

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MGJ
[REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is MGJ [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1952. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going to boarding school

2. I was born in [REDACTED] but I am from Blairgowrie and that is where I lived with my family before I went to boarding school. My mother's name was [REDACTED] and my father was [REDACTED] I have an older brother called MGJ [REDACTED] who is ten months older than me.
3. Life at home was ok and was quite normal and I was quite happy. I went to primary school in Blairgowrie from the age of five and MGJ [REDACTED] was always one year above me. My parents split up when I was aged four and my mum left the household, so from then my father took me to school. My father met someone else in 1957 and they married two years later. My step-mum was called [REDACTED] and she was known as [REDACTED]. My step-mum was Catholic and we were a Protestant family. She persuaded my father that myself and MGJ [REDACTED] should be educated in a good Catholic boarding school. It was decided that MGJ [REDACTED] and I should be sent to St Columba's college in Largs from [REDACTED] 1960 just a few weeks before I turned eight years old and I left there when I was twelve.

St Columba's College, Largs

4. My dad and step-mum took us to school in the car the first time and maybe one other time after that, and the rest of the time we made our own way there. We then travelled to St Columba's by train and changed at Stirling and Glasgow before getting the train to Largs. It felt like an adventure at the time.
5. The school was run by a religious order called the Marist Brothers. There were around thirty to thirty-five boys in the school. The boys were aged eight to twelve. It was quite a small school. It was a fee paying school and my father paid the fees.
6. I recall the school was at the end of a driveway that curved round a lawn so you'd travel half way along the drive before you saw the house. The school was in an old house. The garden was looked after by a civilian gardener from outside and there was a vegetable garden around the back. The school was not all in one building. The house was two storeys high with an attic at the top. At the front of the building, on the right hand side of the building was a large greenhouse that was wooden framed. It was used as a changing room for the pupils and had sinks in it for washing sports clothes.
7. In the main building there were classrooms on the ground floor, towards the front. The biggest room was facing you as you entered the building. There were smaller classrooms on the left and the bigger ones on the right hand side. Towards the back of the building there was a piano room and further on there was the kitchens and dining room or the 'mess'.
8. On the first floor there were dormitories. There were also one or two rooms for the staff, the Brothers' rooms. The headmaster's room was on that floor. There was also a big dorm and a small dorm and shower rooms. Upstairs, in the attic, there was a bathroom with one bath and some sinks. There was also a bedroom for one of the Brothers. Also there were a couple of steps up to two small dorms for the first and second year pupils, and after that you'd move downstairs to a dorm on the first floor.

9. SNR was Brother MJD. From memory he didn't do very much. He didn't teach as far as I was aware. Looking after the dorms was Brother Germanus. To me as a child he looked old. I think he had greyish hair and he was slim and not tall. I don't remember him having a distinctive Scottish accent. He was there pretty much all of the time. He also took classes. I remember there was also a Brother Douglas and he supervised games lessons. I don't remember any other Brothers. I don't know if these were their birth names or whether they adopted them later on. They got on ok with each other. They didn't seem like they were happy with their lives. People have suggested that the vow of chastity was behind it and this led to frustrations and this was taken out on the children in their care.

Routine at St Columba's

First day

10. I don't really remember my first day at the school. I don't specifically recall being shown round the building and meeting people.

Mornings and bedtime

11. I was initially in the younger group of boys aged seven to nine. There were others who started at the same time and I was one of the youngest. I started at the top of the house in the junior dorm. I think there were six beds in the junior dorm that I was in. I don't remember if MGI was there at the same time. Another dormitory downstairs had twelve beds in the room, so ours was small in comparison. I think we had lockers for our clothes, but I can't specifically recall them.
12. We were woken up in the morning by the lights being turned on by Brother Germanus. He was overseeing the junior dorms when I was there and he did most of the supervision. We would then get up and go to get a wash at the basins, then we put our clothes on and went down to the dining room for breakfast at 8 am.

13. We went up to the dorm for bedtime at around 8 pm after we'd done our homework.

Mealtimes / Food

14. I don't remember any queueing system and we just sat at the table and the food was brought to us in terrines. There were six boys at a table, with three on each side. The kitchen had a hatch and food was passed through to us through the hatch by the kitchen staff and a boy from each table would collect it. The kitchen staff were civilians who came in to work during the day. The whole school ate together. Usually Brother Germanus was overseeing us. He sat at the end of the room to face everyone and supervise us.
15. There was nothing wrong with the food, it was ok. I have no bad memories of it. My step-mother was quite posh and had taught me to put my knife and fork down between mouthfuls. The first time I did that someone took away my plate or bowl away as they thought I had finished eating. We were not made to eat the food that was on our plate. There were no issues with boys not eating the food. The food was put on the table in terrines and you just took what you wanted and didn't take what you didn't like. Then we put the dishes back on the hatch and went off to play for a short while before school.
16. After lessons in the morning we had lunch in the refectory or the mess. We had tea after school at 4:30 or 5 pm. I don't remember having supper at night time.

Washing / bathing

17. We just washed our faces in the mornings, there was an occasional bath. I can't recall how that was organised. I got showers later on when I was aged eight to ten in the attic. We came downstairs and got showers. They were in cubicles, two or three of them. The cubicles had curtains on them. Brother Germanus was usually there organising things. We went in the showers one by one. The showers were already running and I just jumped into a shower and jumped straight out again as the water was so cold. Germanus gave me the belt there and then. That happened on one occasion as I'd jumped into the shower before the hot water had started to run. I had

no clothes on. He gave me the belt on my hands. He liked to use any opportunity to use the belt. The belt was in his pocket all the time. After that I made sure I put my hand in the water to make sure it was warm enough.

Clothing / uniform

18. Our uniform was short trousers, shirt and tie and a blazer. Inside the building we would not be wearing the blazer. My father purchased the uniform. We also had some normal clothes to wear instead of the uniform, and they were probably shorts, T-shirt and a jersey.

School

19. Brother ^{MJD} was ^{SNR} I'm not sure what he did. We had just one teacher for most subjects and that was Brothers Germanus and Douglas who were mainly our teachers. I don't know if they had teaching qualifications. Brother Douglas would supervise us if we were out on one of the playing fields. A lady came in to teach piano and she was a member of 'civilian' staff. I don't remember her name. In St Columba's I was in the same class as ^{MGI} There weren't independent classes for each year. There was not much emphasis on individual subjects, the teaching was more generic.
20. After breakfast we had a half hour of play and then started school at about 9 am. At that time of day we probably just played in the grounds around the house itself. There were playing fields across the main road, but we were not allowed to cross the main road by ourselves, so we had to wait for one of the Brothers. Classes started at 9 am and we got a break at around 11 am and could go outside and have some milk. My teacher was Brother Germanus at first, and he remained my teacher. He and Brother Douglas were the only teachers in the time I was there. Brother ^{MJD} possibly did some teaching, but I'm not sure.
21. After lunch in the refectory or mess, we had some playtime and then back to classes. We had to cross the main road to get to the playing field and football pitches. Beyond that was the sea shore. We were allowed to go there and play in rock pools. There

was organised sports and we went to a football stadium in Largs and went there every week for the afternoon to play football. We played rugby in winter and cricket in summer. I recall some cricket with Brother Douglas, but mainly it was with Brother Germanus. My memories of the sport was good. It got me away from everything else that I was worried about.

22. School work was fine for me, but it became difficult as I am very short sighted and couldn't see very well at the time. I sat at the front of the class and squinted to see the board. I didn't get glasses until I was fourteen. With regard to discipline in the class room, I don't remember the belt in the classroom itself. If you did something wrong you were always told you'd be seen afterwards. There was a Nissen hut outside of the main building and you'd go in the hut to get the belt. It normally happened in the hut and I don't recall it happening anywhere else. You did pretty much nothing to get the belt and Brother Germanus found any excuse to use it and he'd insist you had to be punished. He was very belt-happy.
23. I thought at the time, and for the first few years after I left that school, that I got the belt every day, but looking back there were times when I didn't get the belt. It just felt like it was every day. I'd been there a couple of years before the belt started for me and it started when the other abuse from Brother Germanus started. At least I don't remember getting the belt myself until the other abuse started. The belt was threatened within the school environment itself. I don't believe any record of punishments was kept in the school.
24. You'd be in the Nissen hut by yourself and generally you'd get the punishment by yourself. It happened to me by myself. It might happen with someone else if you'd got in trouble together, perhaps because two of us had been caught running in a place where we weren't meant to be running or crossing the main road together without an adult. A lot of the time you were by yourself being belted. They used the leather tawse with two tongues at the end. The tawse was thick and not very flexible. It was a hard and strong belt and you'd get it on both hands, one on each hand. Normally it was just two strikes. I was aware that other boys got called to the Nissen hut, but I think I was

called more often than the others. If we were playing together I knew that when a boy got called away that that was what was going to happen.

Religion

25. It was a Catholic school. They knew me and [MGI] were Protestant. I got confirmed and became Catholic. The school was fine about us going through that process and we weren't treated any differently. We weren't the only non-Catholics. We went to the local Catholic church in Largs every Sunday. The school didn't have its own church. We were taught about the faith by a priest. It was strange, but it was a gradual thing and we weren't thrown into it. We said prayers at night before bed and kneeled on the hard wooden floor. We also said grace before every meal.

Work/chores

26. We cleaned our own football boots in the greenhouse that was part of the school. We had no chores to do.

Trips / Holidays

27. We went to Largs and we went to Cumbrae Island a lot. It was an adventure for a day trip. We went on small motor boats with fifteen or twenty boys. I remember the sea was choppy and we didn't have life jackets. We were dropped off at the island and went wandering by ourselves. Then they came back for us.
28. We watched films in school. There was a projector and we watched cartoons on weekends. The screen was projected on to a wall. It was organised by a Brother. There were no overnight trips.

Leisure time

29. After school day was finished we changed out of uniform, I think but I'm not sure. I think we would have put trainers on and played in shorts. We could go over to the

playing fields. There was organised homework and back to the classroom for that for half an hour. Then we had our own time in the dorm or piano practice. My parents paid for me to have piano lessons every week.

30. There were board games in the Nissen hut and we did a bit of boxing in there and there were musical instruments. Brother Germanus initiated the boxing and he saw it as a fun activity for us and the boxing gloves were already in the room. It was just for a wee bit of sparring with each other and not a serious sport. It wasn't a way of resolving arguments between boys. There were some games and storytelling sessions.
31. I have good memories of playing football and playing along the sea shore. I enjoyed looking in the rock pools and collecting fish and eels. We walked on the sea shore. I got on ok with other boys. I don't remember any names apart from the ones we kept in touch with, such as [REDACTED] and his brother [REDACTED]. Also [REDACTED] was there and I was in touch with him for a while afterwards.

Birthdays and Christmas

32. I went home to my parents at Christmas, Easter and in summer and at half-term. Most of my birthdays were spent at the school, and I don't recall any celebration of it.

Visits / Inspections

33. My parents came to visit once a term and took us out for a meal and for the afternoon out. There was a change in my demeanour after Germanus started to abuse me and that was from being normal and outgoing to being introverted. I think I had been at the school a couple of years by that point and the doctor had picked up on the skin condition on my leg. I wanted to be isolated from everyone. I couldn't isolate myself physically, so I did it mentally and became quiet. I think someone from outside of school noticed this, but I remember my mother said it was a phase I was going through, but it lasted for about ten years. I think the person who noticed I'd become very quiet was from my mother's church.

34. I don't remember anyone else visiting the school. I don't recall any external inspectors or religious visitor. I don't remember anyone else staying in the school, such as a visiting priest.

Siblings/contact

35. I could see and speak to my brother MGI whenever I wanted. There was no separation and we were all mixed in at break times.

Healthcare

36. There was no nurse on the school site. If you were unwell you had to speak to Brother Germanus and he decided if you had to go to see the doctor in Largs and he would take you. I don't remember a doctor coming in to see us. If you needed a dentist you went to see one at home in the holidays.

Running away

37. Me and MGI sort of ran away once together. It was in the evening. We'd been playing across the road and we'd been to the shore and when it was time to go back no-one came to tell us. We were not allowed to cross the main road and we couldn't draw attention to anyone as there were big trees in the way. Instead we walked along the shore to the town. We talked about going to our own home and we thought it wasn't far away. We decided we weren't going to make it home that night and were looking for a barn to sleep in. The police found us wandering on the pavement. I don't know how old we were.
38. The police took us back to the school, we had our blazers on so they knew where we were from, and I don't remember the journey back to school. We must have seen Brother MJD quite quickly and he said to Brother Germanus and Brother Douglas that there was no punishment and he made a point of that. Brother Germanus would have belted us. I assume this because of how belt-happy Germanus was and he

needed very little excuse to use the belt on me. It wasn't a conscious decision to run away, it was just that we couldn't cross the main road and we'd get badly punished for that normally. This was the only time I ever did anything like that.

Bed Wetting

39. I had no problems with bed wetting. I don't recall it happening to anyone else. We'd had the trauma before going to school as our parents had split up. I think if a boy had wet the bed, he would have been belted for it.

Discipline

40. I got the belt from Brother Douglas once because I told him to shut up. I must have been having a bad day. I think I was older than ten years old. It happened in the classroom and on my hands. I don't remember other people getting the belt in class from him. I'd don't recall him telling boys to meet him afterwards in the Nissen hut. I am the only person I recall getting the belt from Brother Douglas and only once. I don't remember ever getting the belt from Brother MJD. In terms of other discipline we may have been given lines to do and that came from both Brothers, but mainly Brother Germanus. I can't recall what behaviour would lead to us getting lines to do.

Abuse at St Columba's College, Largs

41. The abuse started from the age of ten. I had these marks or spots on my leg, only about six of them up and down one leg. The doctor in Largs had suggested that they were bathed with a mixture of Dettol diluted with warm water and just dabbed with a flannel. It wasn't measles, I'm not sure what the skin complaint was. Brother Germanus decided I should be bathed in Dettol and water instead, and that is when the abuse started. He decided I had to have these baths after everyone else had finished bathing and returned to the dorm. Now I can see that he took advantage of me having to use the bath by myself.

42. I was by this stage sleeping in a dorm on the first floor, and used the baths and sinks on the second floor. His room was on the second floor just before you go through into the bathroom. I don't recall specifically the first time he bathed me. It was pretty much the same thing every time. He'd say to me that I had to go and get my bath now, so he chose when it would happen. I had to get into the bath water and wait for him to come back into the room and sometimes the water had gone cold by the time he came in. The bathroom was not being used by anyone else at that time.
43. He would then come back and I got out of the bath and he'd half help me to dry myself. He was fully dressed as normal in his habit and I was naked coming out of the bath. There was a big mirror. I was wearing my towel and it would fall off me so I'd be standing naked and in front of the mirror. He would stand behind me and he would start tickling me, then his hands would travel down to my crotch area and he would feel around there. He didn't grab me by my penis or my testicles, but he fiddled around that area. I can't recall him saying anything specific and nothing sexual.
44. This went on for as long as I was having the baths and had the skin problem. I think I had the baths over a few months. It was pretty much every night. I knew it was wrong and I didn't like what he was doing. After he tickled me in the bathroom, almost every time, he would take me into his bedroom and told me he wanted to be sure my leg was properly dried.
45. He put me into his bed and there was a metal frame over my legs to keep the bed covers off them. He put the covers over me in a way that the covers didn't touch me and I would get dry at the same time. I was naked under the covers and this metal frame. As far as I remember he didn't get into the bed beside me, but he'd then lay on top of the bed and he would be still wearing his habit. After half an hour or so I would say I was dry and, as I had my pyjamas with me, I would put them on and go to my own bed.
46. On one occasion, I was starting to make my way downstairs to the dorm, at the top of the stairs there was a couple of steps going up into the attic dorm. He was sat on these steps, on the landing area, and started speaking to me. I can't remember what he was

saying, and he had hold of my arms and he was pulling me towards him. My hands were on his chest trying to resist, but he was far stronger than me. I can't remember if I was wearing my pyjamas or if I had just my towel round me. I felt something wet on my bare leg and I knew straight away what this was. I believe it was his penis and I don't know if he ejaculated, there was just a wet touch on my leg. I said 'no' loudly and pushed him away with all my strength and he let me go and I ran downstairs to my bed in the dorm. The other boys were in their beds by this time.

47. Just after I got into my bed, and he did it on other occasions, he came to sit on my bed. The door to my dorm was usually open and there was a light on in the hallway. I would always lie with my face to the wall, so it was away from the light. I would pretend to be asleep. He would come sit on the bed and say I know you're awake, don't pretend to be asleep. On the same evening as he'd grabbed me on the attic steps he also said to me, something like, don't say anything about what happened, there's no point in telling anyone because no-one would believe you. I can't recall what exactly he said.
48. This thing about him sitting behind me, on my bed, led to night terrors later on. He was wearing his black habit and, I don't recall exactly, but he must have pulled it up to over his knees. His knees were bare and he wasn't wearing trousers. I assume, now, in retrospect, that he must have taken them off when I was in the bath waiting for him. I believe that the Brothers would normally wear trousers under their habit as I would see the Brothers on the playing field and running and their habit would ride up and I'd see their trousers underneath.
49. There were no partitions between the beds. I think he sat on other boy's beds, and I heard him coming in the room sometimes and I assume he sat on other beds, but I never turned round to check. I didn't want to draw attention to myself. I don't remember him ever taking any boy out of the dormitory.
50. Around the time I started having the baths, I was also getting the belt more during the day. It's difficult to recall as I thought I always got the belt every day, but really it was a normal amount of times before I started having the baths. He then just took the

opportunity to get me by myself, because of my leg, and this seemed to trigger something in him, and maybe he was taking it out on me with the belt.

51. I think that incident on stairs when I pushed him away finished me having to have the baths, and I think I had them over a period of two months. I didn't go back to the doctor to have it confirmed. I think I was expected to have the baths every night. I think I was aged around ten at this time. The belting continued. It was only on the hands that I can recall. I can't specifically recall being belted on my backside. When I went to St Josephs after St Columba's I thought, thank God I'll get away from having the belt so often.

Reporting of abuse at St Columba's College

52. I couldn't tell anyone what was happening. In the early 1960s nobody talked about stuff like that. There was no-one to tell and my parents didn't understand that when a child changed their character there must have be a reason for it and something was wrong. They just assumed it was a phase I was going through.
53. I don't recall any conversations with other boys about Brother Germanus. Much later on as an adult, me and my brother were friends with someone who had been a boy at our school. We were talking about St Columba's. He said nothing happened to him. It was only me and my brother ^{MGI} who had problems with Brother Germanus out of the three of us. I'm sure other boys at the school must have had problems with him though. ^{MGI} was taken out of his dorm and made to sit on steps as punishment, and there were other boys sat there too. Brother Germanus told him that he wasn't tired enough and he had to sit there until he got tired. That didn't happen to me.

Leaving St Columba's College

54. I was nearly twelve when I left St Columba's in 1964 and I passed my eleven-plus to get to St Josephs. I don't know if I had to pass it in order to get into St Joseph's, but I

was a bright boy and I passed it. My brother ^{MGI} went to St Joseph's one year before me when he was twelve.

St Joseph's school, Dumfries

55. I came home for St Columba's for [REDACTED] holiday and then started at St Joseph's in [REDACTED] 1964. The Brothers used the belt at St Joseph's but nothing like it was at St Columba's. I don't remember the name of the Headmaster in charge, I can't even picture him, other than he was tall. The Head that was there in 1964 changed after four or five years. He didn't have a reputation for giving out punishment. I don't remember the names of the Brothers and none stood out. The teachers used the belt if you were involved in any wrongdoing. Everyone was treated the same and no one individual was picked out and picked on.
56. St Joseph's school was run by the Marist Brothers. Some of the Brothers were teachers and some staff were lay teachers. Boys at the school were aged from twelve to eighteen, and this depended on whether you were staying to do A levels. I left when I was seventeen-and-a-half as I had done my O' Levels and Highers.
57. The school was a big place. There were a lot of different buildings. In the long, main building there were three storeys. There was an annex on the end for the science labs. The main building had a foyer or hallway, and the refectory at one end. The building was level at one end and the ground dipped away and you went down steps to get down to the ground. There were several classrooms on the ground floor. On the right hand side of the main building was a new building with a stage and a cinema where plays were put on and we had speeches in there.
58. Upstairs, there were the dorms on the second floor. A lot of Brothers stayed on the first floor. The pupils had big open dorms. I think the school had between 250 and 300 boys. There were forty to fifty boys in the big dorms. Another, smaller separate building further back was all dorms. There was a certain part of the school allocated to certain

ages. We were moved around to different parts of the school buildings depending on our school year.

59. There were Brothers in charge of the dorms. Brother ^{MLU} the [REDACTED] teacher, was in charge of the dorms for boys from third year onwards. His room was opposite where my dorm was. He was in a separate room. In the separate, smaller building there were smaller dorms for seven or eight boys and some were smaller. They were ordinary rooms without partitions. In the main building, the dorms were on second floor. The first years were on the third floor, second years on the second floor and Brothers on the first floor. The majority of the Brothers had their own separate house.

Routine

Mornings and bedtimes

60. We had to go to Mass on Tuesday and Thursday morning and on Sundays. We were up at 6 am for Mass and 7 am on the other days.

Mealtimes and food

61. We had breakfast between 7:30 and 8 am. We had one hour for lunch in the refectory on a school day. We had tea at 5:30. The food was okay and it was mass produced. They were lay staff. There was a cook and I don't know if the kitchen staff lived on the premises. It was delivered to us through hatches. There was more children and the mealtimes were more rushed. We got prunes and custard a lot. They came in a shallow dish that was carried on a tray that was pushed through from the kitchen to refectory. The food would slop out of the dish when it was carried from the hatch to the refectory. You'd have to scrape it off your clothes. And some put the scraped food went back in the dish. I didn't eat it then. We didn't have to finish the food and you ate what you wanted to.

Washing and bathing

62. We had wash rooms with sinks and showers. I don't remember any baths. We were left to ourselves and not supervised. We could shower when we wanted. I don't remember any time when all of us were together. When we came back from the playing fields, about two miles away, we would walk back, shower and change. There were cubicles with curtains round the shower.

Clothing/uniform

63. There was a seamstress to repair clothes. The uniform was the same as at St Columba's, just with a different badge. My parents provided the uniform for me.

School

64. Classes started at 9 am and there was a break at 11 am for half-an-hour. Then back to classes until about 12:30 then one hour for lunch. There was a break in the afternoon and we would be in class until about 5 pm. There was organised homework and more of it than at St Columba's. The lines were part of homework. Brothers took pretty much all of the classes. I can only remember Brother ^{MLU} who was tall, skinny and narrow faced. He taught ^{MLU} was his nickname. He was ok and a nice guy. The art teacher was lay and she was a local Dumfries lady and I can't remember her name, she was okay. The Brothers took most classes, like French, maths, Biology and English, plus extra-curricular subjects like Russian and German. There was organised sports, rugby, football or cricket, on Wednesday and Saturday afternoon
65. I had to start wearing glasses at age fourteen. I had decided myself there was something wrong as I was squinting when I looked at the board. It affected my schooling as I was in bigger classes and wasn't able to sit quite so close to the blackboard. It was not picked up on between the ages of twelve and fourteen until I volunteered the information. It was becoming hard to keep up with the class. They took

a lot of getting used to and my schooling got better, but it was never that great. I wasn't good at concentrating and my reports cards used to say 'could do better'.

66. The classes had about thirty pupils in each and not all pupils were fee paying and there were also some local boys who were day pupils. I think there was some sort of scholarship to enter the school. The day pupils wore the same uniform and there was no real difference in how they were treated.

Leisure time

67. We had tea at 5:30 and after that we had time to ourselves. There were homework sessions for one hour homework at first for younger boys and this became two hours as you got older. The younger pupils would be sent to the dorm earlier in the evening. Older boys had a play area in an old derelict house. There were TVs in there that were for pupils who were aged sixteen onwards. We could sneak out to watch rugby games in the derelict house. Sometimes we got caught and told not to do it again. We became good at not getting caught. Brother MLU was pretty tolerant of us.
68. We had freedom at weekends and could go into town and mix with other children. We could go to local cafes. We had pocket money and our parents left money with the school at the start of term for our pocket money. One of the Brothers was the bursar for the school and he could distribute money and for emergencies, such as needing new shoes. You could get that shopping by yourself.
69. I never thought about running away and there was no need to. As I was older I could save up money and go on the train home or I could have phoned home and my dad would have picked me up. You could leave St Joseph's if you wanted to and I didn't have to run away.

Healthcare

70. There was a nurse on site. I don't recall her name. She had worked in a hospital for a long time before she came to work at the school. I saw her to get my ears syringed.

One time there was a boy who was messing around in class and he had a tiny pen knife. I was stabbed in my hand by the knife and it was bleeding, so the nurse bandaged it for me. There was no punishment for this from the teachers. I got my nose broken in a football match and it was re-set under general anaesthetic. I had to take myself to the hospital, maybe one or two days after the match.

Chores

71. We didn't have any chores other than possibly to sweep the dorm. Nothing sticks in my mind.

Christmas and Birthdays

72. I was at home in the holidays for Christmas and Easter and in summer and mid-term.

Visits

73. My parents came and stayed in a hotel in town so they could visit us at St Joseph's. There were more visits at this school generally, such as other schools coming to play us at sports. We also visited other schools for sports. Parents came in the building during visits and could see what was going on and the children could show their parents round the building. It was a relaxed environment for visitors.
74. A lot of Brothers had their home on school site. I don't specifically remember any other Marist Brothers coming to visit the school, if they did they would stay in the house where most of the Brothers lived and not where the boys were. I don't recall any official visits or anyone asking me specifically how I was getting on. I don't remember anyone for the wider Catholic church visiting.

Discipline

75. We got given the belt and lines too. The belt was for messing about in class, whether you were at fault or not, as long as you were involved and lines were given for a similar

thing. It would depend on the teacher. I don't recall getting both together. Some of the teachers were Brothers and some were lay teachers. Most of the lay teachers didn't give out the belt, but the Brothers did and some were more handy with the belt than others. The belt was over and done with quickly. It was used on your hand, once or twice. Mr Craig was the gym teacher and he occasionally gave the belt if you deserved it for mucking around in the gym. I can't recall why he did it. I didn't get it from him myself, but others did. The geography teacher was Mr McEwan. I don't remember him punishing anyone with the belt.

76. I thought many incidents of belting were unfair. One time I was standing speaking to the boy at the desk in front of me. Another boy came running up behind me and kneed me in the back and the teacher, I can't recall his name, pulled both of us out of the room and gave both of us the belt. This was done by one of the Brothers and I think this was in my O Level year, so my third year. Whenever I got the belt I was pulled out of the classroom and into the corridor to be punished and it happened once in the classroom itself, as described below.
77. On one occasion me and a couple of other boys got eighteen of the belt from ^{SNR} [REDACTED] and that was six on each hand and six on our bottom. We had to bend over a desk. I didn't do anything wrong. In chemistry class, something fell on the floor and a few of us dived on the floor to grab it. There was a scramble on the floor. We were having laugh and rolling about on the floor.
78. ^{SNR} [REDACTED] walked past and saw us through the glass door. He thought we were fighting. The chemistry teacher, whose name I can't recall, was a civilian and tried to intervene and ^{SNR} [REDACTED] shut him down straight away. The civilian teacher stayed back and was quiet. ^{SNR} [REDACTED] gave four of us eighteen strokes. The lab was in an annex and there were partitions between rooms and ^{SNR} [REDACTED] took them away. We were belted in front of everyone in the classrooms. I think now that he had to get his frustrations out on us and he used an excuse to give us the belt. He carried his belt on him. I can't recall the name of ^{SNR} [REDACTED] but am sure he was the same one as at the start of my time at St Joseph's when I was twelve. ^{SNR} [REDACTED] changed at some point in my time at the school.

79. It was better for me than in St Columba's and we had more freedom. I was not abused by any Brothers. We had more leeway and we were held responsible for our own actions. You would expect to get punished if you didn't do something you were told to do. It was a more effective way of dealing with things. It felt more relaxed and freer. I don't recall any record of punishments being made in a book. I don't remember any Brothers rushing off to record it. Punishment was spontaneous.

Leaving St Joseph's

80. I left after doing O Levels and Highers. I got Highers in Maths, English literature and language as well as geography. I also had seven different O Levels. I left aged seventeen-and-a-half in [REDACTED] 1970. I have good memories of my time at the school, especially involving sports. I wasn't good at running, but I was good at field events such as javelin and discus.

Life after school

81. From age fourteen I had done some waitering in local hotels in Blairgowrie, and I went back to that in my first few months out of school. I was interested in aircraft and joined the Air Force in September 1970 when I had just turned eighteen. I joined up for just over three years and went into the mechanical side of things. I was posted to a station that didn't work well for me. There were too many officious people working there for me to be comfortable. I tried to continue working with air craft, but I didn't have enough qualifications to follow it up.
82. I went part-time with my dad working in his [REDACTED] firm in 1976 and I started working full-time in this company until I retired two years ago. He had shops in [REDACTED] and a few other places and I concentrated on [REDACTED] myself.

83. I never married or lived with anyone. I stayed by myself and that is a legacy of what happened to me in St Columba's when I would withdraw into myself. I have to have time by myself and find it difficult to form emotional relationships. I was in an on/off relationship for a long time, but we could never spend enough time together as we lived in different places.

Impact

84. There is an impact from my time in St Columba's. At the time I didn't see it as such a big deal, but now I see it has had a big impact on how I relate to people. I find it takes me a long time to trust someone and let them into my life. Joining the Air Force was good for me and I came out of my shell, but I left because there was too much officialdom. One place had certain groups of people on general duties with no qualifications, but would still tell you off or criticise you for something mundane like not having your coat buttoned up. I became fed up with it.
85. My reaction to people pulling me up at the Air Force was possibly linked to my school experience. I had some issues with authority and in particular didn't hold these non-qualified people in high regard.
86. I didn't drink much before I joined the Air Force. When I was in St Joseph's we used to go to rugby matches in Edinburgh and went to the pub afterwards. I found alcohol made me feel good and chatty. In the Air Force it was part of the culture and I was soon drinking more, and the more I drank the more sociable and chatty I became and found I was more comfortable in a group. In the late 1970s and through to 1980s I drank too much and it was becoming a problem. I wasn't an alcoholic, but I drank too much. I'd prefer not to drink now and I only drink sometimes. Now I still have problems with being a in a group and I'll be by myself a lot.
87. After I left St Columba's and went to St Joseph's it took a long time for me to get to sleep. I thought someone would come up behind me and I would have the sensation of someone standing behind me when I was in bed. It took me a long time to have the

courage to turn around and see there was no-one standing beside my bed. It took a time long to get to sleep and then I didn't sleep for long, maybe two or three hours of sleep. That went on for many years. When I first retired I was sleeping eight hours a night, but now it's just two hours or so and then I'm awake again. It takes a long time to get to sleep at the start of the night too. I've become used to having little sleep.

88. I don't have night terrors now. When I was scared I'd have to make myself turn around to see no-one was standing by my bed, and once I was confident there was no one there I felt better. Then the night terrors began to dissipate. I'd also have a heavy and tight feeling in my chest.

89. I don't think about St Columba's very often. I don't worry about it and it doesn't crop up much in my mind. I think sometimes how would I be now if I hadn't gone to St Columba's and what would my life be like.

90. After I left school altogether I visited my school friend [REDACTED] with my brother [REDACTED] MGI and we went to his wedding. The first time I talked about St Columba's was when I was aged about twenty-three and I shared the information with them. [REDACTED] had no problems at the school and [REDACTED] MGI said something had happened to him, but I don't remember any details. I've never thought about having counselling, but have tried being hypnotised for another issue, but it didn't work and my mind was closed to it. I can't let myself be under someone else's power. It is deep rooted now and I don't think counselling would help me.

91. I never told my dad about St Columba's as I didn't want him to feel guilty about sending us there. I went back to the school when I was passing through Largs in the mid-1980s. The house had been knocked down, but the driveway and lawn and the gardens at the back are still there. New houses were being built and I felt pleased that the old house wasn't there anymore.

Reporting of Abuse

92. I never made any reports to the police about my experience at St Columba's.

Records

93. I have my report cards from St Columba's about academic achievement as we had one every term and I have school photographs, but nothing more.

Lessons to be Learned

94. Our experience was in the 1960s. I wanted to give my account in support of anyone else who went to St Columba's or had similar problems at the same time period. Perhaps for anyone who wants to bring a legal action against the Catholic schools run by the Marist Brothers.
95. If I had children I would not have sent them to a boarding school. Some guys from the school had no problems and they would send their children to a boarding school. The abuse that happened to me would have been difficult to prevent. People didn't talk about these things in those days. A monitoring situation would have helped, but there wasn't anything then. It wasn't available. Things have changed since then and I think parents are more aware of changes in their children now, and don't just assume it's a phase.
96. The likes of religious orders are perceived as being trustworthy, but the Catholic church has a history and much has been covered up in the past. I don't know what can be done about it unless teachers at school are monitoring their colleagues and keeping others in line. In the old days they either didn't know or kept quiet, now they are more aware.

Other information

97. 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..... 26/3/19