

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

**Neil LIGHTBODY**

Support person present: No

1. My full name is Neil Allan Lightbody. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1947. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Life before going into care**

2. I was born near Faslane Port, near Garelochhead. This was before Faslane Port was a naval base. There was a salvage company based at the port, and my father was a director of the salvage operation, which was called Metal Industries Salvage. We lived in a house that went with the job.
3. My father's name was [REDACTED] and my mother's name was [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. Her name before marriage was [REDACTED].
4. [REDACTED]
5. I went to the local council primary school at Garelochhead until I was about six years old or so.
6. I was then sent to a private, fee paying school, which was a prep school called Larchfield School. I lived in Helensburgh at the time and the school was also in Helensburgh so I attended as a day pupil. I remained there until the age of twelve.

## **Larchfield School, Helensburgh**

7. I was six or seven years old when I started at Larchfield school.
8. My recollection is that it was quite a good little school, and you got a good education in several subjects. The interesting thing about that school was that the teachers were nearly all female although the pupils were all boys in a single sex school. I subsequently understood this to may be significant insofar as the role rugby played at my next school.
9. Larchfield had its own rugby pitch and rugby was played there, but nobody bothered about it too much. I hated rugby because I was a late developer. I was small, thin and not strong. Larchfield had a tolerant attitude towards those who weren't suitable for rugby. They would just give us a ball to kick it around, or tell us to take turns to kick the ball into the goals.
10. The last year at Larchfield School, I remember seeing a boy, aged thirteen or thereabouts who distinguished himself in Larchfield's First XV. He was very popular because he'd been injured playing for the school. He was on crutches and his nose had been broken, and the rims around his eyes were bright red. I remember having a conversation with him about whether it was worth it, because it was just a game. He was very dismissive about what I said, because he was the school hero for a few days.
11. I remember that conversation stayed with me and I thought to myself that I wasn't going to get into that physical state over a game. I didn't care about what anyone said because I would be the one who would get injured, and would always get injured because I was smaller.
12. Larchfield was a happy school and I got a good education there. I feel that is because they did not emphasise the importance of sport above education. I think that is because they had mainly female teachers.

13. The main function of prep schools are to prepare children for one of the prestigious fee paying, boarding schools. There was a board up in the main assembly room with information about students who had gone on to distinguish themselves in such boarding schools.

### **Going to Keil School, Dumbarton**

14. My mother had various friends who sent their boys to Keil, a fee paying school, and she wanted to send me there too. She had this idea that a fee paying boarding school would be an enormous advantage to me in later life as it would make me tough and independent and make me a real man.
15. There was this absolutely ridiculous idea that if a young boy wasn't toughened up by exposure to a school like Keil, he could become a feeble, spineless individual that people would take advantage of so it was in his interest to go to a tough boarding school.
16. The characteristics of what was regarded a real man in the 1960s, included someone who had negative attitudes towards women, physically and mentally disabled people, homosexuals, and other races. Such a man would be considered as having unacceptable social attitudes today.
17. I wasn't given any choice about going to the school. I was frightened about going there because I had heard about their obsession about rugby. There were no options for me though because my mother had filled my head with the notion that if I went to the local, council secondary school, Hermitage High School, I would pick up coarse, rough and boorish manners that would not serve me well in the future.
18. My parents insisted that they apply to Keil School, which they did. There was an entrance test that I was required to sit. I went to the school itself to sit it and I failed, so I was initially rejected. My father knew the headmaster of the school and pulled some wires and got me in.

19. A few months after I was sent to Keil, my father's company collapsed. This meant that we were extremely hard up. My father then bought a shop and we had a hand to mouth existence. My father had to approach his brother to help with the fees of the boarding school, which he did.
20. Our family, before the shop was purchased, faced a major crisis. We even considered emigration to Canada. I did not want to worsen matters by a confrontation with my parents over attendance at Keil School.

### **Keil School, Dumbarton**

21. I remember being taken to the school on the first day by my father, when I was twelve years old. I remember my heart sinking as I got there and I think my father felt it too.
22. The head master was a man called Mr Alex Robertson. He left after my first year and then there was a new head master from the beginning of my second year. His name was Edwin Jeffs.
23. There was the main school building called Helenslee House. It was a very fine building with Grecian columns, beautiful tiles and stained glass. This was also where the fifth and sixth year boys stayed. The fourth years were accommodated in this building too, but in a tower attached to the house.
24. The second and third years were in a separate building, which was a 1950s style two storey building. They had long dormitories on both floors with about ten beds and lockers along each wall.
25. There was a separate building again for the first year, which was in a converted stable. The dormitory was on the first floor in that building. It was a long, "L" shaped room with 26 beds in it and a locker between each bed. The sleeping accommodation was like a shelter for the homeless.

26. Also on the first floor were, showers, toilets and wash basins, although not nearly enough of them for 26 boys who played rugby. The same was true of the accommodation for the second and third year boys.
27. In the first year building, there were three sub-prefects in a room next to the entrance on the ground floor, and two prefects in a room on the first floor. They were very much in control. No teachers or adults were ever involved in any way with the functioning of the first year dormitory.
28. The prefects were called "chiefs" and the sub-prefects were called "deputies" in the school.
29. There were over a 100 boys in the school, and maybe as many as 120.
30. All the boys at the school were boarders and there were no day pupils. The school was far away from any public transport so it would have been difficult to attend as a day pupil. The school occupied an isolated but beautiful position overlooking the River Clyde.

### **Routine at Keil School**

31. Technically, first to third year, all had a teacher assigned to their dormitory. The first year teacher slept in a completely separate building, whilst the second and third year teacher slept in a building attached to the house. They were never seen in the dormitory at all. The supervision of the younger boys was left to the chiefs and deputies, who had absolute powers over what went on. There was no supervision from teachers at all.
32. In first year, the chief who had a room next door to the dormitory, would walk into the very large dormitory at 6:30 am, ringing a very large hand bell. This would get all the youngsters up.

33. The boys would get up and quickly wash in the washrooms, using the inadequate facilities.
34. We would then do some housework and cleaning up. We had to clean our dormitory, sweep the floors, and clean the bathroom and toilets.
35. We went to the dining room and got breakfast. We would sit at a table of ten for our breakfast.
36. After breakfast, we went to assembly.
37. We then went to classes, which started just before 9 am. We had a few classes and then were back to the dining room for lunch.
38. There was a bit of a break after lunch, followed by classes, then we usually had to go to the rugby pitches to play practise games. You were allocated to a particular team and practised for two hours.
39. You would be filthy with mud and bruised when it was over, so you would go back to your building to use the washing facilities.
40. We had rugby practise most days, and there were no other organised games offered during the winter, autumn and spring months. There was only rugby.
41. The evening meal was at 6 pm, and then we would have prep time in the classrooms during the evening, which was time to do homework. We had prep for two or three hours and this would be supervised by a prefect.
42. After prep, we all re-assembled to have a third of a pint of milk, which was government issue at the time.

43. We then had an evening assembly before going to our dormitory to get ready for bed. Lights out would be about 11 pm. It would have been earlier in first year. It was the chief or deputy who would put the light out.
44. The staff didn't check up on the boys in the dormitories. It was left to the chief or deputy.
45. The days were pretty full so there was no leisure time.
46. We played rugby on a Saturday morning. I hated rugby and was useless at it, so I would go down to support the team. If I didn't do that, I would go to the library and read the National Geographic instead.

*Mealtimes / Food*

47. Mealtimes were in the main building. The meal set up was that you had rectangular tables in the dining hall, and you were assigned to a table of ten, which was known as your "squad."
48. At the beginning of each year, a notice would go up on the notice board with a list of names in each squad. You then sat at the same table with the same squad at every mealtime for the whole year. There was nothing you could do to move.
49. At the table, there was the chief at one end who was in charge, and a deputy on the other. In between, there were four boys on each side of the table from different years. There were two boys from first year and a mix of boys from other years.
50. The food was brought in ashets, bowls or pots and had to be ladled out by the chief.
51. Breakfast consisted of an aluminium bowl of porridge on the table, with a ladle. It was ladled out to each boy. I also remember a green plastic plate, with sliced, white, factory bread, with butter and jam. There were unbreakable, green, plastic cups and saucers. There would also be a large teapot and a jug of milk.

52. Lunch was not very pleasant. I remember salads with thin slices of meat that consisted of gristle, fat, bone and connective tissue. I have never seen meat this bad anywhere else in my life.
53. For the salad, your plate would be covered with lettuce, you also got half a tomato and a cube of yellow cheese.
54. The puddings were spectacularly awful. I remember cold sago with amazingly thick skins on it, as well as horribly yellow custard, also with a thick skin. Stale, white bread was made into bread and butter pudding. There were also steamed puddings that arrived in metal cylinders.
55. The evening meal was at about 6 pm. I remember particularly disgusting liver that was hard to cut because of veins and blood vessels in it. It was hard to eat because it was like chewing gum. There would be mashed potatoes, which were alright, with gravy.

*Washing / bathing*

56. I only remember there being two toilets in the first year building for 26 boys. The toilets were like public toilets.
57. My recollection is that there were only a maximum of four showers, if that, for 26 boys in the first year shower room. It may also have been as few as two. There was a bath, but that was only for the prefects.
58. We had rugby practise most days, so we would have a shower after that. There would be a crowd trying to get into the showers.
59. A lot of pride was taken in cleaning rugby strips and boots. More so than personal hygiene.



60. In my last year, I was a sub-prefect and had some supervisory responsibilities of the first year, so I was able to get use of the much envied bath.

*Clothing / uniform*

61. Through the week, we wore a grey button up shirt with a green jumper on top, with navy blue shorts and green and yellow socks. We wore shiny black shoes with them.
62. We also had green and yellow blazers, and a cap for when we went out. We had kilts to wear for when we went to church or any other formal occasion.
63. We got mocked by boys in the local town for what we wore when we went out.
64. We had lockers next to our beds to keep all our things in. We hung our uniforms and clothes in there, as well as our rugby gear.
65. They didn't lock but it didn't matter too much because nobody had anything worth stealing.
66. We didn't have any casual clothes to wear through the week.

*Discipline*

67. An inadequate system of discipline caused a lot of trouble. It was conducive to uncontrolled bullying by the chiefs and deputies towards younger boys.
68. There was supposed to be a system whereby if a prefect observed a boy seriously misbehaving, he could record his name in a book, and then that boy would have to do some hours of outdoor work as a punishment. This was tidying up or gardening type of work, which would be used as a punishment. From what I saw, this was very rarely deployed.

69. The book was held by the senior chief, who was the head boy. Other chiefs and deputies would go to him to put entries into it, but the chief could put whatever he wanted to in it. He had unquestionable right over the book and could put in or refrain from putting in whatever he wanted.
70. Really, discipline was kept by the threat of violence.

### *School*

71. I had obtained such a good education at Larchfield school, especially in Latin, that I caused quite a lot of astonishment by getting 99% in the Latin exam at the end of first year at Keil.
72. The Latin teacher was a very old man, who wasn't very good at teaching. I think that the war might have wrecked his health. The first year chemistry teacher was also very bad. A fine chemistry teacher replaced him in second year.
73. There were very good English, Latin and history teachers in later years. For me, a major problem was that the Latin and history teachers worshiped rugby as a form of religion to the exclusion of all else.
74. The subjects that were taught were quite limited. Other than Latin, they taught no languages, except Gaelic, which you could opt into doing. No modern languages were taught at all, which I thought was quite bad because I had a good grounding in French from Larchfield, which I couldn't take further.
75. There was a fine laboratory for teaching physics and chemistry beyond third year, right up to higher level. However, the school also didn't teach geography beyond the third year, which was very serious to me because that was my best subject.
76. When Edwin Jeffs took over as headmaster in my second year, he tried to broaden the subjects taught at the school and recruited several new teachers who were very

good. He brought in art, which I was keen on, as well as French, but it was too late for me to take French because I was in my third year.

77. There was a very good chemistry teacher. The new, good teachers being brought in gave me a reason to stay on at that school.
78. The school had teachers who were very good, but they had this obsession with rugby. Your academic results were a minor matter to the school compared to rugby.
79. I noticed in my last year, in fifth year, when I was preparing for my Highers, that some of the boys were being considerably handicapped in their study because they were spending most of their afternoons on the rugby fields, instead of studying.
80. The school were distorting the life of the boys at the school by making them think that rugby was more important. They were also putting boys at an academic disadvantage by making them spend so much time on the rugby field instead of allowing them to study, especially around exam times.
81. It was really difficult to get into university in the 1960s. Keil school in particular had problems getting boys into university. There were four or five boys in my year who had a good chance to get into university, but they were being disadvantaged by spending so much time on the rugby field.
82. The Highers I got at the end of my fifth year were English, history, combined physics and chemistry, plus O level arithmetic.

### *Rugby*

83. The trouble with Keil School was that their main function was to make boys really good rugby players. The captain of the First XV was an awesome figure, as was the team itself. Everyone was expected to want to be in a rugby team.

84. There was never any attempt to ascertain whether you wanted to play the game or not. It was just taken that you were there and so you would play rugby.
85. The rugby teams were selected through the week, and names would be put up on a list. We practised almost daily and I went to these practise sessions at first. I would be covered in bruises afterwards. I learned that to pick up a rugby ball was not a good idea for me because much bigger boys would immediately jump on me.
86. The rugby games against other schools would be on a Saturday morning. I remember it always being cold, dark and muddy when we played. I hated playing rugby anyway so I started just turning up to cheer them on instead of playing myself.
87. I had seen what the consequences of rugby could be from my time in Larchfield, and I didn't want to go down the same route. I didn't care what anybody thought because I would be the one carrying the injuries for the rest of my life.
88. At Keil, if you were useless at rugby, which I was, they didn't want you around anyway. This meant that I didn't have to play in the matches after a while. I would sometimes just go down and support the players instead. That was my choice and I didn't always go.
89. From what I could see, the head master, Edwin Jeffs, was not in the slightest bit interested in rugby, although he did go through the motions to congratulate the teams. He was conspicuously trying to increase the academic standards but was struggling against the rooted culture of the school.

### *Chores*

90. No cleaners came in so the boys were expected to do the cleaning. We would clean the dormitories, baths and showers. We did that in the morning, before or after breakfast.

91. We were all assigned a job by the Chief and we would have to do that job every morning for the whole term.
92. There were brushes, and buckets, pales and cleaning fluids supplied to us to clean. The chief and deputy would supervise the cleaning.
93. Any chief could tell you to do whatever task they wanted to. This could be anything from cleaning their boots or carry coal up to their coal burning fire, and you had to do it. A particular task was to clean up dishes after outside rugby teams came to visit and had been fed and watered.
94. In my first year there, all the dishes had to be washed by the boys in two large sinks after every meal time. Each squad had to do it for a week at a time. That was a particular horror.
95. In my second year at the school dysentery broke out so they installed an industrial sized dish washer and we didn't have to wash the dishes by hand after that.

#### *Trips*

96. The school had the occasional trip to a factory, which was good. In my first year, we were taken to R.S.McColl's sweet factory. This was the best trip of all. Another group were taken to the Caterpillar factory.
97. The ship industry was alive then and the whole school was taken to a local shipyard called Denny's shipyard, for the launching of a ship in Dumbarton.

#### *Visits and inspections*

98. As far as I can see, there was minimal contact between the teaching staff and parents. Visits to the school by parents were very rare, and almost unknown, except for on speech day. Family would sometimes show up to pick a boy up if there was a crisis, to take the boy to a family funeral or something.

99. There were no parent/teacher days. As far as I could see, there was no arrangement for contact between staff and parents. There was no system in place where a parent could talk to a teacher about their child's progress in a particular subject.
100. A report was done at the end of the school year and given to the parents and that was it.
101. Nobody seemed to be checking on the school syllabus or living conditions. Parents didn't seem to take an interest in the living arrangements either, which were awful. It is strange that they would pay money for their children to stay there and then not take any interest in how they were living or being treated.

#### *Family contact*

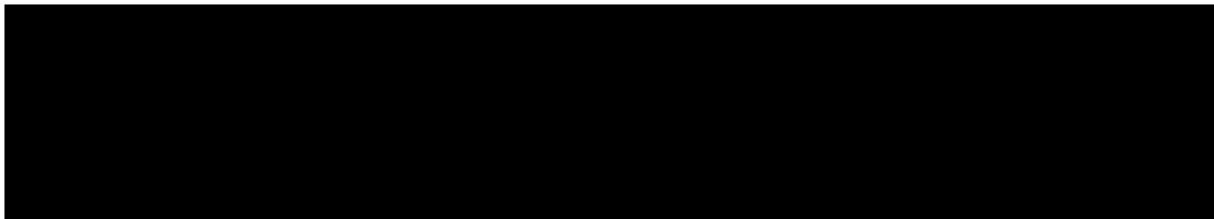
102. Boys there realised, after sending a few weepy letters, that you wouldn't be withdrawn from the school and that you had better just find your own way. Parents just withdrew and left you there. That was the mentality.
103. I probably sent weepy letters the first few weeks I was in the school but they were duly ignored. My mother had been warned by another parent not to see me for a month or two as it would upset me and to allow me to settle in.
104. After the first few months in Keil, I was able to go home at weekends. My home was 21 miles away from the school so I could go home most weekends, but only for a couple of hours on a Sunday.
105. There were one or two others who lived near me, so they would go home too and we would share cars.
106. You were allowed out on the occasional Saturday between 1 pm and 7 pm. This would usually be for the boys to go to Glasgow to watch an epic Saturday matinee film like Ben Hur or something.

107. Every morning, a boy would write the number of days to go until the end of the term, on the blackboard. This was the number of days to go until the holiday.

108. I spent the school holidays with my parents and my brothers at home. We had longer holidays than the council schools, but we had no half term holidays.

109. I was always home for Christmas, as well as my birthday, which fell on the holidays.

110.



111.



#### *Healthcare*

112. There was a nurse on the staff, or at least she was called a nurse. I don't remember her name.

113. There was a sick bay in the school which was a room with six beds in it. My recollection is that you were only regarded as sick if they could see the physical injury or if you were running a temperature.

#### *Religious instruction*

114. The entire school went to Bridge End Parish Church, which was Church of Scotland.

115. One of the few positive things I would say about Keil School was that nobody was the slightest bit bothered about what religion you were. There was no sectarianism. I think this was because many boys were from widely scattered villages in the Highlands and Islands, so you didn't have the base upon which sectarianism could flourish.

116. We would sing a hymn or prayer at assembly. The hymn would depend on the master presiding, but it was very generally Christian. There was no link to any specific religious denomination.
117. There were no black or minority ethnic people at all in the school at that time.

### **Abuse at Keil School**

118. The food and accommodation was terrible in Keil and it was run like it was a prison camp.
119. It is said that rugby is a game of physical contact; I say it is a game of physical violence. It was perfectly alright to kick boys, knee them, punch them, elbow them. You could commit just about any act of physical violence as long as it was in the course of the game and the referee didn't see you do it, which he never did.
120. You can take boys of the same age and have an enormous difference in physique and weight, and if they collide, the lighter one is the one who will be injured. I was always the one who got injured and would be covered in bruises after practise, if I participated.
121. In boxing, you wouldn't set a light fly weight against a heavyweight, but they did in rugby. I found the game abhorrent.
122. I was picked on for not being interested in rugby and not wanting to get onto the rugby teams. I feel I was justified for not wanting to play rugby, but I became a prime target for bullying because I was not interested in it. You were considered only half a human being if you weren't into rugby or on one of the school's rugby teams.
123. The issue around rugby didn't just affect those who weren't interested in rugby due to being lightly built. There are things like Tourette's, autism and Asperger's Syndrome



that had hardly even been identified at the time. There were some boys who displayed the symptoms of such things and they were tormented by other boys.

### *Bullying*

124. Anything at all can be used as a pretext to bullying, no matter how trivial. In first year, I was picked on for having a centre parting in my hair, for having dandruff or for coming from Helensburgh. On another occasion, I was ridiculed for having blood on my nose owing to a nose bleed condition
125. The boys in first year were unsupervised, unchecked and unregulated.
126. A boy with seniority was either a head boy, a chief or deputy, in the First XV rugby team, or a class monitor. They had to have street credibility and look like they could give you a right battering.
127. The chief and prefects could demand that junior boys do things like cleaning their dirty rugby strips, carrying things around, fetching coal for their fire, or anything they wanted to.
128. The first two years I was there, the prefects seemed to have the authority to basically hit you on the bottom with a plimsoll gym shoe, as they wished. They would line the boys up in a row and strike each boy on the backside with the gym shoe a requisite number of times.
129. I was subjected to this treatment once or twice. This was soon after I started the school. I think it was to show us what they could do it so that we would stay in line after that. I don't remember the name of the chiefs who administered this beating.
130. This practise may have continued after I moved on, but I think it came into disuse.

131. After a few months of being at the school, a very large boy became a dictator. He didn't confine his activities over just the weak ones, but tried to assert a lordship over the entire dormitory. His name was [REDACTED]
132. A rebellion broke out and there was a fight between the boys with brush poles.
133. The same thing happened with another person who tried to take over. It was about survival of the fittest. There was no comradeship or fellowship, and if someone saw you being persecuted, they just kept well away.
134. In my first year, I was being pushed about by another boy in my year. He wasn't in a group, but acting alone. I had told my dad who suggested I challenge him to a fight. We had the fight in a square room near the dormitory and I was beaten to a pulp. My nose was battered to a pulp, I had two black eyes, a broken tooth, a thick ear and bruising to my jaw.
135. My face was a sight for about a week after that fight and there was no comment about it from the teachers, which I found remarkable. All of my first year teachers would have seen the injuries on my face.
136. My mum's attitude when she saw me was that it was just to be expected and it was all part of growing up. I knew there was no point asking my parents for advice after that, so I didn't tell them when I was being bullied in fifth year.
137. The thing that also helped the bullies was that there was no privacy anywhere in that school.
138. There was a boy in my year, [REDACTED] who had a real vicious streak in him. He wasn't big himself but found a group of three or four boys who were bigger, and took the lead in their group. He would then find a boy who was weak and isolated, and had a peculiarity to pick on, such as their hairstyle, the way they dressed or a limp.

139. The bullying wasn't physical criminal assault, like a punch, but these boys would repeatedly push weaker boys, like he was a rag doll or piece of rubbish. They would then hold their hands limp and wave them in the boy's face. I saw several boys suffer from this bullying in first year. It happened to me a few times as well but it wasn't constant.
140. I never reported this to anybody because I would have been branded a clipe and the treatment of me would have gotten worse.
141. This boy was always looking for boys to pick on. Nothing was done over the years to suppress his bullying and so he got worse. I managed to keep out of his way for the next few years.
142. In fifth year, I was assigned to a squad as a deputy so I was at one end of the table. [REDACTED], who was now in fourth year, as he had been kept back a year because he wasn't good academically, was also on my table. He started to pick on me and also got two of the first year boys on the table to join in with him to make fun of me. I was isolated because I wasn't in a rugby team and didn't have big, strong friends.
143. Although I was a deputy, I didn't have the street credibility because I didn't have a big physique. I was isolated and didn't have friends who could back me up.
144. The bullying by the squad got more and more organised, and more and more intense as the year went on. It was at breakfast, lunch, dinner and supper so it was constant.
145. There are a lot of ways to insult and intimidate someone at a dinner table, including jeering and mockery. When the plates were passed round for the food to be ladled into plates, they would leave me out, or snatch my cutlery. I would also get choruses of abuse which they all joined in on. They'd say things like they hoped I failed all my exams. This was as I was approaching my Highers.

146. The prefect on the other side of the table didn't intervene or do anything to stop it. All the boys on my squad were into rugby and assigned to teams, apart from me, so I wasn't liked. I believe this is why I was bullied.
147. I had nobody on my side and nobody in the world I could turn to. If I told the teachers then I would be subjected to more bullying for being a clipe. It would become unendurable.
148. The bullying and chants could easily be heard by other tables, but nobody intervened. The teachers sat on a raised platform in the dining room, which was only a couple of feet away and about a foot high. They must have heard that something was going on, but did nothing to intervene or stop it. It did not appear to be in the job description of the teachers to take any interest in the affairs of the boys.
149. When I was in fifth year, there were rumours about [REDACTED] that he had stabbed another boy who he was now threatening to stay silent about it. This shows that he had a reputation throughout the school for being a thug and a bully. This boy had been a vicious bully for years and nothing was done to stop him. Now it was up to me to try to stop him, but I couldn't. I had nobody on my side.
150. There was also another incident that happened when I was fifth year. I was walking in the woods within the grounds of the school, which had a disused quarry there. Two boys in my year jumped out and hung me over the edge of the quarry, holding me by the arms. They acted as though it was a joke. I didn't see it as a joke then, and I don't see it as a joke now. I don't remember the names of the boys.
151. I felt like it was all getting too much, I was unable to sleep and starting to get shakes and anxiety. I thought about attacking [REDACTED], whose bullying was constant, but I only thought about it and didn't do anything about it.
152. I had to try not to have a nervous breakdown, just as I was approaching my Higher exams. I managed to find the endurance and resolve within myself to keep going. I psychologically managed to get myself into a state of mind to go on and told myself

that I could leave at the end of the year. I was determined and managed to get through but I shouldn't have had to do that. It is possible that any other boy in my place may have had a nervous breakdown. The bullying could have affected my exams and chances of getting into university.

153. Some might say I could have gotten help if I felt a breakdown coming on, but that is victim blaming. The issue wasn't about me getting help, it was that the bullying shouldn't have been allowed to happen. It enrages me that it was my responsibility to sort out the bullying when it happened to me.
154. I wished many times as time went on that I had just gone to the local, council school.

### **Reporting of abuse at Keil**

155. There was nobody you could speak to if you were being persecuted. If you did tell anybody then you would get bullied even more.
156. By my final term, my tormentors had been bullying for years, and the teachers must have known it was going on but they did nothing to suppress it.
157. The teachers must have overheard the harassment and bullying against me at meal times when I was in fifth year. They only sat a short distance away, on a platform. On one occasion, a teacher who was sat on the corner of the platform was able to lean over and touch me on the shoulder to ask for a jug of water, so they were very close.
158. I also don't doubt that [REDACTED] was bullying other boys too, maybe in class. The teachers should have been aware but they seemed to be completely indifferent to bullying and didn't acknowledge it was happening. That way they didn't have to do anything about it.

159. If I had told a teacher, they would have advised me to plunge myself into rugby and get tough. This was no more helpful to me, than my father's advice to challenge my tormentor to a fight.
160. There was no line of communication with anybody outside of the school whatsoever. I couldn't have told my parents anyway as they didn't care and were completely ignorant what it was like to live in a place like that as neither had been to boarding school. They wouldn't have wanted to think that I was the kind of boy who lacked the spine to deal with it.
161. The one time I had told my dad about being pushed around, he had told me to fight the boy and I had been beaten up so I wasn't going to ask his advice again.
162. I felt that any advice I would have gotten from teachers or my parents would have resulted in me getting hurt, and I wanted to avoid that.

### **Leaving Keil School**

163. I had a dreadful fifth year in the school because of the obsession with rugby, which led to bullying. I also felt that you were expected to spend far too much time being involved in the running of the school, as a chief or deputy, rather than concentrate on your studies.
164. Despite all the bullying, I managed to pass my exams in fifth year, which was a great achievement, for me at least. My parents, by this time, were happy for me to leave the school.
165. I was expected to stay on for sixth year, but I was able to leave if I wanted to so I chose to get out of there and go to college.

166. I wanted to get away because of the bullying, but I also could have done Highers in more varied subjects at a college, rather than the limited choices I would have had in sixth year at Keil.

167.



### **Life after boarding school**

168. I went to Glasgow tutorial college, where I studied Higher Latin and Geography, which I passed.

169. Together with my qualifications from Keil, I now had a mix of arts and sciences so I could apply to just about any university.

170. My father was working in a shop and we didn't have a lot of money. I didn't want to be a financial burden on my parents so I picked a university near me so I could still live at home in Helensburgh.

171. I went to Glasgow University to study for a law degree. I was travelling over an hour to and from university so I didn't have much of a social life. There were also hardly any females studying law so I was continuing in this male atmosphere, which I thought was really unnatural.

172. I got my degree, then got a law graduate apprenticeship in Aberdeen County Council. I moved to Aberdeen when I was about 22 or 23 years old. I was paid enough to live on there, but without much left over for luxuries, but after being somewhere as awful as Keil School, it was a doddle for me.

173. In Aberdeen, I shared a flat with a boy who was my age. He had also been to boarding school and had played rugby. He needed to get a spinal fusion because of the injuries

he had sustained while playing rugby. He had to get a brace on his back and take regular ultra violet treatment. He also had a lot of trouble with his knee. I knew that I hadn't been wrong for keeping away from rugby with such an example of injury before me.

174. I was a very solitary person by the age of 23 and had very little to do with women. This is not because I had sought this out, but because I had lost local contacts in Helensburgh due to being in the boarding school. I didn't have any friends from Keil due to the nature of the school and the bullying there. It was also a male only school so I had no experience of mixing with women. Thereafter, I moved on to studying for a law degree, when very few females took this on.
175. I switched over to Aberdeen Corporation for the last few months of my apprenticeship and then became an in-house lawyer with them for a few months.
176. I then applied for a job in Scottish Special Housing Association as an in-house Solicitor, which I got. That was based in Edinburgh so I moved to Edinburgh in 1973 and worked in that job until 1989. The Association then merged into Scottish Homes and I worked for them as Principal Solicitor, thereafter.
177. I've never had any counselling and I am deeply sceptical about the usefulness of it. It moves attention away from defects in the school, to the mental state of the victim of bullying. What I mean by this, is that the school could then absolve responsibility by claiming that the victim's mental state meant that they couldn't deal with things.
178. I've never made any attempt to see my records from Keil School and I don't think that I would learn much from them.



## **Impact**

179. A parent can honestly wish the best for their child, but still be wrong in what they do for their child, and that was the case for me. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
180. My father was a kindly man. He was upset to a degree about putting me in that dreadful school, but never really expressed it. It was my mother who was dominant about putting me into boarding school and she was in a state of total denial of what they'd done to me about putting me in that school.
181. If I ever said anything to my mum about what Keil did to me, she just acted as though I was ungrateful and didn't appreciate what they had done for me, because they had borrowed money from my uncle for me to go there. She also had this attitude that real men should be tough and have a spine to deal with things that happened at boarding school, and how could I not handle it when other boys could.
182. Whenever I have spoken to my parents about it, they have never understood. Although my father was always kind, I have always been met with the attitude that it could be considered that I was a weakling and should have stuck up more for myself. It hasn't been an easy experience.
183. The single sex school thing is completely unnatural and made it completely difficult for me to find the right woman. Women weren't around until I went to Aberdeen at the age of 23, by which time they were all married off. I never got married and started a family, but I don't know how much of that is attributable to going to a boys only school.
184. I always found that if things got too bad, you could always bury yourself in a book or film until it went away.

## **Observations about boarding schools**

185. My parents' generation were a heroic generation. They and their parents had been forced to fight in two world wars. Then there was the height of the Cold War in 1960 and 1961, and the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. It was never expressed, but there was an idea that all us youngsters would end up in the army so it would toughen us up to go to these boarding schools.
186. Exposure to cruelty does not improve the character of a youngster.
187. Larchfield School was a fee paying school, although I didn't board there. Rugby was played at the school, but it was a happy little school because they were not obsessed with the sport, unlike at Keil. I think a difference was that Larchfield had female teachers and there wasn't this awful testosterone ridden team spirit there.
188. Teachers at Keil put more importance on the cult of rugby than academic achievements. I don't understand how educated men with degrees and teaching qualifications from good universities, who were clever and well informed teachers, could sanction, authorise, endorse a school where academic achievements, results and exams were minor compared to your performance on the rugby field.
189. Maybe I was a bit precocious, but it was obvious to anybody that thought about it, that it didn't matter if you were ace at rugby once you left school. Nobody would care once you left school.
190. I don't have anything against rugby itself, I just don't think that anybody should be forced to play it, or punished for not joining in.
191. Jonathan Dimbleby wrote a book about the Prince of Wales, and there is a chapter in it about the heir to the throne's experience at Gordonstoun. It reads:

“He was not a gifted athlete so when he did get hold of the ball, he was easily felled. This gave ample opportunity for the opposing forwards to lay into him with boots and fists....”

192. Both Gordonstoun and Eton were the most prestigious of these secondary, public, fee paying schools, so they were the models for the lesser ones like Keil, so you could hardly expect Keil to be any better.
193. Bullying seems to go unchecked in these schools. The boys are just left to get on with it. I was bullied to the point where I could have had a nervous breakdown and it could have ruined my chances of getting into university.
194. Everyone has a breaking point and if a bullied boy was to react by snapping and attacking his torturers with an offensive weapon, then he would be sent to a young offender's institution and suffer for it.
195. These schools are so secretive that nobody knows what's going on in them. It's a real problem.
196. I find it strange that there was no arrangement even for contact between parents and staff, as far as I could see. The school seemed to be in charge of not only your education, but also your upbringing while you were there.
197. William Boyd wrote a book called "School ties." In it, he writes that he thought the toilets were indistinguishable from a public lavatory. This is what I felt about the toilets in Keil. The living arrangements were terrible and nobody was checking or inspecting them.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

198. There should be female teachers and mixed boy and girl schools. That way, there would be less of a testosterone filled environment that exists in boys only schools.
199. There will be natural leaders that will emerge when boys are grouped together in a boarding school environment. Headmasters should really brief all the teachers and all

the boys, especially prefects, and make it clear from the start that no bullying will be tolerated.

200. Private fee paying schools need to have zero tolerance to bullying and make it their upfront official policy. This includes teachers and prefects and all senior boys, who should look out for bullying and when they spot it, to stop it.
201. Where someone is unable to stop it, there should be a procedure in place for the victim to report it.
202. Children should have an outside contact who they can get in touch with to complain if the bullying has not been dealt with properly by the school. This would put the headmaster under threat of bad publicity, which these fee paying schools are terrified about, and will ensure that they address bullying.
203. A clear message should be put out to schools that bullying will result in expulsion.
204. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.  .....

Dated *26th February 2020* .....