit they noted that: "The Collection consists of 240 separate files all now clearly listed with abstracts of which each contains and a large collection of photographs. It consists of about 19 yards of shelves kept in cupboards in the basement of Columba House."⁸⁴¹

Following from this visit, the archive was split and held in two places. The majority of the archive was held with the EBC archive and stored at Downside Abbey. The archive at Downside Abbey consisted of materials that related to the monastery such as records of council meetings, chapter meetings, scholarly works, and a certain amount of material going back to the 17th century.⁸⁴²

Other documents "more concerned with Scottish history" remained at Columba House.⁸⁴³ Amongst the documents that remained in Scotland "were the personal files of employees and of school pupils. Some of

these files contain sensitive personal material such as personal problems, people in trouble with the police, medical matters, etc."⁸⁴⁴

In 2013, due to the poor conditions at Columba House, discussions were had about where the FA files stored in Edinburgh should be kept.⁸⁴⁵ On 23 October 2013, "21 metre length crates, 15 pack I cartons and 2 pack III cartons" were collected from Edinburgh and delivered to Downside Abbey.⁸⁴⁶

Abbot President Christopher Jamison explained that: "After the closure of the monastery the archive was initially kept at the Scottish Catholic Archives at Columba House in Edinburgh, but from 2013 the archives have been split and held in two places. Since 2013 the majority of the archive has been held within the Congregation's Archive that is stored at Downside Abbey. Other documents have been stored at the offices of our Scottish solicitors...It was intended that records relating to the Fort Augustus Abbey School would be kept in Edinburgh to make it easier for our solicitors to respond to requests for information from former pupils. However, unfortunately no record of what exactly stored at Downside Abbey and what was retained in Edinburgh was made at the time of the archive being split."⁸⁴⁷

839 The Archives of Fort Augustus, at BEN.001.004.0385. The Archives were transferred to Columba House in April 1999. See Letter from Dr Christine Johnson to Dom Philip Jebb, 31 March 2000, at BEN.001.004.0401.

840 The Archives of Fort Augustus, at BEN.001.004.0385. The annalist of the EBC is responsible for monitoring the archival collections of the various monasteries, and provides advice on how this should be kept. See [written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), paragraph 7, at BEN.001.004.4358.

841 The Archives of Fort Augustus, at BEN.001.004.0385.

842 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4542-4544.

843 The Archives of Fort Augustus, at BEN.001.004.0385-0386.

844 Letter from Dr Christine Johnson to Father Francis Davidson, 28 March 2001, at BEN.001.004.0395.

845 Letter from Dom Richard Yeo, 3 July 2013, at BEN.001.004.0414.

846 Transport Note, 24 October 2013, at BEN.001.004.0425.

847 Statement of Abbot Christopher Jamison, at BEN.001.001.5750.

Inventories of the archive

Several inventories were produced of the archive at different times. In particular, a detailed inventory of the archive was produced by Dr Johnson in around 2000/01.⁸⁴⁸ A less detailed finding aide, with brief information about the boxes contained in the archive, was also produced on 26 June 2000.⁸⁴⁹

Abbot President Christopher Jamison explained that the inventories did not reflect the materials now contained in the archive. The EBC are aware that some documents are missing from the archive; searches of the Downside Abbey were undertaken in an attempt to locate the missing materials, but without any success.⁸⁵⁰

Abbot Geoffrey explained that not all the material listed in Dr Johnson's handwritten index remains in the archive. He presumed that material have been lost over time.⁸⁵¹

Because of the problems generated by the mismanagement of archival materials, and the need for the EBC to respond properly to SCAI's legal request for documents, the EBC transported the archive held at Downside to their Edinburgh solicitors for searches to be undertaken to assist SCAI.⁸⁵² Members of the Inquiry team attended the solicitors' offices to assist in that exercise.

Files relating to the schools

Abbot Geoffrey told SCAI that there are relatively few, and in any event incomplete, files for FA and that: "there does not seem to have been any systematic attempt to create or retain files on teaching staff or pupils."⁸⁵³ He was of the view that CK's archival position was probably even weaker: "It was a sort of outpost with four monks who were running around and trying to teach and keep the place in order and probably didn't have too much secretarial help there."⁸⁵⁴

In summary, the following records that may be of some relevance to the former pupils of the school survive for FA.

There are parent and account ledgers from 1947 to 1952, 1958 to 1968, and 1977 to 1981. There is a relatively complete set of class lists. There are brief pupil files for many of the pupils who left prior to 1969, but almost no pupil files for the years 1970 to 1993. This suggests that there was a greater dedication to retaining files in the earlier period than in the later period. Abbot Geoffrey accepted that many of the allegations of abuse related to the period between 1970 and 1993: "I can't speak to that at all. I'm just rather interested that the critical years are not covered by what might have been useful material."⁸⁵⁵ He also told the Inquiry that there was an incomplete set of housemaster reports from the 1980s: "The

848 The Archives of Fort Augustus, at BEN.001.004.0385.

849 Summary Index to Archives of the Abbey of St Benedict, Fort Augustus, deposited at Columba House, Edinburgh (also includes large collection of monastic and school photos), 16 June 2000, at BEN.001.004.0416-0423.

850 Written statement of Abbot President Christopher Jamison, 29 November 2018, at BEN.001.001.5749-5742; see also letter from Clyde & Co to SCAI, 12 October 2018, at BEN.001.001.1931.

851 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3912.

852 Written statement of Abbot President Christopher Jamison, 29 November 2018, at BEN.001.001.5749-5752.

853 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3912-3914; see also [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), at BEN.001.004.4359.

854 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3914-3915; see also [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), at BEN.001.004.4359.

855 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3914-3915; see also [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott](#), at BEN.001.004.4359.

pastoral position of housemasters might have had material there which would have been very useful for inquiries into abuse.”⁸⁵⁶

In relation to CK, Abbot Geoffrey said there are few files available: “We have no pupil files for pupils before 1957, as they are missing from the archive. From 1957 to 1977, the files were arranged alphabetically and we have some files of students with last names starting with H through to Y.”⁸⁵⁷ He accepted that the situation reflected “bad...archival housekeeping, I’m afraid, and I regret it, particularly in the light of what was to happen to Carlekemp...I don’t think [records] were probably kept anywhere; they must have been destroyed by the headmasters of the time.”⁸⁵⁸

Some records of note

The Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey run from 1919 to 1996 and provide a daily report of life in Fort Augustus Abbey. Chronicles produced to SCAI cover the period from 1930 to 1996. From 1 January 1930 through to 31 December 1960, the document runs 821 pages.⁸⁵⁹ The second volume produced covers the period 1 January 1961 to February 1996 and is 886 pages.⁸⁶⁰

Although the focus of the Chronicles is the Abbey itself, FA is mentioned regularly and the activities of the pupils are discussed.

The Chronicles contain lists of pupils at the school. In the later years, there is an updated list of pupils at the start of term. The Chronicles contain an annual note of the monks residing at the Abbey and their roles. They also provide a note of the staff resident at the Abbey (not always named), some of whom would likely have been involved in the running of the school. The Chronicles have been helpful to the work of SCAI in a number of respects, such as confirming dates certain monks were at the schools and periods they were elsewhere. They also contain some references to inspections taking place.

Other records produced to SCAI included four visitors’ books for Fort Augustus Abbey—the first covering 1929-1947,⁸⁶¹ the second covering 1948-1960,⁸⁶² the third covering 1960-1990,⁸⁶³ and the fourth covering 1991-1998.⁸⁶⁴ These books list visitors, with dates and addresses provided. Interestingly there is a note at the beginning of the last book stating that the book is to be filled in by the guest master, not the guest, and to qualify for inclusion the guest must have stayed overnight and have had meals in the monastic refectory.⁸⁶⁵ A visitors’ book was also produced for CK covering the period from 1945 to 1977.⁸⁶⁶ Abbot Jamison noted that the Fort Augustus books related to the Abbey itself, and that the CK visitors book only records the most important visitors.⁸⁶⁷

856 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3915-3916; see also [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scot](#), at BEN.001.004.4359.

857 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3916; see also [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scot](#), at BEN.001.004.4359.

858 [Transcript, day 154](#): Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3916; see also [Written statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scot](#), at BEN.001.004.4360.

859 Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1930-1960, at BEN.001.001.4897-5721.

860 Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4010-4896.

861 Fort Augustus Abbey Guest Book, 1929-1947, at BEN.001.001.2174-2263.

862 Fort Augustus Abbey Visitors Book, 1948-1960, at BEN.001.001.2281-2357.

863 Fort Augustus Abbey Visitors Book, 1960-1990, at BEN.001.001.2358-2480.

864 Fort Augustus Abbey Visitors Book, 1991-1998, at BEN.001.001.2264-2280.

865 Fort Augustus Abbey Visitors Book, 1991-1998, at BEN.001.001.2265.

866 Carlekemp Priory School Visitors Book, 1945-1977, at BEN.001.001.3400-3476.

867 Written statement of Abbot President Christopher Jamison, 29 November 2018, at BEN.001.001.5752.

“...when I asked for copies of my records from Fort Augustus, I got nothing back but a one-page A4 document, with everything redacted other than my name.”

Several files containing detailed financial information and analysis for CK, FA, and the Abbey were produced to SCAI.⁸⁶⁸ These cover most of the period under examination. Lists of monks were compiled every four years at the general chapter, and were produced to SCAI for the majority of the period spanning from 1941 to 1997.⁸⁶⁹ A number of Scottish Education Department inspections reports were produced and are discussed in the following chapter.⁸⁷⁰ Some visitation reports were produced, as mentioned in [Chapter 2](#). Some pupil's files, in the main relating to academic performance and marks, were provided along with some admission forms for each school. Some monks' files were produced. It seems there was a policy that when a monk died or left the monastery his personal file was destroyed. This was not the practice in the other monasteries.⁸⁷¹ There is, for example, a file for Denis Alexander “[b]ecause he was still a member of the community when the community closed—and Father Davidson who was given that file, obviously kept it.”⁸⁷²

Index cards for FA were recovered by SCAI from Police Scotland.⁸⁷³ These cards had previously been provided by the EBC for a police investigation. These cards listed pupils' names, dates of birth, and, in the main, dates of arrival and departure to and from the schools. They cover the period from 1920⁸⁷⁴ to 1993.⁸⁷⁵ Although they are incomplete in places, they were extremely helpful to SCAI in assisting with dates and placing certain evidence in time. It appears that these cards were used by the school in place of an admissions register. Index cards for CK covering the period from 1961 to 1977 were provided by the EBC to SCAI.⁸⁷⁶

Attempts by former pupils to recover records

A number of former pupils of the schools provided evidence about their attempts to recover records from the EBC and the little they were able to retrieve. Hugo Kennedy (FA 1974-76) said that “when I asked for copies of my records from Fort Augustus, I got nothing back but a one-page A4 document, with everything redacted other

868 A total of 111 separate folders, covering the period 1933-1990, were provided to SCAI. These contain information about the schools and the Abbey income and expenditure, including financial advice as to how to improve the financial situation of the Abbey. Accounts for the schools and the Abbey are mostly presented in the same document, emphasising the financial interdependence between the Abbey and the schools. These files can be found at BEN.001.001.2026-2173; BEN.001.001.2481-3399; and BEN.001.001.3591-4009.

869 Catalogues at BEN.001.001.1938-1982; Written statement of Abbot President Christopher Jamison, 29 November 2018, at BEN.001.001.5751.

870 See chapter on [Inspection Reports](#).

871 [Transcript, day 12](#): Dom Christopher David Yeo, at TRN.001.001.4544.

872 [Transcript, day 149](#): Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3345-3346.

873 Index Cards from Police Scotland, Index C, at PSS.001.008.2131; Index Cards, boys 1961 to 1977, at BEN.001.003.2808; Index Cards from Police Scotland, Index B, at PSS.001.008.4848.

874 Index Cards from Police Scotland, Index C, at PSS.001.008.2131.

875 Index Cards from Police Scotland, Index B, at PSS.001.008.4848.

876 Index Cards, boys 1961 to 1977, at BEN.001.003.2808.

than my name...I was hoping to get my records, maybe my medical records, what school year I'd joined and left. Nothing."⁸⁷⁷ Desmond Austin (CK 1955-58, FA 1958-62) attempted to recover his records for both schools and explained: "There was nothing available from Carlekemp, nothing at all. Fort Augustus were just my marks in exams, and then a small comment about when I left school going to university but that was all. Very flimsy."⁸⁷⁸ "James" (FA 1961-63) considered that he had been unfairly expelled from FA and wanted to recover his records because he was particularly interested in what had been recorded about his expulsion: "I thought you can't get expelled from a school without my parents having some communication with the school. And I want to know...they must have had a record of the investigation...I contacted [the EBC]...they put me on to their solicitors, and then the solicitors came back and said, 'No, there aren't any records, we can't find any'."⁸⁷⁹

Response to evidence about records

Benedict Seed said that he kept records about boys' behaviour and development in his desk when he was housemaster at FA from 1983-85. However, he said that "when the school closed, or after a few years, they were considered sort of obsolete. You only kept them for a year or two...for the boys who were in my charge."⁸⁸⁰ He described how after two or three years he "probably

threw them out...After [boys] left [the] school, you would generally not keep [their records] any more...Because you felt they were out of date, they were not relevant anymore."⁸⁸¹ He said there was no rule about destruction of records and when that should happen, and he accepted the housemaster records may have had some relevance to the boys themselves, particularly in later life.⁸⁸²

He said that his records as a housemaster would be of secondary importance to the records of the headmaster and that academic records were kept for longer: "their passes and the leaving certificate and so on. They were kept for years. In fact, they probably still exist in Edinburgh."⁸⁸³

He explained that, when he was headmaster, every term parents were sent progress and conduct reports.⁸⁸⁴ During term, periodic reports were also sent addressing academic performance: "So there was an ongoing day by day record, really, and then a term by term record and year by year records and reports."⁸⁸⁵ Such records were kept in the headmaster's office. He said that he either disposed of them when he ceased being the headmaster or may have left them in the office.⁸⁸⁶ If he did dispose of them, his position was that he "judged [his successor] wouldn't be interested in [his] old records... He'd prefer his own views."⁸⁸⁷ While there was obvious uncertainty in his evidence, it appears he likely kept headmaster reports

877 Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2944.

878 Transcript, day 145: Desmond Austin, at TRN.001.006.2691.

879 Transcript, day 143: "James", at TRN.001.006.2317-2318.

880 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3819.

881 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3820.

882 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3820-3821.

883 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3820.

884 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3819.

885 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3819.

886 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3821.

887 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3821.

“[Records are] incomplete to begin with because of negligence...but also in the move from Fort Augustus down to [Edinburgh], other material went missing...I can’t understand why it went missing.”

for the next headmaster to evaluate.⁸⁸⁸ What is clear, however, is that there was no policy as to how records of that kind were to be kept.

Colin Geddes (FA bursar and housemaster from 1988-92) said he did not keep any records as housemaster: “I didn’t keep any diaries, I’m not a diary person. I didn’t keep notes, I had no reason to.”⁸⁸⁹

Seamus Coleman (FA art and French teacher from 1986-93) explained that “I had my records as any teacher would...I would have destroyed my records when I left the school...I’m not aware of any recording procedure for discipline.”⁸⁹⁰

Dom Yeo was asked about evidence provided by Desmond Austin regarding the lack of records as “simply astonishing.”⁸⁹¹ In response, Dom Yeo accepted that there was a paucity of records for both CK and FA.⁸⁹²

Abbot President Jamison told SCAI that “I very much regret the incomplete state of the records entrusted to the EBC upon the closure of Fort Augustus Abbey.”⁸⁹³

Abbot Geoffrey Scott, speaking on behalf of the EBC at the conclusion of the case

study, accepted there was inadequate record-keeping, particularly in relation to the children at both the schools.⁸⁹⁴ He referred in his evidence to “two losses”,⁸⁹⁵ which he developed in the following way: “[Records are] incomplete to begin with because of negligence...at Fort Augustus... files weren’t kept on pupils. Et cetera—but also in the move from Fort Augustus down to [Edinburgh], other material went missing.”⁸⁹⁶ In relation to the material that went missing he said: “I can’t understand why it went missing. It could just be the move and a few boxes were neglected here and there...In the final clearance of Fort Augustus, there could have been negligence...the other alternative is to say there’s some sort of mischievous[ness].”⁸⁹⁷ He did not, however, think the latter was a probability: “if you’re faced with, say, 100 boxes of archives, and you’re looking for sensitive material you want to get rid of, burn or whatever, it’s quite a lengthy process to...plough through it, particularly if there’s no decent classification. So I guess there probably wasn’t a mischievous interloper who was trying to ferret out archives. I can only say that as pure speculation.”⁸⁹⁸

888 Transcript, day 153: Benedict Seed, at TRN.001.006.3821-3823.

889 Transcript, day 154: read in statement of Colin Geddes, at TRN.001.006.3986.

890 Transcript, day 154: Seamus Coleman, at TRN.001.006.3993-3994.

891 Supplementary statement of Desmond Austin, 23 July 2019, at WIT.003.001.9977.

892 Transcript, day 149: Dom Richard Yeo, at TRN.001.006.3345.

893 Written statement of Abbot President Christopher Jamison, 29 November 2018, at BEN.001.001.5752.

894 Transcript, day 154: Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3916.

895 Transcript, day 154: Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3913.

896 Transcript, day 154: Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3913.

897 Transcript, day 154: Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3913.

898 Transcript, day 154: Abbot Geoffrey Scott, at TRN.001.006.3913.

In closing submissions, it was submitted on behalf of the EBC that “[t]he system for maintaining and retaining records at both schools was unacceptable and inconsistent with what the EBC would have expected. The EBC recognises this has hindered the work of the Inquiry and has been a source of frustration for a number of applicants. The EBC regrets that.”⁸⁹⁹

Conclusions about records

The records produced to SCAl, perhaps unsurprisingly, fail to disclose the serious abuse that I have found was inflicted on children at CK and FA. Any records that do survive are sparse and focus on academic performance, not on how children were treated. For example, it will be evident from the findings that I have made in this case study that the sexual abuse of children at CK and FA was known by the Fort Augustus monks. As set out in [Chapter 7](#), complaints of sexual abuse were made, but there is little evidence in the records to assist in understanding how the monks addressed the important issues raised, apart from the moving of perpetrators to other environments without warning of the risks they posed.

The EBC has, quite rightly, accepted that record keeping was inadequate, and that they were careless about the making of records and in their subsequent preservation. Abbot Geoffrey Scott did raise the spectre of the “mischievous interloper” by which I understood him to mean the deliberate destruction of records to destroy evidence. The fact remains that the Benedictine monks of Fort Augustus Abbey failed to create or preserve relevant records that children entrusted into their care could subsequently scrutinise, and that constitutes a failure in care.

899 Written submission on behalf of English Benedictine Congregation, at BEN-000000001, p.4.

10

Inspection reports

Carlekemp Priory School

Inspection reports recovered: 1945-1955

For this period, SCAI has recovered three reports of inspections of CK.⁹⁰⁰

The first was of an inspection carried out in 1946, seven months after the school had moved to its “very fine situation” at North Berwick.⁹⁰¹ The atmosphere was described as a “happy one”.⁹⁰² The school was advised of the report’s contents by a letter to the headmaster dated 8 July 1946.

The second was of an inspection of CK carried out on 17 June 1949.⁹⁰³ The report noted that the 60 boarders and five day boys were divided into five forms and observed that the small number of pupils

in each form allowed for “individual needs to receive attention.”⁹⁰⁴ The school was said to be “adequately staffed. Instruction was intelligent and vigorous, and the relations between teachers and pupils were happy.”⁹⁰⁵ The school was advised of the report’s contents by a letter to the headmaster dated 20 September 1949.⁹⁰⁶

The third was of an inspection of CK carried out on 19 June 1952.⁹⁰⁷ This inspection had been requested by the school, under the terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1946.⁹⁰⁸ The documents recovered do not explain why the school asked for this inspection—for which they had to pay. The school was advised of the contents of the report by a letter to the headmaster dated August 1952.⁹⁰⁹

900 The Inquiry recovered inspection reports for CK’s predecessors—St Andrew’s Priory School and Fort Augustus Preparatory—for the academic sessions 1933-34, 1934-35, 1935-36, 1936-37, 1937-38, 1938-39, and 1941-42. See NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors’ Reports, 1934-1955, at SGV.001.005.9455-9487. These inspections were carried out in accordance with the provisions of section 19 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1878, as amended by the Education (Scotland) Act, 1936. The recovered documents indicate that at least for the final inspection (1941-42), a copy of the report was sent to the Fort Augustus monks. See NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors’ Reports, 1934-1955, Letter to the Rev. Father J.E. McCombes, 13 August 1942, at SGV.001.005.9488-9489.

901 NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors’ Reports, 1934-1955, SED Inspection Report, 24 June 1946, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9490.

902 NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors’ Reports, 1934-1955, SED Inspection Report, 24 June 1946, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9490.

903 NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors’ Reports, 1934-1955, SED Inspection Report, 17 June 1949, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9494-9496. Inspections of schools were by then carried out in accordance with Section 61 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1946.

904 NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors’ Reports, 1934-1955, SED Inspection Report, 17 June 1949, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9494.

905 NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors’ Reports, 1934-1955, SED Inspection Report, 17 June 1949, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9494.

906 NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors’ Reports, 1934-1955, Letter to Rev J.O. Eaves, 20 September 1949, at SGV.001.005.9497-9498.

907 NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors’ Reports, 1934-1955, SED Inspection Report, 19 June 1952, Form S 10, SGV.001.005.9499-9506.

908 Section 62 of the 1946 Act allowed independent schools to request an inspection—and if such a request was made, the costs of the inspection had to be met by the school. It seems that whilst Section 61—which placed a duty on the Secretary of State to arrange the inspection of every education establishment—was to apply to both public and independent schools, that it was Section 62 of the 1946 Act that applied to independent schools in practice. See NRS ED48/1377 Registration of Independent Schools: General Policy, 1953-67, Minute, 6 October 1955, at SGV-000007325, pp. 41-42.

909 NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors’ Reports, 1934-1955, Letter to Rev J.O. Eaves, August 1952, at SGV.001.005.9507-9509.

The school was described as generously staffed with both teaching and domestic staff. The matron, who was responsible for the general health of the boys, is recorded as having been a state-registered nurse.

The inspector concluded that: "The boys had worked industriously in a happy atmosphere, and the admirable tone of the school reflects credit on all concerned."⁹¹⁰

Inspection reports recovered: 1960s

For this period, SCAI has recovered one report of an inspection.⁹¹¹ The report is dated 11 June 1965.⁹¹² It is unclear whether a copy of this report was sent to the school.

This report contains a single paragraph of general observations. The inspector concluded that the boys "domestic and social life is well catered for, and throughout the school there is a happy atmosphere."⁹¹³

Fort Augustus Abbey School

Inspection reports recovered: 1920-1929

In this period, the SED carried out regular inspections of FA. There are reports for these inspections dated:

- 25 April 1922⁹¹⁴
- 30 June 1926 (academic session 1925-26)⁹¹⁵
- 16 May and 10 and 30 June (academic session 1926-27)⁹¹⁶
- 6 July 1928 (academic session 1927-28)⁹¹⁷
- 11 June 1929 (academic session 1928-29)⁹¹⁸

The 25 April 1922 inspection was the first by a public authority or independent examiner since the establishment of the school, noted as having been in 1921 in the "Preliminary Statement of Particulars relating to Fort Augustus Abbey School".⁹¹⁹ The report recorded that although the school provided accommodation for 60-70 pupils, at the

910 NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors' Reports, 1934-1955, SED Inspection Report, 19 June 1952, Form S 10, SGV.001.005.9500.

911 When the relevant provisions of the Education (Scotland) Act 1946 came into force in September 1957, CK had to register with the Registrar of Independent Schools. See Kenneth McK. Norrie, [Report to SCAI, Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents](#) (November 2017), pp.318-320. The provisional registration of the school was granted on 11 February 1958, and final registration on 2 April 1958, after a visit to the school by the SED "S" branch on 27 March 1958. See NRS ED32/260 School Inspectors' Reports, 1958-1969, Letter to Rev. J.E.K. McCombes, 11 February 1958, at SGV.001.005.9528; NRS ED32/260 School Inspectors' Reports, 1958-1969, minutes, 29 March 1958, at SGV.001.005.9530; Letter to Rev. J.E.K. McCombes, 2 April 1958, at SGV.001.005.9534. No inspection reports were recovered for that period.

912 NRS ED32/260 School Inspectors' Reports, 1958-1969, SED Inspection Report, 11 June 1965, Form S 9, SGV.001.005.9554.

913 NRS ED32/260 School Inspectors' Reports, 1958-1969, SED Inspection Report, 11 June 1965, Form S 9, SGV.001.005.9554.

914 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED, Inspection of Secondary (and Preparatory) Schools, Form H (4), at SGV.001.005.9567-9568.

915 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1925-26, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9571-9574. This inspection was carried out in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1878.

916 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1926-27, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9575-9579. This inspection was carried out in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1878.

917 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1927-28, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9581-9583. This inspection was carried out in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1878.

918 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1928-29, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9586-9589. This inspection was carried out in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1878.

919 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED, Inspection of Secondary (and Preparatory) Schools, Form H (4), at SGV.001.005.9568.

time of the inspection there was a total of 35 pupils (including 10 boys under 12 years of age) and that the headmaster, Rev. S.A. Parker, was assisted by 10 teachers—one of which was a lay teacher.

Inspectors visited FA again on:

- 30 June 1926⁹²⁰
- 16 May and 10 and 30 June 1927⁹²¹
- 6 July 1928 (academic session 1927-28)⁹²²

These inspections focused on the curriculum, with both positive and negative observations made, as well as recommendations for improvements. No information was provided about the pupils' well-being, their life at school, or the administration of the school.

The report following the visit on 6 July 1928 was very complimentary of the improvements the school had achieved:

*"It is most gratifying to find throughout the school an atmosphere of interest and earnestness in work. The improvement in this respect during the past two sessions, and especially during the current session has been very marked...and it therefore reflects all the greater credit on the Headmaster and his present staff."*⁹²³

Similar praise of the headmaster and his staff was made the following year in the inspection that took place on 11 June 1929.⁹²⁴

Inspection reports recovered: 1930-1940

Between 1930 and 1940, the SED carried out regular inspections of FA. Reports for these inspections are dated as follows:

- 2 July 1930 (academic session 1929-30)⁹²⁵
- 7 and 8 July 1931 (academic session 1930-31)⁹²⁶
- 13 June and 9 and 10 July 1934 (academic session 1933-34)⁹²⁷
- 28 and 29 May 1935 (academic session 1934-35)⁹²⁸
- 16 and 18 May 1936 (academic session 1935-36)⁹²⁹
- 10 and 14 May 1937 (academic session 1936-1937)⁹³⁰
- 17 and 27 May 1938 (academic session 1937-1938)⁹³¹
- 11 and 14 May 1939 (academic session 1938-39)⁹³²

920 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1925-26, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9571-9574. This inspection was carried out in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1878.

921 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1926-27, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9575-9579. This inspection was carried out in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1878.

922 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1927-28, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9581-9583. This inspection was carried out in accordance with the provisions of Section 19 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1878.

923 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1927-28, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9581.

924 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1928-29, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9586.

925 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1929-30, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9596-9599.

926 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1930-31, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9601-9605.

927 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1933-34, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9606-9611.

928 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1934-35, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9612-9615.

929 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1935-36, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9616-9619.

930 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1936-37, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9620-9625.

931 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1937-38, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9626-9633.

932 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1938-1939, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9642-9650.

Reports were short, between three and four pages long. Copies of the inspection reports were sent to the school.⁹³³

The focus of these inspections was on the curriculum. The inspectors commented both positively and negatively, and made suggestions for improvement.

Most reports also contained a short paragraph with general observations about the school. These were often positive. For example, in 1931 the inspector wrote that:

*"A healthy tone pervades the school. Full advantage is taken of the splendid grounds to provide those outdoor recreations which are so valuable for the health and discipline of boys."*⁹³⁴

The following year the inspector wrote that:

*"The tone throughout the school is healthy. Gratifying evidence of the desire of the managers to meet the educational requirements of the pupils is afforded by the new science laboratory which is approaching completion."*⁹³⁵

Similarly, in 1933, the inspector wrote:

*"Tone throughout the school is good and organisation and classification are generally satisfactory. The managers are to be congratulated on the provision of a new and well equipped laboratory for the teaching of science. The open-air swimming pool has also been completed."*⁹³⁶

Whilst there was a change of inspectors in 1936, the content of the reports did not change—the curriculum remained the focus, and the general comments continued to provide a positive account of the school life and facilities. For example, in 1937 the inspector wrote:

*"The spacious grounds attached to the school are admirably suited for open-air organised games, and the corporate life of the school in its various aspects of school societies and athletic clubs is flourishing vigorously. The school magazine, which is printed and published in the school thrice a year, reflects much credit on all concerned."*⁹³⁷

In 1939, general comments included two paragraphs commending the work of the departing headmaster, Commander Farie:

"In the early summer, by the retiral of Commander Farie, the school lost the services of a headmaster who for seventeen years directed its activities with outstanding ability, impressing upon it his own vigorous personality and turning out manly and independent boys, well prepared physically and intellectually to take their place in the world..."

The spirit and discipline of the school are admirable, while the bearing of the boys, a blend of frankness, independence and deference, was very attractive. The existence of literary, dramatic and

933 FA 120/1 SED Form S 9 1923-31, SED Inspection Report, Session 1929-30, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3479-3481; SED Inspection Report, Session 1930-31, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3483-3485; FA 120/2 SED Form S 9 1934-39, SED Inspection Report, Session 1933-34, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3488-3491; SED Inspection Report, Session 1934-35, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3492-3494; SED Inspection Report, Session 1935-36, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3496-3498; SED Inspection Report, Session 1936-37, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3500-3503; SED Inspection Report, Session 1937-38, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3504-3505; SED Inspection Report, Session 1938-39, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3508-3511.

934 FA 120/1 SED Form S 9 1923-31, SED Inspection Report, Session 1930-31, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3483.

935 FA 120/2 SED Form S 9 1934-39, SED Inspection Report, Session 1933-34, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3488.

936 FA 120/2 SED Form S 9 1934-39, SED Inspection Report, Session 1934-35, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3492.

937 FA 120/2 SED Form S 9 1934-39, SED Inspection Report, Session 1937-38, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3502-3503.

debating societies, with the opportunities afforded for intercourse between masters and pupils, does much to cultivate an agility of mind and readiness of speech that cannot be produced by the classroom alone. Physical education is well care for: in addition to formal physical training, the ample grounds allow all forms of seasonal games, and the geographical situation of the school affords opportunities, much taken advantage of, for indulging in other forms of physical recreation.”⁹³⁸

Inspection reports recovered: 1940-1960

Two inspection reports were recovered for this period, one of which (carried out on various dates in May and June 1950) had been requested by the school under section 62 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1946; the other took place on 1 July 1955.

The reports were both short, and curriculum focused. Copies of these reports were sent to the school.⁹³⁹

The 1950 report included the following description:

“The main course provided is an academic one, including Latin and French...Ample opportunities for all-round development are afforded: the playing fields are fully used; there are a number of societies, literary and others as well as an orchestra and choir...The health of the boys has been very good. Their spirit and behaviour which were commended in the report for 1938-9, continue to be admirable.”⁹⁴⁰

Inspection reports recovered: 1960-1980

Two inspection reports were recovered for this period. The first relates to the 1965-66 academic session.⁹⁴¹ Its focus was, again, on the curriculum. It included a longer general section than in previous reports, much of which was positive in tone, although a lack of effective organisation was alluded to:

“In its professed aim of character training the school continues to be conspicuously successful. The general bearing of the boys, in which independence and frankness are blended with a high standard of courtesy and good manners, bears witness to the training and example set by the staff. There is an excellent relationship between staff and pupils, and the tone of the school is very good... In academic achievements the school is less successful. Improvement could be achieved if the head of each department were to organise the teaching of his subject through the school and had frequent consultations with the rest of the staff in his department. Regular meetings of principal teacher with the headmaster could prove particularly fruitful.”⁹⁴²

The second report was for the academic year 1971-72. The inspector expressed similar concerns to those raised in the 1965-66 inspection about the curriculum, namely that there was a lack of a coordinated and coherent approach to its development:

“Overall there is very considerable need for curricular planning in order to produce progressive courses appropriate to the various levels of ability among the pupils.”⁹⁴³

938 FA 120/2 SED Form S 9 1934-39, SED Inspection Report, Session 1938-39, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3508-3509.

939 FA 120/3 SED Form S 9, 1950-55, SED Inspection Report, Session 1949-50, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3513-15; SED Inspection Report, Session 1954-55, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3517-3518.

940 FA 120/3 SED Form S 9, 1950-55, Inspection Report, Session 1949-50, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3513.

941 FA 120/4 SED Inspections (HM) 1965-66, SED Co-ordinated Inspection, 1965-66, at BEN.001.001.3520-3524.

942 FA 120/4 SED Inspections (HM) 1965-66, Co-ordinated Inspection, 1965-66, at BEN.001.001.3520.

943 FA 120/5 SED Form S 9 (HMI) 1972, SED Inspection Report, Session 1971-72, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3531.

However, overall, the conclusion was:

*"Fort Augustus Abbey School continues to provide a character-training which develops poise and confident, pleasant manners in its pupils...and the general welfare of the pupils is well provided for."*⁹⁴⁴

Inspection reports recovered: 1980-1990

There were no inspections between 1972 and 1982.⁹⁴⁵

On 17 June 1986 the HM Inspector of Schools, Mr Osler, arranged to meet Benedict Seed on 2 July 1986 to discuss the recommendations arising from inspection visits that had taken place in May and October 1985, and January, February, April and May 1986.⁹⁴⁶ This was against a background of the SED having, in 1985, agreed to make £95,000 available to the school for fee remission under the Assisted Places Scheme, to help it to consolidate its position at a time when its finances were so tight that there was a real risk of closure.⁹⁴⁷ Mr Osler met with Abbot Nicholas Holman and Benedict Seed on 2 July 1986 and "demanded school improvements".⁹⁴⁸ Mr Osler's concerns included:

- the managerial structure, whereby the "precise relationship of the headmaster to the Abbot in the running of the school [was] unclear"⁹⁴⁹ and the status of the advisory committee needed to be clarified;⁹⁵⁰
- staff ages and their lack of qualifications and experience: "Many of the monks are elderly and out of touch with good educational practice, few of the staff hold qualifications to teach";⁹⁵¹
- Benedict Seed's ability to fulfil the role of head, given that he had been appointed to the post "at short notice, and without opportunities in his previous post to become familiar with the complexities of running a school and the changes taking place in curricular provision";⁹⁵²
- the lack of guidance provision for pupils, as there was a need for arrangements to be made "to ensure that pupils have regular access to sensitive and informed guidance on personal, curricular and career matters";⁹⁵³ and
- the need to control the use of corporal punishment in circumstances where he had found pupils to be "wary, perhaps even... repressed"—what was needed was for a

944 FA 120/5 SED Form S 9 (HMI) 1972, SED Inspection Report, Session 1971-72, Form S 9, at BEN.001.001.3531.

945 FA 120/32 SED 1981-82, Letter from headmaster to Father Abbot, 25 November 1982, at BEN.001.002.1540.

946 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from HM Inspector of Schools, Mr Osler, to Benedict Seed, headteacher, 17 June 1986, at BEN.001.002.1914.

947 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Memorandum from to Mr MacKay, Registration of Independent Schools, at SGV.001.006.0213. According to a letter sent to FA on 23 May 1985 a total of £95,000 would be made available to the school for fee remission under the Assisted Places Scheme during the 1985-86 academic year. ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Letter from SED to Fort Augustus Abbey School, 23 May 1985, at SGV.001.006.0302.

948 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4593.

949 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Abbey School: Summary of matters arising from visits by HM Inspectors of Schools, May 1985-May 1986, at SGV.001.006.0111.

950 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Abbey School: Summary of matters arising from visits by HM Inspectors of Schools, May 1985-May 1986, at SGV.001.006.0113.

951 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Memorandum from Mr D A Osler to Mr T N Gallacher, Fort Augustus Abbey School, at SGV.001.006.0290.

952 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Abbey School: Summary of matters arising from visits by HM Inspectors of Schools, May 1985-May 1986, at SGV.001.006.0112.

953 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Abbey School: Summary of matters arising from visits by HM Inspectors of Schools, May 1985-May 1986, at SGV.001.006.0114.

system “to be introduced to control and record the use of corporal punishment.”⁹⁵⁴

Upon reading Mr Osler’s notes, the SED’s response was that “the quality of teaching and learning in the school [was] of very low standard and distinctly inferior to that provided in most public sector schools.”⁹⁵⁵ Put shortly, by 1986, a dire state of affairs had come to pass.

On 15 September 1986, Mr Osler wrote a letter to Benedict Seed in which he asked him to show how the concerns—about which he was clearly advised—were going to be addressed.⁹⁵⁶

Benedict Seed sent a draft plan to Mr Osler on 16 September 1986⁹⁵⁷ and Mr Osler responded by letter dated 7 October 1986.⁹⁵⁸ He told Benedict Seed that his proposals fell “short in a number of respects of the detailed plan for action which is an essential step in bringing about significant improvements in the quality of education provided”.⁹⁵⁹ Mr Osler listed five further points which had to be considered:

“a. a review of current staffing and a staged plan designed to ensure that teachers are appointed who have qualifications and experience relevant to their teaching duties in view of the lack of formal training and qualifications of teachers of some subjects.

b. a management structure which includes job descriptions for senior and middle management and incorporates responsibility for aspects such as staff development, the active promotion of quality in learning and teaching and oversight of pupils’ experience; this to bring about the necessary co-ordination of subject teaching and monitoring by senior staff.

c. proposals for staff development which heighten management expertise in the school, enable teachers to become and remain familiar with current developments, teaching methods and resources in their specialist subjects and provide expertise in pupil guidance...

d. opportunities for staff to consult widely outwith the school to ensure the effective development of the subject schemes of work referred to in your letter.

e. improved arrangements for personal, curricular and careers guidance to ensure that pupils receive informed advice about the subjects they should study and the necessary careers and personal guidance.”⁹⁶⁰

The inspector also expected the school to review its policy on corporal punishment. The headmaster was required to produce a detailed plan by 15 December 1986.

954 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Fort Augustus Abbey School: Summary of matters arising from visits by HM Inspectors of Schools, May 1985-May 1986, at SGV.001.006.0112.

955 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Memorandum from Mr W Moyes, SED I, to Mr MacKay, Registration of Independent Schools, 20 October 1986, at SGV.001.006.0213.

956 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from HM Inspector of Schools, Mr Osler, to Benedict Seed, headteacher, 15 September 1986, at BEN.001.002.1916.

957 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from HM Inspector of Schools, Mr Osler, to Benedict Seed, headmaster, 7 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1926.

958 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from HM Inspector of Schools, Mr Osler, to Benedict Seed, headmaster, 7 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1926.

959 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from HM Inspector of Schools, Mr Osler, to Benedict Seed, headmaster, 7 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1926.

960 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from HM Inspector of Schools, Mr Osler, to Benedict Seed, headmaster, 7 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1926.

Mr Osler returned to the school on 9 October. There is no indication that Benedict Seed realised the seriousness of the situation, or that he was able to allow for the possibility that the criticisms were well-founded. Rather, an entry from the Chronicle of the same date states:

*"A chief HM Inspector of Schools called with the HM Maths Inspector accompanying him...and criticised the school in an unfair and hectoring manner. The Inspectorate is making exacting demands about the instruction, syllabuses and management of the school, they are also making bad reports to higher authorities in Edinburgh."*⁹⁶¹

The reference to higher authorities may have been to the Registrar of Independent Schools. Matters had gotten to the stage that it was thought that revocation of the school's registration might need to be considered.⁹⁶²

Mr Osler visited again on 16 October 1986 and "laid down some exacting ultimatums for the school to fulfil."⁹⁶³ On 6 November 1986, he wrote to thank Benedict Seed and the abbot for their time during the visit, and offered Benedict Seed assistance in preparing the detailed action plan that was to be completed by 15 December.⁹⁶⁴

On 19 December 1986 the Registrar of Independent Schools wrote to Benedict Seed, noting that the school had been given several opportunities to discuss their concerns and had been given the opportunity to produce an action plan. The Registrar also noted that if the plan was not satisfactory "the most likely course of events is a full inspection by HMI as a prelude to a final decision on whether to issue a formal notice of complaint."⁹⁶⁵ Benedict Seed could have been left in no doubt that the school was at risk of closure if he did not cooperate.

However, in his reply, he expressed his disagreement with some of the criticisms and complained that the school had not had the opportunity to put forward their case directly to the registrar.⁹⁶⁶ Benedict Seed also complained of not having seen the reports written by the HM Inspectors, and only having "a short talk with each Inspector".⁹⁶⁷ In an undated draft of this letter, Benedict Seed indicated that he would contact his local MP—or even the Secretary of State directly—for advice.⁹⁶⁸ He wrote to Mr Charles Kennedy, MP, on 13 January 1987.⁹⁶⁹

961 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4595.

962 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from HM Inspectors of Schools' Office, Mr Osler, to headmaster, Benedict Seed, 7 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1928.

963 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, at BEN.001.001.4596.

964 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from HM District Inspector of Schools, Mr Osler, to headmaster, Benedict Seed, at BEN.001.002.1938.

965 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Registrar of Independent Schools, Mr Boyle, to headmaster, Benedict Seed, 19 December 1986, at BEN.001.002.1940.

966 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Benedict Seed to Mr Boyle, 8 January 1987, at BEN.001.002.1946.

967 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Benedict Seed to Mr Boyle, 8 January 1987, at BEN.001.002.1946.

968 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, draft letter to Mr Boyle, at BEN.001.002.1944-1945.

969 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from the headmaster, Benedict Seed, to Mr Kennedy MP, 13 January 1987, at BEN.001.002.1948.

Benedict Seed sent his action plan to Mr Osler on 31 January 1987. It was not, however, a paper explaining how improvements were to be achieved; rather, it sought to explain and justify the existing practices. For example, on the topic of staff qualifications, it was disclosed that unqualified staff were employed and that would continue: "It is the policy to employ Staff with both academic and teaching qualifications. Those who fall short of this are appraised and assisted to achieve the required standard of work."⁹⁷⁰ On the topic of corporal punishment, it was stated: "The use of belt, cane and suchlike instruments is no longer permitted. Miscreants can be given constructive manual labour in the school premises and grounds."⁹⁷¹ That, however, was not true. Corporal punishment had not been banned at the school.

These plans were not accepted as sufficient, and in February 1987 Benedict Seed, accompanied by the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) joint secretary, attended a meeting with the inspectorate and SED.⁹⁷² Following the meeting, the SCIS joint secretary wrote to Benedict Seed saying it was clear that "both the Inspectorate and the SED would like to see the successful continuation of the School—but where opinions differ is on the extent to which Fort Augustus Abbey School can meet, or be expected to meet, the Inspectors' objectives."⁹⁷³

The SED had not ruled out making a formal complaint under the statutory process they had previously explained, but they equally appear to have been prepared to do what

they could to help. In a letter dated 26 February 1987, the SED wrote:

*"The Department's purpose in this matter is constructive and the advice of HM Inspectorate is at your disposal to help you deal with the problems which you face. I thought it necessary to inform you of the s.99 procedure so that you would be aware of the Secretary of State's powers and duties in relation to independent schools and to convey to you the urgent need for the school to take positive remedial action."*⁹⁷⁴

A letter from the bursar dated 25 February 1987 indicates that others at the school shared Benedict Seed's view that the inspectorate had been uncooperative and the process lacked transparency:

*"The Abbey School has been receiving a number of visits from HMI Inspectors over the past months, in particular by a Mr Ossler [sic]. They are not finding fault with exam results, or anything like that, but simply that in their eyes the school is not 'modern' enough. They are making all kinds of veiled threats...unless we appoint a 'lay' headmaster, retire most of the monk teachers (as being over 65), and introduce methods of teaching which only they approve of. But they refuse to put anything into writing, or even let people take notes at their meetings with us...And we wonder if all is going on with the knowledge and approval of their Political Masters, in St Andrew's House. Perhaps with your contacts...you may be able to find out if the Under Secretary of State for Education is aware of this?"*⁹⁷⁵

970 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from headmaster to Mr Osler, 31 January 1987, at BEN.000.002.1970.

971 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from headmaster to Mr Osler, 31 January 1987, at BEN.000.002.1971.

972 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from SCIS Joint Secretary to Benedict Seed, 20 February 1987, at BEN.001.002.1972.

973 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from SCIS Joint Secretary to Benedict Seed, 20 February 1987, at BEN.001.002.1972.

974 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from SED to headmaster, Benedict Seed, 26 February 1987, at BEN.001.002.1976.

975 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Bursar to Mr F. Spencer Nairn, 25 February 1987, at BEN.001.002.1974.

This view was hardly justified, given the flexibility shown, and the support provided, by the inspectorate and SED, as illustrated above. It was also, in the circumstances, manifestly unwise.

On 9 March 1987, Mr Osler wrote to Benedict Seed asking for a more detailed plan of action. In an effort to help Benedict Seed, Mr Osler provided a detailed 10-point plan of what needed to be done to ensure improvement of the quality of education and teaching. Each action had a clear deadline, and the full programme was to “be implemented as soon as possible, and certainly not later than session 1988-89”.⁹⁷⁶ That was two years after the concerns were first raised.

Mr Osler visited again on 10 March 1987 to consider the action plan. He concluded that he had made “little headway with Father Benedict”,⁹⁷⁷ but “gained the impression... that the Abbot had more doubts about the ability of the headteacher to manage the school than about the credibility of our assessment.”⁹⁷⁸

On 28 April, Mr Osler visited the school with a representative of the SED, Mr Davidson, who recorded that the meeting had been “a formality, though a necessary one, for the headmaster recovered from the panic which he fell into when he got [Mr Boyle’s] official letter as Registrar, and more importantly, he seems at last really to have begun to grasp what the Inspectorate are driving at and to see the benefits of using their guidance.”⁹⁷⁹

Mr Davidson had also met with a representative from the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB) that had provided a substantial grant to the school in 1985, and “they want to see it accounted for. If the school goes out of business they will be wanting their money back.”⁹⁸⁰ The HIDB was planning to “take quite a tough line with the school”, their primary aim being the clear separation between the school and the monastery accounts. That might be thought to suggest that grant moneys—intended to benefit only the school—had been mixed with monastery funds, and could not be demonstrated to have been spent solely on the school.

Mr Davidson was keen to ensure that the plans laid by the HIDB were not at cross-purposes with the demands made by the SED. He concluded by noting that:

“Our own financial interest is of course limited to the grant we pay under the Assisted Places Scheme... Previous office discussions have already established that it would be hard to defend excluding the school from the scheme unless we were also prepared to serve notice of complaint under s.99. And there seems no doubt that if we did cut off the assisted places the school would fold. The question which we must be prepared for, and will be hard to answer, is whether there would come a point at which the school would be bad enough to require us to cut it out of the scheme but not yet bad enough to

976 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Mr Osler to Benedict Seed, 9 March 1987, at BEN.001.002.1979.

977 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, memorandum from Mr D. A. Osler to Mr T. N. Gallacher, in confidence, Fort Augustus Abbey School: note of visit, 10 March 1987, at SGV.001.006.0138.

978 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, memorandum from Mr D. A. Osler to Mr T. N. Gallacher, in confidence, Fort Augustus Abbey School: note of visit, 10 March 1987, at SGV.001.006.0139.

979 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, memorandum from Mr E. C. Davison to Mr Boyle, 1 May 1987, at SGV.001.006.0124.

980 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, memorandum from Mr E. C. Davison to Mr Boyle, 1 May 1987, at SGV.001.006.0125.

withdraw its registration. As matters stand today however there is reasonable hope that we shall not come to that point.”⁹⁸¹

Finance and standards both clearly remained critical factors for the school.

Benedict Seed did, by mid-May 1987, produce schemes of work, but they were not good enough. Mr Gallacher, HM Chief Inspector of Schools wrote to Mr Osler:

“We have the schemes of work requested and our colleagues are busy giving you responses to them. As we expected, they fall quite a bit short of what we would regard to be ‘minimum requirements’ but they are a helpful basis for dialogue. Once you have completed your consolidated response-and I agree entirely that it should be offered in constructive vein-I think you should take the opportunity to discuss it with Father Benedict. The school will, no doubt, need very considerable assistance to take our suggestions on board, which gives us the opportunity to remind them of the offer Dr Steward [Director of Education, Highland Region] has made to provide assistance through his advisers.

There is, or course, still a very long way to go. While getting departmental documentation on courses, teaching methods, assessment etc right will be a considerable step, the crucial area is staffing and staff expertise which, as Mr Davison indicates, will be much more difficult...A number of other deadlines

should have been met by now, for example, in relation to items 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 in your letter [of 9 March]”⁹⁸²

Improvements did occur, but in June 1987, in a memorandum from Mr Osler to Mr Gallacher, he stated:

“The headteacher indicated to me that he is having considerable difficulties with the members of staff in English, history and art. They have been very critical of his management style both within the school and in his conduct of public relations. I gather that angry words have been exchanged on a number of occasions and that relationships there are not good.”⁹⁸³

There was continuing progress though, and by June, matters had reached the stage that Mr Gallacher felt a more constructive dialogue was developing.⁹⁸⁴

Scottish Council of Independent Schools

By the time that Benedict Seed submitted his action plan on 31 January 1987, the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) was providing help with staff development and curriculum development.⁹⁸⁵ Benedict Seed contacted the SCIS on several occasions to seek guidance on how to deal with the inspectorate and the issues raised by them. In a letter dated 19 September 1986, the SCIS had tried to assure him that the inspectorate’s intention was “to help and advise”.⁹⁸⁶ The letter suggests that Benedict Seed was not aware of relevant legislation

981 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, memorandum from Mr E. C. Davison to Mr Boyle, 1 May 1987, at SGV.001.006.0125-0126.

982 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, memorandum from Mr T N Gallacher to Mr D A Osler, 13 May 1987, at SGV.001.006.0122.

983 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, memorandum from Mr D A Osler to Mr T N Gallacher, 1 June 1987, at SGV.001.006.0118.

984 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, memorandum in confidence from Mr T N Gallacher to Mr D A Osler, 3 June 1987, Fort Augustus Abbey School, at SGV.001.006.0117.

985 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from headmaster to Mr Osler, 31 January 1987, at BEN.000.002.1971.

986 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Scottish Council Independent Schools, to Benedict Seed, headmaster, 19 September 1986, at BEN.001.002.1918.

and statutory guidance, and SCIS sent him copies. It also indicates that Benedict Seed was concerned about the possibility of the school being unable to continue the benefits afforded by the Assisted Places Scheme—which by the mid-1980s was a significant source of funding for the school.

Following the visit by Mr Osler to the school on 9 October 1986, Benedict Seed wrote a lengthy letter to the SCIS.⁹⁸⁷ It is clear from the letter that Benedict Seed did not understand that the school was subject to legislative requirements, was unable to recognise the validity of the issues raised by the HM Inspector, and took the criticism very personally. For example, to the recommendation that the school should have a person who knew about the minimum curricular requirements in charge of curriculum development (such as all S3 pupils continuing to take a language), Benedict Seed wrote: “I do this job. I admit I did not know a language was obligatory in S3. Is this really so?...I feel that much of the criticism under other headings is similarly directed at me.” Benedict Seed also records the conversation he had with Mr Osler about corporal punishment:

“[Mr Osler]: Are you keeping a corporal punishment record, and are you discontinuing it?”

[Benedict Seed]: Yes. Housemasters can still give it if the situation would be mistakenly evaluated by an offender.

Notice was given two weeks ago of its phasing out. It is very rare. It will be ended by 15th December, the end of term, and even now is virtually at an end.

[Mr Osler]: That is too vague.”⁹⁸⁸

Benedict Seed concluded by writing:

“I feel that all these matters are a question of degree. We see to them to a considerable extent; they could be better seen to, but are they critically defective? The Chief Inspector thinks so, and seems to talk as if we didn’t see to some of them to any extent at all. This, I do not accept. However, I do not object to improving, and will take steps to do so.”⁹⁸⁹

On 19 January 1987 the SED and the registrar met with SCIS to discuss FA.⁹⁹⁰ The SCIS joint secretaries had visited the school, and “[w]hilst they had found the financial management pretty inept and the accounts incomprehensible they had been quite impressed by some of the pupils... and their overall judgement was that they had seen worse elsewhere.”⁹⁹¹ SCIS’s joint secretaries were “as critical of the school’s financial policies as [the inspectorate] are of the educational side.”⁹⁹² The focus of the discussions were therefore on the financial health of the school, with the SED representative concluding that: “It seems to be at this stage that, although we should certainly not be thinking of killing the patient off, come the next financial crisis we will probably not

987 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Benedict Seed to SCIS joint secretary, 9 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1930.

988 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Benedict Seed to SCIS joint secretary, 9 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1930.

989 FA 121 SED Inspector Visits 1980s, Letter from Benedict Seed to SCIS joint secretary, 9 October 1986, at BEN.001.002.1930.

990 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, minutes from Mr E. C. Davison, SED II, to Mr Gallacher, Fort Augustus Abbey School, 20 January 1987, at SGV.001.006.0160-0161.

991 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, minutes from Mr E. C. Davison, SED II, to Mr Gallacher, Fort Augustus Abbey School, 20 January 1987, at SGV.001.006.0160-0161.

992 ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, minutes from Mr E. C. Davison, SED II, to Mr Gallacher, Fort Augustus Abbey School, 20 January 1987, at SGV.001.006.0160-0161.

strive officiously to keep him alive.”⁹⁹³

On 19 February 1987, a meeting was held between SCIS’s joint secretaries, representatives from the inspectorate and SED, and the registrar. Mr Gallacher noted that the SCIS had been providing support to the school and they were keen to continue in that role. The meeting was noted as being very helpful as “[i]t gave an opportunity to make quite clear to them the extensive contact we had had with the school over the last eighteen months...and thereby the basis for our concerns. It will have served to put the feedback they have had from Fr Benedict into perspective.”⁹⁹⁴ SCIS made reference to the “complete mystery” of the school’s finances, and the difficulties this raised in judging the school’s responses to suggestions made. Overall, Mr Gallacher concluded that SCIS understood the aims of the inspectorate and were supportive of the proposals made.

Conclusions about inspections

The adequacy of inspection regimes generally over the whole period of SCAI’s terms of reference is a topic that SCAI intends to consider at a later stage. What I can say at this stage is that if the gaps in inspection identified here did occur, in particular the apparent gap between the 1972 and the 1985 inspections, then they demand explanation.

⁹⁹³ ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, minutes from Mr E. C. Davison, SED II, to Mr Gallacher, Fort Augustus Abbey School, 20 January 1987, at SGV.001.006.0161.

⁹⁹⁴ See ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, memorandum from Mr T. N. Gallacher to Mr D. A. Osler, Fort Augustus Abbey School, 24 February 1987, at SGV.001.006.0147; and notes of meeting between SCIS and SED on Thursday 19 February 1987, at SGV.001.006.0148.

11

Other investigations

Aside from this Inquiry, there have been other recent investigations related to Benedictine monks and the abuse of children, some of which are discussed below.

Independent Inquiry into Sexual Abuse

In 2018 and 2019 the Independent Inquiry into Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in England and Wales established that children had been physically and sexually abused at institutions in England run by members of the EBC. The findings included that “extensive” sexual abuse of children took place at St Benedict’s School, associated with Ealing Abbey, and that “appalling sexual abuse” of children was inflicted over decades at Ampleforth School, associated with Ampleforth Abbey, and Downside School associated with Downside Abbey.⁹⁹⁵

The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Sexual Abuse

In 2017, the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (ARC) published an analysis of child

sexual abuse claims made to Catholic Church institutions.⁹⁹⁶ This analysis concluded that, amongst those Catholic Church authorities in Australia with priest members, the Benedictine Community of New Norcia “was the religious institute with the highest overall proportion of priest members who were alleged perpetrators (21.5%).”⁹⁹⁷ As of 2017, the Benedictine Community of New Norcia had received claims of child sexual abuse from 71 people—of these, 55 individuals identified one or more priests as an alleged perpetrator, and 16 individuals identified one or more Brothers as an alleged perpetrator.⁹⁹⁸ Claimants were, on average, nine years old when the alleged sexual abuse took place.⁹⁹⁹ Most of these individuals also made an allegation of physical abuse.¹⁰⁰⁰ It is of note, as set out in [Chapter 3](#), that Aidan Duggan, Fabian Duggan, and Denis Alexander originated from New Norcia before their arrival at Fort Augustus in the 1950s.

⁹⁹⁵ See IICSA, *Ampleforth and Downside (English Benedictine Congregation case study). Investigation Report, August 2018, a report of the Inquiry Panel*, Prof. Alexis Jay OBE, Prof. Sir Malcolm Evans KCMG OBE, Ivor Frank and Drusilla Sharpling CBE; *The Roman Catholic Church, Case Study: English Benedictine Congregation, 1. Ealing Abbey and St Benedict’s School, 2. Ampleforth and Downside: update. Investigation Report, October 2019, a report of the Inquiry Panel*, Prof. Alexis Jay OBE, Prof. Sir Malcolm Evans KCMG OBE, Ivor Frank and Drusilla Sharpling CBE.

⁹⁹⁶ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Analysis of Claims of Child Sexual Abuse Made with Respect to Catholic Church Institutions in Australia*, June 2017.

⁹⁹⁷ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Analysis of Claims of Child Sexual Abuse Made with Respect to Catholic Church Institutions in Australia*, June 2017, p.16.

⁹⁹⁸ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Analysis of Claims of Child Sexual Abuse Made with Respect to Catholic Church Institutions in Australia*, June 2017, p. 132.

⁹⁹⁹ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Analysis of Claims of Child Sexual Abuse Made with Respect to Catholic Church Institutions in Australia*, June 2017, p.132.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Analysis of Claims of Child Sexual Abuse Made with Respect to Catholic Church Institutions in Australia*, June 2017, p.132.

“...there was not any kind of shadow of doubt in our minds that what they were telling us was true. The detail was extensive. It was sometimes very harrowing to listen to”.

“Sins of Our Fathers”

On 29 July 2013, a BBC documentary film entitled, “Sins of Our Fathers”, was broadcast in Scotland.¹⁰⁰¹ The film was produced by a team within the BBC, then known as BBC Scotland Investigates, and since 2018 known as BBC Disclosure. The principal people who worked on the film were Mark Daly, a BBC investigations correspondent, and Murdoch Rodgers, a freelance producer and director. Both provided written and oral evidence to the Inquiry.

The investigation

The investigation began in late 2012, and focused on allegations of abuse at CK and FA. By the time the programme was aired, over 50 former pupils of the schools had spoken with Mark Daly and/or Murdoch Rodgers.¹⁰⁰² By then, around half of those former pupils had made disclosures of sexual or physical abuse.¹⁰⁰³ The numbers of pupils making allegations of abuse continued to grow after the programme was broadcast.¹⁰⁰⁴

Murdoch Rodgers had, by the time he gave evidence in July 2019, been in touch with over 100 people who had shared accounts of their experiences of life at CK and/or FA.¹⁰⁰⁵ He was understandably very conscious of the trust of these individuals, and the importance

of not betraying that trust in discussions with the Inquiry.¹⁰⁰⁶ He explained that some of those who had spoken with them had come forward to the Inquiry, but that others had chosen not to do so.¹⁰⁰⁷ He was anxious to respect the positions of those who had not chosen to come forward to the Inquiry; he was correct to take that principled approach.

As the investigation progressed, Murdoch Rodgers became convinced by the quality of the testimony, and that it was “very profound.”¹⁰⁰⁸ He went on to explain that “[t]he other thing that was very, very impressive about these men is that there was not any kind of shadow of doubt in our minds that what they were telling us was true. The detail was extensive. It was sometimes very harrowing to listen to because you were very conscious of what these men were actually going through in engaging with two complete strangers [and providing] these very, very personal stories.”¹⁰⁰⁹

Mark Daly said, of the accounts they heard: “This [CK and FA] was a diabolical place for many boys. The inquiry has heard that it was survival of the fittest. The strongest boys did prosper, but for a huge percentage of boys, it was a diabolical, terrifying, evil place, where monks acting in a calculated,

1001 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3708.

1002 [Transcript, day 152](#): Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3656-3657.

1003 [Transcript, day 152](#): Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3657; [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3736.

1004 [Transcript, day 152](#): Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3657; [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3735-3736.

1005 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3708 and 3736.

1006 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3708.

1007 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3736.

1008 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3713.

1009 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3713.

cunning, patient way—and sometimes a completely opportunistic way—were preying on vulnerable boys, sexually abusing them, with almost no comeback whatsoever. These monks were using the school and religion as a shield, as a front, for their paedophile activities.”¹⁰¹⁰

That graphic description chimes with evidence presented to the Inquiry by former pupils.

A careful approach

Both Murdoch Rodgers and Mark Daly approached their task with great care. They were conscious that some of the men they spoke to were being asked to disclose the abuse they suffered for the first time. As Murdoch Rodgers explained: “The determination and courage of these men was something that became very powerful from our point of view in terms of the responsibility that we had, not only to gather the evidence but actually to tell the story effectively and properly. We had a responsibility because these men were coming forward in this way.”¹⁰¹¹ They put “strict” protocols in place with the former pupils that enabled a degree of trust to be built. This included many phone conversations, in-person meetings, follow-ups in writing, discussions about the potential consequences of the appearance in such a programme, the option of anonymity, and assurances that nothing would be done with information provided without the former pupil’s permission.¹⁰¹² The relationship built up with the men continued from initial

contact right up until the film was broadcast and, on some occasions, afterwards.¹⁰¹³

Alleged abusers

At the stage of transmission of the programme, there were allegations of abuse being made against the following alleged abusers: Lawrence Kelly, Mark Dilworth, Edward Delepine, Vincent Pirie Watson, Gregory Brusey, John MacBride, Aidan Duggan, and Denis Alexander. Francis Davidson and Augustine Grene were accused of covering up allegations.¹⁰¹⁴

A decision was made that the programme would focus on allegations of abuse by monks and lay staff, but the team also heard accounts of bullying and homosexual behaviour between the boys.¹⁰¹⁵

The Australian visit

During the course of the investigation, Mark Daly and a cameraman travelled to Australia. Mark confronted Denis Alexander on the doorstep of his home, and put to him allegations of abuse made by the former pupil “Brendan”. Denis Alexander “said nothing about the allegations...he commanded me to get off his property, he was going to call the police...He showed nothing resembling contrition or apology. He was angry, he was irked. So irked in fact that he got in his car and he drove it straight into mine.”¹⁰¹⁶

Contact with Dom Yeo

Mark Daly interviewed Dom Yeo shortly before the programme was transmitted. In advance of the interview, a detailed letter was sent to Dom Yeo setting out the nature

1010 [Transcript, day 152](#): Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3683.

1011 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3714.

1012 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3714-3715; [Transcript, day 152](#): Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3654-3656.

1013 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3721.

1014 [Transcript, day 152](#): Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3682-6383; [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3734-3735.

1015 [Transcript, day 152](#): Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3737.

1016 [Transcript, day 152](#): Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3574.

“The phone was ringing off the hook with people wanting to get in touch. Boys who had suffered similar, who hadn’t known about our programme, boys from all over the world.”

of the allegations so that he would be in a position to respond. Dom Yeo did not address the detail of the allegations during that interview.¹⁰¹⁷ This was a disappointing response; Dom Yeo could have been much more forthcoming.¹⁰¹⁸

Contact with Father Francis Davidson

Mark Daly also made contact with Francis Davidson, who was headmaster, including when “Brendan”, who had alleged abuse, was a pupil. As Mark explained they were “stonewalled” by Francis Davidson at that time.¹⁰¹⁹

The aftermath

Following transmission of the programme, the investigation team was “inundated with calls.”¹⁰²⁰ Mark Daly explained that “[t]he phone was ringing off the hook with people wanting to get in touch. Boys who had suffered similar, who hadn’t known about our programme, boys from all over the world”.¹⁰²¹ While some former pupils continued to contact them with positive accounts, the numbers of allegations received after transmission “probably doubled” taking those complaining of abuse to roughly 40 or 50 former pupils.¹⁰²² Some approaches

were from people from whom they had previously heard but who wished to share more disclosures after the programme, and some were from people to whom they had not previously spoken to. Murdoch Rodgers said, of what they heard after transmission of the programme, (which focused in the main on FA), that it “was quite staggering in terms of the number of people that were talking about their experience at Carlekemp.”¹⁰²³ Murdoch Rodgers also said that bullying was something that was being raised on almost every occasion he had spoken with former pupils.¹⁰²⁴

One of the former pupils who got in touch after the programme was Hugo Kennedy, a SCAI applicant who was abused by Denis Alexander.¹⁰²⁵ Once he had contacted the two men, further contact was made with Francis Davidson. Mark Daly explained that this time Francis Davidson met them “halfway at least” in that he admitted to having been aware of the investigation process relating to “Brendan’s” allegations at the time, but that the allegations had been raised with the abbot.¹⁰²⁶ He admitted that the allegations led to Denis Alexander being sent back to Australia. He said he did not recall the allegations made by Hugo Kennedy.¹⁰²⁷

1017 Transcript, day 152: Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3690-3692.

1018 Transcript, day 152: Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3692.

1019 Transcript, day 152: Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3666-3668.

1020 Transcript, day 152: Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3735.

1021 Transcript, day 152: Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3686.

1022 Transcript, day 152: Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3686-3687.

1023 Transcript, day 152: Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3735.

1024 Transcript, day 152: Murdoch Rodgers, at TRN.001.006.3738.

1025 See Transcript, day 147: Hugo Kennedy, at TRN.001.006.2912-2919.

1026 Transcript, day 152: Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3689.

1027 Transcript, day 152: Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3688-3690.

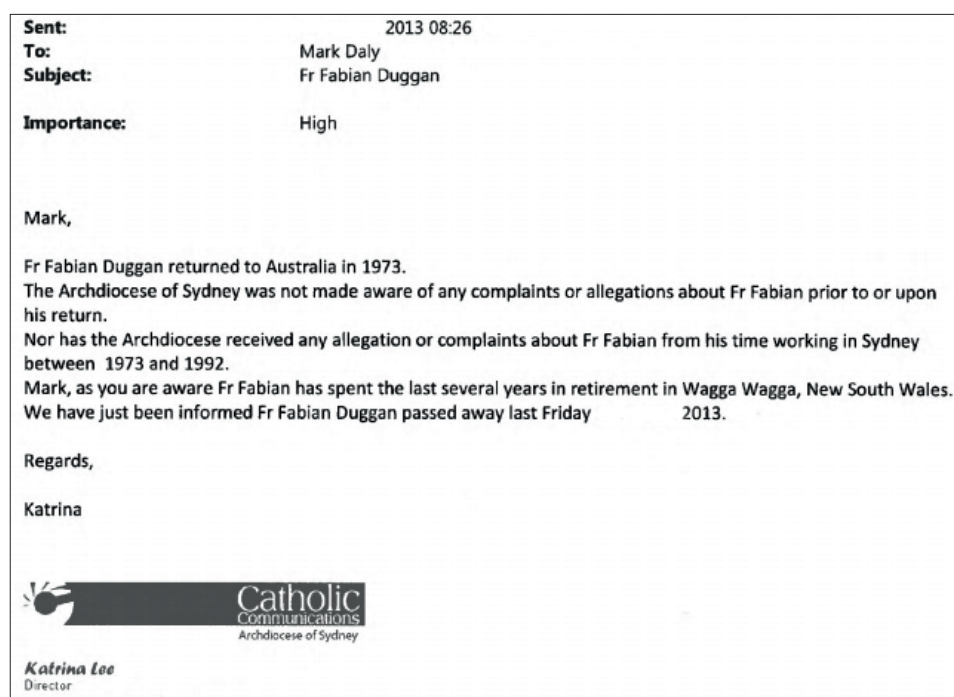
“[The reporter] was allowed in and [Denis Alexander] gave a bit of an interview...where he denied all the allegations... He said that [the alleged abuse] never happened.”

Contact with Denis Alexander

Mark Daly explained that he tried to keep the story alive. A local freelancer in Sydney was tasked to visit Denis Alexander to ask about the allegations made by both “Brendan” and Hugo Kennedy. The reporter was successful in establishing contact with him. As Mark explained: “[the reporter] was allowed in and [Denis Alexander] gave a bit of an interview...where he denied all the allegations. He said [a] bishop was supporting him and that it would all be sorted out in the end...He said that [the alleged abuse] never happened.”¹⁰²⁸

Fabian Duggan

Mark explained that, following on from the programme, the team also managed to have a letter delivered to Fabian Duggan. This was after more people had come forward with allegations against him. The letter set out allegations and was delivered to him in a retirement home in New South Wales, Australia. Fabian Duggan died in 2013, the day the letter was delivered to him.¹⁰²⁹ Three days later the following was confirmed on behalf of the Archdiocese of Sydney in an email to Mark:



Email sent on behalf of the The Archdiocese of Sydney to Mark Daly relating to Fabian Duggan¹⁰³⁰

1028 [Transcript, day 152](#): Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3675-3676.

1029 [Transcript, day 152](#): Mark Daly, at TRN.001.006.3679-3680.

1030 Email from Katrina Lee, Director, Catholic Communications, Archdiocese of Sydney, to Mark Daly, 2013, at BBC.001.001.0049.

Investigative journalism

A number of the former pupils who provided evidence to SCAl spoke positively about their involvement with “Sins of Our Fathers” and, in particular, of Mark Daly and Murdoch Rodgers.

There is no doubt that “Sins of Our Fathers” was a responsibly presented programme, based upon a well-researched investigation, and it brought into the public domain an issue of real public interest—the abuse perpetrated with impunity by Benedictine monks in Scotland. The BBC deserves substantial credit for supporting the important investigative journalism that enabled it to happen.

Appendix A - Terms of Reference

Introduction

The overall aim and purpose of this Inquiry is to raise public awareness of the abuse of children in care, particularly during the period covered by SCAL. It will provide an opportunity for public acknowledgement of the suffering of those children and a forum for validation of their experience and testimony.

The Inquiry will do this by fulfilling its Terms of Reference which are set out below.

1. To investigate the nature and extent of abuse of children whilst in care in Scotland, during the relevant time frame.
2. To consider the extent to which institutions and bodies with legal responsibility for the care of children failed in their duty to protect children in care in Scotland (or children whose care was arranged in Scotland) from abuse, regardless of where that abuse occurred, and in particular to identify any systemic failures in fulfilling that duty.
3. To create a national public record and commentary on abuse of children in care in Scotland during the relevant time frame.
4. To examine how abuse affected and still affects these victims in the long term, and how in turn it affects their families.
5. The Inquiry is to cover that period which is within living memory of any person who suffered such abuse, up until such date as the Chair may determine, and in any event not beyond 17 December 2014.
6. To consider the extent to which failures by state or non-state institutions (including the courts) to protect children in care in Scotland from abuse have been addressed by changes to practice, policy or legislation, up until such date as the Chair may determine.
7. To consider whether further changes in practice, policy or legislation are necessary in order to protect children in care in Scotland from such abuse in future.
8. To report to the Scottish Ministers on the above matters, and to make recommendations, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Definitions

'Child' means a person under the age of 18.

For the purpose of this Inquiry, "Children in Care" includes children in institutional residential care such as children's homes (including residential care provided by faith based groups); secure care units including List D schools; Borstals; Young Offenders' Institutions; places provided for Boarded Out children in the Highlands and Islands; state, private and independent Boarding Schools, including state funded school hostels; healthcare establishments providing long term care; and any similar establishments intended to provide children with long term residential care. The term also includes children in foster care.

The term does not include: children living with their natural families; children living with members of their natural families, children living with adoptive families, children using sports and leisure clubs or attending faith based organisations on a day to day basis; hospitals and similar treatment centres attended on a short term basis; nursery and day-care; short term respite care for vulnerable children; schools, whether public or private, which did not have boarding facilities; police cells and similar holding centres which were intended to provide care temporarily or for the short term; or 16 and 17 year old children in the armed forces and accommodated by the relevant service.

"Abuse" for the purpose of this Inquiry is to be taken to mean primarily physical abuse and sexual abuse, with associated psychological and emotional abuse. The Inquiry will be entitled to consider other forms of abuse at its discretion, including medical experimentation, spiritual abuse, unacceptable practices (such as deprivation of contact with siblings) and neglect, but these matters do not require to be examined individually or in isolation.

Appendix B - The parental right of chastisement, corporal punishment in Scottish schools, and related matters

The parental right of chastisement

The common law of Scotland granted parents the right to inflict corporal punishment upon their children.¹⁰³¹ This right was statutorily acknowledged in 1889 by the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act, and repeated by its successors—including the Children Act, 1908 and the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1937.¹⁰³² However, corporal punishment was only lawful, if it was “(i) aimed at chastisement, in the sense of educative punishment, and (ii) within a moderate and reasonable level of severity. Acting in a manner beyond ‘reasonable chastisement’ has long been a legal wrong”.¹⁰³³ Although the concept of “reasonableness” has changed over time according to society’s changing views on the rights of children and their parents, “cases from the earliest period indicate a judicial awareness of the dangers to vulnerable children of excessive physical punishment.”¹⁰³⁴ Therefore, although parents did have the right to punish their children, this parental right was not without limits—it had to have a purpose and had to be reasonable.

Corporal punishment in Scottish schools

As mentioned above, throughout much of the period examined in this case study, corporal punishment was permitted in Scottish schools. In Scotland, the corporal punishment in question commonly took the form of striking the palm of the pupil’s hand with the “Lochgelly tawse”.¹⁰³⁵ After the Second World War, changing attitudes towards children and new understandings about their development, saw increased concerns about the use of corporal punishment not only at school, but also in circumstances where children were living away from the family home.

Curtis Report

In September 1946, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Education presented a report to Parliament from “The Care of Children Committee”. The committee had been chaired by Miss Myra Curtis and became known as the “Curtis Report”. It was the result of detailed inquiry into the provision for children in care and its recommendations, strongly urged on the government, included:

1031 See Alexander Birrell Wilkinson and Kenneth McK. Norrie, *The Law Relating to Parent and Child in Scotland*, 3rd ed. (2013) at 7.36. See also Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart From Their Parents](#) (November 2017), at p.346.

1032 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart From Their Parents](#) (November 2017), at p.346.

1033 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart From Their Parents](#) (November 2017), at p.346.

1034 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart From Their Parents](#) (November 2017), at p.347.

1035 See “[How the tawse left its mark on Scottish pupils](#)”, BBC Scotland, 22 February 2017. Retrieved 5 September 2020.

"Discipline

We have given much thought to this question and have come to the conclusion that corporal punishment (i.e. caning or birching) should be definitely prohibited in children's Homes for children of all ages and both sexes, as it already is in the Public Assistance Homes for girls and for boys of 14 and over. We think that the time has come when such treatment of boys in these Homes should be unthinkable as the similar treatment of girls already is and that the voluntary Homes should adopt the same principle. It is to be remembered that the children with whom we are concerned are already at a disadvantage in society. One of the first essentials is to nourish their self-respect; another is to make them feel that they are regarded with affection by those in charge of them. Whatever there is to be said for this form of punishment in the case of boys with a happy home and full confidence in life, it may, in our opinion be disastrous for the child with an unhappy background. It is, moreover, liable to... abuse. In condemning corporal punishment we do not overlook the fact that there are other means of enforcing control which may have even more harmful effects. We especially deprecate nagging, sneering, taunting, indeed all methods which secure the ascendancy of the person in charge by destroying or lowering the self-esteem of the child".¹⁰³⁶

Although the committee's concerns focused particularly on children in care, their condemnation of corporal punishment and abusive attitudes had to apply, logically, to all children "at a disadvantage in society". Whilst many of the children at CK and FA came from

what they described as happy homes there were some whose homes and families were far away, some who had previously been abused in other school settings, and at least one child in the later years who was placed at FA by a local authority after having previously been in a children's home. As Seamus Coleman explained "we did get our fair share of kids who were troubled elsewhere before coming to Fort Augustus".¹⁰³⁷ These aspects of some children's backgrounds and circumstances could hardly be described as advantageous. Also, the ages at which children were admitted to CK—some as young as six—made them particularly vulnerable.

In all the circumstances, had the committee also been required to address the punishment practices in the schools examined in this case study, I conclude that it is likely that their criticisms of corporal punishment would have applied to them with equal force.

The Administration of Children's Homes (Scotland) Regulations 1959

Although not applicable to boarding schools, it is worth mentioning the Administration of Children's Homes (Scotland) Regulations 1959, which applied to both local authority and voluntary homes and came into force on 1 August 1959. These Regulations reflected a shift in social attitudes to the punishment of children in any institution, including boarding schools—a shift that the monks of Fort Augustus Abbey wholly failed to recognise.

These Regulations "contained rules for the administration of homes, the welfare of children accommodated therein, and for oversight of both these matters."¹⁰³⁸

¹⁰³⁶ The Curtis Report, paragraph 493(xviii), at LEG.001.001.8889-8890.

¹⁰³⁷ Written statement of Seamus Coleman, paragraph 28, at WIT.001.002.6715.

¹⁰³⁸ Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, *Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart From Their Parents* (November 2017), at p.204.

Regulation 1 required those responsible for the administration of the home to ensure that it was “conducted in such manner and on such principles as will secure the well-being of the children of the home.”¹⁰³⁹ Thereafter, Regulation 10 held that:

“(1) The general discipline of the children accommodated in a home shall be maintained by the personal influence of the person in charge of the home.

(2) Except as provided in Regulation 11 a child whom it is necessary to punish for misconduct shall be punished only by a temporary loss of recreation or privileges.

(3) A record of any punishment administered to a child shall be made in the log book...

(4) Any case in which a child is punished with abnormal frequency shall be reported by the person in charge of the home to the administering authority who shall arrange for an investigation of the child’s mental condition.”¹⁰⁴⁰

Regulation 11 provided that corporal punishment may “exceptionally be administered”.¹⁰⁴¹ In such cases, it “could only be administered by a person specifically empowered by the administering authority to do so.”¹⁰⁴² If the child was known to have any physical or mental disability, sanction was required from the medical officer before corporal punishment could be administered.¹⁰⁴³

Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961

Again, although not directly applicable to boarding schools, it is also worth mentioning the Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961 as the standard noted in these Rules could be said to reflect what was expected at the time in relation to the use of corporal punishment in schools.

The Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961 contained provisions relating to discipline and punishment.¹⁰⁴⁴ Rule 28 provided that discipline and punishment were the responsibility of the headmaster of the approved school.¹⁰⁴⁵ The headmaster could delegate this responsibility, except where special provision to the contrary was made in the Rules. Rule 29 listed the punishments available:

“(a) reprimand;

(b) forfeiture of privileges or rewards;

(c) loss of conduct marks or reduction in ranks;

(d) loss of recreation or liberty;

(e) performance of useful additional tasks;

(f) the disallowance of home leave, which may be used only in the case of a serious offence;

or

(g) corporal punishment.”¹⁰⁴⁶

1039 The Administration of Children’s Homes (Scotland) Regulations 1959, reg. 1, at LEG.001.001.2719.

1040 The Administration of Children’s Homes (Scotland) Regulations 1959, reg. 10, at LEG.001.001.2722-2723.

1041 The Administration of Children’s Homes (Scotland) Regulations 1959, reg. 11, at LEG.001.001.2723.

1042 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart From Their Parents](#) (November 2017), at p.206.

1043 The Administration of Children’s Homes (Scotland) Regulations 1959, reg. 11, at LEG.001.001.2723. See also Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart From Their Parents](#) (November 2017), at p.206, and [Transcript, day 2](#): Professor Kenneth Norrie, at TRN.001.001.3250.

1044 Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961, Rules 28-32, at LEG.001.001.2704-2705.

1045 Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961, Rule 28, at LEG.001.001.2704.

1046 Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961, Rule 29, at LEG.001.001.2704.

Rule 30 established that

*"The type of punishment to be used shall be determined not only by the gravity of the offence but also by the age, temperament and physical condition of the offender. The Medical Officer shall be consulted if there is reason to think that punishment might be harmful to the pupil. In no case shall the nature or the extent of the punishment be such as might be injurious to physical or mental health. Punishments shall not be awarded more than once for the same offence."*¹⁰⁴⁷

Rule 31 dealt specifically with corporal punishment and provided that it may be inflicted only in the following conditions:

"(a) for an offence committed in the course of ordinary lessons in the schoolroom the principal teacher may be authorised by the Managers to inflict on the hands not more than three strokes in all;

(b) except as provided in the last foregoing paragraph, the punishment may be inflicted only by the Headmaster or, in his absence or incapacity, by the Deputy Headmaster or by the master specifically directed by the Managers under Rule 14 to exercise the functions of the Headmaster;

(c) except when the punishment is inflicted in the presence of a class in a schoolroom, an adult witness must be present;

(d) no pupil may be called upon to assist the person inflicting the punishment;

(e) the punishment may not be inflicted on a girl other than a pupil in a school classified under subsection (1) of section

85 of the Act as a junior school and not more than three strokes in all may be inflicted on the hands only;

(f) for boys under 14 years of age, the number of strokes may not exceed two on each hand or four on the posterior over ordinary cloth trousers;

(g) for boys who have attained the age of 14 years, the number of strokes may not exceed three on each hand or six on the posterior over ordinary cloth trousers;

(h) only a light tawse may be used: a cane or other form of striking is forbidden;

(i) the punishment may not be inflicted on more than one occasion for the same offence; and

(j) no pupil who shows any sign of physical weakness or mental illness shall receive corporal punishment without the sanction of the Medical Officer;

*and any person who commits a breach of this Rule shall be liable to dismissal or other disciplinary action."*¹⁰⁴⁸

Rule 32 provided that

*"(1) The Headmaster shall, without delay, enter in the punishment book full particulars of each occasion on which home leave is stopped or corporal punishment inflicted. A teacher who inflicts corporal punishment under paragraph (1) of Rule 31 shall, without delay, report the punishment to the Headmaster for entry in the punishment book."*¹⁰⁴⁹

Rule 32 also indicated the information that should be included in punishment books.

1047 Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961, Rule 30, at LEG.001.001.2704.

1048 Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961, Rule 31, at LEG.001.001.2704-2705.

1049 Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules 1961, Rule 32, at LEG.001.001.2705.

Elimination of Corporal Punishment in Schools: Statement of Principles and Code of Practice

By the 1960s, following agreement in principle that the teaching profession should be encouraged to move towards the gradual elimination of corporal punishment, a consultative body—the Liaison Committee on Educational Matters—worked on and issued a booklet entitled “Elimination of Corporal Punishment in Schools: Statement of Principles and Code of Practice.”¹⁰⁵⁰ It set out rules designed to limit the use of corporal punishment:

“Until corporal punishment is eliminated its use should be subject to the following rules:

- (i) It should not be administered for failure or poor performance in a task, even if the failure (e.g. errors in spelling or calculation, bad homework, bad handwriting, etc.) appears to be due not to lack of ability or any other kind of handicap but to inattention, carelessness or laziness. Failure of this type may be more an educational and social problem than a disciplinary one, and may require remedial rather than corrective action.*
- (ii) Corporal punishment should not be used in infant classes. Its elimination from infant classes should be followed by progressive elimination from other primary classes.*
- (iii) In secondary departments, only in exceptional circumstances should any pupil be strapped by a teacher of the opposite sex or girls be strapped at all.*

- (iv) Corporal punishment should not be inflicted for truancy or lateness unless the head teacher is satisfied that the child and not the parent is at fault.*
- (v) The strap should not be in evidence, except when it is being used to inflict corporal punishment.*
- (vi) Where used, corporal punishment should be used only as a last resort, and should be directed to punishment of the wrong-doer and to securing the conditions necessary for order in the school and for work in the classroom.*
- (vii) It should normally follow previous clear warning about the consequences of a repetition of misconduct.*
- (viii) Corporal punishment should be given by striking the palm of the pupil’s hand with a strap and by no other means whatever.”¹⁰⁵¹*

The thinking as to what was acceptable, even in the school setting, had shifted significantly by the late 1960s.

Further developments in the 1980s saw corporal punishment abolished at most schools. In 1982, 10 years before the closure of the school at Fort Augustus, in the case of *Campbell and Cosans v UK*¹⁰⁵² it was argued that the use of corporal punishment in Scottish schools was contrary to Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.¹⁰⁵³ Whilst the European Court of Human Rights rejected that claim, it “found the United Kingdom in breach of Article 2 Protocol 1 for failing to respect the parents’ philosophical conviction against corporal punishment. The Government...considered it

1050 See Corporation of Glasgow, Education Department, Meeting of Schools and School Welfare Sub-Committee, 6 May 1968, at GLA.001.001.0703. The booklet was sent to all education authorities in February 1968.

1051 Liaison Committee on Educational Matters, Elimination of Corporal Punishment in Schools: Statement of Principles and Code of Practice, February 1968, at GLA.001.001.0706.

1052 Series A no 48, 4 EHRR 293, IHRL 33.

1053 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart From Their Parents](#) (November 2017), at p.354.

impractical to prohibit corporal punishment only of children whose parents objected, and so instead, all pupils at public schools were granted protection from corporal punishment by their teachers.”¹⁰⁵⁴

Consequently, the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, section 48A—which was inserted after section 48 of the Education Act (Scotland) 1980—abolished the corporal punishment of pupils. For the purposes of that section, a “pupil” included a person for whom education was provided at

- “(i) a public school,*
- (ii) at a grant-aided school, or*
- (iii) at an independent school, maintained or assisted by a Minister of the Crown, which is a school prescribed by regulations made under this section or falls within a category of schools so prescribed.”¹⁰⁵⁵*

As some pupils at Fort Augustus were assisted places, this legislation would have applied directly to them.

1054 Kenneth McK. Norrie, Report to SCAI, [Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart From Their Parents](#) (November 2017), at p.354.

1055 Education (No. 2) Act 1986, Section 48A(6).

Appendix C - Breakdown of numbers of children at Fort Augustus Abbey School and Carlekemp Priory School

Fort Augustus Abbey School Statistics

Number of children at FA between 1922 and 1991

Between 1922 and 1991, FA accommodated approximately 4,825 children.

Date	Number of pupils	Date	Number of pupils
1922	35 ¹⁰⁵⁶	1949	78 ¹⁰⁶⁵
1926	54 ¹⁰⁵⁷	1950	74 ¹⁰⁶⁶
1927	53 ¹⁰⁵⁸	1951	69 ¹⁰⁶⁷
1928	60 ¹⁰⁵⁹	1952	68 ¹⁰⁶⁸
1929	69 ¹⁰⁶⁰	1953	80 ¹⁰⁶⁹
1930	60 ¹⁰⁶¹	1954	75 ¹⁰⁷⁰
1935	11 ¹⁰⁶²	1955	74 ¹⁰⁷¹
1938	56 ¹⁰⁶³	1956	77 ¹⁰⁷²
1944	9 ¹⁰⁶⁴	1957	86 ¹⁰⁷³

1056 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED, Inspection of Secondary (and Preparatory) Schools, Form H (4), at SGV.001.005.9568.

1057 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Details for the years 1926-1930, at SGV.001.005.9592.

1058 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Details for the years 1926-1930, at SGV.001.005.9592.

1059 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Details for the years 1926-1930, at SGV.001.005.9592.

1060 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Details for the years 1926-1930, at SGV.001.005.9592.

1061 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Details for the years 1926-1930, at SGV.001.005.9592.

1062 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#): BEN.001.001.0166.

1063 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Higher Inspection, 1938-1939, Form H 5, 17 November 1938, at SGV.001.005.9640.

1064 Section 21 response, Part A, at BEN.001.001.0166.

1065 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspections of Schools 1950, Form H 5, 25 October 1949, at SGV.001.005.9675.

1066 NRS ED32/283 School's Inspectors' Reports, 1921-1955, SED Inspection Report, 1949-50, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9679.

1067 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Return of pupils on the registers of Independent Schools, October 1951, at BEN.001.002.1061.

1068 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Return of pupils on the registers of Independent Schools on 31 March 1952, at BEN.001.002.1095.

1069 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Return of pupils on the registers of Independent Schools on 31 March 1953, at BEN.001.002.1110.

1070 English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts A and B response to section 21 notice, Fort Augustus](#): BEN.001.001.0166.

1071 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Return of pupils on the registers of Independent Schools on 15 January 1955, at BEN.001.002.1198.

1072 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Return of pupils on the registers of Independent Schools on 15 January 1956, at BEN.001.002.1281.

1073 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Return of pupils on the registers of Independent Schools on 15 January 1957, at BEN.001.002.1302.

Date	Number of pupils
1958	101 (including four day pupils) ¹⁰⁷⁴
1959	96 (including four day pupils) ¹⁰⁷⁵
1960	104 (including one day pupil) ¹⁰⁷⁶
1961	106 (including one day pupil) ¹⁰⁷⁷
1962	127 ¹⁰⁷⁸
1963	148 ¹⁰⁷⁹
1964	157 ¹⁰⁸⁰
1965	153 (including one day pupil) ¹⁰⁸¹
1966	145 ¹⁰⁸²

Date	Number of pupils
1967	147 ¹⁰⁸³
1968	139 ¹⁰⁸⁴
1969	141 ¹⁰⁸⁵
1970	140 ¹⁰⁸⁶
1971	132 ¹⁰⁸⁷
1972	116 ¹⁰⁸⁸
1973	133 ¹⁰⁸⁹
1974	141 ¹⁰⁹⁰
1975	130 (including 6 day boys and 6 day girls) ¹⁰⁹¹

1074 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Form R.I.S.2, Registration of Independent Schools, Return of Information to the Registrar in Terms of Regulation 2(2)(b) of the Registration to Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations, 1957, Number of pupils on the roll of the school at the date of application, 22 January 1958, at BEN.001.002.1319.

1075 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Form R.I.S.2, Registration of Independent Schools, Return of Information to the Registrar in Terms of Regulation 2(2)(b) of the Registration to Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations, 1957, Number of pupils on the roll of the school on 15 January 1959, at BEN.001.002.1385.

1076 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Form R.I.S.2, Registration of Independent Schools, Return of Information to the Registrar in Terms of Regulation 2(2)(b) of the Registration to Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations, 1957, Number of pupils on the roll of the school on 15 January 1960, at BEN.001.004.4123.

1077 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Form R.I.S.2, Registration of Independent Schools, Return of Information to the Registrar in Terms of Regulation 2(2)(b) of the Registration to Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations, 1957, Number of pupils on the roll of the school on 15 January 1961, at BEN.001.002.1433.

1078 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Form R.I.S.2, Registration of Independent Schools, Return of Information to the Registrar in Terms of Regulation 2(2)(b) of the Registration to Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations, 1957, Number of pupils on the roll of the school on 15 January 1962, at BEN.001.002.1444.

1079 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Form R.I.S.2, Registration of Independent Schools, Return of Information to the Registrar in Terms of Regulation 2(2)(b) of the Registration to Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations, 1957, Number of pupils on the roll of the school on 15 January 1963, at BEN.001.002.1460. Note that in this form the revised figures for the number of pupils attending the school were added in pencil and the total number of pupils is revised up to 156. It is unclear who has added these revised figures, or when.

1080 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Form R.I.S.2, Registration of Independent Schools, Return of Information to the Registrar in Terms of Regulation 2(2)(b) of the Registration to Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations, 1957, Number of pupils on the roll of the school on 15 January 1964, at BEN.001.002.1477.

1081 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Form R.I.S.2, Registration of Independent Schools, Return of Information to the Registrar in Terms of Regulation 2(2)(b) of the Registration to Independent Schools (Scotland) Regulations, 1957, Number of pupils on the roll of the school on 15 January 1965, at BEN.001.002.1484.

1082 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Easter Term 1966, at BEN.001.001.4165.

1083 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Christmas Term 1967, at BEN.001.001.4196.

1084 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Christmas Term 1968, at BEN.001.001.4222.

1085 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Easter Term 1969, at BEN.001.001.4233.

1086 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Spring Term 1970, at BEN.001.001.4264.

1087 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Easter Term 1971, at BEN.001.001.4297.

1088 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Lent Term 1972, at BEN.001.001.4319.

1089 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Lent Term 1973, at BEN.001.001.4345.

1090 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Easter Term 1974, at BEN.001.001.4370.

1091 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Christmas Term 1975, at BEN.001.001.4404.

Date	Number of pupils
1976	111 (including 5 day girls, 8 day boys) ¹⁰⁹²
1977	146 (including 7 day pupils) ¹⁰⁹³
1978	161 (including 7 day pupils) ¹⁰⁹⁴
1979	155 (including 9 day pupils) ¹⁰⁹⁵
1980	147 ¹⁰⁹⁶
1981	140 ¹⁰⁹⁷
1982	144 (including 4 day girls) ¹⁰⁹⁸
1983	117 ¹⁰⁹⁹
1984	109 ¹¹⁰⁰
1985	82 (including one day pupil) ¹¹⁰¹
1986	90 ¹¹⁰²
1987	72 ¹¹⁰³
1988	65 ¹¹⁰⁴
1989	56 ¹¹⁰⁵
1990	62 (including two day pupils) ¹¹⁰⁶
1991	63 (including three day pupils) ¹¹⁰⁷

1092 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Christmas Term 1976, at BEN.001.001.4438.

1093 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Autumn Term 1977, at BEN.001.001.4444.

1094 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, September 1978, at BEN.001.001.4488.

1095 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, September 1979, at BEN.001.001.4504.

1096 Baxter, class lists, 1978 to 1980, Spring Term 1980, at BEN.001.003.6813.

1097 Curran, class lists, 1977 to 1983, Autumn Term 1981, at BEN.001.003.6849.

1098 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Spring Term 1982, at BEN.001.001.4515.

1099 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Summer Term 1983, at BEN.001.001.4536.

1100 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Spring Term 1984, at BEN.001.001.4548.

1101 FA 120, Correspondence with the SED, 1938 to 1993, Form RIS 2, Registration of Independent Schools, Numbers of pupils on the roll of the school on 23 September 1985, at BEN.001.002.1608.

1102 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, 12 August 1986, at BEN.001.001.4593.

1103 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, September 1987, at BEN.001.001.4621.

1104 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Autumn Term 1988, at BEN.001.001.4668.

1105 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, Autumn Term 1989, at BEN.001.001.4709.

1106 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, 22 August 1990, at BEN.001.001.4750.

1107 Chronicles of St Benedict's Abbey, 1961-1996, 28 August 1991, at BEN.001.001.4782.

Analysis of the means by which children were placed at FA between 1930 and 1988¹¹⁰⁸

Year	Placement
1930-1980	All recorded boarding school placements privately funded by parents.
1981	Boarding school placements mainly privately funded by parents, except one pupil funded and placed by the local authority through the Assisted Places Scheme.
1982	Boarding school placements mainly privately funded by parents, except four pupils funded and placed by local authorities through the Assisted Places Scheme.
1983	Boarding school placements mainly privately funded by parents, except 10 pupils funded by local authorities through the Assisted Places Scheme.
1984	Boarding school placements mainly privately funded by parents, except 10 pupils funded by local authorities through the Assisted Places Scheme.
1985	Boarding school placements mainly privately funded by parents, except 19 pupils who were funded by local authorities through the Assisted Places Scheme.
1986	Boarding school placements mainly privately funded by parents, except nine pupils who were funded by local authorities through the Assisted Places Scheme. ¹¹⁰⁹
1987-88	Boarding school placements mainly privately funded by parents, except 11 pupils who were funded by local authorities through the Assisted Places Scheme.
1989	Of the 65 pupils enrolled at FA in 1989, 40 were funded by the Assisted Places Scheme. ¹¹¹⁰
1990	At least 50 pupils were being funded by the Assisted Places Scheme. ¹¹¹¹

¹¹⁰⁸ Unless otherwise specified, placement numbers collated from FA 128 Assisted Places Scheme 1985-1988, at BEN.001.002.2598.

¹¹⁰⁹ According to a memorandum from the SED dated 21 August 1986, political pressure at the time when the EBC decided to close FA “led the Department to agree that the school should be given a generous allocation under the Assisted Places Scheme in order to keep it afloat. As a result, just less than half of the school’s roll is assisted pupils.” See NRS ED32/541 Independent Schools: Registration, 1958-1990, Mr W. Moyes to Mr Leitch, in Confidence, Abbey School, Fort Augustus, 21 August 1986, at SGV.001.006.0108.

¹¹¹⁰ Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, January 1989, at BEN.001.001.4684.

¹¹¹¹ Chronicles of St Benedict’s Abbey, 1961-1996, 8 November 1990, at BEN.001.001.4756.

Carlekemp Priory School Statistics

Between 1945 and 1977, CK accommodated over 2,000 children.¹¹¹²

Date	Number of pupils
1945/46	58 (plus "a few day pupils") ¹¹¹³
1949	60 (plus five day pupils) ¹¹¹⁴
1952	64 (plus nine day pupils) ¹¹¹⁵
1963	66 ¹¹¹⁶
1964	64 ¹¹¹⁷
1965	67 ¹¹¹⁸
1966	71 ¹¹¹⁹
1967	69 ¹¹²⁰
1968	68 ¹¹²¹
1969	66 ¹¹²²
1970	68 ¹¹²³

Analysis of the means by which children were placed at CK between 1930 and 1977¹¹²⁴

Year	Placement
1930-1977	Boarding school placements all privately funded by parents.

¹¹¹² According to Delepine, who taught at CK from 1945 to 1957, an average of 65 boys attended the school each year from 1945 until near the end. See Archives History of Fort Augustus, Outline History of Fort Augustus Abbey (or Dom Edward Delepine's Recollections), 1999, at BEN.001.004.0479.

¹¹¹³ NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors' Reports, 1934-1955, SED Inspection Report, 24 June 1946, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9490.

¹¹¹⁴ NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors' Reports, 1934-1955, SED Inspection Report, 17 June 1949, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9494.

¹¹¹⁵ NRS ED32/259 School Inspectors' Reports, 1934-1955, SED Inspection Report, 19 June 1952, Form S 10, at SGV.001.005.9499.

¹¹¹⁶ Carlekemp school chronicle, 10 September 1963, at BEN.001.003.3577.

¹¹¹⁷ Carlekemp school chronicle, Lent 1964, at BEN.001.003.3586.

¹¹¹⁸ NRS ED32/260 School Inspectors' Reports, 1958-1969, SED Inspection Report, 11 June 1965, Form S 9, SGV.001.005.9554.

¹¹¹⁹ Carlekemp school chronicle, Lent 1966, at BEN.001.003.3600.

¹¹²⁰ Carlekemp school chronicle, Easter 1967, at BEN.001.003.3604.

¹¹²¹ Carlekemp school chronicle, Lent 1968, at BEN.001.003.3607.

¹¹²² Carlekemp school chronicle, Lent term 1969, at BEN.001.003.3611.

¹¹²³ Carlekemp school chronicle, Lent 1970, at BEN.001.003.3618.

¹¹²⁴ FA 128 Assisted Places Scheme 1985-1988, at BEN.001.002.2598.

Appendix D - Numbers of complaints, civil actions, police investigations, criminal proceedings and applicants to SCAI

Fort Augustus Abbey School and Carlekemp Priory School

Number of complaints made to the EBC relating to abuse or alleged abuse at FA and CK as at 29 March 2019.	17 complaints comprising: 14 complaints relating to FA, Three complaints relating to CK. ¹¹²⁵
Number of civil actions raised against the EBC relating to abuse or alleged abuse at FA and CK as at 29 March 2019.	Two civil actions relating to FA. ¹¹²⁶
Number of police investigations relating to abuse or alleged abuse at FA and CK of which the EBC were aware of as at 29 March 2019.	The EBC were aware that the police examined the files of 26 former pupils of the schools who had made complaints. ¹¹²⁷
Number of criminal proceedings resulting in a conviction relating to abuse at FA and CK of which the EBC were aware of as at 29 March 2019.	One: criminal proceedings against Benedict Seed in relation to abuse at FA. ¹¹²⁸
Number of SCAI applicants relating to FA and CK	33 ¹¹²⁹

¹¹²⁵ English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts C and D response to section 21 notice, Carlekemp and Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0288; Part D response to section 21 notice, updated appendix 1, 29 March 2019, at BEN.001.003.7078; Letter from Clyde & Co to SCAI, 29 March 2019, at BEN-000000007.

¹¹²⁶ English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts C and D response to section 21 notice, Carlekemp and Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0289; Part D response to section 21 notice, updated appendix 3, 29 March 2019, at BEN.001.003.7079; Letter from Clyde & Co to SCAI, 29 March 2019, at BEN-000000007.

¹¹²⁷ English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts C and D response to section 21 notice, Carlekemp and Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0291; Letter from Clyde & Co to SCAI, 29 March 2019, at BEN-000000007.

¹¹²⁸ English Benedictine Congregation, [Parts C and D response to section 21 notice, Carlekemp and Fort Augustus](#), at BEN.001.001.0292.

¹¹²⁹ As of 23 July 2021.

Appendix E - Convictions of Michael Seed (Benedict Seed) and Denis Alexander

Michael Seed (Benedict Seed)

On 26 May 2017 Thomas Michael Seed was convicted of one charge at Inverness Sheriff Court. He was fined £1,000.¹¹³⁰

Michael Seed was convicted, by majority, of the following charge:

On an occasion between 7 September 1980 and 6 September 1982, both dates inclusive, at Fort Augustus Abbey School, Fort Augustus, Invernesshire, you did assault **Child A**, aged between 14 and 15 years and a pupil at the aforementioned school, and did drag him from his bed and into your study and thereafter you did repeatedly strike him with a tawse on his hands and wrists, all to his injury.

Denis Alexander

On 11 June 2021 Denis Alexander pled guilty to and was convicted of two charges at Glasgow High Court.¹¹³¹ On 30 July 2021 Denis Alexander was sentenced to four years and five months imprisonment and ordered to be deported to Australia on completion of his sentence.¹¹³²

Denis Alexander was convicted of the following two charges:

On an occasion between 1 September 1973 and 30 June 1974, both dates inclusive, at Fort Augustus Abbey School, Fort Augustus, you did use lewd, indecent and libidinous practices and behaviour towards **Child B** [aged between 12 and 13] then a pupil at the aforementioned school, place your hand under his clothing and repeatedly touch his penis.

On various occasions between 1 January 1974 and 31 July 1976, both dates inclusive, at Fort Augustus Abbey School, Fort Augustus, you did use lewd, indecent and libidinous practices and behaviour towards [**Hugo Kennedy**] [aged between 10 and 13 years], then a pupil at the aforementioned school, and rub his genitals, touch his penis, expose your penis to him, seize his head, push his head towards your penis and penetrate his mouth with your penis.

1130 Michael Seed Extract Conviction and Sentence, at CFS.001.010.3671; Minute of proceedings dated 26 May 2017, at CFS.001.010.3688.

1131 Copy official amended indictment relating to Denis Alexander, at CFS-000009122.

1132 "Former monk Denis Alexander to be deported after child abuse sentencing", BBC Scotland, 30 July 2021. Retrieved 2 August 2021.

Appendix F - Roles

A document produced in 1988, in response to a request made by the SED inspector in 1986, provides detailed description of the various roles within the school.¹¹³³ Whilst the document narrates the position as at 1988, I am satisfied that the descriptions provided are broadly accurate for the whole of the period under consideration in this case study. In particular, I am in no doubt that the headmaster of the school was always answerable to the abbot, and that housemasters were responsible for the welfare of the pupils in his house.

Headmaster

(1) Has ultimate authority over all school matters, but much is delegated. Must answer on all school questions to the Abbot.

(2) Principal function in one of management. i.e. seeing that all departments are functioning properly.

(3) In particular

a) Deals with parents. Recruiting pupils to the school. Recruiting teaching staff. Dealing with matters concerning promotion of the school.

b) Is the official spokesman for the school vis a vis the Bursar, Abbot and Community.

c) Deals with Headmasters' associations, ISIS, SCIS etc.

d) Makes final decisions on all matters of general policy, whether educational, or disciplinary. Defines functions of various departments etc. and is arbiter between them.

e) Acts as Court of Appeal in matters of boys' discipline or other matters. Also in case of disagreement between teaching staff and Deputy.

f) Handles matters not clearly defined to any delegated authority.

Deputy Head

General: Has responsibility for the curriculum and allied matters.

(1) Timetables for classes and study periods (known in this school as "preps").

(2) Performance and teaching duties of teaching staff. Organises in-service training. Monitoring and advising of Department Schemes of Work.

(3) In consultation with Headmaster and Bursar, providing necessary resources for subject teaching – within parameters set by school budget.

(4) Monitoring pupils' academic progress. Advising same on subject choices. Taking action where academic progress is not satisfactory.

(5) Following on the above, formulating and carrying out school assessment policies and monitoring their implementation and effectiveness.

(6) Internal and external examinations.

(7) Liaison and external examinations.

(8) (At present – maybe this will be passed to someone else later). Organises Games, C.C.F. and many extra curriculum activities.

¹¹³³ FA121/6 [SED] School Management Structure, 1988, at BEN.001.002.2080-2084.

Housemasters

In general: Look after boys' welfare and discipline acting as deputies of Headmaster, in loco parentis, in all matters not directly connected with the curriculum, therefore not handled by Headmaster or Deputy Headmaster.

1. Act as counsellors in Religious and Moral matters. Give social guidance where necessary, and in all similar or allied matters.
2. They are the principal enforcers of school discipline.
3. They manage boys' finances, travel etc. In consultation with the Matron/Housekeeper look after boys' health and allied questions. Also, in consultation with Matron/Housekeeper, supervise boys' care of their clothes and other personal property.
4. Organise boys' social life outside class/ prep time or organised games etc.

Matron/Housekeeper

In her position as Matron, she has responsibility for boys' health and all allied questions. In cases where, in an emergency, health or accident matters have to be handled by somebody else (Games Master, Housemaster etc). she has to be informed afterwards and must keep records of all incidents.

In her position as Housekeeper, she has similar responsibility for boys' clothes.

Appendix G - Notice of draft findings

Individuals received notice of relevant findings in draft form and were afforded a reasonable time to respond, if they wished to do so. It was confirmed on behalf of the individuals that they did not wish to comment.

The notice process has not persuaded me to amend my draft findings in any way.

