

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Walter KERKHOF

Support person present: No

1. My name is Walter Kerkhof. I'm known as Wally. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1942. I found out my real date of birth when I was 55. My date of birth had been the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 1942 but the authorities altered it. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. A priest fathered me. He was called Father [REDACTED]. I was put into Nazareth House in Falkirk. I don't know anything about where I lived before I was put into Nazareth House. I just can't remember anything about Nazareth House or the journey to Australia. I left Scotland when I was four years and ten months old.
3. I can remember soon after I arrived I was outside digging the bitumen road. I think it was minus ten degrees in Scotland and forty degrees in Fremantle. I was red raw with sunburn. I was digging the road because I remember being told before we left that there was gold in the road. The road was shimmering because of the sun. I thought it was gold. A man came up to me and kicked me in the bum. He asked what I was doing and said there was no gold in the road.

Life in care – receiving country

St Joseph's Girls' Orphanage, Subiaco, Western Australia

General

4. I went to St Joseph's because of my age. St Joseph's Orphanage was for girls. I was too young for the brothers to dress. I can't remember anything about it there at all. The things that stick in my mind are the things that had an impact, not the daily aspects of living. I have little clear patches of memory that are usually connected to the major things. The more I air it out, the more I see. It's too hurtful.
5. I had to make all the beds in St Joseph's dorm while others were watching a film. There were 54 beds and mine was the last one. I would just have finished the last bed and I'd hear the tune at the end of the film. It always ended the same way. Other times, I would have to watch one of the brothers saying "oh look at that" to the boys and some of the boys would turn around. He would kick them in the groin. It was the mind games they used to play. A brother would check the hem on the top sheet was perfectly made.

Castledare Boys' Home, Western Australia

6. I went from St Joseph's to Castledare. The Christian Brothers were in charge. There was one superior, I think this was Brother Clasin. I was there for two to three years until I was eight or nine.

Mornings

7. One of the brothers used to come into the bedroom and said, "Right, everybody up". It would just be whichever brother was there. We had to kneel down and say our prayers. After that we had a job to do. I can't remember my job.

Other information

8. I can't remember a lot about Castledare. Brother MDF was there. I could never forget him. He followed me from Castledare to Clontarf. No one liked him, he was just a mongrel. He was six foot four inches like a skinny rake. He wasn't the superior.
9. Soon after I arrived, I went into the boiler room, I saw two kittens. I thought they were feral. I had never seen cats or dogs. I grabbed a metal aeroplane wing and killed them.

I thought they were beasties. I told everyone what I had done, that I'd saved them from the beasties. They called me a little bastard. Fifty or so boys took me down to the 'ghost tree' and found me guilty. They told me to climb up on the fence post. Somebody found an old holster from the dairy made out of jute, which is a kind of course string. They told me to say sorry to God and jump from the fence post. I did what I was told. I saw stars and my neck was aching. Brother **MDF** came up to me and told me to stop slouching my neck. He lifted me up off the ground and I saw stars again.

10. I can't remember the classrooms or the teachers. They taught us to swim. They lined us up on the jetty. Brother **MDF** was at the end of the jetty and he'd just say "swim, swim". I was only about seven. He would count us and, say two would be missing. So he'd tell us to dive in and find them. One time we thought one kid was gone but we got him eventually. He was spewing. I ran away once from Castledare.
11. I can remember we went to Scarborough Beach and I had woollen bathing trunks. They hung down like a pair of ram's balls when they got wet. We got back to Castledare and I told the superior brother that I had something wrong with me down below. I let him have a look. I had sand under my foreskin. I had to go to have lotion put on my penis every morning. One morning I got an erection, I got a wallop and it knocked me flying. I was told to do it myself from then on. They didn't tell us anything about sex. Kids got warped ideas about it. In that era, the church made it disgusting and rude. If it was rude, why did God give us the things that get us into trouble?

Abuse at Castledare

12. One morning, I told my friend, **[REDACTED]** not to look at me when we were talking because the brothers were behind us and would see our heads moving. The next thing, I was socked in the side of the head by one of the brothers and they hit **[REDACTED]** head off my head. It was Brother **MDI** who did this to us. They marched me down to the cricket pitch, the lawn was pure white and you could hear the ground crackling. The brother said "It's a bit nippy round the hells this morning isn't it Walter?" It was alright for him, he had galoshes over his leather boots. I had to kneel on the pitch for three quarters of an hour with no shoes, shorts, a little shirt and thin jumper.

I was so frozen that I couldn't even stand up when he blew the whistle. I was seven at the time. I had indentations in my knees for weeks after it from kneeling on the stones.

13. Brother **MDF** called me one day to knit his head with my fingers and while I was doing that his hands were up my trouser leg. He had wandering hands which I discovered later.
14. I went into the showers one night and two of his hench-men were making a kid piddle into a milk bottle. The kid behind had to drink it. I walked straight past.
15. Another time I was called to Brother **MDI** office. I can still hear the grandfather's clock 'tick-tocking' some nights. He asked me why I done something. I didn't know what he was talking about. He gave me 'six of the best'. He hit me with the strap all over my body. He was powerful. Another ten minutes went by and the clock was still ticking. It drove me mad. He gave me twenty more. I realised if I said the same thing again, I would get another six so I said that I did it. I still didn't know what I was admitting I had done. He told me to name the other kids who were there. I said "you've got me there". He asked why I said I did it when I didn't and I said because you would just have kept belting me until I said I did. He told me that I was supposed to have walked up to a boy who was playing outside and grabbed him while he was counting up to a hundred and he thought he saw me speeding off into the distance.
16. **MDI** flogged boys who would get scared and just name anybody to stop the belting. The floggings would be beatings on the body with a cane or the strap. It was just madness and it went on for weeks. Kids were just naming other kids to stop. The brothers were brutal with their beltings.
17. I got Brother **MDF** back one time when we were playing "blacks and whites". He had a big collection of moths and beetles from all over the world. I was collecting them with one day. I hid a mouse in a hole at the back of a cupboard one day.
18. One time, I was up a loquat tree when Brother **MXD** came over and shouted me down. They were huge trees. I was sitting in a fork in the tree with my shirt full of

loquats. I went to move and my foot slipped, my hand let go of the shirt and the loquats fell. He told me to come down and pick them up. He knew it was me.

19. He let me go for a week until he grabbed me one day and said, "Thought you'd got away with it Mr Kerkhof?" I got 89 freezing cold showers each day after that. Every shower represented a loquat. It was freezing. It was so cold that I would walk out and bang into other kids. My brain wouldn't function, it was frozen with the cold and pressure of the water.
20. Another time, I woke up in the night. I slept in a little cubicle. I could hear the window above me open slowly then I felt pressure on the edge of the bed and Brother **MYK** was sitting there. I was shaking like a leaf. He said "I will come like a thief in the night". My heart didn't stop thumping until two in the morning. The next thing I heard Brother **MYK** going crazy throwing kids around the room for being out of bed. Everything was about fear and massively wicked. He was usually tough but fair.
21. We were given a pair of shorts and a shirt. We didn't have shoes. They used to say that it offended God to have bare feet in church so we only wore shoes when we went to church and had to give them back afterwards.
22. Brother **MDF** was so cruel to me. He followed me to Clontarf. I left Castledare because I was at a certain age.

Clontarf Boys' Town, Waterford, Western Australia

23. Clontarf was about eleven kilometres away from Castledare. It was in the bush. Brother **MDI** came after I had been there for about a year. There was a little fat brother **MDH** Brother **MDI** was **MDI** He was 33 years of age. I always remember that because Christ died at 33 years of age.

Mornings

24. I slept in a big dorm. There were about forty-odd kids to a dorm. There was a dorm for the big boys too. They never went to school so they became working boys. There was a PR system because we used to listen to a creepy thing called 'The Shadow'. Nobody would dare walk around when it was on. The theme song was "crime doesn't pay, the shadow knows". It was so quiet when we were watching it that you could hear a gecko lizard fart.
25. The brothers just came round in the morning and shouted "out of bed". We would jump out of bed and kneel by the side of our bed saying prayers.
26. We did our jobs and then had breakfast. We hung around the Quadrangle until we started school at nine o'clock. My job was to rake the poplar leaves barefoot. My toes would be cracked and my feet would bleed. In the afternoon we would have a "piece" for lunch which was an apple or broken biscuit from local shopkeepers.
27. Teatime was at 6:00 pm. After school we played around down at the oval or the creek catching jilbies which are like crayfish. I was always fishing. I had a good method of catching them. I used to dam up the creek and divert it. I would stand in the water, feeling them crawling over my feet and trying to eat the scabs so I would put my hand in and calmly catch them. I would get a couple of gallon of them.

Mealtimes

28. After we had done our jobs, we would have breakfast and we'd usually be given porridge. The milk was always just a little bit off. The brothers got cream but we never got it. There were thirty-odd milking cows. They would sell the cream and butter for a bit of money for the school. Brother ^{MIZ} [REDACTED] was in charge of the chooks or chickens. We never had bacon either but the brothers had copious amounts of it.
29. I knew how to sneak into the 'cool room' by undoing a little bolt in the wall. I was in there all night. I ate cream and lumps of butter like you'd eat cake. I did it twice.

30. There was a storeroom with biscuits and lollies. We used to see the rats come out of the store room with full biscuits in their mouths. I never accepted a biscuit. We got slops from other Christian Brothers. They boiled them all up and gave it to the pigs.

Teatime was at six. We were given a lot of basic, steady food. I used to tell Brother MDI that the dog had worms and I would eat the tablets. She was a Red Setter.

31. A lot of the veggies were steamed. It was basic food. One day we got a truckload, about eight tonne, of swede from the market. We had a huge bowl of swede, there was one wee sausage in it and a bit of potato mashed. There was no cream, garlic, salt, or pepper, nothing. MDI saw us flicking out the swede onto the ground so he got a big bowl and three quarter filled it with the dirty swede. He told us that we had to eat it. We did and nobody dared throw up.
32. From 6:00 pm until about 7:00 pm we played around, doing active sports. We played a game called "blacks and whites" and kids would say "we want to be in your mob". They wanted me to be the leader. We would get socks, put salt in them, use them as clubs and flog each other.
33. We went to church after that and said prayers. I think we might have gone back to the quadrangle and played around a bit more then we went to bed.

Bedtime

34. We went to bed at about 9:00 pm every night. We got up every second morning for church and also on a Sunday.

Bed-wetting

35. There were twenty kids in the "wetty-bed" dorm. MDI used to say they were "lazy, good for nothings". They would get a dong in the morning and a freezing cold shower. The dong was a strap or the cane on their head. They were made to feel like a criminal for wetting the bed. It wasn't their fault. It was a medical problem.

36. [MDI] came up with the idea of electric shock treatment for them too. When the kid woke up and piddled, he got an electric shock. They had to wait until [MDI] got out of bed to stop it. The kids were raving lunatics, they were demented because of the shocks, after that happened a few times. Some of the kids had medical problems, others were scared of the dark.
37. I wet the bed once. I dreamt that I was swimming in the river. Luckily, the boy in the bed next to me was crook in the infirmary so I swapped the sheets. They were dry by the time he came back.

Washing and bathing/Hygiene

38. The brothers used to line us up and pour Kerosene on our heads to get rid of lice. We never got them again. It killed them off stone dead. I used to have to go through Brother [MDF] hair with a fine nit comb in the classroom. It was bearable until he grabbed my 'doodle' or made me grab his. My 'doodle' was my penis. My mates were there but they couldn't see it happening behind the desk. I was in second year at the time. He liked me doing it because I must have been good at it. I was ambidextrous. He did it whenever he got the urge until I pulled away one day. It went on for a while. They had a phobia about sexual stuff yet they were doing it themselves.

Leisure time

39. The British Government used to give them two and sixpence for each kid. You could do a lot with money in those days and could buy four lollies for a penny. Brother [MXI] used to look after our lollies. We would ask him for a lolly and go into his office. He never tried to do anything inappropriate although he was in his eighties. I don't know what he was like when he was younger.
40. I collected bugs. I had bugs and beetles in jars. Kids were scared to go into my room because of what I had in there.

Trips and holidays

41. We went to Bindoon on St Joseph's Day. St Joseph was the Patron Saint of Bindoon. We would travel on an open sided truck, in rain, hail or shine. There were fifty kids on the truck. We spent all day digging rabbits out of their holes. We would bring the bunnies back to Clontarf and hide them in our desks. Brother ^{MDI} would find them and kill them.
42. We were going on a trip to Bendotty's farm when we were in a bus accident. Boys lost arms and legs. One boy was killed. He was called [REDACTED]. His own brother didn't even know they were brothers. [REDACTED] had a leg cut off. Another boy's wrist was flopping and he was asking other kids if they needed any help. Another kid had his nose ripped off. Brother ^{MDI} just told us to pray.
43. At Bendotty's farm we were just cheap labour. I got up at 6:00 am and we milked seventy cows. We would be planting spuds, cutting or bagging them up for seven weeks. It was supposed to be our holiday. I found it repugnant. I asked Mr Bendotty why I had to work on the Sabbath and he told ^{MDI} that he didn't want me because I complained too much.
44. We had the Clontarf Fete. The photographer would come to take photos of me with the bees. Everything was fine until the flash went off and the bees went crazy. Brother ^{MXD} was screaming.
45. Another time, Brother ^{AOW} who we called "baby face" pushed me into his bedroom to catch a rat. He was up on the bed with his trousers rolled up screaming his lungs out. I caught it but I hung onto it for a while to scare him with it.

Schooling

46. Some of the boys didn't go to school, they became 'working boys'. They were sent to work on farms. I was relatively bright until I was assaulted by Brother ^{MDF} when I was about twelve. I got 48 for English and 3 for Arithmetic.

47. Brother ^{MXD} used to teach [REDACTED] I liked Technical drawing and I was good with my hands. I sort of went away from the intellectual stuff and put my efforts into woodwork.
48. When it came to sex, they didn't tell us anything. In that era, it was seen as disgusting. The church made it rude.

Healthcare

49. None of us got crook or ill. No one caught mumps or polio. However, at the time, Polio was rife around Perth. It was caused by people who were dirty. People didn't wash like we were told to wash.
50. They gave us pink powder for our teeth. It was dry and they poured it on the toothbrush. If you had dirty teeth or a bit of food in your teeth, you got a backhand or you missed out on the movies. Your teeth enamel wore off. You cannot put a price on a set of teeth especially if someone takes that away from you.
51. They sent me to Perth Dental Hospital. They catered for the poor and those who couldn't afford dentistry. There was a government initiative to train dentists. They couldn't get enough volunteers so they started to use orphans. Orphans didn't ask questions. They drilled all my back teeth. After my fourth or fifth visit, I asked why they were drilling my teeth because I didn't have any cavities. They didn't take X-rays or anything. They told me that I had soft centres. It was just an excuse to use me as a guinea pig. I told Brother ^{MDI} that I wasn't going back. I lost all but one tooth.
52. One of the Hungarian sisters at Clontarf had a surgery. Once a week, if you were crook or had cut yourself, she would give you a Band-Aid and some Disprin. I was sent to the infectious disease hospital when I was six but I can't remember anything about it.

Religious instruction

53. We always prayed and said grace before meals. I wouldn't do Stations of the Cross in the church. If Brother ^{MDI} saw you doing Stations of the Cross, he thought you were

fiddling with yourself. He would be on your case asking you who you were doing it with.

Work

54. You were supposed to just work and say nothing. We were bare feet. Sometimes they gave us boots. It was hard working on the farm with boots on. They were heavy and sore. I used to get a burnt nose every day because I didn't wear a hat. We made the pool, it was one metre shy of an Olympic sized pool because we didn't want people going from all around to use it. We mixed up the cement with our feet and with sticks. We had no tools.
55. We worked for an hour after school. We had to get the manure from the piggery or the dairy. We had to make sure there was enough for the rose gardens. We built hand ball courts with bricks. They were huge. We put a foot of dirt on the oval and used sugar bags to raise it. We started growing vegetables in the garden. They had all the water in the world to do it. We had to sew up 180 bags of wheat, there were twelve stitches to a bag of wheat.
56. I was in charge of the parrots. I used to suffer more because I liked animals. I cared for them and I understood them. The human has emotions but animals don't. Emotions control humans. I was in charge of the pigeons and rabbits. I was in charge of the birds too. There used to be parrots flying around until some kid shot them with a crossbow.

Running Away

57. I ran away once. There were six of us. I can't remember why we decided to do it. The brothers were on a religious retreat somewhere. We came across a house in the middle of nowhere. We stole a loaf of bread from there. The guy who lived there spoke funnily and slurred his words. He had lots of puppies and one of them wouldn't leave me alone. The guy told me that I could take it. I didn't know at the time that he was drunk. I had never seen a drunk bloke before. I just thought he was funny.

I took the puppy back to the orphanage about two or three days later. I hid it in the boiler room. Brother MYK [REDACTED] came to the window and told me that he knew where the dog was. The guy with the puppies came to Clontarf a few days later with the police and told them that I had stolen the dog. The police told him to get lost. Some kid killed the puppy. I was used to my animals being killed.

Christmas and Birthdays

58. We had seven weeks off at Christmas time. We would go to someone's house. A priest in the diocese would ask people if they wanted a poor orphan. The bus would take us to certain locations. A lot of kids went to places around Perth.
59. I went with my friend, [REDACTED] to stay with a family in Subiaco. We used to go fishing. We made "kylies" which were pieces of flat metal made into a 'V' shape. They were a bit like a boomerang. If people gave you presents, as soon as you got back to the orphanage, they took them off you. You didn't see them again. Nobody knew about birthdays.

Visitors

60. The welfare department came once and everyone was on their tippy toes. The visits were all orchestrated.

Review of care/detention

61. I ran away frequently especially in my last year. When I did, they noticed. I don't know why. I attracted attention. I thought that I was different from the other kids because I was sent away when I was only four years and ten months and my name had been changed. I asked Brother Dopiazza why God made some kids suffer more than others. He told me, matter of factly, "God gives it to those who can handle it so be off with yourself". I felt like telling him to tell God to give it someone else because I had had enough.

Personal Possessions

62. We didn't have any personal possessions.

Discipline

63. In that era, society was different, it was brutal. Parents belted their kids if they had erred on the side of naughtiness. Nowadays people aren't even allowed to shout at a child. Humans have to be disciplined, that's why we have so much crime nowadays. However, some of the discipline was over the top. Some of the incidents were abuse. They were really brutal with their strapping.
64. Brother **MDI** came to Clontarf after I had been there for about a year. He called me into his office one day and accused me of hitting another boy. He asked why I had done it and gave me 'six of the best'. He was very powerful and I ended up getting twenty. Another time, Brother **MDI** kicked me in the groin.
65. Brother **MXD** was known as **MXD**. He was a sadistic bastard. Brother **MXD** had a knack at hitting us. He had a halfpenny sewn into the end of his strap by the bookmaker. He was very accurate. He'd hit you right on the tips of your fingers or your wrist all the time.
66. We never wore shoes and I remember standing on a nail, it went right into my foot, I didn't feel it until later on when my body had warmed up so I hadn't noticed a big pool of blood on the floor. I got a hiding from Brother **MXD** for making the mess on the floor and not telling the brothers.

Abuse

67. Brother **MDF** grabbed my penis in the classroom. I had to touch his penis under the desk. The other boys were there. He was straight out brutal. He touched me twice one day and twice another time. I'd had enough by then so I pulled away. He grabbed me and said "not good enough am I Kerkhof? We'll remember this" with his horrible breath. He didn't say what he was going to do.

68. A couple of days later I was sent down to the big boys' end of the showers because I had pubic hair. Brother MDF used to look at all the 'doodles'. There were 27 boys showering at any one time. He would turn the tap for a minute and move onto the next one. He would come back and look at you when you had soaped up.
69. One night at about six o'clock when the boys were having tea, MDF came into the big boys end and the locker room. He left and then came back when I was in the shower cubicle alone. He pulled my towel off and was looking down at my crown jewels or private parts so I covered myself. He said "who told you to move?" and went in with his knee in my groin so I doubled over. The next thing I was upside down and he knocked me out. all the other boys were in the dining area having tea by this time.
70. When I came to, I was lying on the ground, I coughed and saw a big lump of thick, red jelly next to me. I felt my tongue and there were two holes in it. I had bitten my tongue on both sides. I was out of it for twenty minutes. He just left me there lying naked.
71. Eventually I went to tea and one of the brothers said "playing with the pigeons again nature boy?" I said, "Yes Sir". There was no way I could tell the brother what he had done because I would have been flogged for being a "lying little shit" or "the son of a whore". Those were the types of things the brothers called us. I didn't know my mum but I don't think she was a whore. I got six of the best in front of everybody and missed the movies for five weeks. I think MDF thought he'd killed me because he didn't speak to me after that.
72. After that, I used to get shocking headaches. It wiped out my memory, that's why I can't remember things. I was eleven or twelve when that happened. I stayed in the same class at school for two years. If I tried to remember anything or concentrated on something, I would get a headache.
73. I would only get three or four spellings right out of ten. If you got less than six right, you got a dong off a brother for every one wrong so I used to get a lot of dongs. They couldn't make me cry. If I tried to concentrate or remember anything, I'd get a

headache. After I left school, I used to feel anxious and pressured whenever I was in a group of more than a few men.

74. **MXD** would look at me, grin and say, "Oh Wally, no I've lost it". I had to wait with the psychological anguish for a week waiting to find out what he was going to do to me. He played on my mind. He was sadistic. I suffered more than the six dongs because it got into my head.
75. One day, I flicked a spoon of food at someone in the dining room and he saw me. He saw this and said, "We're still thinking about it". He meant that he considering what punishment to give me. I suffered because it got into my head. I was worried about it every day. He had to feast and got an adrenaline rush out of it. They had a phobia about sexual stuff.
76. I reckon I was given four dongs with the strap every day. It would be a six foot two guy on his toes with a strap, if you tried to defend yourself he would make sure he got you on the head. The pain was unbearable. They were accurate with the strap.
77. I can remember one brother came back from Ireland and told us that he had got a lovely shillelagh for us. This was a solid cane. If you got something wrong at school or talked in the chapel you were belted with this. It was like being hit with a metal pipe although it was made of bamboo. **MXD** would throw something at you and ask a question. If you got the wrong answer, you got a backhand.
78. **MDF**, **MDI** and **AOW** were the main ones. They did a lot of belting. You had to be really bad for **MXD** to do it you. It was like the army, they had to be brutal to a few to control many. There were virtually four men looking after two hundred kids. It wasn't hard to get away with misbehaving.

Every Wednesday, we had 'Speech Day' where we left school at 11:00 am and went into the hall. **MDI** would walk down the middle of the room and pick someone out if they reminded him of a misdemeanour or something that he wanted to talk about, to give them 'six of the best' in front of everyone. He would get to my row and say

"Kerkhof". I would have to walk over to the wall and stand with the other bad kids. [MDI] would say what you had done wrong and then give you six of the best.

Reporting of abuse

79. I never told a brother or outside authority about the abuse. We spoke amongst ourselves about it. I saw it happening to the others, fists, the strap or the cane, it happened regularly. You wouldn't dare report anything to the police. It was pointless. There was a lot of Catholics in the police and government. The people at the top level were in denial. The whole nation was in denial about the abuse. They were all complicit in it. The attitude was that these men had given their lives up for us. It took for attitudes to change for things to start coming out because they didn't have anybody blocking them. It's all these years later for them to realise that we were telling the truth. I have never reported anything to the police.

Leaving Clontarf

80. Brother [MDI] just came in one day and told me that I wasn't doing well at school. I was just short of fifteen. He told me I was leaving and sent me for a bus. In those days it was the back of beyond.

Life after the institution(s)

81. I got a job at Jay Roll's farm. When I arrived, I saw an old bloke outside. He yelled at me to get a move on. I worked there for six months until they realised they couldn't afford me.
82. The brothers got me another job because it wasn't my fault. I went to work on a farm run by the [MSB] family. I slept in the tin shed. It was stinking hot in the summer and freezing in the winter. Their little boy was only seven but he used to make me give him lollies. He would bribe me by saying that if I didn't he would tell the mother that I had hit him. The mother was a big woman who didn't like me. I was terrified of her. After an incident with the son, [MSB] put his arm around me and told me that I was the

best worker they had ever had but I had to go because the woman didn't want me there.

83. After that I went to stay with another family. I lived with them for four years. They always respected me.
84. I left and went to work on the railways doing contract work. It was 118 degrees in the shade and 36 at night. We used to get up at three o'clock in the morning and started work at four. We worked through the heat. I was earning good money. I wasn't even 21 then. I worked doing well sinking in Perth too. In those days, everyone had jobs. If someone didn't have a job, they were seen as some sort of criminal.
85. I got married at 24. We had two children, a son and daughter. I was married for nearly fourteen years when, one day, I looked into her eyes and said "you've been seeing somebody else". I knew it but I hadn't wanted to admit it to myself. She left. A little while later, she got the kids too. About three weeks later, the kids begged me to come and stay with me. I applied to rent a house on a farm. I started to work for myself as a handy man. I always had enough to pay the rent.
86. I had another relationship because the kids wanted a mother. I advertised in the paper for a woman who also had children. In the end, she cheated too. There was no animosity or fighting. I was just disappointed. I always seemed to attract women who needed my help initially. I think they were drawn to me because I was kind and listened to them.
87. When I was 65, I found out I had no nationality. I met some Dutch people last year who told me that my surname was spelled incorrectly.

Treatment/support

88. I've never had counselling. I sometimes think it's worse to dwell on things. You have to get yourself together and pick out the best parts of life. When I meet up with my

friends who were in there too we talk about it all. I have never had an argument with any of them. We just don't do that kind of thing.

Records and family tracing

89. I received a letter from the church, which stated that my mum died in 1985. I never met her. I travelled to Scotland in 1990 and 1999. I met some of my family. I have a half-brother called [REDACTED]. I'm still in touch with him. I never received my records because they had been falsified.
90. When I went back to Scotland I spoke with a woman who knew about me going into care. She said that when I was baptised she had heard Father [REDACTED] saying he was my natural father. She was only small when she heard him saying this.

Other matters for relating to migration

91. I got 25,000 Australian Dollars about two or three years ago. It sounds a lot but I wouldn't even accept that to have my teeth smashed out. The Christian Brothers paid me 62,000 Australian Dollars.
92. We were British subjects. The Government gave me the money back to be an Australian citizen and a British passport. I receive a state pension for single people.

Impact of migration

93. I don't know what I would be like if I hadn't been sent to Australia. I don't know what I never had. I could have had it worse off in Scotland. I have flashbacks and wake up screaming. One night I woke up dreaming that I was in the shower and wouldn't let [REDACTED] touch me. The older I get, the more emotional I get. I tell people that I'm glad I'm an orphan because I see how families can be. When someone dies, they are all fighting over things.

94. I can never recapture my Scottish culture. It was taken away from me. I just wanted my mother or a sister. I never had any female bonding. I don't like thinking about it, it's just when someone pulls the scab off, it all comes flooding back.

95. I'm getting better at mixing with people because I give talks on Carnaby birds and bees. I sometimes can't wait to get home to shut myself away with my birds.

Lessons to be learned

96. I think the biggest problem is when children tell you something, they generally don't lie especially when it is something at a 'ten on the Richter scale'. An allegation of that magnitude has to be looked into objectively. The church can't investigate the church. We've got to find a balance where we find someone who can arbitrate a problem without bias.

97. I just want people to believe what I have said is true. I can only speak for myself. I can't forget what happened. The Catholic Church should be told that they cannot let men look after children. There has to be a balance of men and women. It gives children a semblance of normality. It's hard to establish a set of rules when there is a huge number of children being controlled by men. That being said, nobody ever says that there are good brothers and priests which isn't true at all. There are good ones. Things were different in those days. People were more cruel during that era.

Final thoughts

98. 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..... 21-3-2019