

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MMB

Support person present: No

1. My full name is MMB My date of birth is 1957. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I lived at home in Paisley with my mum, dad and grandmother. My mother was called and she worked as a health visitor. My father was and was a painter and decorator for the council.
3. I went to St Catherine's Primary School in Paisley. My gran would often have friends around at the house when we got in from school, and my mother and father felt that I was spending a lot of time with older people.
4. My mother and her sister, who was a primary school teacher, discussed things and thought it would be a good idea to send my cousin and I to St Columba's boarding school in Largs. We went to visit the school before we started. Our parents said it was an experiment and if it didn't work, we would be pulled out.
5. and I started St Columba's in 1965, when I was eight years old, and we didn't wish to be pulled out. We essentially had a bit of a holiday there. I remember more about the fun aspects than sitting in a class trying to pass exams.

St Columba's, Largs

6. St Columba's was a prep school so it was only for eight to eleven year children. There were fifty boys, of whom around 33 were boarders. The other seventeen were day pupils. My cousin and I were fee paying, but I don't know if everybody there was a fee payer.
7. I remember meeting the SNR [REDACTED], who was a very tall, dignified gentleman called Brother MJD. He was a [REDACTED] and an educationalist. He loved the [REDACTED] and loved [REDACTED] which he managed to convey to most of us who were avid [REDACTED]. He was possessed with a sense of humour too.
8. Brother MJD was SNR [REDACTED] for the first two years I was there, then Brother [REDACTED] took over as SNR [REDACTED] for the last year.
9. We called the staff 'Brothers.' The names of staff members that I recall are Brothers MJD Nilus, MLA [REDACTED], Germanus and Douglas. There was also old Brother MFN [REDACTED] who was retired and didn't teach. I don't know what the Brothers real names were. They were all clean shaven and wore black. They wore a white collar, which was quite large and hung down.
10. Brother Germanus was probably about 5'6 or 5'7, lightly built and was very slightly stooped. He smoked a pipe. Brother MLA [REDACTED] and Douglas were younger, I think in their forties, and the rest were in their late fifties or early sixties.
11. The old cook was a chap called Frank, and his buddy was old Brother MFN [REDACTED] who was very serene.
12. The building was an old, detached manor house with a one way carriage drive. The house was originally called Landour. I think it was sandstone, but it was painted cream.

13. As you came in the gate and turned left, you went around a lawn with old trees in it. The main building stood there with a little passageway to the left. The building to the left of it, which would have originally been the servant's quarters, was where the Brothers lived.
14. If you went through that passage, you went into the back garden, which was a large square lawn. There were old vegetable plots and what had been an orangery against the wall. Only the footings were left.
15. Then going up the hill at the back, there was a gate. Beyond the gate, you could walk up a step zig zag path which took you up to a golf course.
16. In the main house, the ground floor rooms were used as class rooms, and one was Brother **MJD** study. The dining room was through a passageway towards the back of the house, and the kitchen was to the left.
17. There was a staircase that went up to the dormitories. There were three or four dormitories on two floors for the 33 boarders. The showers and bathrooms were upstairs too.
18. On the other side of the building, there was a conservatory, which we used as a boot room. That's where shoes, football boots and muddy things were kept. Outside that, there was a Nissen hut, which was the recreational hall, and also outside toilets.
19. We had a little mini snooker table and quite a lot of things to keep us occupied in the Nissen hut when it was raining. There were only 33 kids who played there so they fit in quite well.
20. The Brothers often called us by our first names because there was so few of us. It was a bit more formal if you were in trouble.

Routine at St Columba's

21. We were woken up as a group, which was very standard. It was a bit of a fight to get to the front of the queue to wash in the mornings, for those of us who were motivated to get to the front quickly. This was just so we could get to breakfast as quick as we could.
22. Then we had breakfast in the dining room. We had all of our meals in the dining room.
23. There were only 33 kids who slept in the dormitories on two floors, and the numbers per room varied from five to eight depending on the room size. The room to the right of the of the main door, on the first floor, was large and airy, and accommodated eight to ten boys. There were two rooms in the attic, which each slept five and six boys in each. On the other side of the attic, there was a loo, and the little room where Brother Germanus slept, which was just a hutch big enough for his bed and desk.
24. The staircase was open and Brother Germanus could hear a pin drop from his room, so there was no need for patrols at night. If anybody even broke wind, you would hear them. He was on the ball, and if anybody was restless in the attic rooms or the rooms below, you would often hear him come to the door to check on things. He was quite a light sleeper.
25. I think the dormitories were split up into age groups, but we were only ranging from eight to eleven years old, so there wasn't a big difference between us. I seem to remember that the younger ones were up at the top, near Brother Germanus' room. Then, as you got older, you moved downstairs to a room that was a bit further away.
26. Brother Germanus slept in a tiny little room right at the top, in the attic. This was so he could be alerted to yells and shrieks, and the kinds of things eight year old boys get up to at night.
27. I was in a room in the front of the house at one time.

28. I think occasionally, people wet the bed. There was one boy who had a problem with bed wetting, and he did end up being checked in hospital. It didn't affect his academic progress. As we were little boys, he would get ragged about it from other boys, but I think the staff stopped that happening as best they could.
29. We had to write home to our families on a Saturday morning. They were checked for punctuation and to make sure it was legible. We would be reminded if anything particular had happened that week, and to include in our letters what we had actually done that week. My parents occasionally wrote back but not too often as I saw them every other weekend, alternating with my aunt and uncle. I would receive my letters unopened.
30. We went to church on Sunday.

Clothing and uniform

31. Clothing was very informal when we were on the premises. We had to be neat and clean, but we didn't have to wear a uniform unless we were walking out.
32. On Sunday mornings, we had to wear uniform to go to Our Lady Star of the Sea Church, on the sea front in the town. St Columba's wasn't big enough to have its own chapel. We would also wear uniform if we went out for any other occasion.

School

33. A lot of the brothers were getting older, so they would do maybe two thirds of the work that a younger teacher would do. It was a way for them to be partially retired.
34. I remember being taught [REDACTED] by Brother **MJD** Brother **MLA** taught us too. I don't recall Brother Germanus teaching, but he was never my teacher.
35. Given that we were in primary school, no teacher was identified as teaching a particular subject. We stayed in the same class for the whole year.

36. There was an eleven plus, but that was cancelled just as we were about to sit it. The announcement about it being cancelled came on a particularly sunny day. We were all sitting doing a preliminary test in class, when Brother **MLA** came in and said: "Right lads! The eleven plus is cancelled. Everybody out!" So we all got to get changed and went off down the beach.
37. I seem to remember my mum, dad and aunt being very pleased with our academic achievements.
38. We all seemed to achieve, academically. I don't remember anybody falling behind. A number of the boarders went on to St Joseph's College in Dumfries after Largs, so you tended to hear how folk got on, and they all ~~med~~ ^{seemed} to achieve their ambitions.

Trips and leisure time

39. Brother **MLA** and **MLA** Brother Douglas were the youngest and were very get up and go. They were golf fanatics, and a lot of the boys played golf too, because their parents did. Sometimes, we would have a beautiful day and he would suddenly come into class and say "I think we'll go beach rambling, what do you say?" We could catch up on school work in the evening because it was a boarding school.
40. We used to wander up to the golf course usually with Brother **MLA** We were always beach combing or doing something. We spent a lot of time outside. We had been told to bring outdoor gear like gym shoes, jeans, welly boots and a waterproof coat on our kit list.
41. There was a playing field across the road from the school. There was a flat bit at the top, and then it dipped down into a burn, and then it was attached to a little bit of beach. The bottom part was just big enough for a very small football pitch, and the top bit was a decent sized football pitch. It had trees all around it.
42. I remember we used to play commandos around the fields and trees. We would play in the pitch dark, hiding behind the trees. There was lots of mud and lots of fun. The

autumn, velvety nights seemed to go on forever. Somebody would always be out supervising us, but they would be invisible.

43. A company called Hallidays ran boats off the beach at Largs. They were big, wooden, open boats with motors in them. They would offer trips around the bay and across to Little Cumbrae. A favourite trip on a June summer's day would be to go in a Hallidays' boat, towing a dinghy, across to Little Cumbrae, with a big tub of beans with a lid on top, a big tray of pies, some buns and napkins.
44. We would go to the top of Cumbrae island, which was not as busy then as it is now. There was a little beach that you could be isolated in. The Hallidays boat would drop us off and we would all change into swimming kit. Brother Germanus would row this rowing boat around the bay, and all these giggling kids would come charging in, shaking themselves all over him and diving out again.
45. Then we would go and light a fire, warm up the beans and eat our pies and beans. Then the Hallidays boat would come back and pick us up. We spent quite a few afternoons doing that sort of thing. We had a little Bedford mini bus that we got ferried around in.
46. We sometimes went to Millport in the steamer and cycled around the island, or went to Rothesay, or roller skated down to the Pencil Monument, which is the memorial to the battle of Largs. Again, it would be Brother Germanus with his pipe and his beret and thirty kids on roller skates, and him on his roller skates at the back of the pack, going along the front. That time we would be wearing our blazers over what we were wearing. He never lost one of us, which I thought was impressive.
47. I always remember the summer being hotter and longer than it probably was, and there being lots of them, but there must have only been three.
48. I remember one blazing day, the sun was coming in through the window of the dorm. I was ill and in bed, and everybody else was going to Rothesay. There was something on and I had wanted to go to it. Just before they left, Brother Germanus appeared with

some sandwiches, cakes and a bottle of fizz for me. He said he hoped I was ok and they'd see me when they got back, and if I needed anything, to ring the bell for Brother MFN. That was the only down moment and that was my own fault because I had the lurgy.

49. There wasn't a lot of external sports because we were a prep school. It did happen from time to time that we would play other schools, but not that often. We tended to play local schools.
50. I remember playing football for the school at Barfields, and I played appallingly badly. 22 boys aged ten don't make a big impression on big sized football fields. Boys would tease each other about things. I got teased for not being able to play football. I got ragged outrageously for it, but that was just what wee boys were like in the 1960s.
51. We had a television room and I remember watching Celtic win the European cup in 1967. The Marist Brothers had founded Celtic so there^was always an affiliation with the team. That was a great day.

Birthdays and Christmas

52. We would go home for Christmas. When it was your birthday, you would usually get a cake or something at tea. There was always some excuse for a bit of a feed, and Frank would usually knock something up.
53. If your birthday fell on a week day, you would usually celebrate it with your family when you saw them at the weekend.

Trips, visits and inspections

54. Older Brothers from other places would visit for a few weeks here and there. St Columba's was by the seaside, so Brothers who had taught at St Mungo's in Glasgow would come to have a break when they were retired. These people weren't monks,

they were Brothers and that is a very distinct difference. I got the impression that a lot of them were people who had been involved in education for a lot of years.

55. When these older Brothers came to visit, they had their own accommodation in a different building from us.
56. We got visitors every week on Sunday, and your family would come to see you. My parents, aunt and uncle would take it in turns to come and see my cousin and I, so we always had a visitor on Sunday. You weren't obliged to have visitors, and some children didn't because their families lived far away.
57. Family would normally visit after church and lunch on a Sunday. They had to present themselves at the school before being able to take you out for the afternoon, and they would have to bring you back afterwards. I think you had to be back for about 7 pm. There would be a member of staff there to see you go and to see you come back.
58. There was a phone in Brother **MJD** office that boys could ask to use if they wanted to phone home. People sometimes did this, especially if something had happened in their family. I never felt the need to call home because I was perfectly happy.
59. The parents and friends organised a fete on a Sunday in May every year in the grounds of the school. It was to raise money for the school to build a new hall. My father and uncle used to do the wheel of fortune, and would make a lot of money on the day. The children and the teachers attended, as well as locals and some dignitaries.
60. A certain amount of money would be deposited by your parents with the school at the beginning of each term, and then it would be doled out to you as pocket money throughout the term when you went out. You would always have enough to get yourself an ice cream, and if you didn't, it would just magically get topped up, usually by Brother Germanus.
61. Occasionally, there was a visit from the Provincial office. The Marist Brothers were divided into provinces around the world, and somebody had to make sure that

everything was ok, and the kids were clean and nobody had been lost. I don't remember anybody specifically asking us if everything was ok, but it was a long time ago.

Healthcare

62. I was ill that time I wasn't able to go to Rothesay. That only lasted for about 48 hours. I think someone checked on me two or three times during the day, and I was given a bell to ring if I needed anything. I don't remember anybody being ill enough to be taken to hospital, but it must have happened at some point.
63. There was no nurse within the school, but everybody was registered with a GP in Largs and the GP came out when needed. Some boys were taken to the GP when needed.
64. Occasionally someone was carted off to the hospital in Greenock to the Accident and Emergency unit. I can't remember what for, but I remember them coming back with a bandage or pills. I think someone was admitted once, but I can't remember what for.
65. I was an outpatient in Greenock because I had a verruca, which I got from the local swimming pool, but that was as far as it went. We were a remarkably bullet proof lot during my time there.

Chores

66. We mucked in to keep the recreational hall clean. We were also expected to keep our beds, lockers and area around us clean. We didn't mop floors or anything.
67. Frank cooked and cleaned his kitchen and Brother MFN helped. We may have been asked to wipe down tables occasionally but I don't remember.

Religious instruction

68. Religious instruction was part and parcel of schooling. We had a period of religious education.
69. We had prayers in the morning. We said grace before and after breakfast. Then we said prayer in class before starting the school day. There was also prayer said before lights out in the dormitory.
70. We walked to church on a Sunday, for about a mile and a half. It wasn't very far. It could be a pain if the weather was bad. When the weather was too bad, we would go to church in the minibus.
71. I remember we once listened to the news about the Aberfan disasters in the dining room in complete silence. After that, we said prayers for the kids and families who had been involved in that. It is an image that is very vivid in my mind and we all felt very together about that as a community.

Discipline

72. You were expected to behave a certain way. You weren't expected to thump each other, or be exceptionally noisy. You were supposed to be well behaved in class and the dining room. When you were off the premises, you were representing the school and yourself, and you didn't want to let yourself down.
73. I don't remember what would happen if you didn't behave. The way I saw it was that there were a set of rules and you stuck to them. I don't remember being out of line so discipline didn't really affect me. It may have been the case that you wouldn't be allowed on some trip, but I don't remember that happening.
74. The belt was used, but it was used everywhere in those days. It wasn't used in any exceptional fashion. I don't remember anybody getting belted.

75. I can't recollect anybody not having respect for Brother **MJD**. He was dignified, looked a bit austere but had a twinkle. He was the sort of chap you would go to if something wasn't right. He occasionally had to break bad news to people when they lost a relative, and he was quite good at it.
76. Brother Germanus was the sort of guy who would pick up and care for small birds and animals. He was a gentle person and I always had the feeling that I was secure. I cannot recall his being out of sorts with anyone.
77. I don't remember anybody trying to run away.
78. I never felt I had a problem with anything that might be considered abusive. It never happened to me and I didn't see or hear about anything happening to anybody. I am pretty sure my parents would have picked up on it if anything was wrong. If they had been unhappy about anything, I would have been out of there.

Leaving St Columba's

79. I had three very happy years in Largs. My cousin and I stayed there until we were eleven years old.
80. My parents asked me where I wanted to go after Largs. I had four choices, which were between the local academy at Paisley, two schools in Glasgow, and St Joseph's College in Dumfries.
81. **[REDACTED]** and I knew about St Joseph's College from having been at St Columba's because they were both run by Marist Brothers. We had enjoyed the boarding school experience, so we both decided to go to Dumfries.
82. **[REDACTED]** and I started at St Joseph's in the **[REDACTED]** of 1968. We went to visit the school before we started there.

St Joseph's College, Dumfries

83. There were divisions by age in school. There was the junior division, known as the 'wee rec' who were the first years, aged about eleven years old. That was the class I started in. Then the second years were the intermediate division who were called 'inters.' The middle division covered third and fourth year and were called 'mid rec', then there were the seniors.
84. When you came in the front gate, there was a large, red sandstone building at an angle, with a driveway in front of it. It was opposite the old Dumfries Royal Infirmary on Craigs Road.
85. When you went into the building, there was a big dining hall and the kitchen on the left hand side on the ground floor. On the right hand side, there were some smaller dining rooms, language and biology labs and the bursar's office.
86. Going up the main stairs, there were big ornate windows. On the next floor, there was the headmaster's office, and classrooms to the left and right. Above that, there was the middle rec's dormitory, shower rooms and toilets to the left. Brother **MY** was in charge of the middle recs and had his room near the dormitory. To the right on that floor, there was a curtained area for the senior middle recs, who were in fourth year. There was also alcoves with partitioned curtains so they had their own space. The sick bay was also on this floor.
87. On the top floor, there was the junior division dormitory, and Brother **MFU** room as he was in charge of the juniors. There was a combination of a dormitory and four bedrooms, each with two beds in them. On the other side, there was the inter division dormitory, and Brother **MLX** room as he was in charge of the inters. There were showers on that floor too. There was also a dormitory for the inter division in the concrete annex part of the building. That was the area of Brother **AK**, who was known as **AK** for some reason.

88. As you got older, you got out of the big dormitory into the smaller dormitory, and then eventually you got your own study. When you got to fifth year, you got a room with a curtain. When you got to the final year, you got a room with a door and then you had really arrived. You could keep your light on as late as you liked, as long as you didn't make a noise.
89. On the end of the main building, was a concrete annex built in the 1960s, which was where the assembly hall was. It had the biggest suspended balcony that any school had in the UK. Down the side of it were the labs, including physics, chemistry and geography. The art room and a glass fibre observatory were at the top.
90. Up behind the main building was a chapel and, opposite it, a small house for a priest who acted as our chaplain and had residence there. He was about forty years old and had [REDACTED]. He was a lovely bloke and died in his fifties.
91. Along from the chapel was a building that was known as the 'Big Mount' a big, red sandstone building. The senior division dormitories were at the top in there, and some of the Brothers' studies were also in there, on the lower floors. The junior school was on the ground floor of the Big Mount.
92. Up on the hill was the 'Wee Mount,' which was a low, white painted building that had been the original one on the site. That was where the brothers lived. The Big Mount and Wee Mount were joined by a little iron causeway.
93. There was also the old chapel, at the same level as the Wee Mount which was a corrugated iron structure, known as the 'middle rec hall.' It was used as a recreation room by the middle rec kids.
94. There were quite substantial playing fields way up the top of the hill. There was a full sized football pitch in the grounds of the school, as well as a slightly smaller one, and some tennis courts. There was a tarmac area near the big football pitch, known as the 'mid's yard' and it had a bike shed in it. it was on a slope and we could kick the ball about there.

95. There was also a concrete structure behind the big mount, which was the wee rec hall. It had table tennis tables and table football tables for when we weren't playing outside.
96. As you came out of the main school gate and turned right, there was an old house. It was called 'The Ranch' and was the senior rec leisure area, accessed only from inside the grounds, by walking along the path by the main football pitch/sports field and past the gymnasium. There were lounge chairs and a TV there and the sixth formers could lounge around. The Senior Division were responsible for running and maintaining the inside of this building. It had a basement that was painted in black and white stripes, and was known as 'The Tomb.' That was the one place that anyone was allowed to smoke.
97. There was a gymnasium and changing rooms, which was the domain of [REDACTED] our PE teacher and rugby coach.
98. There was a junior school there, but I think they were day pupils aged ten and eleven only. There were only two classes in the junior school, which were in the ground floor of the Big Mount.
99. The total school roll was only about 500 and of that, over 100 were day pupils.

Staff

100. Brother MYZ [REDACTED] was the SNR [REDACTED] and for some reason was known as MYZ [REDACTED] MYZ [REDACTED] He was also sometimes known as the MYZ [REDACTED], but I don't know why. He had the most peculiar accent. He was also the coach of the [REDACTED] club.
101. Brother MM [REDACTED] was my [REDACTED] teacher, who then became SNR [REDACTED] when MYZ [REDACTED] left.
102. Brother MFI [REDACTED] was my [REDACTED] teacher briefly. Brother [REDACTED] was also a [REDACTED] teacher, and was known as [REDACTED] Brother Francis was the biology master, known as 'Harry Weasel.' Brother Andrew also taught biology.

103. MLY? and Luigi Rinaldi were the teachers. The geography teacher was Brian A.D. McEwan and he made it fun. He had yellowy, blonde hair, a goatee beard, and always wore a tweed jacket. He never had a hair out of place.
104. Brother MFT taught Brother MLZ was the master, and Brother Kenelm
105. took and was known as He was quite a character and a enthusiast. He died quite young, but that was after I left the college.
106. Brother MFU didn't really teach. He did a bit of informal sports with the wee rec on a Wednesday afternoon.
107. Brother MLX taught but I can't remember what. He came to tell my cousin and I when our grandmother passed away. It was in March towards the end of my second year. He was hugely supportive. He sat us down, explained what had happened and that our parents were on their way. He then sat with us.
108. There was a matron in the school. She was fearsome and made you stay in bed when you were ill. I can't remember her name.

Daily Routine

109. We got up in the morning and got washed. There were rows of basins in the washroom, and rows of showers. They were open and communal, which was par for the course in those days.
110. There were prayers in the morning and prayers at night. You had the option of being woken in the morning to go to mass, because there was a chapel on the premises. If you wanted to be woken, you put your towel at the end of the bed, but there was no compulsion to go. Not very many people went in the morning because it was at 7 am.

111. I would often put my towel over my bed to be woken. Then Brother **MLX** would come and shake me in the morning to get up and sometimes I wouldn't get up. Then I would see him later and he would just give me a teasing look, but that was it.
112. We had morning assembly where announcements would be made. We were often involved in charitable things, locally and for international purposes, and we were encouraged to do that. We did raise money for different charitable events. During my time in St Joseph's, the Biafran War raged in Nigeria and we helped raise money to assist children affected by the fighting.
113. We would have classes during the day. We had sport on Wed and Sat afternoons, and we had classes on Saturday morning.
114. As we got older, we had more freedom to come and go out of the school building as long as we were back for a certain time.
115. We used to have prep at night, and we would do homework from 7 pm to 8 pm. Then you would have a cup of something, brush your teeth and go to bed.

Clothes and uniform

116. The uniform in school was a blazer over, for example, cords. When we went out, we wore flannel trousers and a shirt and tie under our blazer, or a kilt.
117. Clothes used to get sent to the local laundry. Your pyjamas would come back starched and with a crease. A lot of the kids didn't like that so many of us who could do so sent our laundry home, although this didn't work for those who lived along way away. The rugby and football kits were laundered by the school.

Schooling

118. Dumfries had a good academic reputation. They didn't have any modern technical subjects on site but they made arrangements if people wanted to do them, so if you

wanted to do something like tech drawing or engineering, you went to Dumfries Academy to do it. There weren't many people who did those, because most people who went there wanted to do the classic subjects like medicine, veterinary medicine, the sciences, law or art.

119. There were never more than 28 kids in a class. The teacher to pupil ratio was very good. The year was split into two or three streams in each year. It was pot luck in first year because they didn't know what your academic ability was, so you were in 1A or 1B. From second year, it was based on academic ability, and I was lucky to stay in the A streams all the way through.
120. I got Highers in Maths and Physics, and I wasn't that brilliant at them, but I needed them to get into medical school.
121. I can't remember the name of the French teacher, but he used to walk up and down the stage when we had exams, and speaking in French and doing the gestures. I don't know if the Scottish Certificate of Education people ever clocked that, but I think he helped quite a few of us during exams.
122. There were female teachers at St Joseph's for years, but not female pupils. During my time there, the school introduced girls into the upper couple of years.
123. There was a Brother Andrew who was a Biafran from Nigeria. The province shipped him out to keep him alive. He was a refugee, and he came to Dumfries as a biology teacher.

Sport and leisure time

124. We had our rec halls for leisure time. There were also great, tall cupboards with books. We were also encouraged to use the local library. We were escorted there in first year, but could go on our own as we got older.

125. Once we became Seniors, we could go out to the bakers, to the shops and had a bit more freedom, as long as we were back for a certain time.
126. We used the swimming pool by the river a lot.
127. We were divided into four houses for sports. They were St Andrew's, who wore dark blue, St Ninian's, which was what I was in and we wore pale blue, St George who were red and St Patrick who were green.
128. There was a lot of sport. I didn't like football, then I discovered rugby which I enjoyed. Our reputation in rugby in south of Scotland was extremely high and we routinely did well. I only got as far as the Third XV because I wasn't a great player and I then got injured in a collapsing scrum. I used to run the line for the First XV.
129. On one occasion in Glasgow, I was on the line with my flag. There was a ruck, and our scrum half wanted to see where the ball was going to go. What came out of the scrum wasn't the ball, but a boot and it caught this guy called [REDACTED] in the crotch, and it lifted him off the ground. As he toppled off [REDACTED] came pounding along and said "don't rub them, count them!" Gone are the days when men were men and pansies grew in flowerbeds.
130. [REDACTED] went on to qualify in medicine and have a family so all was well.
131. I spent a night in the Dumfries Royal after being injured during rugby. Then I was shipped back to matron at St Joseph's. I couldn't wait to get out of her clutches because she wouldn't let me get out of bed. She was a little woman, and very argumentative.
132. I discovered rowing soon after and moved on to that and away from rugby, and that was better.
133. I remember the middle rec hall because we watched television there. I remember the whole school being in there in 1969 to watch Neil Armstrong land on the moon. There

were about 350 of us crammed into this room to watch it. Someone had rigged up a speaker so we could all hear it. It was all crackly and hissy. I will never forget that.

134. We had two school trips to Spain with Brother MFT. They were great trips. We lived in a hostel type place just outside San Sebastian the first time, then we went to Tarragona.
135. We had Whit Sports in the middle of the summer term. We would have a sports day and perform whatever play we had been working on. We did Gilbert and Sullivan's "Ruddigore", their "Pirates of Penzance" and a musical play called "1066 and All That". Lots of parents would come to stay in Dumfries for three days, in hotels and Bed and Breakfasts.
136. There was a [REDACTED] taught by Brother MLZ. We were good and were recorded by the BBC several times, [REDACTED] in our own chapel.

Trips, visits and inspections

137. The distance was further away now so [REDACTED] and I only got visits every fortnight. My aunt and uncle and my parents took it in turns, which meant that I was only seeing my own parents once a month. My gran would also come. The kids whose parents didn't live so far away would still get weekly visits.
138. There were some boys who boarded Monday to Friday and went home at weekends. They lived too far to do a daily commute but close enough to go home at weekends. There was quite a mix.
139. We had telephone booths with quiet boxes that we could use to call home. I got bullied a little bit for being a bit tubby when I was in second year, and that led to me being a bit homesick. I would phone home when I felt like that and my mum would say that they were coming to get me, but I would refuse.

140. A Brother Arthur visited from the provincial office. He was known as 'Big Hearted Arthur' because he would talk for a long time and then say that those words came from the bottom of his heart. He was a decent chap and had a heart of gold.
141. People from the local authority would turn up. We would just be in class, and someone would walk in and we would be told whoever it was and that was it. They did speak to us but I can't really remember it.

Christmas and birthdays

142. I went home for Christmas. On birthdays, you got your cards and letters sent to the school. If your family had sent you something, then you would get that. An event wasn't made out of it because we were roughly toughy secondary kids now.

Discipline

143. Lines were used as a form of discipline. You would get lines to do if you failed to do your school work to an accepted standard.
144. If something was really serious, then you were hauled in to see the SNR and you would often get a lecture. If you were in deep trouble then occasionally the belt would be used, which was a tawse. MYZ was more likely to give you a lecture, which gave you food for thought, than use the belt.
145. You would get the belt for helping yourself to someone else's property. It was understood that if you made that kind of mistake again then you would be packing your trunk to leave. I don't remember anybody being made to leave. People generally learned the lesson.
146. We used to sit at tables of six for lunch. One of the boys turned up late once, and we thought he wasn't coming, so we ate his chips. He then arrived and complained. Brother MFU who was in charge of the dining room, investigated, and decided

that we were a bad lot. We all got one of the belt, and then he also gave one to the boy for being late and for clipping.

147. Any of the staff could give you the belt. I must have got the belt more than once but I don't really remember. If it happened to me more than once then it was part of the disciplinary code that I lived with, and I didn't have a problem with it.
148. You would also get the belt for gross insubordination or being rude to a staff member. If someone physically beat another boy, then they would be in trouble. You could get the belt in class in front of other people. I saw other boys getting the belt. I don't really remember names. I don't think that any of the boys really took it to heart.
149. There were one or two lads who got a bit big for their boots as they got older. They were brought down a peg or two by the management.
150. As you got older, you were encouraged to keep an eye out for the younger ones.
151. I was not aware of any abuse during my time at St Joseph's College.
152. Other than being a bit homesick in second year, I had a great time at St Joseph's. I remember the fun aspects more than sitting exams.

Life after school

153. A lot of my year went on to do medicine. It was an academic school and we did well.
154. I did medicine at university, and I joined the Naval Reserve as a student and remained in uniform, serving in the UK and Europe, the Middle and Far East and the Mediterranean, until retirement in 2015, although I returned after a three month gap to facilitate a colleague's completion of training before finally retiring in 2016

155. There is no shadow of doubt in my mind that I am more successful in my career because of the schooling I had, than if I had gone to a local school.
156. I am married and have two children.

Final thoughts

157. To quote Shakespeare: "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones." I'd rather it wasn't like that. I want to give a voice to those who don't have one.
158. There was huge humanity on display every day of the week, in both schools I went to. People are human and everybody makes mistakes. They are still members of the human race.
159. No doubt there will be people out there who will say I was a fantasist, but, frankly, I think people will have memories that assume greater significance to them than was perhaps the case. Doing the job I did, it is very easy to see people construct a solid edifice out of something completely gaseous.
160. 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, although I would point out that, 40 to 50 years down the line, memory can play false.

MMB

Signed.

Dated.

5 March 2019