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Friday, 8 October 2021

(10.00 am)

(Proceedings delayed)

(10.07 am)

Introduction

LADY SMITH: Good morning and welcome. Can you hear me?

(Pause).

Can everybody hear me now? Thank you.

Good morning and welcome not only to the next section of our case study looking into boarding school provision of care for children but also to our new premises here in Mint House.

I apologise for the slight delay to the resumption of hearings but it was unavoidable and was due to the requirements of the last items of snagging work impacting on our final preparations.

To start today, I've got two names for you. The first is Roseberry Topping, the second is William Hamilton Beattie.

Roseberry Topping is the name of a steep and bleak hill in North Yorkshire from which the first Earl of Rosebery took his title in 1703. That was because it was close to his wife's estates and it's apparently a tough climb.

We climbed our own Roseberry hill in the Haymarket

1 premises as we grew and moved through the building,  
2 taking on more space until, as some of you will  
3 remember, we occupied parts of four of its floors. The  
4 words tough and bleak could be appropriately applied to  
5 some of our experiences of a 1970s building that was in  
6 many ways no longer fit for purpose, although we did our  
7 best to make it work, particularly for those attending  
8 Inquiry hearings.

9 It was, though, not altogether surprising to find  
10 in June last year that its owners had decided the way  
11 forward was demolition.

12 So what about William Hamilton Beattie? Well, he  
13 knew the Haymarket area. Born in Edinburgh in 1842. As  
14 an adult his offices were in Grove Street and he lived  
15 in Douglas Crescent.

16 William Beattie was an architect. He trained under  
17 David Bryce, who designed one of the buildings in this  
18 case study, Fettes College, and his most famous works  
19 include the Jenners building, the North British Hotel,  
20 now known as the Balmoral, and the Carlton Hotel.

21 But one of his earliest works in 1864 has been  
22 referred to as a hidden gem, and an unbelievably ornate  
23 Venetian Gothic printworks and warehouse, strangely  
24 ornate both for its use and its location. You're  
25 sitting in that hidden gem. It was built for the Cowan

1        brothers, a business founded by a man called  
2        Alexander Cowan. The Cowan brothers owned paper mills  
3        on the North Esk River. They manufactured paper. They  
4        had a paper shop in Princes Street and, importantly for  
5        our interest, their paper was of such high quality that  
6        they secured a contract from the Royal Bank of Scotland  
7        to manufacture bank notes, hence this building, where  
8        the Cowans stored paper and printed money.

9        Whilst initially it was simply called Cowan's Paper  
10       Warehouse or the Royal Bank Stationery Warehouse, it  
11       became known as the Mint Building or Mint House.

12       I suspect that neither William Beattie nor Alexander  
13       Cowan ever foresaw the use to which this building is now  
14       being put, but I think that Alexander Cowan in  
15       particular would have approved. He was a well-known  
16       philanthropist, who, for instance, was so moved by what  
17       he saw of the dire poverty of families living in the  
18       Royal Mile, where their broken windows were stuffed with  
19       rags in a pathetic effort to keep out the cold, that he  
20       paid for every single window there to be reglazed.

21       Also, he would sit with the cholera victims in the  
22       Canongate helping to comfort them.

23       The abuse of children in care would, I believe, have  
24       troubled him greatly. He would have wanted to do  
25       something about it.

1           Turning to our journey out of Rosebery House and  
2           into Mint House, to say that the move from one to the  
3           other involved a phenomenal amount of hard work is  
4           an understatement, it simply wouldn't have happened  
5           without the consistent, determined and willing efforts  
6           of so many members of the Inquiry team whose  
7           contributions have gone far above and beyond the call of  
8           duty.

9           I want today to pay tribute to them and record my  
10          enormous gratitude.

11          I hope that you have all been able to find your way  
12          around the new hearing suite without difficulty but  
13          please don't hesitate to speak to a member of the  
14          Inquiry team if you have any queries or concerns. You  
15          may also find it helpful to consult our new  
16          familiarisation video and it should be available on the  
17          website some time next week.

18          A word about COVID precautions. Please would you  
19          follow advice and guidance that's printed on the signs.  
20          So far as masks are concerned, I would ask you to wear  
21          them when you're moving around. You don't have to wear  
22          them when you're sitting down. It's a matter for you.  
23          If you're more comfortable keeping your mask on when  
24          you're seated, please feel free to do so and don't feel  
25          under pressure because other people take them off, but



1 if you're more comfortable with your mask off when  
2 you're sitting down, we have taken care to measure the  
3 spacing of seats and you should feel welcome to do so.

4 We've also provided hand sanitiser and wipes at  
5 a number of points. They should be obvious, but if you  
6 can't find them, don't hesitate to ask or if you think  
7 they're running out, please let us know.

8 So far as future planning is concerned, let me turn  
9 to what's planned between now and the Christmas/New Year  
10 break. As you all know, today we begin the evidence in  
11 relation to Gordonstoun School. After that, we will  
12 move on to Queen Victoria School, then to Keil School  
13 and then to Fettes College.

14 In January next year we'll move on to Merchiston and  
15 thereafter to closing submissions in relation to the  
16 entire case study, all with a view to finishing the  
17 boarding school case study by, I hope, late February.

18 After that, as part of our work in relation to  
19 preventing the abuse of children in care, evidence in  
20 which the psychology of those who commit such abuse will  
21 be explored with some expert witnesses and they will  
22 give their evidence together in a group, probably over  
23 about two days.

24 Then we plan to commence the hearings in our case  
25 study looking into the provision of foster care in

1           Scotland, and that will be in late spring next year.

2           Now, foster care will be a substantial case study and  
3           it's likely to run for some months.

4           So let me now turn to today and next week. Today we  
5           have three witnesses. One of them will be giving  
6           evidence by videolink this afternoon, but two of them  
7           will be giving evidence in person this morning.

8           Thereafter, although we plan to continue with our  
9           norm of sitting from Tuesday to Friday each week, next  
10          week we'll also be sitting on Monday morning, and that's  
11          with a view to beginning to catch up with the evidence  
12          that we would otherwise have heard earlier this week.

13          That's enough from me for the moment. I'm now going  
14          to turn to Mr Brown and invite him to tell me what's  
15          happening next.

16          Mr Brown.

17       MR BROWN: My Lady, good morning. I think you've summed up  
18          all that I could probably say about the plan. The first  
19          live witness is 'Sarah'.

20       LADY SMITH: Thank you.

21                       'Sarah' (sworn)

22       LADY SMITH: While your glasses are being retrieved, let me  
23          just reassure you that you've got your statement both in  
24          that red folder and on the screen in front of you if you  
25          want to see them. Mr Brown no doubt will refer you to

1           such parts as he wants to look at.

2       A.   Thank you.

3       LADY SMITH:   Otherwise, any questions or concerns, please

4           don't hesitate to ask.   If you want a break at any time,

5           if it works for you, it works for me.

6       A.   Okay, thank you.

7       LADY SMITH:   And when your glasses arrive, I'll hand over to

8           Mr Brown and he'll take it from there if you're ready to

9           start your evidence.

10      A.   Yes.   I'll need my glasses, I can't read that.   Sorry.

11      LADY SMITH:   You have my sympathy, don't worry.   That's them

12           coming now.

13      A.   Thank you.

14      LADY SMITH:   All right.   Are you okay if I hand over to

15           Mr Brown now?   Very well.   Mr Brown.

16                               Questions by MR BROWN

17      MR BROWN:   My Lady, thank you.

18           'Sarah', good morning.   You've been referred to the

19           statement in the folder in front of you and on the

20           screen in front of you.

21      A.   I can't see that at the moment on the screen but I've

22           got it on the folder.

23      Q.   That's fine.   I may refer you to parts of it -- it's

24           also behind you, but I don't imagine you need to see

25           that.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. You obviously were involved in a lengthy process in  
3 preparing this statement and we see it's been typed up  
4 and if you look to the end of the document, which is  
5 page 35, we can see that they're all numbered paragraphs  
6 and the last one, paragraph 151, ends:  
7 "I have no objection to my witness statement being  
8 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.  
9 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are  
10 true."  
11 And then under that you've signed it and dated it.  
12 Is that correct?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And should we understand that obviously in terms of the  
15 preparation of this statement, you saw a draft, you were  
16 allowed to comment on it and before you signed it you  
17 read this statement?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. And it's true and accurate?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Thank you. You'll be pleased to know we don't need to  
22 go through the statement but I just would like to touch  
23 upon a number of issues that you raise in it because its  
24 contents are in evidence.

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. All right? Obviously our interest today focuses on  
2 Gordonstoun School and also, by association, your  
3 experience at Aberlour, which was the prep school; is  
4 that correct?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Can I just be clear, what was your understanding of the  
7 relationship between Aberlour and Gordonstoun?

8 A. Well, Aberlour was the official prep school for  
9 Gordonstoun.

10 Q. Yes?

11 A. And most children who attended Aberlour House would go  
12 on to Gordonstoun but not all of them. So you didn't  
13 have to, but it was generally that's what happened.

14 Q. Yes. It was the norm just to progress on?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And was Gordonstoun from your perspective felt to be the  
17 same of claim as Aberlour or were they distinct as far  
18 as you would understand it?

19 A. What do you mean by the same?

20 Q. Well, part of the same organisation or were they  
21 separate bodies if I can put it that way?

22 A. Okay, they were, from my understanding, part of the same  
23 organisation.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And both built on the same principles and I don't know

1           which came first but I imagine Gordonstoun and then

2           Aberlour followed on from there.

3       Q.   You've mentioned principles and obviously we've heard  
4           already about Kurt Hahn, who founded Gordonstoun, and is  
5           it those principles that you're talking about as being  
6           the same as between the two schools?

7       A.   Yes, yes.

8       Q.   All right. And again from your perspective, what would  
9           you understand Kurt Hahn's principle to be? You lived  
10          it.

11      A.   I think there was a mixture of things like teamwork,  
12          being able to work as a team, look out for each other,  
13          build friendships and -- but there was a lot of outdoor  
14          activity, so a lot of emphasis was put on the physical  
15          aspect of life, sport, expeditions, all that kind of  
16          thing.

17      Q.   We would understand that you started at Aberlour I think  
18          in the early 1980s, early to mid 1980s, and that from  
19          your statement is in part because your dad was in the  
20          Royal Air Force and presumably he moved about to some  
21          degree, but also the Air Force funded education for its  
22          servicemen?

23      A.   Yes. So there were grants awarded to children who --  
24          whose parents were in the Forces. I don't think you'd  
25          call it a grant, but certainly you are correct, they

1           paid a certain amount towards the school fees. But that  
2           was whether the Forces' parent moved around or not.

3       Q.   Okay.

4       A.   And actually my father, he spent most of the time in  
5           Scotland and when I was at school he was stationed in  
6           Scotland. There were two or three years where he was  
7           stationed near London, but then he came back to  
8           Scotland. So -- but yes, you are right, the Forces do  
9           pay towards the fees.

10      Q.   Right. But I think, as we see from your statement, you  
11           spent the first few years of primary school just in  
12           a local school but then, aged 9, you went to Aberlour?

13      A.   Yes.

14      Q.   Do you remember, were you involved in the discussion  
15           about going to Aberlour or was that something that was  
16           just decided for you?

17      A.   I remember being involved in the discussion. There was  
18           an idea at one point that I would either potentially go  
19           there or maybe to a dance school because I was a good  
20           dancer as a child, and I can't really remember if I had  
21           sort of a final say, but I was definitely involved.

22      Q.   Were you excited at the prospect?

23      A.   Yes, I did, I looked forward to it.

24      Q.   I think we see at paragraph 6 of your statement on  
25           page 2 you describe the school as a big beautiful stone

1           house in a remote setting in a tiny village.

2       A. Right.

3       Q. We can look at a photograph of Aberlour House with

4           document GOR-000004475 which should appear on the screen

5           in front of you.

6           Hopefully it will rotate and we can see it rather

7           better.

8           That's Aberlour?

9       A. (Witness nods).

10      Q. I think if we move to the left of the screen, you can

11          see a floor plan.

12          We can take it off the screen. Can you take it off

13          the screen, please.

14      A. It's fine.

15      Q. Okay. What we see from that, it's a country house,

16          effectively.

17      A. Yeah.

18      Q. I think as you set out, you lived in the main building

19          but the educational part of it was in the outhouses, if

20          I can put it that way.

21      A. Yes.

22      Q. It was fairly haphazard, making do with what they had?

23      A. Yes, definitely.

24      Q. Okay. And in relation to the boarding experience

25          obviously, it would be divided as between boys and girls



1           because it was mixed?

2       A.   Yes.

3       Q.   Did you know anyone who was at Aberlour or who was going

4           to Aberlour with you?

5       A.   No.

6       Q.   But your excitement obviously going somewhere new, had

7           you ever been in a house like that before?

8       A.   No. I think I was, you know, a mixture of excited and

9           scared at the same time.

10      Q.   Yes.

11      A.   Definitely.

12      Q.   I appreciate, and as you say in your statement, because

13           of other events your memories really aren't very good of

14           some of the detail and I don't -- this is not a memory

15           test.

16      A.   No. Good.

17      Q.   Please be assured of that.

18      A.   Yes.

19      Q.   One general question, though. As you said, your dad was

20           based locally for much of the time in Morayshire. Did

21           the fact that you were perceived as local have any

22           impact so far as you were concerned?

23      A.   Yes. I was teased and bullied at Aberlour for being

24           local, which sounds really bizarre in a school in

25           Scotland, but I at that time did have a Scottish accent,

1           which wasn't particularly common within the school, and  
2           I think my -- maybe that the social standing of my  
3           family was also not the norm either.

4       Q.   So you were somehow different?

5       A.   Yeah.  Not so well off.  I think those of us, the few of  
6           us who were, you know, military children and therefore  
7           only really there because the military was partly  
8           funding it, we were different.

9       Q.   And was that consistent through your time at Aberlour?  
10           Or was it just something that happened at the outset but  
11           then calmed down?

12      A.   No, it was consistent.

13      Q.   All right.  Again, it's a very broad question but there  
14           were a number of, you say, military children, who would  
15           presumably be fairly obvious to the rest.  Where were  
16           the rest of the children coming from if they weren't  
17           local, plainly?

18      A.   All over the world, actually.

19      Q.   Yeah.

20      A.   And the UK, yeah.

21      Q.   So it was a very broad mix of --

22      A.   Very broad.

23      Q.   Thank you.  But again just in a broad sense, you've told  
24           us you were excited at going there.  Thinking back  
25           perhaps to the first couple of years, overall would you

1           say you enjoyed it?

2       A. I don't know if enjoy is the right word. I think  
3       overall, I think I would have to probably  
4       compartmentalise enjoying some aspects of it and not  
5       others, really.

6       Q. You talk, for example, and you've mentioned this in  
7       terms of Kurt Hahn, there was an outdoor emphasis, so  
8       there would be expeditions, a great deal of sport.

9       A. Yes.

10      Q. Was that something that initially you enjoyed?

11      A. Yes, definitely.

12      Q. And you talked about team building. Did that happen in  
13      practice? Did you feel part of a team?

14      A. I think so, yes. I think -- you know, I think that was  
15      done well, actually.

16      Q. And I think, as you've said throughout the statement, it  
17      might be described as a spartan experience, with windows  
18      open?

19      A. Yes.

20      Q. Pretty cold?

21      A. Yes. Really cold. Yes, when -- you know, looking back  
22      as an adult, you think crikey. You know, to have  
23      children living in that kind of environment, you know,  
24      obviously the idea was that it was for their good and to  
25      character build, but it was really quite harsh actually.

1 Q. When you arrived, was it explained to you how the school  
2 operated, in other words what the rules were?  
3 A. I don't remember actually.  
4 Q. Okay.  
5 A. I'm sure there must have been something, but --  
6 Q. You don't recall?  
7 A. -- I don't remember.  
8 Q. All right. But I think in terms of the order of things,  
9 you talk about a great amount of detail of the  
10 day-to-day existence.  
11 A. Yes.  
12 Q. The food from your perspective was okay?  
13 A. Mm-hmm.  
14 Q. But people had to eat what they were given up to  
15 a certain point. I think if we see at paragraph 25 on  
16 page 6 you say you had to eat food and if you didn't eat  
17 a certain amount, you would get in trouble.  
18 A. Yes.  
19 Q. You didn't have a problem with that, but you remember  
20 sitting with younger children with a plate of food in  
21 front of them and tears streaming down their faces?  
22 A. Yes.  
23 Q. And they would be made to sit there until they ate it?  
24 A. Yes.  
25 Q. Was that approach one that was consistent throughout

1           your time at Aberlour?

2       A. Yes.

3       Q. Was there any explanation of why that approach was

4           taken?

5       A. Not that I remember officially, but I think, you know,

6           basically -- I can see to a degree why that was taken.

7           You know, you don't want to end up with a child on your

8           hands that's underfed, I suppose, but, yeah, you had to

9           eat.

10      Q. And if a child was in tears, was there any response from

11          supervising staff? Other than to enforce what seems to

12          be a rule that you ate so much?

13      A. Yeah, just that, really.

14      Q. Okay. In terms of the staffing, obviously in terms of

15          cooking there would be kitchen staff.

16      A. Mm.

17      Q. But moving on to teaching staff, and this is a theme

18          we'll come back to when we look at Gordonstoun, from

19          your perspective, I think would it be fair to say that

20          some teachers you thought very good but some were less

21          so?

22      A. Yes.

23      Q. And I think at paragraph 30 on page 7 you talk in

24          positive terms about two teachers, Mr Hanson and

25          Mr Gardner?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And both, I think reading it short, were good teachers  
3 but pastorally, to use the word you've chosen, were good  
4 people?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. So it turned on them being good people?

7 A. That's my experience of those two people.

8 Q. It was simply their character?

9 A. Yes. You felt that they cared genuinely.

10 Q. And you say at the foot of that paragraph:  
11 "They were teachers who were easy to talk to. If  
12 there were issues between children such as bullying,  
13 those teachers would be good at mediation between  
14 children."

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Again, if you can remember, is that something that they  
17 would positively look out for to mediate about or were  
18 they teachers that pupils felt they could just go and  
19 talk to?

20 A. I can't think of anything specifically, but I think  
21 both.

22 Q. And I think, looking down to the next paragraph, 31, you  
23 say you "remember Mr Hanson and Mr Gardner being  
24 supportive and kind at a time when I was finding life  
25 difficult."

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Would you feel confident in going to them?

3 A. Yes, definitely.

4 Q. But that was your assessment because you could see them  
5 operate, rather than them being appointed pastoral  
6 teachers?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. All right. Was there ever at Aberlour any pastoral  
9 supervision, perhaps in a way that you would understand  
10 now with your own family?

11 A. Not that I particularly remember.

12 Q. Okay. There were no guidance teachers, for example,  
13 or --

14 A. Again, I don't -- not that I remember.

15 Q. Fair enough. But you go on in that paragraph to say:  
16 "Not every teacher would be good at doing that and  
17 I don't imagine any of them had any training in that  
18 whatsoever."

19 That's your perception?

20 A. That's -- exactly, mm.

21 Q. And then you add:  
22 "They would be teaching their subject that they may  
23 or may not have had a degree in. I can't remember  
24 anyone being presented to us as the adult we would go to  
25 with personal issues."

1 A. Mm.

2 Q. You make a point about appointment of teachers and your  
3 perception, and I think this is both at Aberlour and  
4 Gordonstoun, the appointment could, in some cases at  
5 least, be linked with knowing the headmaster?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. I think you say that that was the subject of discussion  
8 amongst the pupils?

9 A. Yes. I -- it was discussed amongst pupils but then also  
10 I think a lot of -- a lot of the families knew -- a lot  
11 of people knew each other. There was a lot of community  
12 connections, I suppose, between teachers and families as  
13 well.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And there -- you know, it was very openly known that,  
16 you know, teachers were friends of the headmaster or,  
17 you know, got their job through knowing the headmaster  
18 rather than necessarily applying through the normal  
19 channels.

20 Q. So from what you understand even then, it was fairly  
21 ad hoc and there was a lot of appointment by connection?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Irrespective of experience, perhaps?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Do you know that, there were people appointed who had



1           little, if any, experience in what they were teaching?

2       A.   Yes.   There was an A-level English teacher who I had in

3           my final year, one of two English teachers I had for

4           A-level, and he was a retired policeman, he'd recently

5           retired from the police force and was a friend of the

6           headmaster's and came in, you know, as an A-level

7           English teacher.

8       Q.   Obviously, since we're talking A-levels, this is

9           Gordonstoun?

10      A.   Yes.   Yes, sorry.

11      Q.   No, no, not at all.

12      LADY SMITH:  'Sarah', can we just confirm, I think you must

13           have been about 9 years old when you went to Aberlour,

14           would that be right?

15      A.   Yes.

16      LADY SMITH:  And then did you go to Gordonstoun at the usual

17           transfer age of 13?

18      A.   Yes, I was 13.  I was due to go the year before because

19           I'd been moved up a year at Aberlour, so I had to repeat

20           the last year, so I was 13 when I went.

21      LADY SMITH:  So about four academic years at Aberlour, was

22           it?

23      A.   Yes.

24      LADY SMITH:  Total.  And then the senior school years at

25           Gordonstoun?

1 A. Yes.

2 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

3 MR BROWN: Thank you, my Lady.

4 We'll come back to teachers and ad hoc teaching in  
5 a moment, if we may, but just one final practical issue  
6 and that's in relation to discipline of children at  
7 Aberlour. We would understand that punishment in  
8 perhaps the classic sense of beating children going back  
9 perhaps the 1980s and before was not prevalent in  
10 Kurt Hahn's outlook on education? Punishment, physical  
11 punishment wasn't something that you had experience of  
12 at Aberlour?

13 A. Not personally, no. So I -- I can't say whether or not  
14 it happened to anybody else.

15 Q. I think we see at paragraph 45 on page 10 --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- there was detention and removal of privileges.

18 A. Mm.

19 Q. " ... there may have been some form of physical  
20 punishment that I didn't experience as I was well  
21 behaved. I do have a memory of a few naughty kids who  
22 were sent to see the headmaster. It's not a clear  
23 memory. I don't know if they were spanked. I didn't  
24 see it happening."

25 A. Mm.

1 Q. And you think there's a distinction as between boys and  
2 girls, it certainly wouldn't happen to girls?

3 A. Mm.

4 Q. All right. Again, if you simply can't remember please  
5 say so, was there a set of rules about behaviour and  
6 what was expected?

7 A. I think there were -- yes, there were certain rules but  
8 I couldn't tell you what exactly. But probably just  
9 I -- I imagine being in the right place at the right  
10 time, on time, being kind to each other, that kind of  
11 thing.

12 Q. All right.

13 A. Fairly basic.

14 Q. But you go on to say at the top of the next page, second  
15 line down:

16 "Given the culture we were in where you didn't show  
17 weakness or talk about feelings, if there were any kids  
18 who had been hit or beaten they wouldn't have talked  
19 about it."

20 A. That's right.

21 Q. And just to focus on the culture, was that culture  
22 something that was just understood by the pupils who  
23 were there or was that something that was pushed by the  
24 school?

25 A. No, that was just the way it was. It was just

1       understood and obviously from my perspective coming  
2       into -- obviously coming into an established school with  
3       an established pupil body, then you learned to -- you  
4       learned what the culture is and you learned to fit in.

5       Q. You pick it up and you go along with it?

6       A. Yes.

7       Q. Okay. I think you talk about there being a hierarchical  
8       system within the school which again might be seen to  
9       mirror Gordonstoun, there were Colour Bearers who might  
10      be seen as prefects?

11      A. Yes.

12      Q. So senior pupils had some degree of authority over  
13      junior pupils?

14      A. Yes.

15      Q. But, as you say at paragraph 49, there were no powers to  
16      punish other pupils?

17      A. That's right.

18      Q. And you say:

19                "There would be a colour bearer meeting with the  
20               staff every week and you'd bring issues to the meeting."  
21               Do you remember those meetings?

22      A. I have a couple of memories of them yes.

23      Q. Were they serious meetings in the sense that the staff  
24      were interested to know what was going on, were you  
25      interested to share what you knew or were they rather

1           more formal?

2       A. I think they were fairly -- fairly informal, but formal

3           in the sense of someone would take minutes. And, you

4           know, you would each have an opportunity to talk about

5           any issues you felt needed raising.

6       Q. Thank you. Were you aware of bullying at the school?

7       A. Yes.

8       Q. What do you remember?

9       A. I mean, personally, you know, I was bullied a fair bit.

10      Q. Is that over and above because of being local?

11      A. It was just a mixture of things, really. When you're

12           new into a situation, you don't come from the same kind

13           of background as everybody else. I did well in school,

14           so, you know, sometimes that caused me problems as well.

15           And, you know, I -- I would say you always have

16           an awareness of there being bullying between other

17           children but I couldn't give you a specific example

18           particularly.

19      Q. All right. Understanding that broad remembrance, do you

20           remember if the school was alive to bullying and took

21           any action?

22      A. I think they did on occasion, yes. I do -- I do believe

23           so. Again, I couldn't give you a specific -- specific

24           example.

25      Q. Okay. Again we talked about the outdoor side of things

1           and you mentioned expeditions. Would there be  
2           expeditions ongoing throughout the year or were there  
3           particular times when the expeditions took place?  
4       A. Mainly in the summer when the weather was good, but I do  
5           have memories of being out on top of a mountain in  
6           absolutely horrendous weather, so I'm guessing there  
7           were expeditions at other times of year -- but then that  
8           could have been the Scottish summer, so I don't know --  
9       LADY SMITH: Well, I was about to say, it could be  
10          a midsummer's day in Scotland.  
11       A. It was hailing but -- yes, I think generally through the  
12          warmer months, for whatever, you know, those are up  
13          here.  
14       MR BROWN: And I think you went on an expedition with one of  
15          the teachers you speak highly of, Mr Hanson?  
16       A. Yes.  
17       Q. How many pupils would go on these expeditions? I'm sure  
18          it wasn't an exact number, the same number every time  
19          but just roughly?  
20       A. I'd say between 10 and 15.  
21       Q. And in terms of staff supervision, for example  
22          Mr Hanson's expedition, was it just him or whether there  
23          others?  
24       A. Just him.  
25       Q. And that was the norm?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And was that simply because the number of staff was  
3 limited?

4 A. I guess so. Or maybe they just didn't want to -- yeah,  
5 they maybe didn't want to take all the members of staff  
6 out of school. Because the bigger expeditions like  
7 Mr Hanson's expedition you did in the senior years.

8 Q. Right.

9 A. And I -- because I'd been moved up a year, I did  
10 actually do three senior expeditions. You normally only  
11 do two in the last two senior years, but I did three.  
12 So, yes, I think just that, just like you say, maybe not  
13 enough staff to put -- but again in those days people  
14 didn't think in those terms, you know, of ratios of  
15 staff to children.

16 Q. No. And did you have concerns, thinking back to  
17 Mr Hanson's expedition, there's something wrong about  
18 this or did you think --

19 A. No.

20 Q. -- that's just the way it is?

21 A. It was normal.

22 Q. It was normal?

23 A. Mm.

24 Q. Because obviously, and I'm not going to go into great  
25 detail because you've set it all out in detail from

1 page 12 onwards, of your experience, would it be your  
2 last expedition --  
3 A. Mm-hmm.  
4 Q. -- at Aberlour?  
5 A. Yes.  
6 Q. I said I would come back to teaching before we talk very  
7 briefly about the experiences on that last expedition.  
8 One of the obvious details is that the person who took  
9 that last expedition was a young man in his late teens.  
10 A. (Witness nods).  
11 Q. Who had joined the school, as you would understand it,  
12 because of connections with the school?  
13 A. Yes. Again, friend of the headmaster's family.  
14 Q. All right. So we should understand that was this  
15 someone who was coming as a student exchange or  
16 an assistant teacher? Can you remember what his title  
17 was?  
18 A. We understood that he was brought into the school from  
19 abroad because he was a very good [REDACTED]  
20 Q. All right. And that seemed to be a sufficient basis for  
21 him to join the school, presumably with no  
22 qualifications?  
23 A. That's right.  
24 Q. And someone who presumably, given the age we've agreed  
25 on, was not long out of school himself?



1 A. Right, so he was 19 or 20.

2 Q. Yes. But notwithstanding that, and the detail doesn't  
3 matter, we would understand as well as sport he was also  
4 used as teacher, notwithstanding his youth and lack of  
5 experience?

6 A. Yes. [REDACTED] we were taught -- I certainly  
7 was taught [REDACTED] by him.

8 Q. All right. Now, he was involved in your last expedition  
9 and I think, given his youth, you've described the  
10 perception of presumably you and your friends that he  
11 was cool because he was young and trendy rather than  
12 presumably a middle aged man.

13 A. Mm, yes.

14 Q. And there was excitement and presumably people wanted to  
15 go on that --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- trip into the Highlands?

18 A. Mm.

19 Q. But I think, as you indicate, it was discovered, once  
20 you'd got into the country and parked the school minibus  
21 by a loch, that there was one tent missing?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And the result of that was that people would have to  
24 share his tent?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Thinking back to previous expeditions, had that ever  
2 happened before?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Was there a clear delineation between teachers and  
5 pupils?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Do you remember at the time, or thinking back now, was  
8 there surprise that you were a tent short?

9 A. Yes. Yeah, generally. I think none of us had been in  
10 that situation before because the other teachers always  
11 kept themselves very privately.

12 Q. But was the young man in any way troubled by the absence  
13 of a tent?

14 A. No.

15 Q. And I think as you set out that it was agreed that  
16 pupils would sleep with him in his tent every night and  
17 you would rotate?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Was there any concern about that?

20 A. I don't really remember. I think maybe we all thought  
21 it was odd or just -- yeah, a bit weird.

22 Q. Were you worried at that stage?

23 A. No.

24 Q. No.

25 A. Not particularly.

1 Q. Thinking back, do you have any views on why you were  
2 a tent down?  
3 A. I think he potentially did it deliberately.  
4 Q. Yes. Because, again, without going into the details of  
5 what happened, one of the things you tell us that he  
6 clearly deliberately did was to bring condoms with him?  
7 A. Mm, exactly.  
8 Q. On a camping trip with children?  
9 A. Yes.  
10 Q. And just to be clear, there's a dozen or perhaps 15  
11 children with him on this expedition?  
12 A. (Witness nods).  
13 Q. Senior pupils?  
14 A. Yes.  
15 Q. I think you would be 13?  
16 A. Yes.  
17 Q. So you would all be of that sort of age?  
18 A. Yes.  
19 Q. And on that first night, you and two other girls shared  
20 a tent with him?  
21 A. Yes.  
22 Q. And as you've set out, he began to do things with the  
23 result they left and he raped you?  
24 A. Yes.  
25 Q. Okay. You talk about the impact of that, because,

1 reading your statement, it's clear that it was known  
2 what had happened --  
3 A. (Witness nods).  
4 Q. -- that no one would speak to you?  
5 A. (Witness nods).  
6 Q. And in fact you suffered further because of what had  
7 happened, is that fair?  
8 A. Yes.  
9 Q. You were bullied because you had been raped?  
10 A. Yes.  
11 Q. By the other girls in the group?  
12 A. Yes.  
13 Q. And again without going into the detail of it, that  
14 continued on to Gordonstoun?  
15 A. Yes.  
16 Q. Did it ever stop during your time at school, either  
17 Aberlour or Gordonstoun?  
18 A. Yeah, they stopped when my dad died.  
19 Q. Yes. And I think, again reading matters short, it's  
20 fair to say there has been a degree of apology in the  
21 years since?  
22 A. Sorry, say again?  
23 Q. There's been a degree of apology from those girls --  
24 A. Yes, yes, there has.  
25 Q. And you also would understand that one of the girls in

1           the tent with you may have been involved in  
2           a relationship with this young man at the same time?  
3       A.   Yes.  
4       Q.   All right.  When you got back to Aberlour, you say at  
5           paragraph 68 on page 16:  
6                 "I don't know if any of my teachers from Aberlour  
7           noticed a change in my demeanour or should have.  The  
8           difficulty was that there was only a few months left of  
9           prep school and my behaviour could have been put down to  
10          being a teenager."  
11      A.   Yeah.  
12      Q.   No effort was made to talk to you, presumably, had you  
13          been behaving like a teenager or just being unhappy?  
14      A.   No.  
15      Q.   And did you feel that you could talk to anyone about  
16          what had happened?  
17      A.   No.  
18      Q.   No.  The bullying that you endured after the event at  
19          Aberlour, would that have been, do you think, obvious to  
20          the teachers that you were being picked on?  
21      A.   I don't know.  I can't remember.  I think I was so  
22          traumatised by what had happened that I think my --  
23          I think when I look back, my perception of what was  
24          going on around me was different because I think I was  
25          so focused internally, if that makes some sense.

1 Q. Yes. I think you talk about, in terms of that trauma,  
2 at paragraph 65 you talk about finding a photograph of  
3 you and your dad?  
4 A. Yes.  
5 Q. And knowing obviously what you know, you can see the  
6 state you were in, but he had no idea.  
7 A. No.  
8 Q. He was so proud of you and he looked so happy?  
9 A. Yeah.  
10 Q. Okay.  
11 A. I don't think maybe I've said this, but I remembered he  
12 used to -- he used to -- he used to come up to me in the  
13 corridor and ask me how I was.  
14 Q. This is the youth?  
15 A. Yeah. And several times told me that I would die before  
16 him, but I never really understood. I don't know if  
17 I've said that anywhere.  
18 Q. You did at paragraph 64.  
19 LADY SMITH: It's in your statement.  
20 A. Is it?  
21 MR BROWN: Yes. It's all right, you've said that.  
22 A. I don't know, it's been on my mind quite a bit lately.  
23 I don't know.  
24 LADY SMITH: What do you make of that expression now?  
25 A. I'm trying to understand the syntax of the emphasis,

1           whether he meant -- because you could read it in  
2           a couple of ways, couldn't you? That I would die first  
3           before he died, or I would die in front of him, as it  
4           were. You could read that either way and say that --  
5           I don't know. I imagine he meant that I would die  
6           first, but I don't know why he -- or whether that was  
7           just some way of keeping me quiet, I don't know. It's  
8           been on my mind a lot recently. I'm not sure.

9       LADY SMITH: Did it feel like a threat?

10      A. Maybe I think of it that way now, but I think -- you  
11      know, then I had no idea what was happening or -- you  
12      know, or how to respond. He even wrote it on a T-shirt.  
13      We had a -- you know, when you leave the school, because  
14      this was in the last few months and you'd get everyone  
15      to sign your T-shirt, you know, it's one of those  
16      things, or the year book or whatever.

17      LADY SMITH: Yes.

18      A. I'm pretty sure he wrote it on a T-shirt.

19      LADY SMITH: On your T-shirt?

20      A. Yeah.

21      LADY SMITH: I see that you pinpoint the photograph as taken  
22      at a 50th anniversary ball. Is that the 50th  
23      anniversary of the foundation of the school.

24      A. I think so, yes.

25      LADY SMITH: So that would be when?

1 A. Oh ...

2 MR BROWN: It would be 1987.

3 LADY SMITH: 87, I think, yes.

4 A. Yes. There was a -- there was a school document,  
5 a magazine, a newsletter thing that was uncovered during  
6 the police investigation and they found it and it was  
7 all to do with the 50th anniversary ball and I think it  
8 was the only -- one of the only documents -- because of  
9 the said -- there was a fire that destroyed a lot of the  
10 Aberlour documents, but this was one of the only things  
11 that the police uncovered that proved that this man and  
12 myself were at Aberlour at the same time because both  
13 our names were mentioned in this newsletter.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 MR BROWN: You just mentioned a T-shirt and this was the  
16 sort of thing that was done, signing T-shirts because  
17 you're about to leave and in your case you go on to  
18 Gordonstoun in 1987. I think you were there until 1992?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And moving on to paragraph 82, you say:

21 "The routine was very similar to Aberlour. There  
22 was still the morning run, but it was on a bigger scale  
23 as everything was spread out."

24 And is that perhaps one of the very striking things,  
25 Aberlour is tight in one building and the surrounding



1           buildings, whereas Gordonstoun is all over the place?

2       A.   Yes.

3       Q.   I won't bother showing you a map of it, but we know

4           there are houses at one --

5       A.   Yes, huge grounds, yes.

6       Q.   Huge grounds, that's right. And again there's still the

7           outdoor focus?

8       A.   Mm.

9       Q.   We've heard about the fire service, the coastguard.

10      A.   Mm-hmm.

11      Q.   Sail training.

12      A.   Yes.

13      Q.   Just touching on the sail training, is that something

14           you did and enjoyed?

15      A.   Yes. Yes, I did like it.

16      Q.   Was it quite tough, though?

17      A.   Mm, gosh, yes. Yeah, anything to do with the sea in

18           Scotland, I think, is difficult and cold and miserable

19           to a degree, but it was interesting and good fun.

20      Q.   And I think you mentioned that the captain was quite

21           stern?

22      A.   Yes.

23      Q.   But you also say his heart, I think, he had a heart of

24           gold?

25      A.   Yes, no, he was -- yeah, definitely.

1 Q. Do you remember why he was so stern?

2 A. Well, I think you have to be to keep everything safe  
3 and, you know, keep all the children safe and under  
4 control.

5 Q. That was the point of it?

6 A. Yeah, it must be very difficult and, you know, obviously  
7 you're in a very challenging environment there, aren't  
8 you?

9 Q. Yes. You talk in your statement about obviously  
10 Gordonstoun being a bigger campus, bigger numbers, much  
11 more fluid and house-based rather than just one house as  
12 there was at Aberlour.

13 A. Mm.

14 Q. Just going through a number of practical factors, you  
15 mentioned the teaching and I think we see at  
16 paragraph 83 in terms of education you thought the  
17 standard was mixed?

18 A. I apologise for my language.

19 Q. Sorry?

20 A. I said I apologise for my language in the statement.  
21 Did I say that? Yes.

22 Q. " ... great teachers and some shit teachers who were  
23 there because they knew the headmaster."

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. If that's how it was, that's how it was.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. And you go back to mentioning the retired policeman who  
3 gets a job because he was a friend of the headmaster?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Was that commented upon by the pupils? Was there --

6 A. Yeah, I think it generally was. I don't think he was  
7 particularly well-respected within the pupil body.

8 Q. And looking beyond that English teacher, was that  
9 something that was -- well, I suppose what was the split  
10 between good and bad?

11 A. It's difficult to say, isn't it? It -- I think -- my  
12 perception, my memory -- for example, there was a very  
13 gifted chemistry teacher who taught me chemistry and  
14 I think she was very well-qualified and clearly knew the  
15 subject incredibly well and understood her subject  
16 incredibly well, but she didn't really have good  
17 teaching skills, so those qualities are a different --  
18 a different thing, aren't they? It's all very well  
19 knowing a subject very well, but if you can't help  
20 someone else understand it, then that makes you a shit  
21 teacher in my book.

22 Q. All right.

23 A. But you've kind of got someone there on one hand who is  
24 not qualified at all and has walked into a job because  
25 they're friends with the headmaster and they're not

1 a particularly good teacher, but then you can also have  
2 someone who is incredibly intelligent, incredibly  
3 well-qualified, still not a very good teacher because  
4 again it's a different skill, isn't it?

5 So I think across the board, you know, there was  
6 a real mixture and I think you would get that in any  
7 school anyway. I -- I -- but obviously these days it's  
8 different in terms of you need to be properly qualified  
9 and you're not just about to walk into a job because  
10 you're friends there.

11 Q. Yes.

12 A. But there was some really good ones too.

13 Q. All right. Just as there had been at Aberlour.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Some very good teachers, good people.

16 A. Yes. This was my, you know, my perception of it.

17 Q. You've talked obviously about that particular retired  
18 officer becoming an English teacher because he's  
19 a friend of the headmaster.

20 A. Mm.

21 Q. That's the headmaster we understand who took over about  
22 1990, there was a change of headmaster in your time at  
23 Gordonstoun?

24 A. That's right, yes.

25 Q. Did you notice a shift in approach with a new head from

1           what had been and what it became?

2       A. Not that I can really recall particularly.

3       Q. Just out of interest, whether there was a different

4           style, a move away from things that had been done? If

5           you can remember, fine; if you can't, please just say

6           so.

7       A. I don't think so. I think it pretty much stayed largely

8           the same.

9       Q. The reason I ask is obviously, and again we don't need

10           to go into detail because it's written down, but there

11           seems from what you've said to have been quite a lot of

12           drinking going on?

13       A. Mm, yes.

14       Q. Which presumably was new from your experience or was

15           that something you'd seen at Aberlour too?

16       A. No, I hadn't seen that at Aberlour. That was definitely

17           more -- that was a Gordonstoun experience.

18       Q. And was it something that was quite prevalent amongst

19           the student body?

20       A. Yes.

21       Q. Smoking as well?

22       A. Yes.

23       Q. And what about drugs? Did that develop while you were

24           there or --

25       A. I heard the odd story, but never saw anything first

1 hand. There was one particular boy who lived in the  
2 Netherlands, so I think maybe it was easier for him to  
3 bring cannabis into school perhaps than -- and so he was  
4 sent home a couple of times.

5 Q. All right. I think you say he ended up -- this is  
6 page 21, paragraph 94 -- someone was expelled.

7 A. Yeah, that may well have been him then.

8 Q. All right, so the school would act?

9 A. Oh yes, there you go, yeah. There was the lad who ran  
10 away, mm.

11 Q. But the description you have certainly when you started  
12 was that there that were houses dotted around a large  
13 campus?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Was freedom of movement as between houses; is that  
16 correct?

17 A. Yes, yes. You -- so you could visit the common room of  
18 another house. If it was a girl visiting a girls'  
19 boarding house you could go into bedrooms, but if you  
20 were visiting a house of the opposite gender you  
21 couldn't go into bedrooms but you could go into the  
22 common room.

23 Q. Was that policed at all?

24 A. No. Not really, no.

25 Q. Did that change in your time at Gordonstoun? Did that

1           become at all stricter?

2       A. Not that I remember.

3       Q. Okay. But I think, returning to drink, the fact that

4           you were local meant that you could perhaps access

5           alcohol --

6       A. Yes, I had a couple of friends who could help us get

7           alcohol.

8       Q. And that was just the done thing?

9       A. Well, it was what we did.

10      Q. It was what you did.

11      A. Yeah.

12      Q. All right. And as you say at paragraph 86:

13           "I remember us getting drunk in the bath. The

14           housemistress never went into the bathrooms and we knew

15           that."

16      A. Yes.

17      Q. So there was on one view a routine that you could take

18           advantage of?

19      A. Yes.

20      Q. Was it all -- my word, not yours, you tell me if I'm

21           right, it sounds as if supervision could be described as

22           lax?

23      A. Yes, probably.

24      Q. Was that very much determined by who -- the personality

25           of the housemistress?

1 A. Yes. That's an interesting point, actually, because the  
2 housemistress in my house changed whilst I was there and  
3 I think it would be fair to say that the original one  
4 was maybe more on it than the -- than her successor.  
5 Q. I think you've talked about the personalities, your  
6 first housemistress you were fond of?  
7 A. Yes.  
8 Q. She was interested in her pupils, is that fair?  
9 A. Yes, definitely.  
10 Q. Her successor, less so?  
11 A. I -- that's -- yes. And again, interestingly enough,  
12 I think the lady who came in -- yeah, the successor, she  
13 was a friend of the headmaster's.  
14 Q. What about overall supervision? We've been talking  
15 about the house and the import of the personality of the  
16 housemistress.  
17 A. Mm.  
18 Q. That person decides, I suppose, how the house operates?  
19 A. Mm.  
20 Q. Was there supervision of the housemistresses that you  
21 recall from the headmaster? Was that evident?  
22 A. Not evident. No idea.  
23 Q. Not that you saw?  
24 A. Not that I saw, no.  
25 Q. So might we understand that the houses were really their



1           own little worlds?

2       A. Yes, that's -- yeah, a good way of putting it.

3       Q. All right. Again, and please if you can't remember or

4           don't know please just say so, was that just something

5           that changed over the time that you were at Gordonstoun?

6           Did you get the sense that there was greater

7           supervision?

8       A. No. No. No -- no idea of that.

9       Q. All right. Now, obviously we've touched on this,

10           I think you mentioned it, your dad who was in the Air

11           Force was killed [REDACTED] in 1990.

12       A. Mm.

13       Q. We see this at paragraph 96 and onwards, but if we go to

14           page 23, which is paragraph 99 --

15       A. Mm.

16       Q. -- we would understand that you learned something's

17           happened because you're in the main Gordonstoun House,

18           I'm reading back to 97, but we don't need to look at it:

19           " ... and someone came bursting into the room and

20           told me I needed to go to [your house] to see ... the

21           housemistress ... immediately."

22       A. Mm.

23       Q. And you obviously sensed something was wrong.

24       A. Mm.

25       Q. But going back to 99, you say:

1                   "Gordonstoun didn't deal with it."

2       A. No. No, I didn't -- I didn't have any -- any real  
3           support from them. I mean, the housemistress -- you  
4           know, she was lovely and she said, you know, if I ever  
5           wanted a chat I could go into her office, but that was  
6           all I was ever offered in terms of support.

7       Q. There was nothing more proactive than that, just the  
8           offer of a friendly ear --

9       A. Yeah.

10      Q. -- if you felt it necessary?

11      A. Necessary.

12      Q. But what you go on to say is:

13           "I ran away from school and went to stay with some  
14           young colleagues of my dad's for two days after it  
15           happened."

16      A. Mm.

17      Q. "I was alone in their house for a couple of days while  
18           they went to work."

19      A. Mm.

20      Q. Being in the Air Force, presumably?

21      A. Mm.

22      Q. Your mum was abroad at that stage?

23      A. Yes.

24      Q. But would you be in contact with her and she'd be coming  
25           back?

1 A. I hadn't made contact with her, but obviously I think  
2 the Royal Air Force had.  
3 Q. All right. But you then go on to say:  
4 "No one knew where I was."  
5 A. No, no. No, I can't remember how my aunt found me.  
6 I don't remember. Because obviously then we didn't have  
7 mobile phones, so --  
8 Q. No.  
9 A. -- I don't really remember what happened.  
10 Q. But potentially for the 48 hours after you get this  
11 dreadful news, you're alone and -- other than the offer  
12 of talk if you want to --  
13 A. Yeah.  
14 Q. -- the school did nothing?  
15 A. That's right.  
16 Q. And I think, as you say, your aunt found you and you  
17 went home until your mum arrived?  
18 A. Mm.  
19 Q. But there came a point obviously when you went back to  
20 school, as you see in paragraph 101:  
21 "There were no repercussions ..."  
22 Reading from that:  
23 "... from having disappeared for two days. I think  
24 they were just concerned and no one was angry with me."  
25 A. Mm.

1 Q. So was it as if it just hadn't happened or was there --  
2 just that you returned to school as normal?  
3 A. Yeah, returned to school as normal and just was expected  
4 to -- well, get on with it. It was a couple of weeks  
5 before we sat GCSEs.  
6 LADY SMITH: Did they ask you where you'd been?  
7 A. I don't remember, to be honest.  
8 LADY SMITH: With the GCSEs coming up, was that a period  
9 when some students went home on study leave or not?  
10 A. No, I don't think so.  
11 LADY SMITH: Thank you.  
12 MR BROWN: But I think we see at paragraph 103:  
13 "There weren't any conversations about my dad at the  
14 school or about my well-being."  
15 The housemistress that you were fond of was there  
16 when he died and she was good, but then, of course,  
17 I think that was her last year and she was replaced by  
18 the successor, who was less good?  
19 A. Yes.  
20 Q. As you say about the first housemistress:  
21 "She'd made it clear to me that her door was always  
22 open."  
23 A. Mm.  
24 Q. "I think part of her role was to be the person to go to  
25 with personal issues."

1 A. Mm.

2 Q. "I don't know if we were aware of that."

3 Was there, as you recall, any indication of who you

4 should go to for pastoral support or guidance?

5 A. Nothing official, no. As I say, I think I -- I -- you

6 know, that the housemistress, she would -- she did say

7 to me that I could go and talk to her, but there was

8 nothing official. We did have tutors you would have

9 regular meetings with, but they were more for academic

10 support rather than anything else.

11 Q. So the focus was on education, not anything else.

12 A. Mm.

13 Q. All right, and this is the early 1990s we're talking

14 about?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. All right. I think in conclusion, if we go on to

17 page 24, you then talk about the second housemistress,

18 the successor to the one you liked, was horrible to you,

19 looking at the penultimate line:

20 "She told me once we're not giving you any special

21 treatment because your father died."

22 A. That's right, she actually said that to me.

23 Q. But from what you've told us at that point, having been

24 bullied because of events at Aberlour, that at least

25 stopped?

1 A. Yes, yeah, they left me alone after that.

2 Q. Was there any kindness from your fellow pupils?

3 A. From my friends, you know, people I would consider

4 friends, but I think they found it really difficult as

5 well, and I -- I was quite isolated for a while because

6 I think that even the people who -- you know, who I was

7 friends with found it very difficult to deal with and

8 didn't know how to deal with me.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. It's understandable, really. And they knew my father

11 and they liked him, so that's -- you know, it would have

12 been hard for them too.

13 Q. All right. But in terms of official support there was

14 none?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Other than the offer of a chat?

17 A. A chat.

18 Q. Okay. You remained at Gordonstoun obviously until you

19 would leave in the ordinary course, is that fair?

20 A. Sorry, say that --

21 Q. You remained at Gordonstoun, you were doing your GCSEs,

22 you stayed on and did A-levels?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And then moved on?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Did things, just from a general point of view, change at  
2 all in those latter years that you noticed in terms of  
3 the way the school approached things or was it just the  
4 same as you've been telling us now?

5 A. Yeah, I don't think anything particularly changed.

6 Q. All right. In terms of abuse at Gordonstoun, obviously  
7 you were in a girls' house but we see at paragraph 111  
8 you discuss one particular teacher, but if we move on to  
9 paragraph 113, because you don't have any knowledge of  
10 that other than what you've read --

11 A. Mm.

12 Q. -- but going on to paragraph 113, you do have knowledge  
13 of a teacher who is named there coming into the school  
14 and you "can't remember what he taught but he wasn't one  
15 of my teachers" and "from the minute he arrived at  
16 school there were rumours about him coming to  
17 Gordonstoun because he'd been kicked out of a teaching  
18 job ..."

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Presumably you would accept that schools are hotbeds of  
21 rumour and excitable talk?

22 A. Mm.

23 Q. But that is what you recall it was understood?

24 A. Yes. Yes, and I do think he's been -- I do think he's  
25 been charged or imprisoned since, I think.

1 Q. I think your statement goes on to confirm that.  
2 A. Yeah.  
3 Q. But you had dealings with him in 1992 at your leavers'  
4 ball?  
5 A. Yes, that's right.  
6 Q. And as you say, he tried to put his tongue in your  
7 mouth?  
8 A. Yes.  
9 Q. And your friend said the same thing, he'd gone round the  
10 leaver's ball trying to snog a load of girls?  
11 A. Yeah.  
12 Q. What age was this man, do you remember?  
13 A. Mid 30s, I would say. Early, mid 30s.  
14 Q. Was he doing this overtly?  
15 A. I don't think so, no. No.  
16 Q. But we would understand it was understood by the student  
17 body, if not by anyone else?  
18 A. Yeah. Yeah, I don't think he was doing it openly so  
19 that he could be seen by anyone.  
20 Q. No. Would it have occurred to any of you to report  
21 that?  
22 A. No. I don't think so, no.  
23 Q. Can you say why not?  
24 A. I don't know, I mean ...  
25 LADY SMITH: You say this was a leavers' ball?



1 A. Mm.

2 LADY SMITH: When in the year did the leavers' ball take  
3 place?

4 A. Would have been July.

5 LADY SMITH: July?

6 A. Yeah.

7 LADY SMITH: So that was possibly days before you were  
8 leaving the school?

9 A. This is it, yeah. Really, really, you know, near the  
10 end. Whether it's a mixture of the fact that we were  
11 leaving or that he was a teacher and who would you tell  
12 and who would believe you and I certainly -- from my  
13 previous experiences I'd always thought no one would  
14 believe me.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So -- different world back then.

17 Q. Thank you. And obviously, having left Gordonstoun, we  
18 can read in your statement about matters that have taken  
19 place since.

20 A. Mm.

21 Q. Not all of them easy, and some that have had further  
22 impact on you.

23 Looking back to your experience at Aberlour,  
24 however, we would understand that Gordonstoun had  
25 an online forum of ex pupils; is that correct?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And on that online forum, people began to disclose  
3 experiences?

4 A. (Witness nods).

5 Q. If we go to page 32 and paragraph 137 we should  
6 understand that what we're talking about is probably  
7 about ten years ago?

8 A. Mm. Yes.

9 Q. "Everyone was talking about their experiences at  
10 Gordonstoun. For a while I sat there reading their  
11 accounts and I didn't want to talk about it."

12 Were you interested in hearing of others' accounts,  
13 though? Do you remember what sort of accounts were  
14 being given?

15 A. Gosh, lots of bullying. Some absolutely horrendous  
16 stories of people being locked in trunks and left,  
17 beaten by fellow pupils, raped by fellow pupils,  
18 urinated on. This is largely -- well, this is within  
19 boys.

20 Q. This is boys?

21 A. Yeah. I mean, there was nothing like this -- with  
22 girls, bullying tended to be more sort of  
23 gossip-related, insidious verbal, you know, not the  
24 physical side of things, but some absolutely horrendous  
25 stories came up in that group from the boys.

1 Q. And having been at Gordonstoun, you obviously wouldn't  
2 have seen what was going on in the boys' houses?  
3 A. (Witness shakes head).  
4 Q. Did you understand though that the regime in the boys'  
5 houses would be quite or could be quite tough?  
6 A. Yes. They definitely had more of the sort of  
7 old-fashioned fagging system where, you know, junior  
8 boys had to basically be slaves for older boys and there  
9 was much more of a hierarchical system in the boys'  
10 houses, and more physical abuse between pupils.  
11 Q. But returning to the online forum, I think it became  
12 apparent, as you set this out, there was a woman on the  
13 forum who had a connection with child protection --  
14 A. Mm.  
15 Q. -- and the police --  
16 A. Mm.  
17 Q. -- and had been at Gordonstoun and it was made plain  
18 that people could talk to her.  
19 A. Mm.  
20 Q. And is that what you did?  
21 A. Yes.  
22 Q. Was that a helpful experience from your perspective,  
23 having someone to go to?  
24 A. Well, it was because I deliberated over it for quite  
25 some time, but I knew it was the right thing to do, not

1 just for myself but potentially for other people as  
2 well, and it was helpful for me personally in terms of  
3 progressing and going into what had happened and it  
4 becoming a -- you know, a legal issue, but also just  
5 having people believe me was actually the first thing  
6 for me that was incredibly useful and helpful. And to  
7 get to a point where I understood that it wasn't my  
8 fault and -- yeah, that was -- that was hugely helpful  
9 for me.

10 Q. And because of the availability of that, albeit online,  
11 forum and the provision that it could offer rather than  
12 something more formal, that allowed you to report  
13 matters to the police?

14 A. Yeah. I think it did feel easier that it was someone  
15 who I vaguely remembered from school. She's a different  
16 age to me, but I had a vague recollection of her. And  
17 yeah, that made it easier to talk to somebody like that,  
18 really, initially.

19 Q. Yes. Looking back now then, if we can go to page 35 and  
20 the heading, "Lessons to be learned", obviously you've  
21 set out there your thoughts:

22 "There need to be clear and obvious roles for people  
23 who are approachable to children. How can we ensure we  
24 have trustworthy adults looking after children in the  
25 first place. Even with Disclosure and Barring Service

1 checks, there is only so much you can do. People need  
2 to be trained in safeguarding. I've had that for the  
3 music teaching. I have over the years myself reported  
4 concerns to the appropriate person whose role that is.  
5 We do ultimately need to look out for our teenagers and  
6 know them well enough that we see changes in behaviour."

7 A. Mm.

8 Q. So you've actually experienced the opposite of what you  
9 experienced at school?

10 A. Yes. I mean, I think I've -- as a teacher, well,  
11 because I'm not a class teacher, I'm a one-to-one  
12 teacher, so it's extra curricula, but I have over the  
13 years had children who have talked to me a little bit or  
14 maybe shown obvious changes in behaviour, and I think  
15 I've tried to strike a balance over the years as  
16 a teacher where I'm not -- I'm not looking for anything,  
17 you know, you have to read what's in front of you, but  
18 because, you know, my role in that situation is  
19 literally just to report to an appropriate person,  
20 I mean that's the whole point of the safeguarding thing.  
21 It's not my job to ask the child questions or to try and  
22 go into it. Effectively my role is simply just to  
23 report, but I think that that's a really important first  
24 step. And even if there's nothing, you know, it's  
25 really important to do that.

1 Q. So if you notice something, you'll report it?

2 A. Mm.

3 Q. Okay. In terms of Gordonstoun obviously you've talked

4 about this online forum with ex-pupils, but I think if

5 we could look very briefly at one other document, which

6 is GOR-000004515, which will just pop up on the screen

7 hopefully, technology permitting, this is a letter

8 I think that was sent to you from the headmaster at the

9 time, Simon Reid, and obviously it's a letter directed

10 having read about your experience --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- and apologising for having had that experience in the

13 first place.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And it goes on to offer support. Did you find that

16 helpful?

17 A. Not really. I didn't particularly feel that I -- well,

18 I didn't -- I didn't want to contact the school

19 counsellor for help. That didn't really feel like

20 a helpful thing. I guess maybe that's all they had to

21 offer, but no, I didn't --

22 Q. It wasn't for you?

23 A. No.

24 Q. All right. But did you appreciate the recognition of --

25 A. Yes, I mean, it's good that they sent the letter. Yeah,

1           definitely.

2       Q. I think it goes on, just the paragraph we see the start

3       of:

4           "I know that it will be of little comfort to you,

5       but I can assure you that the Gordonstoun of today is

6       very different."

7           And it goes on to talk about pastoral teams, child

8       protection and co-ordinators, and you'll be aware from

9       your own life experience that there has been a radical

10      change in the approach?

11     A. Oh, it is really different, absolutely, yeah.

12     LADY SMITH: 'Sarah', just earlier on, drawing on your own

13      experience of teaching, you used an expression: you have

14      to read what's in front of you. Are you talking about

15      watching, looking and listening to the child?

16     A. Mm. Yeah, definitely. Because I teach one-to-one as

17      well, it's very different from being in a class setting.

18     LADY SMITH: Yes.

19     A. So if you're seeing a child for half an hour once a week

20      one-to-one, I think you maybe have more opportunity to

21      notice, perhaps. And I always make a point of having

22      a little chat at the beginning of the lesson with

23      whoever I'm teaching, mostly just to help them relax and

24      feel a bit more comfortable.

25           But, you know, there have been occasions in the past

1           where the five-minute chat at the beginning has maybe  
2           thrown up something that's rung an alarm bell for me,  
3           so, you know.

4       LADY SMITH: What would you do then?

5       A. Speak to -- you know, in schools nowadays you have  
6           a designated chain of people, you know, you then report  
7           to whoever your -- I can't remember what they would call  
8           it, you know, child protection officer, and you would  
9           literally just, you know, write an email or a form or  
10          something and say, you know, "I taught so-and-so today,  
11          I -- she's mentioned a couple of things or didn't seem  
12          that great within herself", and then those are the  
13          people who -- you know, who are trained to deal with  
14          more of the safeguarding issues.

15       LADY SMITH: Thank you. Mr Brown.

16       MR BROWN: Thank you, my Lady. I think my rather more  
17          abrupt shorthand was you would report it, but that's the  
18          full process?

19       A. Yeah, basically, yeah.

20       Q. Have you -- and obviously there's no obligation to do  
21          this, because I appreciate having to come and talk to us  
22          is not an easy thing to do, but have you been following  
23          the Inquiry in relation to the current approaches of  
24          schools?

25       A. I've looked briefly, but not very much.



1 Q. Well, it's simply it may be in relation to the first  
2 parts of the Inquiry where the current chief executive,  
3 who's present today, as is the chairman of the board of  
4 governors of Gordonstoun, who is present today, she was  
5 talking about the system in operation, which may be very  
6 similar to what you are describing, which may be the  
7 source of some encouragement.

8 A. Absolutely. Yeah, no, it's good.

9 Q. Okay. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

10 A. No, I don't think so.

11 MR BROWN: Okay. 'Sarah', thank you very much indeed.

12 A. Thank you.

13 LADY SMITH: Are there any outstanding applications for  
14 questions of 'Sarah'?

15 'Sarah', that completes the questions we have for  
16 you. Before you leave, can I thank you very much for  
17 the help you've given us, both in terms of your written  
18 statement, which I have read and will be taking into  
19 account, in addition to what you've said today. Thank  
20 you for coming. I do appreciate that it's not easy to  
21 come and talk in this environment as you have done, but  
22 it's been of enormous assistance to me.

23 A. Okay, thank you.

24 LADY SMITH: So thank you for that and I'm able to let you  
25 go.

1       A.   Thank you.

2                               (The witness withdrew)

3       LADY SMITH:  I think we should take the morning break now,

4               Mr Brown, if that works for you?

5       MR BROWN:  That would be very usefully timed.

6       LADY SMITH:  We'll sit again in quarter of an hour or so.

7       MR BROWN:  Perhaps 20 minutes.  Some logistical issues.

8       LADY SMITH:  Keep in touch and let me know when the next

9               witness is ready.

10       (11.33 am)

11                               (A short break)

12       (12.04 pm)

13       LADY SMITH:  Mr Brown, are we ready to resume?

14       MR BROWN:  We are, my Lady, and the next witness is 'Annie'.

15       LADY SMITH:  Thank you.

16                               'Annie' (sworn)

17       LADY SMITH:  Please sit down and make yourself comfortable.

18               I see you know that the folder is there for you.  The

19               red folder has a copy of your statement in it but you'll

20               also see it coming up on the screen in front of you that

21               I hope will help you as Mr Brown refers to various parts

22               of it during your evidence.

23               Please let me know if you have any questions,

24               queries, if you want a break at any time, whatever works

25               for you works for me, so do remember that.

1           If you're ready, I'll hand over to Mr Brown and  
2           he'll take it from there. Is that okay?

3       A. Yes, my Lady.

4       LADY SMITH: Mr Brown.

5                       Questions by MR BROWN

6       MR BROWN: My Lady, thank you.

7           'Annie', hello again. If we can start with the  
8           statement, you have a copy in front of you, it will  
9           appear on the screen. If we can go to the last page,  
10          page 38, and paragraph 208, where I think as you know  
11          and remember it ends:

12          "I have no objection to my witness statement being  
13          published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.  
14          I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are  
15          true."

16          And you signed that statement on 5 January this  
17          year.

18       A. (Witness nods).

19       Q. Again, the process was a laborious one, I would  
20       understand, where drafts are shared with you, you  
21       correct them and obviously this is quite a long  
22       statement for a variety of reasons we'll come onto and  
23       very carefully considered.

24       A. (Witness nods).

25       Q. Having spoken to you, you've obviously reread the

1 statement because you've identified one error which  
2 you've discovered subsequently. That's paragraph 115 on  
3 page 22 where you describe one of your friends at  
4 Gordonstoun coming down the stairs, third line, she fell  
5 and broke her ankle. You now understand for correctness  
6 that in fact she tore her Achilles tendon, it wasn't  
7 breaking her ankle.

8 A. That's correct.

9 Q. But beyond that correction, I take it you're content  
10 with the statement?

11 A. (Witness nods).

12 Q. And it meets the statement you confirmed when you  
13 signed, it's true and accurate?

14 A. Yes, it does, thank you.

15 MR BROWN: Thank you very much indeed.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you, 'Annie', for that attention to  
17 detail.

18 MR BROWN: Thank you. Obviously this is the Gordonstoun  
19 part of the Inquiry and we know that your experience of  
20 Gordonstoun was in fact as part of your entire school  
21 career a relatively small part, going there in 1986 for  
22 your sixth year; is that correct?

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. How long did you spend in total at Gordonstoun?

25 A. Two academic years.

1 Q. Two academic years, thank you. Your background, and  
2 we'll come to this, ultimately came to be in social  
3 work?  
4 A. That's correct.  
5 Q. And you have particular experience of child protection,  
6 which is why we'll move on towards the second part of  
7 your evidence with some of your thoughts, given your  
8 experience of the structures and child protection in  
9 boarding schools. You're happy to do that?  
10 A. I am.  
11 Q. Thank you. Looking at the statement, and you will  
12 understand that it is in evidence, we don't have to  
13 laboriously go through your entire childhood, in fact  
14 you went to three schools and it was the first of those  
15 schools that, if anything, was the most difficult, is  
16 that fair?  
17 A. That's fair. I went to three independent schools.  
18 I went to one local state school before and had a period  
19 also at another local state school.  
20 Q. Thank you, all right. In terms of independent schools,  
21 the first one we see, and this is a school that no  
22 longer exists in the form that you knew it, St Mary's  
23 Convent near Berwick-upon-Tweed?  
24 A. Yes.  
25 Q. And that was a school that was local to you and was

1           a religious school in the sense it was run by catholic  
2           nuns?

3       A.   That's correct.

4       Q.   And you paint a picture, reading it short, that there  
5           was a real distinction which turned on the characters of  
6           the individual nuns.  Some were charitable,  
7           compassionate, Christian, others were not.  Is that  
8           fair?

9       A.   That's fair, although the ones that were not were  
10          practising Christians but not Christian in the sense  
11          that I think you mean it.

12      Q.   Yes.  And you pick out at paragraph 14, and we should  
13          understand this is a school that you started at when you  
14          were 7, there were two nuns in particular -- sorry,  
15          paragraph 14, page 3:

16                "There were two nuns in particular who I would pick  
17          out as treating the students badly."

18      A.   (Witness nods).

19      Q.   You think there may have been other nuns that were  
20          physically abusive "but I did not witness that".

21      A.   (Witness nods).

22      Q.   In relation to the abuse that you describe from those  
23          two individuals, we see in paragraph 16 there was  
24          striking with a slipper, hand or other implement on  
25          their back or their naked bottom and that happened to

1           you a lot of times?

2       A.   That's correct.

3       Q.   Perhaps 5 to 15.   Perhaps reading on to paragraph 17:

4           "She would also get us up in the night, as

5           a punishment and make us kneel down to pray while facing

6           the wall.   This could happen late at night, separated

7           from others and alone in a dark deserted corridor.   This

8           happened to me at least twice that I can remember.

9           I saw other girls taken out of the dorm for hours on end

10          ..."

11          And they told you of being put in various corridors

12          essentially in the darkness.

13       A.   That's correct.

14       Q.   All right.   Paragraph 18.   Bed-wetting was treated

15          robustly.   Children would have to remove their sheets

16          and wash them there and then?

17       A.   That's correct.

18       Q.   Okay.   And you talk about the particular treatment meted

19          out to one of your friends who came from overseas and

20          had African and English heritage as well as being

21          Catholic and her curly Afro hair was combed with a wire

22          brush?

23       A.   That's correct.

24       Q.   Until her scalp bled?

25       A.   Yes.

1 Q. Okay. You go on to describe, which we don't need to  
2 look at in detail, other examples of maltreatment, to  
3 use your words?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. The effect on you we see at page 30, or page 6,  
6 paragraphs 29 and 30:

7 "We told our parents what school was like and they  
8 said that was what happened at boarding school and we  
9 should behave and we would be fine".

10 A. (Witness nods).

11 Q. It was raised by your mother with the school, your  
12 concerns, and you were moved away from that corridor?

13 A. (Witness nods).

14 Q. And is it fair to say things improved?

15 A. Things improved a lot. I was moved away from that  
16 particular nun because she wasn't on what was called the  
17 top corridor.

18 Q. All right. You go on to say at paragraph 32 of that  
19 same page:

20 "Some of the nuns were kind and very empathetic to  
21 us and did not discriminate by religion."

22 Because there were some Protestant children as well  
23 as Catholics?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. You paint a picture of real distinction between floors,



1 corridors, whichever you prefer. Was it known by the  
2 compassionate nuns you dealt with latterly what was  
3 going on with their colleagues elsewhere?

4 A. I -- I can't say to you that it was absolutely known,  
5 the detail of it, but in general, yes, it was known.

6 Q. And obviously your mother went and complained?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Notwithstanding she was telling you just to get on with  
9 it as well.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. So it was within the school community something that  
12 they could only have known about?

13 A. I believe so, yes.

14 Q. Did, as far as you were aware, anything change after you  
15 were moved?

16 A. Do you mean for the students who remained --

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. No, nothing changed for them.

19 Q. So notwithstanding a complaint --

20 A. I believe nothing changed, although it's so long ago  
21 it's hard to be sure about that, but I believe nothing  
22 changed.

23 Q. All right. And you carried on until you moved to senior  
24 school?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Which is St Leonard's in St Andrews?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. If we go to paragraph 37, page 7, you sum that up by

4 saying:

5 "The school was very well run, extremely safe and

6 also extremely boring."

7 A. Yes. Yes, it was.

8 Q. "I remember the feeling the day I realised that nobody

9 was going to hit us or scream at us or make up pray for

10 long periods, I had been in the school about ten days by

11 then. It was like a weight had been lifted from my

12 shoulders. There were clear routines and clear

13 expectations. There was nothing especially negative

14 about my experience and I had no feeling of being

15 unsafe. It took me about a term and a half to be able

16 to fall asleep easily and also to stop sleepwalking

17 regularly."

18 And we should understand that you were essentially,

19 whilst in the convent school, on a state of permanent

20 alert?

21 A. Yes, absolutely.

22 Q. But that passed?

23 A. That passed.

24 Q. In the dull safety of St Andrews?

25 A. Yes, in the dull safety of St Andrews.

1 Q. What's striking perhaps is that you say there were clear  
2 routines and clear expectations. Was that made apparent  
3 to you as soon as you arrived?

4 A. Yes, it was.

5 Q. And was that different from your previous experience?

6 A. There were clear routines and clear expectations, very  
7 clear routines and expectations in the convent, but they  
8 also included the possibility of physical abuse, praying  
9 in dark corridors, random acts of maltreatment for very  
10 minor transgressions. You know, you're talking about  
11 talking, whispering after lights out, consequence:  
12 you're praying in the corridor like this in the dark  
13 corridor.

14 Q. Yes.

15 A. So it would be the same in this sense, that at  
16 St Leonard's there were also very clear routines but  
17 none of that included -- I was not aware of -- I can't  
18 say for everybody, but I was absolutely not aware of any  
19 kind of physical abuse, any kind of praying -- well,  
20 they wouldn't make you pray anyway, but anything, any  
21 kind of maltreatment. So it was really clear you were  
22 safe.

23 Q. Thinking back to St Leonard's and just thinking more  
24 broadly about what we've been hearing about is the  
25 difficulty faced by some pupils of not being able to

1           talk to someone, at St Leonard's, would you have felt  
2           comfortable talking to staff there or did it not go that  
3           far?

4       A. I probably wouldn't have talked to staff there.

5       Q. All right. What we would understand now in terms of  
6           guidance or support that we would take as routine, that  
7           didn't exist in St Andrews at the time?

8       A. It didn't exist in that way. There were some staff who  
9           were not designated to you, so there was an art teacher,  
10          for example, or a science teacher, but that wasn't their  
11          designated role, but you could talk to them.

12      Q. And was that --

13      A. Or I could.

14      Q. And that was presumably because you trusted that  
15          individual, you could see that they were someone who  
16          was --

17      A. Yes.

18      Q. -- sympathetic?

19      A. I wouldn't say trusted.

20      Q. You wouldn't say trusted?

21      A. No, I wouldn't. I wouldn't.

22      Q. You could take the risk then to talk to?

23      A. Yes.

24      Q. You then moved on to Gordonstoun.

25      A. Yes.

1 Q. And as you've told us, for two years, really for your  
2 sixth year stage, presumably doing A-levels; is that  
3 right?

4 A. That's correct.

5 Q. Why, do you remember, Gordonstoun being chosen?

6 A. So, as I say in my statement, I found St Leonard's quite  
7 boring -- be careful what you wish for -- and when  
8 I said that, I meant that there wasn't very much to do  
9 in the evenings or at weekends and I wanted to do  
10 activities and I also wanted to be with boys. I was 16  
11 and was coming out of an all girls' school and so my  
12 parents and my grandmother actually, we looked at  
13 various schools. I wanted to go to Gordonstoun because  
14 of the outward bound aspect and I got my way.

15 Q. All right. And once you got there, thinking back to  
16 your first weeks there, did you think: I've made the  
17 right choice?

18 A. I realised almost as soon as I got there that it was so  
19 different to any of my experiences, and I hadn't been  
20 there -- I'd been to visit one afternoon prior to going,  
21 I hadn't stayed overnight there. That would be normal  
22 now in boarding schools to go and visit and stay  
23 overnight. And I realised that it was almost like  
24 a parallel universe to what I had been used to.  
25 Everything, from better living accommodation, the living

1 accommodation was good, hot water, that was new for me,  
2 regular hot water. But there were boys, there were lots  
3 of them. There were lots of male teachers. The kind of  
4 guidance and support that was available was very  
5 different in terms of staff being visible to you in the  
6 boarding house or knowing that the staff were there.  
7 And some of the -- the hierarchy, I'm going to call it  
8 hierarchy, was just something that I had never  
9 encountered before and that was -- it took me a while to  
10 understand what was going on.

11 Q. Okay. You talked about St Andrews, things being clear.  
12 When you went to Gordonstoun, by the sounds of what  
13 you've just said, it took a little while for things to  
14 fall into place and does that suggest that there was no  
15 induction as we might understand it now?

16 A. So I don't remember any induction and I don't remember  
17 things being clear. There were -- there were the rules  
18 we were supposed to follow and then the rules we did  
19 follow. There were kind of two separate things going  
20 on.

21 Q. Can we take it from what you just said that there was  
22 a set of school rules which you were given --

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. -- and could read?

25 A. Yeah, they were in a rule book, you were given it.

1 Q. Yes. But the reality was somewhat different?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. All right. You mentioned the word hierarchy and you  
4 touch upon this in your statement at page 10 and you say  
5 at paragraph 52:

6 "In terms of the hierarchy I learned quickly that  
7 the top of the hierarchy were a group of Six A (final  
8 year) boys. They were big strong boys. Finally at some  
9 point through my first year they were expelled and  
10 suspended. Everyone knew their place in the hierarchy."

11 So can we take it from the fact that they were  
12 suspended and expelled that their operation of the  
13 hierarchy was to the detriment of others?

14 A. So I only want to talk specifically about my experience.

15 Q. Mm-hmm.

16 A. These were boys that belonged to a particular boarding  
17 house. I had known one of them before I had come, which  
18 was why I was identified and picked out. And they --  
19 it's very difficult to explain, but essentially they  
20 were -- you felt like they were in charge of the school,  
21 in charge of the students and what was happening as  
22 a counter-narrative to the staff who probably should  
23 have been in charge of the school.

24 I'm -- I don't know precisely why they were  
25 suspended and expelled, but it -- I don't know precisely

1           what they did to warrant that in the end.

2           Q. But what you do know and which you tell us at

3           paragraph 75 is that, to use your words, there was

4           a difficult group of boys -- this is page 14.

5           A. Yes.

6           Q. "These boys were horrible to me."

7           A. That's correct.

8           Q. "That group would call me names, make stupid noises if

9           they saw me around the school. There was nobody I could

10          turn to to stop it."

11          A. That's correct.

12          Q. All right:

13                 "Most students were afraid of them and they were

14          known, amongst students and staff, for their reputation

15          of bullying."

16          A. That's correct.

17          Q. So the staff were aware of this, from what you say?

18          A. Well, I believe so, because it was so widely known.

19          Because I used to talk to my friends about it in the

20          boarding house. You know, it's a nightmare for me. So

21          it would be unreasonable to suggest that they didn't

22          know about it, but I don't know what's in their minds.

23          Q. Of course not.

24          A. No --

25          Q. But amongst the student body --



1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- they were well known?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. But equally whether the staff did or didn't know  
5 directly, by the sounds of it, certainly to begin with,  
6 it wasn't being shared with the staff although at some  
7 stage it must have been because they were  
8 suspended/expelled?

9 A. Yes, although they could have been technically suspended  
10 and expelled for drinking or something like that.  
11 I don't know why.

12 Q. Something entirely different?

13 A. Yeah, yeah.

14 Q. Sure, okay. You've been talking about the hierarchy of  
15 the school in total.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. We understand, and again I'm not interested in the  
18 detail of which particular house you were in, but  
19 Gordonstoun has houses dotted around a large campus?

20 A. That's correct.

21 Q. We've heard evidence that would suggest that in this  
22 period houses would operate perhaps without too much  
23 supervision from the school as a whole. Is that a fair  
24 description from your experience?

25 A. From my experience, yes.

1 Q. The house was a little body which operated on its own?

2 A. Yes. In the evenings and at weekends, all discipline

3 would be referred back to the house. So if you did

4 something wrong in math class, the teacher would correct

5 you there, but if it was serious, it would be referred

6 back to your house parent or housemistress for girls,

7 housemaster for boys.

8 Q. So from your perspective living in a given house, the

9 key person would be the housemaster/housemistress?

10 A. Yes, yes.

11 Q. Because they would --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- effectively be the decision-maker for your life?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. All right. But we see at paragraph 54 on page 10 your

16 housemistress was nice and jolly?

17 A. She was.

18 Q. And again, reading matters short, it was a tolerable

19 existence, living in that house?

20 A. My house experience was very happy. I got on well with

21 the staff and also with the students, and I enjoyed my

22 time in my boarding house.

23 Q. Yes. I think, as you say at paragraph 56, some girls

24 were verbally unkind to other girls:

25 "I never saw any physical bullying from girls on

1           girls in my boarding house. It was harmonious and we  
2           got on okay. Some kids struggled for their own reasons,  
3           but it was okay."  
4       A. Yes.  
5       Q. Did you get a sense just from chat in the day when you  
6           were in school itself that other houses were less  
7           pleasant?  
8       A. Yes.  
9       Q. You obviously can't speak to this, you weren't there.  
10      A. Yeah.  
11      Q. But that was the sense you got?  
12      A. That was the sense that I got, yes.  
13      Q. And were some houses renowned for being harsh places,  
14           particularly boys' houses?  
15      A. Yes. Yes, that would be fair.  
16      Q. All right.  
17      LADY SMITH: You seem to be painting a picture, 'Annie', of  
18           each house being in practice, if not formally,  
19           autonomous. Is that how it was?  
20      A. That's how it felt to me. There was a lot of autonomy  
21           back to the boarding house, but if you did something  
22           major, and I talk about this, like drinking, we were  
23           drinking, a lot, that was a school rule that was given  
24           by the headteacher, a school punishment.  
25      LADY SMITH: Yes.

1       A. Because it was a big punishment, so it went up the  
2       ladder.

3       LADY SMITH: Yes, we have evidence, I think, about that.

4       Just going back to the experience with these six  
5       boys with you describe beginning on I think your first  
6       night at the school, was the dormitory provision for the  
7       six formers different from the dormitory provision for  
8       the younger children?

9       A. So, I think, and I can't say this absolutely, but I'm  
10      fairly sure, that we were all ages in the dorms. I just  
11      can't remember. I'm sure about that in St Leonard's, we  
12      definitely were all ages. The convent, we weren't, we  
13      were segregated by age. But I think we were all ages.  
14      We definitely weren't all six form or lower sixth  
15      together, definitely not.

16      LADY SMITH: So this incident which you describe where the  
17      six boys came into --

18      A. Yeah.

19      LADY SMITH: -- the place where you were sleeping through  
20      a window --

21      A. Through my window.

22      LADY SMITH: Your window. Was somewhere that children of,  
23      probably, thinking back, all ages were sleeping?

24      A. I think probably, but I don't want to mislead this  
25      Inquiry in any way. I have a sense that -- I know for

1           sure I definitely wasn't always with people my age.

2       LADY SMITH: Okay.

3       A. And therefore they must have been younger in there,

4           but -- but I can't absolutely remember. I just can't.

5       LADY SMITH: Don't worry about it, that's helpful, thank

6           you.

7           Mr Brown.

8       MR BROWN: Thank you, my Lady.

9           I was going to come to that episode when boys came

10           through your window because you talked obviously about

11           the anxiety and the constant awareness that you

12           experienced at the convent, that that dissipated once

13           you got into the environment at St Leonard's because it

14           was safe and dull. Did that difficulty resurrect?

15       A. It was back.

16       Q. It was back?

17       A. Yeah.

18       Q. Did it ever leave you at Gordonstoun?

19       A. Yes. I think in my second year it left me because they

20           were no longer there and I was older and I was more used

21           to it.

22       Q. All right. But in terms of one of the concerns you

23           expressed in your statement is the fact that the

24           buildings were not locked, there was limited security.

25       A. (Witness nods).

1 Q. Did that ever change in the time you were there?

2 A. Not that I can remember.

3 Q. By today's standards, would you agree, it's remarkable

4 that buildings were left, containing children, as

5 exposed as that?

6 A. I think what I can say is I can't remember the boarding

7 house being locked. What I know is that we used to just

8 go in and out the window. That was our door. We

9 weren't allowed to do that, but we just did it.

10 By today's standards, that would be extraordinary,

11 and what I do know is you can't do that any more because

12 I've been and I've seen with my own eyes, so I know it's

13 not possible. There are locks on those windows now.

14 Q. Her Ladyship used the word "autonomous" and you agreed

15 that that would describe the houses. Was part of the

16 philosophy of the school that people were self-reliant

17 and in a sense autonomous?

18 A. Yes, that's correct.

19 Q. So that autonomy in a sense was reflected by the entire

20 culture you were in. You were expected to do things of

21 your own volition?

22 A. Within some parameters that they gave, but yes.

23 Q. Although you've said the parameters that were given were

24 not necessarily what reality was like.

25 A. That was my experience, yes.

1 Q. Yes. But you mentioned, for example, alcohol was  
2 commonplace.

3 A. So we definitely weren't allowed to drink. We  
4 definitely did drink.

5 Q. And was it known that the pupils were definitely  
6 drinking?

7 A. When it was known, it was corrected, so for example  
8 writing out the wine list of Bordeaux, which I refer to  
9 in my statement, even by my 17- or 18-year-old mind,  
10 I found that extraordinary, that having been caught  
11 drinking alcohol, my punishment was to actually write  
12 about alcohol.

13 Q. Yes. Was that reflective of the approach of the  
14 Gordonstoun you experienced, that there was  
15 an expectation that pupils perhaps were operating in  
16 a different world from perhaps the rest of boarding  
17 school education? People were to be much more  
18 self-reliant?

19 A. So it certainly was a massive jump between what I had  
20 experienced at St Leonard's and what I experienced at  
21 Gordonstoun. I can only talk about the kinds of  
22 questions I asked my friends who were placed in other  
23 boarding schools and it seemed to be different. One of  
24 the main differences would be that in the boarding house  
25 where I was, there was no what we would call matron --

1           matron means -- in a boarding school does not  
2           necessarily mean a medically trained individual. It  
3           means somebody supporting the housemistress to help  
4           with, really, emotional and practical kind of things:  
5           oh, you don't look well today; oh, do you need more hair  
6           bands because your hair's not tied back? These kinds of  
7           things. That didn't exist at Gordonstoun and that was  
8           a big kind of gap.

9           Q. Right.

10          A. When I was there. It might exist now. I just want to  
11          qualify that.

12          Q. Yes. But from your experience, I think, one episode  
13          that clearly sticks with you at paragraph 114 on  
14          page 21, which is after a narrative of you having ear  
15          infections and having to go to Aberdeen to see  
16          a specialist --

17          A. Yes.

18          Q. -- you were expected just to -- I think you were given  
19          a hand-drawn map, you get a taxi from the school, got  
20          the train, and then walked from Aberdeen railway station  
21          to the hospital, and you say:

22                 "I had never been out of the train station before in  
23          Aberdeen, I did not know Aberdeen. I had never been on  
24          a paying bus before and I had never attended  
25          a specialist on my own ..."



1 Paragraph 114:

2 "On the way back I went into a fast food restaurant.  
3 I looked at the local children and I could see that they  
4 were happy and I wanted to have a burger and be like  
5 them, but I did not know how to order one. It all felt  
6 horrible and overwhelming and I felt just so unprepared  
7 for this experience in a city, in addition to the trauma  
8 of the healthcare appointment and so I just walked out  
9 and got back on my train to Elgin."

10 A. That's accurate.

11 Q. You would be, what, 16 at this stage? 16, 17 perhaps?

12 A. 16, 17.

13 Q. All right.

14 A. And I'd had a very rural upbringing, which is why I'd  
15 never been on a bus. Not because -- we didn't have any  
16 where I grew up, there was no bus service where I grew  
17 up and there were no fast food restaurants and there  
18 were no built-up areas so I just -- I'm trying to help  
19 you understand that for me a city was just like you may  
20 as well have put me into America. It was as  
21 bamboozling.

22 Q. Yes, but the assumption was that because you were of  
23 that age, you would just cope, off you go, was that it?

24 A. Yes, yes.

25 Q. No one looked at you perhaps individually to assess what

1           was required?

2       A. I suppose that would be one conclusion that you could  
3       reach. I don't know why that happened, but it really  
4       wasn't okay for me at that age and stage of my  
5       development.

6       Q. All right. We talked about your understanding of what  
7       went on in other houses. If we go to paragraph 134 at  
8       page 25, which is under the general heading, "Abuse at  
9       Gordonstoun", your boarding house was fine:

10           " ... but I believe the life for some of the boys  
11       was quite different."

12           And this would be something you talked about. But  
13       then you go on in 135:

14           "Whilst I was there, another boy came to Gordonstoun  
15       and my family knew him. My mum told me in her letters  
16       that he was having a hard time. I don't want to give  
17       his name. I told the housemaster what was happening and  
18       it wasn't right and I named the boy who was allegedly  
19       the problem. That boarding house was not okay and a boy  
20       was expelled later on for that."

21           So notwithstanding the self-reliance, it would  
22       appear that you could report and you did feel confident  
23       enough to report, and action was taken?

24       A. So the reason I felt that I could report that -- because  
25       I've thought a lot about this -- is because nobody in

1           the school would have been able to make the link between  
2           me and that boy and that housemaster. And so it  
3           wouldn't have been attributed back to me. There was  
4           a very strong culture of not telling on people, not  
5           telling tales. That exists to this day in some boarding  
6           schools. I don't know about all of them, but certainly  
7           in some of them.

8       Q. Does it not exist pretty much broadly across education?

9       A. Yes.

10      Q. But in this situation, you were confident that it  
11           wouldn't get back to you?

12      A. Yes.

13      Q. So you could do it?

14      A. Yes.

15      Q. Had it been in your own house, perhaps you might have  
16           taken a different approach?

17      A. I wouldn't imagine that it would have happened in my own  
18           house, but I didn't -- I wasn't able to do anything  
19           about my own experience because I knew that that would  
20           be attributed to me. So there's the answer, I guess.

21      A. Okay.

22      Q. Okay. You then go on, and again we don't need to go  
23           into the detail of this, to talk about the one concern  
24           you had about a member of staff --

25      A. Yes.

1 Q. -- who you dealt with and who caused you some unease --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- I think putting matters short, because he was too  
4 touchy-feely?

5 A. (Witness nods). That's correct.

6 Q. The difficulty, I think, if we go to paragraph 148 on  
7 page 28, is, you say:

8 "If I had complained it would have been difficult to  
9 say it was of a sexual nature because I did not really  
10 understand what was happening as the messages were so  
11 mixed. I was new to the school, I had never been taught  
12 exclusively by a male teacher before and I had no  
13 reference points to understanding the kind of hierarchy  
14 that existed at Gordonstoun. It was 1986-1988 and in  
15 the context of that time, it was, and is, hard to  
16 understand what this touching and chaste kissing was.  
17 A nod to an outdated notion of the weaker female sex,  
18 an opportunity for some inappropriate covert authority  
19 figure sexual harassment or something we would now in  
20 fact now call grooming."

21 But even now you can't say?

22 A. What I can say is it was definitely wrong and definitely  
23 inappropriate, and even by that -- even around that  
24 time, that would not be appropriate. I can't actually  
25 tell you beyond reasonable doubt what his motive was.

1           What I can tell you is I did not want to be kissed by --  
2           chaste kissing, but I did not want to be kissed by  
3           a male staff member as I went about my daily life.

4       Q.   Yes.

5       A.   So for that reason, what his motive was I don't know,  
6           but I didn't want it and I didn't like it.

7       Q.   And as we see at paragraph 152, you spoke to a female  
8           teacher --

9       A.   Yes.

10      Q.   -- about it.  So again you felt the confidence to be  
11         able to report?

12      A.   Yes.  Actually, when I say I spoke to a female teacher,  
13           I'm not absolutely certain they were a teacher.  They  
14           might have been a support staff member.  I think they  
15           did support for learning, so they might not have been  
16           a teacher teacher, if you understand.

17      Q.   I follow, yes.  But the response you got was:

18                 "She told me everyone knew he was tricky or  
19                 difficult and I needed just to try to avoid him.  
20                 Nothing came of our conversation."

21      A.   Yes, that's correct.

22      Q.   But from that we might understand that the issue that  
23           troubled you was known and yet --

24      A.   So I cannot believe, and I've said this, that -- I mean,  
25           it was known among -- certainly among the girls.  It was

1           known.

2       Q.   Yes.

3       A.   It was known.

4       Q.   But from what this member of staff, to put it neutrally,

5           says, it was known by the staff too.

6       A.   I believe so, yes.

7       LADY SMITH:  Could I just take you back, if it's all right

8           with you, to what you have said at paragraph 141 --

9       A.   Yes.

10      LADY SMITH:  -- about this person kissing you on the

11           forehead or on the cheek.

12      A.   Yes.

13      LADY SMITH:  How often was that happening?

14      A.   It's so hard to remember now because it's so long ago.

15           I mean, I -- more than five times and less than,

16           I think, I would say about ten.

17           I knew because of my early life experience

18           because -- and I talked about this in my statement,

19           somebody from my community died.

20      LADY SMITH:  Yes.  It's okay, I was just wondering what the

21           picture was of how regularly this was happening and

22           you've helped me with that.  You don't need to go any

23           further.  That's all right.

24      A.   Sorry, I'm just thinking about the girl.

25      LADY SMITH:  Mr Brown.

1 MR BROWN: If you're okay to go to a different subject --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- 'Annie', and you touched upon it, and this is

4 paragraph 117 on page 22. This was the response from

5 the school when, as you've just told us, one of your

6 friends died in a different boarding school.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And it was in your last term at school:

9 "I had sat an A-level paper that day and the

10 housemistress asked to see me. She told me to call my

11 mum from her office ..."

12 And obviously your mum shared what happened.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. You dropped the phone and ran from the boarding house

15 screaming.

16 "Nobody came after me and I was away for hours."

17 You've described --

18 A. It's extraordinary.

19 Q. You've described the same housemistress in positive

20 terms and the house as, it would appear, quite a benign

21 environment, and yet at that moment of crisis you were

22 left alone?

23 A. That's right. I don't know, I mean, I can't explain it.

24 Q. You take yourself off for some hours and return. Was

25 there any concern expressed where you'd been?

1 A. I can't remember. Possibly. I -- I mean, I can't  
2 remember any concern expressed. Somebody came and got  
3 me, but I can't remember anything.

4 Q. But it seems that from paragraph 118:  
5 "Finally my friend came to find me and took me back  
6 to [the] house. I don't remember what happened.  
7 I could not go home for three days as I had A-levels.  
8 I was wandering around campus and the grounds in the  
9 middle of the night in upset and on my own."

10 A. Yes, that's correct.

11 Q. So in terms of pastoral care, dealing with people who  
12 are experiencing crisis, there was none?

13 A. There was really none. And actually, this has just come  
14 to me, I remember actually running into a teacher in the  
15 early hours of the morning, as in maybe six or so in the  
16 morning, and the teacher saying, "Hello", and me saying,  
17 "Hello, sir", and just trundling on. I'd forgotten  
18 about that till now. I took myself to the school doctor  
19 because I knew it was bad.

20 Q. You needed help?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. And you got --

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. -- help?

25 A. Well, he gave me a tranquiliser. I don't know if that's



1           the kind of help that you should get in these  
2           circumstances, but --

3       Q. Whether it was the right help or not, some assistance  
4           was given then.

5       A. Yes.

6       Q. Perhaps to use a word you might more easily accept.  
7           That was right at the end of your school career and as  
8           we see on page 29 at paragraph 154:

9           "My last term was really hard, as described earlier  
10          in my statement [in other words what we've just been  
11          talking about]. I was extremely glad to go home."

12      A. Yes.

13      Q. Overall, though, how would you sum up the two years you  
14          spent at Gordonstoun?

15      A. I had many, many happy times at Gordonstoun. I made  
16          some really good friends. I enjoyed experiences like  
17          sailing and firefighting that I wouldn't have been able  
18          to experience anywhere else. But there were some  
19          challenges alongside that that I've talked about and the  
20          need to grow up quick and grow up fast and get  
21          streetwise. And -- and, you know, that's a -- that's  
22          a sadness, I suppose. But in general my experience was  
23          enjoyable. But I think because I had the skills to  
24          manage, as opposed to learning them -- learning them  
25          there.

1 Q. Okay. If we could go to, please, page 32, and  
2 paragraph 172.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You left Gordonstoun, went to university and have had  
5 a career in social work.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And you have, obviously, experience in child protection,  
8 which we'll come onto very shortly. You've told us  
9 earlier in the statement, which we don't need to look  
10 at, that you went back to the school in 2010, and did  
11 you see change at that stage positively, just thinking  
12 back?

13 A. So, I've been back to the school a few times. I went  
14 back with my schoolfriend whose parents were teachers  
15 and the school was closed so there was nothing to see.  
16 I went back with my daughter -- was that 2010 probably?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. And I did see lots of -- I did see lots of changes. And  
19 she wanted to stay there. She stayed there overnight,  
20 and I left her, stayed locally, and then went back the  
21 next day and collected her. But I knew at that point  
22 that she wouldn't be going to that school for a whole  
23 extra year if that was her choice and we would have to  
24 look at it again.

25 Q. All right. But from your perspective, were the changes

1           welcome?

2       A.   Yes, yes.

3       Q.   Okay.  Things were different from your time?

4       A.   Yes.

5       Q.   In other words?

6       A.   There were staff.

7       Q.   Yes.  But I think to go back to the paragraph I alluded

8           to when you say Gordonstoun had a difficult period about

9           six or seven years ago, I think it may in fact be

10          a little longer than six or seven --

11       A.   Right.

12       Q.   -- obviously given the passage of time.  People who were

13          linked up in the school started talking about the

14          bullying and there was a Facebook page, there was

15          an online forum, we would understand, which you describe

16          was called as G2?

17       A.   That's correct.

18       Q.   Did you have to seek membership of it to get onto the

19          forum or was it open?  Do you remember?

20       A.   So initially people were talking on a main Facebook

21          page and then somebody set up another group and I think

22          you just clicked the thing or somebody sent

23          an invitation, but you had to go into it.

24       Q.   Yes.  And I think, as you set out, the school, because

25          of the connection with the official page, closed it

1 down, but it then reappeared?

2 A. Yeah, yeah.

3 Q. And that's maybe what we would understand is G2?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And on that, again you set out the detail, it was

6 an opportunity to talk about experiences?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And was there a great outpouring?

9 A. There was.

10 Q. In terms of you were at the school in the 1980s --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- late 80s, was it from your period or was it from all

13 periods? Can you remember?

14 A. Ooh, I think it was specifically from my period or

15 around about my period, the kind of years just before

16 and the years after.

17 Q. All right.

18 A. I think.

19 Q. And were you reading of experiences that you might have

20 understood through chat when at school, you'd understand

21 that bad things may have happened in the boys' boarding

22 house, for example, you were now reading accounts of

23 those sort of things?

24 A. Yes, but these were different because these were first

25 person articulations.

1 Q. Oh indeed. But it was individuals talking about events  
2 that you had heard of just as --  
3 A. Yes.  
4 Q. -- rumour?  
5 A. Yes.  
6 Q. I think you say at paragraph 182:  
7 "This period was really upsetting for me."  
8 Sorry, you may think it a silly question, but why  
9 did you find it so upsetting?  
10 A. Because the things that they were talking about were so  
11 awful that I hadn't realised in the school when I was  
12 there that it was that serious or that bad, and I also  
13 understood it from professional eyes of what that  
14 actually meant to people.  
15 Q. And would I be right in saying that because of your  
16 professional experience, you offered to help people who  
17 might want to take complaints further?  
18 A. Yes.  
19 Q. How did that come about?  
20 A. I wanted to not be on G2 anymore because I didn't want  
21 to read it, not because I was unsympathetic or wanted to  
22 imagine or pretend that it was untrue, just it wasn't  
23 helpful to my emotional equilibrium, but by the same  
24 token I didn't want people to not be able to access  
25 Police Scotland or report abuse if they had wanted to do

1           so. This was at the period where Police Scotland were  
2           transitioning from local force to national force and it  
3           was new for all of us in terms of how you get a hold  
4           of -- how do you get a police officer? Many people who  
5           attend Gordonstoun are international students who have  
6           no understanding of how police works or that they need  
7           to report to their local area, all of these really  
8           complex issues, and I didn't want people to be left with  
9           nothing at all.

10          Q. Again I'm not asking for detail, but can you remember  
11           how many people you assisted to contact the police?

12          A. Definitely one. But I think more than one.

13          Q. All right.

14          A. I'm fairly certain, actually. Yeah.

15          Q. I think you mention at paragraph 178 that you reported  
16           one incident that you do remember, which relates to  
17           a Rua Fiola outward bound island camp, that that didn't  
18           relate to Gordonstoun but did relate elsewhere, but  
19           I think the end result of that ball being pushed was the  
20           closure of that outward bound school which we may hear  
21           of in other parts of the Inquiry and conviction and jail  
22           for the owner?

23          A. So that person had attended Gordonstoun, which is where  
24           the link is here.

25          Q. Yes. But the connection with the Outward Bound centre

1           was not through Gordonstoun, I think as you say in the  
2           statement.

3       A.   No, no.

4       Q.   Okay. Obviously you've talked about the difficulty of  
5           dealing with moving from a local force, which presumably  
6           would be it Grampian or would it be Northern --

7       A.   Grampian.

8       Q.   And in the original days it would be simple because you  
9           could presumably go to a local police office and speak  
10          to a real person?

11      A.   Correct.

12      Q.   And then we have centralisation with Police Scotland and  
13          is this something that was obviously difficult then and  
14          is that something that is still difficult now?

15      A.   It was certainly difficult then. I mean, it was  
16          difficult for all of us as normal citizens and I think  
17          for my cohort who wanted to speak with police, it was  
18          difficult to transition. I think it would be fair to  
19          say that there are challenges even now in terms of  
20          having one phone number, you know, 101 -- or is it 111?  
21          Anyway.

22      Q.   101.

23      A.   There's one phone number and you could be phoning about  
24          your bin having been graffitied or you could be phoning  
25          to say, "Actually, I saw something terrible, you know,

1           20 years ago", and that is a challenge for Police  
2           Scotland and for us citizens.

3       Q. Right. Perhaps the greatest challenge is for the person  
4           who may wish to report.

5       A. (Witness nods).

6       Q. And one might have thought should be given the easiest  
7           route to do that.

8       A. Our citizens, yes.

9       Q. Yes, but thinking particularly about the abuse of  
10          children.

11      A. Yes.

12      Q. That is not something that perhaps should go to  
13          an everyday telephone operator. It should be focused at  
14          someone who knows a little bit more about that sort of  
15          complaint. Is that fair?

16      A. So speaking as an ordinary citizen, I want to make this  
17          distinction, I think it's difficult and I think it's  
18          challenging. You know, you're phoning up a number and  
19          you want to disclose the most sensitive of information  
20          and I think that's -- that's hard, particularly if you  
21          have to wait to be connected, it can be difficult to be  
22          connected to Police Scotland. But I don't really know  
23          what more to say on that, other than it's a general  
24          number and that's the reality that we have.

25      Q. Thinking in terms then of child protection and reporting



1           a child protection issue, what would you like to see,  
2           forgetting just being a citizen of Scotland?

3       A. A dedicated line with clear threshold and criteria for  
4           referral, which is specifically for child protection.  
5           And that's really so that the person who is reporting  
6           that information knows that the person on the other end  
7           of the phone is skilled and ready and sufficiently  
8           robust to hear what they've got to say and is able to  
9           make the right choices in terms of routing that call to  
10          the right destination and is also able to give them the  
11          correct response and articulation and support that they  
12          might need in making that call. That would be my own  
13          personal view.

14       Q. And given that you have connection with that world, is  
15          there any sense that that is anywhere near happening?

16       A. I'm not aware of that, but that may be happening but  
17          I don't have knowledge of that.

18       Q. But would you agree it should happen?

19       A. Well, I've told you what I think.

20       Q. Yes.

21       A. I can't make the state or Police Scotland --

22       MR BROWN: No.

23       LADY SMITH: I know you can't, but your thoughts on this are  
24          very helpful actually. I see what you mean about the  
25          enormous difference between a supposedly

1           one-size-fits-all number, whether, as you so powerfully  
2           put it, you want to talk about graffiti on your bin or  
3           you've summoned up the courage to talk to the police  
4           about a child regarding whom you have concerns. It  
5           doesn't feel right.

6           A. Yes, it doesn't feel right. It doesn't feel right. And  
7           you -- you know, the final bit is the call handlers who  
8           are working for Police Scotland, it's quite an ask to be  
9           skilled in that really sensitive area. You need a lot  
10          of additional training and support.

11         LADY SMITH: Thank you.

12         MR BROWN: In the last half dozen pages of your statement,  
13                 five pages actually, there are two distinct headings,  
14                 page 34, "Lessons to be learned", and then, "Hopes for  
15                 the Inquiry". I think we've been straying into perhaps  
16                 "Hopes for the Inquiry" in that last chapter and I don't  
17                 need to go through in full terms all of what you say.  
18                 I'm more perhaps interested in your hopes for the  
19                 Inquiry, but you say, looking at paragraph 183:

20                 "There is such a lot of information I could give in  
21                 a statement like this."

22                 And you talk about the different levels of knowledge  
23                 you have, which perhaps cover a wide range of possible  
24                 experiences, but you emphasise in paragraph 184 the  
25                 importance of a leadership team who need to operate to

1           the direction of the board of governors and that in the  
2           context of that structure there needs to be focused  
3           particularly protected characteristic groups and child  
4           welfare and protection. And from what we've heard,  
5           certainly the latter aspect in terms of governance, as  
6           in governors, and management teams, including -- and  
7           I ask forgiveness, I think I described the current  
8           principal as the chief executive -- the principal we  
9           heard about talking at the outset of this Inquiry about  
10          the structures that are in place which I think mirror  
11          what you're talking about there.

12                 When you say "protected characteristic groups", just  
13          to be clear, what do you mean by that?

14          A. I mean exactly what it means in law, but, you know,  
15          people with a different --

16          LADY SMITH: Are you talking about the Equality Act  
17          definition of protected characteristics?

18          A. Yes.

19          LADY SMITH: I know what you're talking about.

20          MR BROWN: That's fine. I just wanted to be clear.

21          LADY SMITH: Thank you. It's a technical expression in the  
22          legislation.

23          MR BROWN: Indeed.

24          A. Yes.

25          LADY SMITH: It covers a wide range of people who may need

1 special consideration.

2 A. Yes.

3 MR BROWN: That was the concern, because of the breadth,  
4 whether it was any particular ...

5 You go on to say at paragraph 187, as you've said:

6 "Most of what I experienced at Gordonstoun was good  
7 and happy and I made life-long friends and am part of  
8 a life-long extended community. It is a long time ago  
9 and what I talk about has to be seen within the context  
10 of the 1980s."

11 Then you talk about your experiences again. But in  
12 189 you say:

13 "Students need to have an advocate who is  
14 independent from their parents and their schools. This  
15 needs to be independently managed outwith the school and  
16 should exist for all boarding school pupils from the day  
17 they are placed until the day they leave."

18 Can you expand on what you would like to see?

19 A. Yes. So if you're placed in a boarding school, you're  
20 quite removed from contemporary structures and you're  
21 also removed from your family. You're effectively in  
22 care. And there is no third-party organisation that you  
23 can access or that you have a regular relationship with  
24 that is not your family or not the school routinely  
25 allocated to a student. It is an incredibly vulnerable

1 position. There is a pressure, not in all families, but  
2 in some families there's a pressure to be part of that  
3 boarding school life and you understand these wonderful  
4 opportunities that are afforded to you. You're then in  
5 this school and there is a disconnect between what you  
6 think you're getting and reality in some instances. And  
7 as an individual child, you have to reconcile the hopes  
8 and wishes and wants of your parents and family and the  
9 reality of your boarding school, which perhaps may be  
10 absolutely fine and you're happy, but may not be, and  
11 how do you ensure the rights of a child within that and  
12 the autonomy and opportunity for that child to actually  
13 get help, support, guidance, advice from that  
14 third-party place?

15 There is no third-party place routinely given to  
16 children, and there needs to be. In the same way that  
17 for children in the care of the state, for our children  
18 that are looked after and accommodated, they have  
19 Who Cares? and they have advocates allocated to them and  
20 they also have independent reviewing officers. All of  
21 these people are making sure broadly that things are  
22 okay, and even with all of that we know that sometimes  
23 it's not for our children in the care of the state. Why  
24 should it be different for our boarding school children?

25 Q. So would you envisage state intervention in the boarding

1 school structure?

2 A. It's extremely difficult because there's lots of rights  
3 to balance there, but the rights of the child have to be  
4 paramount, and how do we ensure that children --  
5 children's rights are -- first of all, how do we ensure  
6 that they know their rights and then that their rights  
7 are respected?

8 Q. At the earlier phase or the first phase of the boarding  
9 school chapter, we heard from SCIS, which is obviously  
10 an over-arching body representing the boarding schools  
11 that we are talking about. Would that be in your view  
12 a sufficient place to start?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Why not?

15 A. Because they advise and support the boarding schools,  
16 the governors, the school, the institution. We are  
17 talking about the need for an autonomous body to help us  
18 as we become UN -- as we become human rights compliant,  
19 as we move through to help the child and advocate on  
20 behalf of the child and ensure that the rights of the  
21 child are, first of all, known by the child, and  
22 secondly, protected.

23 And so there's a problem in asking SCIS to do that  
24 because they can't do both. They can't help the schools  
25 and the governors. They've got a conflict of interest

1           there.

2       LADY SMITH: Can I take it you accept that what they can do  
3           is work with the schools --

4       A. Yes.

5       LADY SMITH: -- to assist them to learn and develop their  
6           ability --

7       A. Yes.

8       LADY SMITH: -- to secure the rights of the child?

9       A. Yes.

10      MR BROWN: One particular concern, moving on to another area  
11           that I know is of interest to you, is the  
12           vulnerabilities of overseas students and foreign  
13           nationals, which is referred to in 190 and 191 on  
14           page 35 and you make the point that:

15           "Overseas students, who do not have a consistent and  
16           UK present guardian, who are personally known to them  
17           and remain their guardian during their entire time in  
18           the UK have additional challenges and vulnerabilities  
19           around the weekend, half term and school holiday  
20           periods."

21           What would you like to see in that regard, looking  
22           ahead?

23      A. So there are real, real vulnerabilities there in terms  
24           of The Guardianship Service. If you look at the care  
25           inspectorate's just revised its guidance, actually,

1       in April in terms of the guardianship agencies, but,  
2       firstly, the guardianship agencies are not regulated in  
3       the same way as foster care is. So that's the first  
4       issue. They're regulated in terms of being a registered  
5       childminder for children under 16, and so for children  
6       over 16 there's no legal requirement and no regulation,  
7       so that's a huge vulnerability.

8       Secondly, suitability in terms of using  
9       a childminder regulation is different to suitability in  
10      terms of short break, which -- we used to call it  
11      respite in social work, we now call it short break.  
12      It's a different set of criteria.

13      Thirdly, the matching process, if you're an overseas  
14      national and you arrive in the UK to attend boarding  
15      school, you may have a connection with your guardian or  
16      you may not, and how is that matching process done and  
17      is there consistency in that relationship?

18      I know from the experience of my children that that  
19      is definitely variable, even now that is variable. When  
20      the school ask, as they sometimes do, for children to  
21      come to stay at your house -- and I'm talking about now,  
22      or certainly in the last ten years -- they should have  
23      undertaken an assessment of our house to make sure that  
24      it's on the same standard as the school, and me and my  
25      husband should be disclosure checked. I am not certain



1           that that is consistent. I am certain that certainly in  
2           one instance in ten or so years ago and before  
3           I realised that these were the regulations, we  
4           definitely had overseas nationals at the request of  
5           a school.

6           In terms of older children over 16, we have had  
7           over -- we have had children over 16 to stay with us.  
8           They are not covered under the regulation, so we don't  
9           have to be disclosure checked. By complete chance, my  
10          husband and I are disclosure checked, obviously I am for  
11          my job, but that's an incidental.

12          It's really, really vulnerable and it really needs  
13          overhaul. And to do that, it needs regulation because  
14          the schools will operate at what they are told in terms  
15          of guidance -- and guidance just says up to 16 and they  
16          need to be registered childminders. So a 16-year-old  
17          national from Southeast Asia or South America is not  
18          equipped to be staying in an unregulated environment.  
19          It needs regulation.

20       MR BROWN: At paragraph 200 on page 37 you talk about:

21                "A national body could help drive change and to be  
22                comprised from boarding school experienced individuals  
23                and professionals in care and education. This model is  
24                working successfully in the Care Review and I would urge  
25                this Inquiry to consider the relevance of that model as

1 a possible was forward."

2 I think you've touched on that obviously. Do you  
3 think there's a disconnect between the provision that  
4 exists for state education and the ability to report  
5 child protection concerns as distinct from the boarding  
6 school world?

7 A. I think the boarding schools are very good at, you know,  
8 if you go into boarding schools, you'll see the posters  
9 up saying what to do, but do I think that our, for  
10 example, overseas nationals understand or our kids from  
11 overseas, or even our local kids? They're at  
12 a disadvantage to our home-educated -- you know,  
13 children that are staying at home. They're going home.  
14 They can tell their mum in the evening what's happened.

15 Q. All right.

16 A. In terms of, you know, how do we -- how do we move that  
17 forward, if you look at the Care Review, the first -- if  
18 you look at the promise, the first part of the promise  
19 is about the rights of the child, and that's where we  
20 need to look here. It's about the rights of children  
21 here.

22 Q. But would you envisage to cure the concerns you have  
23 some state body which would be looking, over and above  
24 what we already have in terms of the Care Inspectorate  
25 and Education Scotland, at the private school sector?

1       A. That is one possible remedy, I'm not saying that's the  
2       only remedy, but that is one possible way to move  
3       forward.

4       Q. Looking at it from the other way around, we've heard  
5       evidence from teachers, again in the first phase of the  
6       Inquiry, headteachers that there is anxiety at the  
7       inability to go to a one-stop shop to address staff  
8       concerns about how to deal with particular issues. Is  
9       that a concern that you would share?

10      A. So --

11      Q. It's difficult for a headmaster to know who to report  
12      to, to get advice on what he or she should do in a given  
13      situation. That seemed to be something that they  
14      thought was lacking but would appear potentially to  
15      exist certainly in England and potentially in the state  
16      system in Scotland. Is that something that you can  
17      express a view on?

18      A. Yes, I think it's difficult. So your individual state  
19      schools here will have a whole hierarchy behind them in  
20      the public protection partnership of their Local  
21      Authority. Your boarding schools are just not connected  
22      into public protection and they don't have the hierarchy  
23      of the strategic leads in education and health and  
24      social care. They're just not connected in the same  
25      way.

1           So yes, I would agree. It's difficult to know how  
2           to remedy that for them, though.

3       Q. Well, you suggest at paragraph 206:

4           "Arrangements need to be made for all boarding  
5           schools to have a representative at the Child Protection  
6           Committee local to them."

7       A. And I believe that in some areas that that happens, so  
8           I believe in some areas that a representative from SCIS  
9           attends on their behalf. That isn't uniform. That's  
10          definitely not uniform across Scotland. That would be  
11          one way of starting to link them in a way that is really  
12          productive and would ensure that as things moved, they  
13          were moving as part of a national body or body of  
14          understanding.

15       LADY SMITH: Can I just confirm when you say child  
16          protection committee you're talking about the local  
17          authority's child protection committee, are you?

18       A. So child protection committees exist in Local Authority  
19          partnership areas. They're not -- they're generally  
20          chaired by independent chairs and they are comprised of  
21          members of Local Authority, fire and rescue -- sometimes  
22          fire and rescue, members of Local Authority, health,  
23          social work, education, and the third sector. So  
24          they're not -- they're not Local Authority as such.  
25          They attend them and they are the strategic body that

1 drives child protection within a particular partnership  
2 area and they are denoted on Local Authority lines.

3 LADY SMITH: If one was to move to a system where all  
4 boarding schools were invited to be represented on every  
5 child protection committee, where would the invitation  
6 come from? Would there be a central invitation to them  
7 all or would it come from each individual local  
8 committee?

9 A. It would come from the local committee, the committee  
10 local to them.

11 LADY SMITH: All right.

12 A. And I'm not suggesting -- so in an area like Edinburgh,  
13 there's a large number of independent boarding schools  
14 and you can't have all of them represented because  
15 there's not enough seats and that would be  
16 overrepresentation in terms of decision-making. But  
17 some kind of linking in and out.

18 MR BROWN: Does SCIS represent the Edinburgh schools?

19 A. I believe so.

20 Q. And that would perhaps be a sensible response, but if it  
21 was on a national level?

22 A. So Edinburgh will have its own child protection  
23 committee, I believe. Child protection guidance in  
24 Lothian is a cross-border, so I'm not certain whether  
25 they represent for both Edinburgh and J division, police

1 division mid/east/west and Scottish Borders, I'm not  
2 certain, but in other areas I am certain that we -- that  
3 there are -- there isn't uniform representation of SCIS  
4 on all child protection committees where there are  
5 boarding schools.

6 Q. But it might be the most obvious person to represent all  
7 schools would be SCIS?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Is all I'm suggesting.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. All right. The final paragraph other than the  
12 confirmation of truth on the last page says:

13 "All individual boarding schools should be required  
14 to have a forum working with current and former students  
15 to hear and consider their views in a way that is  
16 meaningful. These views must be heard and considered by  
17 the senior management team and the Governors of the  
18 school."

19 Given your own concerns about G2, is that not  
20 potentially a very dangerous step?

21 A. So when I say that, I mean a body that, you know, you  
22 come to the school or online now it would be in Teams,  
23 that is supported by the school and the school are part  
24 of that, in order to hear about things like -- small  
25 things like the water's always cold, can we change that?

1           And really big things like -- it's a small thing but in  
2           a boarding school it's pretty miserable, actually.  
3           I just saw your your face. It's pretty miserable if the  
4           water's always cold. I had four years of it at  
5           St Leonard's. And big things like it's: we're worried  
6           about, for example, a school trip, or we're worried  
7           about -- these are the kind of vulnerabilities or the  
8           kinds of things that happened on my school trip. How do  
9           we make sure they don't happen?

10          Q. The concern I was expressing is given your anxieties  
11           about the way or the direction G2 took which was  
12           upsetting for you as a professional but presumably  
13           potentially very upsetting for others --

14          A. Yes.

15          Q. -- and also it allows a portrayal that may not be  
16           accurate --

17          A. Representative, yes.

18          Q. Yes. Or there may be agendas at play.

19          A. Yes. But what I'm trying to talk about here is not  
20           an environment where people are making lots of  
21           disclosures about things that have happened to them;  
22           an environment that's structured with a terms of  
23           reference where we're looking at -- while not  
24           disregarding some of the things, experiences that people  
25           have had, but using those experiences to think

1           constructively about how to make today better than  
2           yesterday. And you can manage that in a way that the  
3           real anxieties of the past and the real challenges and  
4           difficulties of the past in that intimate detail are  
5           left behind, but the experience that that has given  
6           people in terms of their lived experience is able to be  
7           utilised to change the reality of today when that might  
8           need changing.

9           Q. I suspect we may hear views from the schools on that  
10          very thing. Is there anything else that you would wish  
11          to share with us?

12         A. I don't think so.

13         Q. Clearly this is a world that you live in professionally.  
14          If there are other things, because you've given a very  
15          full and thoughtful statement, if there are other  
16          things, I think it would be fair to say the Inquiry  
17          would welcome to hear from you.

18                 Thank you very much indeed.

19         LADY SMITH: Are there any outstanding applications for  
20          questions?

21                 That completes the questions that we have for you.  
22          Thank you so much for all the help you've given us, both  
23          in terms of your detailed written statement, which  
24          of course helps us with your own experiences at boarding  
25          schools, in the plural, what happened to you at



1           Gordonstoun, and your thoughts as a professional about  
2           where we've been and where we're going in the boarding  
3           school world. It's of enormous assistance to me and I'm  
4           sure it's taken a lot out of you, both in helping us  
5           before today and coming along today to give your  
6           evidence.

7           We're really grateful to you for that, though, and  
8           I'm now pleased to say I can let you go. Thank you.

9           A. Thank you.

10                           (The witness withdrew)

11       LADY SMITH: Now, we're a little late taking the lunch  
12       break, Mr Brown. When will the videolink be ready, do  
13       you think?

14       MR BROWN: The videolink I think is ready for 2.00. The  
15       applicant will be ready for 2.00, but I'm sure we can  
16       probably slip a little.

17       LADY SMITH: Yes. Apart from anything else, I think I'd  
18       like to give the stenography team a proper break,  
19       they've worked hard all morning, their first morning in  
20       a new environment.

21       MR BROWN: Yes. Perhaps 2.10.

22       LADY SMITH: 2.10. Thank you.

23       (1.24 pm)

24                           (The luncheon adjournment)

25       (2.10 pm)

1 LADY SMITH: Good afternoon.

2 MR BROWN: My Lady, the next witness is 'Bob', who is  
3 joining us by videolink.

4 LADY SMITH: Thank you.  
5 'Bob'.

6 A. Good morning.

7 LADY SMITH: Good morning to you. It's good afternoon here,  
8 as you probably appreciate. Thank you very much for  
9 joining us over the link.

10 Could I begin by explaining who I am incase you  
11 hadn't guessed. I'm Lady Smith, I chair the Scottish  
12 Child Abuse Inquiry, and I'd like to begin, if I may, by  
13 you taking the oath.

14 'Bob' (sworn)

15 LADY SMITH: Thank you for that, 'Bob'. Now, I'll shortly  
16 hand you over to Mr Brown, who will be asking you  
17 questions, but first can I just assure you, please, that  
18 I want to know if you have any concerns or any queries  
19 as we go along, or if you need a break at any point. If  
20 it works for you, it works for me, so do please keep in  
21 touch about that and don't think that the fact we're  
22 talking by videolink means that you can't do it. Is  
23 that all right?

24 A. Yes.

25 LADY SMITH: Very well. If you're ready, I'll hand over to

1           Mr Brown and he'll take it from there.

2                               Questions by MR BROWN

3       MR BROWN: Thank you, my Lady. 'Bob', hello again.

4       A. Hi there.

5       Q. You have, I think, a copy of the statement that was  
6       prepared; is that correct?

7       A. It is, yes. As you will remember, this was sent to you  
8       in draft form for your perusal and correction and then  
9       a final version was sent to you and you were asked to  
10      sign it if you were happy; is that correct?

11      A. That is correct.

12      Q. And I think if you go to the document, and I have my  
13      copy, you have yours, we know that on 19 July this year  
14      you signed the document and looking at the very last  
15      paragraph, numbered paragraph, which is number 76 on  
16      page 16, the page before the signature, you say:

17                "I have no objection to my witness statement being  
18      published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.  
19      I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are  
20      true."

21                Is that correct?

22      A. Yes.

23      Q. Okay.

24      A. Yes.

25      Q. So you obviously read it and then signed?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. Okay. Now, we would understand from the generality of  
3 your statement that we don't need to go through every  
4 last page, you went to Gordonstoun in 1990 for two  
5 years?

6 A. A year and a half, yes.

7 Q. A year and a half. And age-wise, you started -- you  
8 were 13, perhaps?

9 A. Just turned 13, yes.

10 Q. So 13 to 14, I take it?

11 A. Yes, exactly.

12 Q. Okay. Your background to that had been going to  
13 a number of different schools in Edinburgh and in  
14 Perthshire; is that correct?

15 A. Both of them were in Perth. We grew up in Edinburgh,  
16 but we left in '84 and then moved to Perthshire, so the  
17 two schools were both in Perthshire. A very small  
18 school called [REDACTED] and then a private school  
19 called Craigclowan which was just ...

20 Q. Thank you very much indeed. I think at Craigclowan your  
21 brother also went there?

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. But from what you say in your statement, you were  
24 different characters, perhaps inevitably -- why do you  
25 laugh?

1 A. Oh, because he was the most athletic kid and I didn't  
2 have much athletic talent. My focus was all academics  
3 and his was not.

4 Q. I think one other -- sorry, carry on.

5 A. No, I think I put this in the document, but the school  
6 back then still allowed caning, and, you know, our  
7 parents had to be called to make sure that if that was  
8 ever going to happen that they would have to call my  
9 parents because they could never have imagined that my  
10 brother had been in a real --

11 LADY SMITH: Sorry, we lost something on the link there.  
12 Did you say your parents had to be called if there was  
13 to be caning?

14 A. Yeah, if there was even an event that would lead to  
15 that.

16 LADY SMITH: I see, thank you.

17 MR BROWN: 'Bob', the sound at our end is coming and going  
18 a little bit. I don't know whether it be as simple if  
19 you could perhaps lean a little bit closer towards your  
20 microphone.

21 A. I can definitely do that.

22 LADY SMITH: That's better, thank you.

23 MR BROWN: That's better, thank you. What I'm referring to  
24 is paragraph 8 in your statement and the point that was  
25 being made. I'll just read it, paragraph 7:

1            "At Craigclowan they still used the cane but ... the  
2            headmaster would call every parent and ask if he had  
3            permission to use it."  
4            That's what you're talking about?  
5            A. That's exactly right yes.  
6            Q. "My parents told me he had asked about whether he could  
7            use it on my brother and me. My parents consented to my  
8            brother being caned because he was a bit of  
9            a troublemaker but in relation to me they told him to  
10           call and check because something would have to be  
11           terribly off if I needed to be caned."  
12           A. That's right, exactly.  
13           Q. Yeah, the sporty one might get into trouble but they  
14           didn't expect it of you, the academic one?  
15           A. Right.  
16           Q. Were you ever caned?  
17           A. No.  
18           Q. No. Moving on to the next paragraph, though, there  
19           comes a time where you're going to move on from  
20           Craigclowan and there's discussion between you and your  
21           parents; is that correct?  
22           A. Yes. Although I will tell you today I don't remember  
23           what that discussion was. I know that the decision was  
24           ultimately made that I would go to Gordonstoun, but  
25           I don't remember ever wanting to attend. I don't know

1           how many 12-year-olds feel like they have that kind of  
2           choice.

3       Q.   Okay.  What you say in your statement is:

4                 " ... I don't understand the decision-making process  
5           which led them to send me to Gordonstoun because I was  
6           the most shy, awkward, sensitive child and in my opinion  
7           it made no sense to send that child to a boarding  
8           school."

9       A.   That's exactly right.

10      Q.   Do you remember saying, "I don't want to go" but it  
11           falling on deaf ears?

12      A.   I remember -- I remember trying every way I could not to  
13           go.  I mean, I -- I remember a lot of tears, I remember  
14           a lot of anger.  I remember a lot of confusion.  But,  
15           you know, hindsight, I also understand ultimately why my  
16           parents thought that it would make sense, because at  
17           least at the time it had an academic reputation that was  
18           strong and I think they thought that academically it  
19           would offer an exciting trajectory.

20                 I think I can say my dad never had that kind of  
21           education, he left school when he was 15.  I think part  
22           of it was just in terms of that.  And I think they  
23           believed that I was being given an amazing opportunity.

24      Q.   In terms of the education you received, I think we see  
25           that at paragraph 26 you say the schooling was excellent

1           and --

2       A.   That's right.

3       Q.   -- you talk of liking the teachers bar one, and we'll

4           come back to that.

5       A.   That's correct.

6       Q.   And the teachers were strict but not punitive.

7       A.   That's also correct.

8       Q.   So in terms of your parents' desire perhaps for academic

9           trajectory, that side was okay?

10      A.   Yes.

11      Q.   But the rest?

12      A.   Was not.

13      Q.   Okay.

14      A.   The social part and then that particular teacher, but

15           the social part was difficult from the day I arrived.

16      Q.   Well, let's take that in stages.  You talk about,

17           I think, trying everything not to go and being very

18           upset.  You set out about being taken up in your dad's

19           car, which that part you enjoyed, but once you'd got

20           there you describe being full of tears and a teacher

21           being kind to you.

22      A.   Yeah, exactly.

23      Q.   You say:

24           "He was fairly compassionate.  He was a nice man and

25           never mean but in retrospect he turned a blind eye to



1 everything he didn't want to see."

2 Was that the housemaster you were speaking of?

3 A. Yes, Mr Ben Goss.

4 Q. When you talk about him turning a blind eye to

5 everything he didn't want to see, what are you thinking

6 of?

7 A. Several things. The culture of the school at large, the

8 culture of the house itself, the bullying, kind of the

9 unspoken hierarchy of -- the social reality of the

10 school. He just -- I'm going to sound repetitive, but

11 just the culture of that house.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. (Overspeaking) some of the students that I mentioned in

14 my case.

15 Q. If we can start with the house and then we'll talk about

16 the school more generally. In relation to the house,

17 we've heard already that the house was perhaps

18 an autonomous body. The housemaster would decide how it

19 operated. Is that correct from your experience?

20 A. That's a great question. I don't know if he decided how

21 it would operate. I just think he let it operate the

22 way it did. Meaning -- I just cannot imagine an adult

23 not knowing what was going on. So when I talk about him

24 turning a blind eye, my sense was that it was just left,

25 like the kids were sort of allowed to do whatever they

1           did and I just don't think people questioned it.

2       Q. In terms of supervision within the house, you've just

3           said the children could do what they wanted to do. Were

4           you aware of supervision?

5       A. Well, the supervision, what I mean by that, the older

6           students who were kind of in charge of the younger kids,

7           because I'm at that point in my first year at boarding

8           school, so just their decisions.

9       Q. Are you saying it fell on the senior pupils to control

10          the younger ones?

11      A. Yeah, but this is what didn't make sense to me. The

12          oldest kids, the ones who were in their final year, they

13          -- I had a very positive experience. It was almost

14          always -- I hope I'm remembering this right -- people in

15          fifth form, so two years above us, they were the ones

16          who, for whatever reason, seemed to have more control

17          over what happened.

18      Q. And did these fifth --

19      A. (Overspeaking) the culture.

20      Q. They dictated the culture, did you say?

21      A. Yeah.

22      Q. And did they have formal roles within the house?

23      A. Yeah, I don't know if they were formal. I don't

24          remember, to be honest, so I can't say "yes" or "no",

25          but I do know that they were the people in charge of the

1           dorm room. I think there were six of us? Again that's  
2           just a memory, but I think there were six or seven of us  
3           in a room, and they were in charge of that room.

4       Q. And you were in that dorm room obviously from your first  
5           day and did you remain in the same dorm room for the  
6           time you spent at Gordonstoun?

7       A. No, just for the first year. The second year we moved  
8           into a new house, which had just been built. We were in  
9           fourth form then and we each got our own room.

10      Q. So your second year at Gordonstoun, was that easier  
11           because of that?

12      A. Definitely.

13      Q. Going back then to the first year, I think your  
14           statement makes clear that there were five or six of you  
15           from the third form, so you were in with your own year?

16      A. Yes.

17      Q. But there's a fifth form who is also in your room in  
18           charge of that dorm?

19      A. That's correct.

20      Q. And from what your statement suggests, he was a pupil  
21           who caused you particular problems?

22      A. Yeah, that's an understatement, but yes.

23      Q. Was that from the first day that you experienced  
24           difficulty with him?

25      A. I honestly couldn't tell you the time frame. I couldn't

1 tell you the time frame. I mean, I don't think anyone  
2 does it from day 1, but my strongest memories are of  
3 him.

4 Q. All right. I think if you have your statement at page 9  
5 and paragraph 42, this is the part of your statement  
6 where you talk about bullying.

7 A. Let me pull that up. Yes.

8 Q. And you start that by talking about yourself and you  
9 say:

10 "I think I was probably a very difficult child  
11 because I don't think I knew how to do life and I think  
12 everyone sensed that and this is why I had the  
13 experience that I had at Gordonstoun."

14 Is that --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- continuing the theme that, just as Craigclowan, you  
17 were an academic, shy, introverted boy?

18 A. Yeah, extremely shy and, you know, lacked any kind of  
19 confidence in a social setting.

20 Q. And thinking back to your dorm room, did you stand out  
21 amongst your five third formers?

22 A. Yeah, I mean, most of the people there, they just seemed  
23 socially much more comfortable. They were highly  
24 athletic. My sense was they just kind of knew how to  
25 navigate this world and I honestly don't think I had

1           a clue.

2       Q. And I think as you say, you think you made a mistake at  
3       the very beginning in terms of dress choice because, for  
4       example, you talk about the different types of jumper  
5       you could wear.

6       A. Yes.

7       Q. Either a V neck or a roll neck.

8       A. Roll neck, exactly.

9       Q. And you went for the latter thinking it would be warmer.

10      A. Yes.

11      Q. But that was a bad choice in terms of what was thought  
12      the norm in the school?

13      A. Exactly. That's correct.

14      Q. And again did you stand out for that reason amongst your  
15      peers?

16      A. I did.

17      Q. And was that something that they commented upon?

18      A. Yeah, they just made fun of me for it. You know,  
19      I still don't know why I just didn't make the switch,  
20      but maybe I -- this is in hindsight -- just felt  
21      resigned to being different.

22      Q. Did you feel being different -- and what I'm going onto  
23      next is the line on page 9, paragraph 42 where you say:  
24                "I was bullied almost every single day I was there.  
25      The fifth formers punched me, giving me a dead arm and

1           they knee'd me in the thigh. I had bruises on my body  
2           for almost a year and a half. Part of the reason  
3           I showered by myself and I tried to avoid changing with  
4           others was so that my bruises would not be seen. It was  
5           awful. I think they knew I wouldn't do anything and  
6           I didn't. This was horrible stuff and no one cared."

7           Did it occur to you to try and speak, for example,  
8           to Mr Goss?

9           A. I must say I think at this age I had internalised, fair  
10          or not, the idea that an adult wouldn't listen, because  
11          I saw my parents not listening when I made what  
12          I thought was my only attempt to communicate that  
13          I didn't want to go to this school. You know, and this  
14          is a different topic, but related, but this has been  
15          unfortunately part of my entire life is not really  
16          knowing how to speak up, and I didn't. I just --  
17          I probably should have, it seems kind of obvious  
18          after --

19          Q. After the event perhaps it does, but I think given what  
20          you've said about Mr Goss at the beginning of your  
21          statement, that he turned a blind eye, effectively, to  
22          a lot of things, did that perhaps prevent you from  
23          taking steps too?

24          A. Probably but I think more of it was just on me not  
25          having a voice.

1 Q. The focus --

2 A. And --

3 Q. Sorry, carry on.

4 A. I just -- I don't know, I just -- I just was so afraid

5 of ... I don't know if I was just afraid that I was

6 going to -- not say the wrong thing, but like I was this

7 tiny, tiny piece of a much bigger culture. And

8 I just -- I think the only thing that I remember

9 thinking is there's no way this is going to make any --

10 I feared the fact that it would make it -- somehow.

11 Q. You feared it would make it worse?

12 A. Yeah. Because then you're the snitch.

13 Q. Well, I was going to ask you about that. Was there

14 a culture of not snitching?

15 A. Oh yes.

16 Q. Was that made --

17 A. There was a culture of fear. At least from my

18 perspective. But again my perspective is that of a very

19 shy, awkward kid.

20 Q. You talk in particular detail of the boy, the fifth

21 former in your room who caused you particular difficulty

22 and you mention at paragraph 44 the difficulty you had

23 because if you coughed, that would have consequences at

24 night-time.

25 A. Absolutely.

1 Q. Why --

2 A. You were sent to a tiny little study room -- or I was  
3 sent to a small study room to sleep where there was no  
4 real place to sleep. And this happened frequently.

5 Q. I think, as you say, the result was you were petrified  
6 of coughing and you would spend your time trying not to  
7 cough.

8 A. Yeah, holding the pillow against my mouth so that if  
9 I did, it would be muffled.

10 Q. How many nights are we talking about?

11 A. Over the course of the year? Probably -- probably 15 or  
12 20.

13 Q. That you were sent to your study room or --

14 A. Yeah, exactly.

15 Q. Yes. Whereas I think your statement confirms you didn't  
16 really sleep.

17 A. No, and to this day I don't sleep well.

18 LADY SMITH: Did any member of staff ever find you sleeping  
19 in the study room?

20 A. No.

21 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown.

22 MR BROWN: Presumably with the routine in the house that  
23 we've heard of at Gordonstoun, or will hear of in  
24 Gordonstoun and elsewhere, there would be a formal  
25 process for getting pupils into their beds, but



1           thereafter was there any staff on duty?

2       A. No. It was the students in charge.

3       Q. And in the morning, was it the students who were

4           responsible for getting -- were the senior students

5           responsible for getting the younger ones up and about

6           and moving?

7       A. Yeah. They -- I think the reason no one ever suspected

8           anything is because, you know, we would all basically

9           head down the hallway outside for the morning run and

10          so, you know, whether I came out of my study hall and

11          into the -- someone may have thought that I was just

12          there getting something. I don't think people would

13          have thought twice about it.

14       Q. And as you've said, you wouldn't snitch, so it wouldn't

15          be something, from what you've said already, you were

16          likely to report anyway?

17       A. Well, that's exactly right.

18       Q. What about the other third formers in your dorm? Were

19          they aware of what was going on?

20       A. Well, the truth is I never said a thing, so I -- I'm not

21          sure. I certainly never had a conversation with anyone

22          about it. I mean, I talked to no one about this.

23          I didn't tell my parents. I certainly didn't talk to

24          Mr Goss. I mean, that was the problem is I just buried

25          all of it.

1 Q. I appreciate that. What I was perhaps pointing to was  
2 the fact you were in a room with four or five others --  
3 A. Yeah.  
4 Q. -- who might have been aware of you being ejected to go  
5 to your study room.  
6 A. Yeah, they would have been aware. That's an interesting  
7 thing. I never even -- maybe they didn't think to  
8 question it either. I don't know.  
9 Q. Because you go on in the statement to talk about other  
10 things that this boy made you do, for example hanging  
11 onto hot water pipes, holding a knife to your genitals  
12 so you wouldn't drop.  
13 A. That's correct.  
14 Q. Was that something that others would have seen?  
15 A. No. He always did that when it was just the two of us  
16 in the room.  
17 Q. So this was happening in the dorm room?  
18 A. In the same room, yeah.  
19 Q. And you say that happened on multiple occasions?  
20 A. Yes.  
21 Q. And you also talk about him using a knife.  
22 A. Yeah. He would ask me to put my hand -- I had  
23 a Scottish rug just to cover the surface of the table  
24 and I just had to leave my hand with my fingers spread  
25 and he would just put his knife in between my fingers at

1           faster and faster paces and on occasion it would  
2           actually go into my finger. And he thought this was  
3           hysterical.

4       Q. Again, was this in the dorm room?

5       A. This was in my -- in the -- where I studied.

6       Q. And was it again out of public view then?

7       A. Yes.

8       Q. Can you describe how you felt? (Pause).

9       A. Honestly terrified and worthless.

10      Q. Okay, thank you. This is all talking about the house  
11      you were in.

12      A. Yeah.

13      Q. You also mentioned the culture of the school. Are you  
14      all right to continue?

15      A. Yeah, yeah.

16      Q. Thank you. In terms of the feeling terrified in the  
17      house, did that extend more widely throughout the  
18      school?

19      A. You know, I think being outside of the actual house was  
20      a bit of a relief because it was all just much more  
21      public and I just honestly largely kept to myself with  
22      eating and going to the little music place. So yeah,  
23      the fear -- until the stuff happened with the teacher,  
24      you know, the fear was mainly contained to the house.

25      Q. So being out of the house was a relief, from what you're

1           saying?

2       A.   Yeah, it was.

3       Q.   And presumably -- sorry.

4       A.   Because they didn't do anything away from the house.

5           I don't have a single memory of something bad happening

6           away from the house. I mean in terms of the bullying.

7           It was -- yeah, it was always in the building.

8       Q.   Okay. But I think, as we see at paragraph 37 of your

9           statement on page 8, and I think you've just touched on

10          this, hinted at it, you used to walk around the campus

11          by yourself --

12      A.   Yes.

13      Q.   -- when you were at the house, listening to music or

14          going to the music room?

15      A.   Yeah.

16      Q.   And you describe yourself as a loner.

17      A.   Yeah. It just felt safer.

18      Q.   And should we understand that you would spend time out

19          of the house if you could?

20      A.   Yeah, and I did.

21      Q.   All right.

22      A.   Whenever I could, I did.

23      Q.   Sorry, whenever you?

24      A.   Whenever I could, sorry, I did, yeah.

25      Q.   All right. But I think, as you set out, that loner

1 status was picked up by one of the staff?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And I know you go on to talk about being invited to his  
4 house, but can you remember how you first had connection  
5 with this individual? Did he teach you?

6 A. Yes, he taught me physics.

7 Q. But was he someone that you would meet when you were  
8 walking around the campus on your own or in the music  
9 room?

10 A. Honestly, not that I recall, but I -- I don't have any  
11 memories of that, so ...

12 Q. All right. But your statement says "he picked up on the  
13 fact"?

14 A. That was in class.

15 Q. That was in class, sorry, that's what I wanted to  
16 clarify.

17 A. Yeah, sorry, I should have been clearer. In class.

18 Q. In class. And having picked up on that in class, what  
19 did he do next?

20 A. Well, this seems silly to say now, but he was just  
21 really nice to me. Like he was just kind, soft-spoken.  
22 He just seemed interested, which was at the time very  
23 unusual for anyone to be interested.

24 Q. I'm sorry, it broke up there. At the time, you said?

25 A. Let me close the window. Just -- it was almost a relief

1           for someone to be interested.

2       Q.   Yes.  And I think he talked to you, you tell us in the  
3           statement, about model aeroplanes and was that something  
4           that interested you?

5       A.   Yeah.  Growing up we had a railway set, we had model  
6           aeroplanes.  It was all just -- it was familiar enough  
7           that, you know, there was a connection over it.

8       Q.   And you say that he started inviting you to his house on  
9           Saturday afternoons.

10      A.   Yes.

11      Q.   So did he --

12      A.   That's correct.

13      Q.   He lived on campus?

14      A.   He did, yeah, right on the other side of campus from  
15           where our house was, but yes.

16      Q.   You say "he started inviting me".  Did you go to his  
17           house many times or was it just once?

18      A.   No, it was several times.

19      Q.   All right.  And were there model aeroplanes?

20      A.   You know what's so weird about this, because I have  
21           thought about this for so long, I don't even remember.

22      Q.   Okay.

23      A.   And I'm sorry for that.

24      Q.   But there came a time when something happened, is that  
25           correct, which stopped your visiting him?

1 A. Exactly.

2 Q. In the run-up to that, and you've talked about it in  
3 your statement, was there anything different at the  
4 beginning of your visit or was it just another Saturday  
5 afternoon visit to his house which made you feel  
6 presumably someone was interested in you?

7 A. Yeah, at the beginning it was, from what I remember,  
8 just the same. It was -- the moment that it changed was  
9 when he showed me that room that I mentioned in my  
10 statement.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. That was the bedroom, the small bedroom.

13 Q. Because I think he indicates that he's about to get  
14 married.

15 A. Exactly.

16 Q. And that conversation led on to the fact that he had  
17 bought oils?

18 A. Yeah, they were at the head of the bed. From what  
19 I remember, there was a table or a -- just, you know,  
20 the way that some beds have like a -- a small shelf.

21 Q. Sure. And what did you understand these oils were for?

22 A. Well, he told me that they were what he used on his --  
23 and again I don't remember if he said fiancée or  
24 whatever, but on that person.

25 Q. But I think as your statement makes plain, the gist of

1           it was he wanted to practise on you?

2       A. Yes, exactly.

3       Q. When you'd been at his house previously, had you ever

4       been in this room, his bedroom?

5       A. No, I had not.

6       Q. Where had you previously spent time?

7       A. Just in the living room.

8       Q. All right. And I think you talk about him asking you to

9       take off your upper clothes and --

10      A. Yes.

11      Q. -- the oil was then used as you lay on the bed on you?

12      A. Yes.

13      Q. There came a point, from what you're saying, that you

14      suddenly though, putting it simply, this is not good?

15      A. Yeah, I mean -- I mean, I knew well before -- I mean,

16      but again this was unfortunately my state is I just --

17      I had spent so much of my time being paralysed out of

18      fear. I mean, I knew -- it's the same thing with the

19      bullying. It was the anticipation of it. I knew every

20      day that something would happen, I just didn't know

21      when, I didn't know how, and so it was almost a horrible

22      deja vu that I knew something was about to happen, but

23      I was just so frozen. And this is the part that haunts

24      me and that has always haunted me, is why I let people

25      do this to me. But the good news is I -- you know, was



1           able to leave before something worse could have  
2           happened.

3       Q. Well, that's what I was going to say, because you did  
4           stop it. You left.

5       A. I did. I did leave.

6       Q. And never returned.

7       A. Never returned.

8       Q. Did the teacher have further contact with you after  
9           that?

10      A. Not outside of class.

11      Q. Was anything ever said about it?

12      A. Not on my end, no.

13      Q. Did he say anything to you or was it just back to  
14           a teacher/pupil relationship in class?

15      A. Yeah. I mean, again he was very nice. I don't know as  
16           an adult if he was nervous that I was going to say  
17           something, I mean I remember him continuing to be very  
18           nice.

19      Q. But there were no more invitations to his house?

20      A. Not that I recall, no, and I know that I never went back  
21           after that.

22      Q. Okay. Was that in your first or your second year, do  
23           you remember?

24      A. No, that was my first year.

25      Q. All right. The second year, from what you said, became

1           easier because there was a new building for the same  
2           house that had an exchange because the building changed.

3       A.   Yes.  The best part was that, you know, I was -- well,  
4           two things changed.  I mean, first, we all had our own  
5           room, so I just spent most of it there and I felt much  
6           safer in my own room.  And then the second is at some  
7           point that semester, my parents told us that we were  
8           moving to the US.

9       Q.   Do you remember how you felt when you heard that?

10      A.   Ha, deliriously happy.  Because whereas before I was  
11           anticipating several years of this, I knew that there  
12           was an end coming.  And once I shared with people that  
13           I was leaving, at that point they seemed just less  
14           interested.  It just -- the second year was definitely  
15           better than the first.  Much better.

16      Q.   And obviously it came to a stop early.

17      A.   It did, yeah, because we left in December.

18      Q.   I appreciate in your statement you talk about other  
19           aspects of your life, but looking at the Gordonstoun  
20           phase -- I appreciate it's part of your life, but are  
21           there things about the Gordonstoun time that you can  
22           identify having particular impact?

23      A.   Things that actually happened at Gordonstoun?

24      Q.   Yeah, or the experience of being at Gordonstoun.

25      A.   Well, unfortunately, I mean, as I put in my statement,

1           it ultimately all came to a head because -- I know this  
2           because I've met in the world other people who have gone  
3           through traumatic things as children and some people end  
4           up turning to alcohol, others to drugs. For me I ended  
5           up developing a near-fatal eating disorder, all borne  
6           out of carrying and not knowing what to do with  
7           everything that happened during my time at Gordonstoun.  
8       Q. I think, as we see from your statement, life is very  
9           different now. Or significantly different then.  
10      A. Yeah. No, I'm physically healthy again.  
11      Q. And you have your own child?  
12      A. I do. He is almost 15 months old.  
13      Q. Looking back to Gordonstoun, presumably once you left  
14           aged 14 you were happy to see the back of it, from what  
15           you've been saying.  
16      A. Yes.  
17      Q. But I understand that you did contact Gordonstoun a long  
18           time after?  
19      A. I did. Just a short email to the head of the school at  
20           the time.  
21      Q. And were you satisfied by the response?  
22      A. I was, yeah. It was filled with compassion and  
23           understanding.  
24      Q. When was that?  
25      A. I honestly don't remember. Years ago. But I don't

1           remember the exact date. I am sure I could dig the  
2           email up somewhere.

3       Q. It's all right. But I think, as you say, you got a very  
4           quick response, so it was taken seriously.

5       A. Absolutely. He did mention -- even though I said, you  
6           know, I'm not going to take this any further, he said  
7           that he was obligated to notify the police and  
8           I understand that he did.

9       Q. Do you remember which headmaster it was?

10      A. I mean, I remember -- I remember his name -- if someone  
11           gave me his name I would know it.

12      Q. Was it Simon Reid?

13      A. What's his first name?

14      Q. Simon Reid?

15      A. Yes.

16      Q. So there was no trying to ignore it on the part of the  
17           school?

18      A. No. He did acknowledge that he was -- based on the time  
19           of my email, he was leaving for another post, I remember  
20           that.

21      Q. Okay. Have you had contact with the school since then?

22      A. No, I have not.

23      Q. But obviously you wanted to come and speak to us?

24      A. Yeah. I did.

25      Q. How did that come about?

1       A. To be totally honest, I think before I did finally reach  
2       out and, you know, have the many conversations I've had,  
3       I just didn't feel whole. And I think part of me just  
4       wanted to put all of this behind me and I assumed that  
5       by going through this process I could move beyond it.

6       Q. Is there anything else you would like to add, 'Bob'?

7       A. Well, the only other thing that really got me motivated  
8       is I discovered I had a health issue, which I learned  
9       about almost a year ago, and now that I have a child,  
10      there is a part of me that just wanted to -- I don't  
11      know, make sure that this story was told, because my  
12      grandfather died a year younger than I am right now and  
13      the disorder that I have is called the silent killer and  
14      I don't really know what my lifespan is going to be, so  
15      I just felt a sense of urgency that this is important  
16      for that reason.

17      MR BROWN: Thank you for sharing your story with us. I have  
18      no further questions for you.

19      LADY SMITH: Are there any outstanding questions or  
20      applications for questions for 'Bob'?

21            'Bob', that certainly does complete the questions we  
22      have for you. Thank you so much for engaging with us.

23      As Mr Brown, I hope, has made clear to you, we have your  
24      statement, I've read your statement. It's part of your  
25      evidence and it's been helped enormously by you being

1           able to talk to us about it and the events that you  
2           cover in your statement, your personal feelings and your  
3           thoughts about the school today. I'm very grateful to  
4           you for doing that and doing it over a link many miles  
5           away, but it has good impact. It's been really good  
6           hearing from you and I hope you're now able to return to  
7           enjoying the joy of your 15-month-old child. Thank you  
8           for that.

9       A. If I just can say something to you: thank you for  
10       caring.

11       LADY SMITH: Not at all. Take care. Thank you, 'Bob'.

12       LADY SMITH: So, Mr Brown.

13       MR BROWN: My Lady, I think now would be an opportunity for  
14           the shorthand writers to have a break and the rest of  
15           the afternoon may in fact be a little easier for them  
16           because I would propose that we start reading in for  
17           a little while just to try and make up ground so that  
18           Monday morning should see off the remaining read-ins  
19           which would have been covered on Monday and yesterday.

20       LADY SMITH: Mr Brown, I don't think of them as seeing them  
21           off. I look forward to them being presented on Monday  
22           to add to our valuable evidence and I'm sure you don't  
23           think of them that way either.

24       MR BROWN: No, my Lady.

25       LADY SMITH: Very well. I'll break now, we'll have

1           a breather and then get back so that we can do some  
2           reading.

3           (3.05 pm)

4                               (A short break)

5           (3.27 pm)

6           LADY SMITH: Mr Brown.

7           MR BROWN: My Lady, I would invite my learned junior

8               Ms Bennie to read four, possibly five statements.

9           LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

10          MS BENNIE: Thank you, my Lady.

11          LADY SMITH: Ms Bennie, whenever you're ready.

12          MS BENNIE: My Lady, the first statement bears the reference  
13               GOR-000004510.

14               My Lady, this statement is in the form of an email.  
15               The email is dated 23 September 2020. The witness  
16               wishes to remain anonymous and the witness has adopted  
17               the pseudonym of 'Andrew'.

18               "I was a pupil at the school from 1945 to 1951.  
19               Kurt Hahn was the headmaster in what was the formative  
20               period in my life. I interjected his values of  
21               directness, honesty and integrity based on a love of  
22               truth and a willingness to stand up and be counted and  
23               speak out in its name. Dr Hahn attracted staff who  
24               shared his values, and this and his concern for us as  
25               individuals helped make me who I am today.

1 Relationships between staff and pupils were  
2 exceptional. They sought out and encouraged our  
3 strengths and tried to help us overcome any weaknesses,  
4 failing badly in my case when it came to maths. I was  
5 impressed at the time by the depth of the knowledge of  
6 each one of us. Trust was mutual, and with remarkably  
7 few exceptions, the honour system was seen to work. The  
8 one hour weekly walk Colour Bearers were trusted to take  
9 on our own was often extended, thanks in my case to the  
10 Moray Firth, which I learned to love in all its changing  
11 moods and seasons.

12 My time at the school made me who I am, and I am  
13 lastingly grateful to Kurt Hahn, the ethos he created  
14 and the exceptional staff he attracted.

15 I have no objection to my witness statement being  
16 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. The  
17 facts stated in this witness statement are true."

18 My Lady, the next witness statement bears the  
19 reference WIT-3-00000093. My Lady, this witness has  
20 chosen to remain anonymous. He has chosen the pseudonym  
21 of 'Malcolm'.

22 "I was born in 1943, in Crieff. My father died in  
23 1948. My elder brother and I were raised by my mother  
24 and when my brother was 12 it was suggested to my mother  
25 that it would be best if we were to go to boarding



1 school, as the remaining family only consisted of my  
2 mother and my aunt. We led a very comfortable life in  
3 a loving home. Up to the age of 13 both my brother and  
4 I had gone to the local school, Morrison's Academy,  
5 where we were not star pupils.

6 I followed my brother to Gordonstoun in 1957 ... my  
7 mother was very satisfied with how my brother had  
8 developed and she had no hesitation in me following him.  
9 I left in 1962 having had many thoroughly enjoyable and  
10 life-enhancing experiences.

11 The routines at the school at that time, based on  
12 the training plan and house/school duties, were very  
13 special and without parallel in boarding education in  
14 the UK. The opportunities outside of the classroom,  
15 which are well documented, were exceptional, and  
16 I participated in most of them. However, the most  
17 important aspect of life at Gordonstoun in my time there  
18 was the emphasis that was placed on self-reliance, which  
19 was nurtured in the context of a secure house  
20 environment. The housemaster, and often also his wife,  
21 together with the assistant housemaster, provided the  
22 basis of that secure environment, but it was the way in  
23 which the senior boys were encouraged to play a major  
24 part in fostering the development of the younger boys  
25 that greatly benefitted both generations. It was not by

1 chance that the head boy was called the Guardian and the  
2 heads of house, house helpers. Whilst at Gordonstoun  
3 and subsequently it was quite clear to me that the ethos  
4 and the atmosphere at the school were entirely different  
5 from other UK boarding schools, where the quality of  
6 life of the whole school community and the individual  
7 was of much less importance than at Gordonstoun. On the  
8 specific of discipline, it was particularly well-handled  
9 both in the implementation and the punishment, which was  
10 non-physical. For trivial discipline matters the  
11 punishment was rather boring and unpleasant, penalty  
12 drill, and for more serious misdemeanours, silent walks  
13 carried out under trust at inconvenient times, where one  
14 had the opportunity to consider where one had erred.

15 As is self-evident, communications in the late 1950s  
16 were considerably different than today. Pay phones were  
17 in scarce supply! However, in retrospect, I realise that  
18 through letter writing and perhaps in my case more  
19 importantly by my housemasters keeping in regular touch  
20 with my mother, which was greatly appreciated by her and  
21 me, I never felt lonely or vulnerable - apart from my  
22 first very day. Although I cannot recall ever having to  
23 speak to my housemaster about any personal matters that  
24 might have been concerning me, I know, based on the  
25 experience of others, that had I the need to do so, he

1        would have been very approachable and understanding.

2                In contrast to the societal aspects of the school,  
3        the academic teaching, I am afraid, left a lot to be  
4        desired and as I recall the clear/academic advice was  
5        pretty much non-existent. That having been said, the  
6        school was instrumental in finding me a position when my  
7        A-level results were less than anticipated. Due to the  
8        geographically diverse origin of the student population  
9        and the much more difficult travel arrangements at the  
10       time, there was very little post-school contact with  
11       fellow students. It was only in later life that  
12       connections have been made and friendships renewed and  
13       created. Without exception the connections that I have  
14       made over the past 15/20 years have confirmed just how  
15       much we all had enjoyed our time at Gordonstoun, and  
16       although recognising its weaknesses academically, we  
17       have all acknowledged and have been very grateful for  
18       the very important contribution it made to our  
19       subsequent lives.

20               On the specific issue of child abuse I was and never  
21       have been aware of any such issue when I was at the  
22       school, neither abuse by a member of staff nor by  
23       another pupil. Of course, there were instances of minor  
24       bullying, which I am afraid can naturally occur in such  
25       close-knit communities, but when there were any serious

1 episodes identified by senior boys or staff then they  
2 were swiftly and properly dealt with by the housemaster  
3 and when appropriate by the headmaster.

4 I have no objection to my witness statement being  
5 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.

6 I believe the facts stated in this statement are true."

7 My Lady, the statement is signed by 'Malcolm' and  
8 it's dated 28 September 2020.

9 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

10 MS BENNIE: The next witness statement bears the reference  
11 WIT-1-000000356.

12 My Lady, this witness wishes to remain anonymous and  
13 he has chosen the pseudonym of 'George'.

14 "My name is 'George'. I was born in 1946. My  
15 contact details are known to the Inquiry.

16 I was born in Keith and was the youngest of three  
17 children. I had two elder sisters ....

18 I was about 14 when I went to Gordonstoun School.  
19 I had heard about it before I went and it had a sort of  
20 mystique around it. I had heard that it was into  
21 fitness and you had two showers a day. It didn't have  
22 a reputation for bullying.

23 Before I started at Gordonstoun, I had to go for  
24 an interview with the headmaster, Mr Chew. My father  
25 drove me there but I had to go for the interview on my

1           own. Even at that time I thought Mr Chew was  
2           a foreboding and unpleasant individual. He faced the  
3           window the whole time I was there and fired questions at  
4           me. This made me feel quite inadequate.

5           I fumbled my way through the interview and was  
6           accepted. I don't know how my father afforded the  
7           fees ... the fees were means tested. Maybe my father  
8           had some family money he used. I really don't know.

9           I was a day pupil when I first went to Gordonstoun.  
10          My father arranged for me to stay with a family at  
11          Duffus Village. I think the school organised this.  
12          They were a nice family and I didn't mind staying there.

13          My school uniform for going to Gordonstoun had been  
14          bought somewhere in Edinburgh. There was a day and  
15          evening uniform. There was also an option to have  
16          a kilt.

17          I arrived at Gordonstoun at the start of the [REDACTED]  
18          term. There were three terms in all, spring, summer and  
19          autumn. Gordonstoun was a large estate. There was  
20          a lodge at the east and west entrances. I think it  
21          would have been about three kilometres between both  
22          lodges.

23          The main building was where you went for classes.  
24          It also had a large dining room. There were a number of  
25          other buildings within the grounds that were used for

1 education.

2 I was put into Duffus House. Duffus House was one  
3 of the seven houses that formed part of Gordonstoun.  
4 You stayed with the same house for the length of time  
5 you were there.

6 Duffus had about six or seven dormitories. I would  
7 stay in one of these when I was a boarder in my last  
8 year. There were around 60 boys in Duffus.

9 Duffus House was the second furthest away from the  
10 school. Hopeman Lodge was the further away. I think it  
11 was about 3 miles from the school. Duffus was about  
12 a mile from the school. When you went to the school  
13 from Duffus, you either walked or took a bike.

14 There was a structure to the boys at the school. At  
15 the top there was the head boy. He was referred to as  
16 the Guardian. Then it was the house helpers, Colour  
17 Bearers and half Colour Bearers. These positions were  
18 all chosen by their peers.

19 When you arrived you weren't allowed to wear your  
20 evening uniform until after you had been at the school  
21 for a certain time.

22 DGP [REDACTED] was the housemaster for Duffus.  
23 The assistant housemaster was Harry Potts. He was  
24 an Australian. They were both nice and I never had any  
25 problems with them. I don't remember being shown around

1           or told anything about the routine. I am assuming I was  
2           and they explained the routine but I can't be certain.

3           There was a very regimented daily procedure for all  
4           pupils. I think there was something that had happened  
5           a few years previously when a pupil had died. He had  
6           been out on a sand dune in a tunnel when it collapsed.  
7           I assume that this was why the check-in was in place.  
8           Things were much more stringent.

9           As a day pupil I arrived after breakfast and went  
10          straight to classes.

11          Duffus was the only house with its own kitchen and  
12          dining area. The meals were good at Gordonstoun.  
13          I would say they were about 30 years ahead of their time  
14          in terms of the food that was provided to you. There  
15          was margarine, not butter. This was a health choice.  
16          There was also things like muesli and whole grain bread.

17          It was quite secular at Duffus. There wasn't the  
18          opportunity to mix with the other houses as we had our  
19          meals together at Duffus. The other boys from different  
20          houses ate together in the main house. The boys would  
21          all sit in their own house groups within the refectory.

22          It was mandatory that you joined one of the services  
23          within Gordonstoun. These were either one of the Armed  
24          Forces. After this you could join the lifeboat,  
25          mountain rescue or scouts. I was a wimp so I chose the

1       scouts. I did manage to become a Queen's scout.

2               Sport was a big part of Gordonstoun. Rugby was the  
3       main thing up until Christmas. After this it was  
4       hockey. Then in the spring and summer it was athletics.  
5       I preferred hockey.

6               Everyone had a training plan. This laid out what  
7       was expected of you every day. There was a morning run  
8       but I missed this as a day pupil. The training plan  
9       also detailed how many press ups and skips you had to do  
10      each day. There was another bit that said you couldn't  
11      eat anything between meals.

12              There wasn't much spare time to do your own thing  
13      other than school activities. If I did have some spare  
14      time on a Saturday afternoon I might occasionally take  
15      a bus into Elgin.

16              I used to arrange football matches between boys from  
17      the school and local village teams. This was frowned  
18      upon as rugby was the main sport at Gordonstoun.

19              I didn't feel out of place in the class when  
20      I arrived. It was the same as a secondary school with  
21      different teachers for each subject.

22              In the morning you had normal classes in the  
23      classroom. In the afternoon you would play sport. Then  
24      there were evening classes between 4 and 6. After the  
25      evening classes you would go for dinner. Once you had



1 dinner, you would do prep.

2 I think I became even lazier at Gordonstoun. As you  
3 got older there was more free time. You were expected  
4 to go to the library during this free time and study  
5 there. I would just go there and read magazines such as  
6 Time. I never swotted for anything in my life.

7 There were classes on a Saturday morning. On  
8 a Saturday afternoon there was interschool sports. This  
9 would mainly be the upper echelons who would play.

10 If you weren't doing well with schoolwork then there  
11 was no encouragement from the teachers to do better.

12 Learning French or Latin was beyond me. I was able  
13 to pick up sciences and maths without any problem.

14 Most of the teachers were English from universities  
15 such as Oxbridge. I remember there was a good maths  
16 teacher. She was from Aberdeen University. My history  
17 teacher was also good. The teacher who saved me  
18 academically was the biology teacher. He had escaped  
19 from the Nazis before the purge of the Jews. He was  
20 interred in Canada during the war.

21 I passed most of my O-levels. I failed my English  
22 O-level and I was told I would have to stay back a year.  
23 My father kicked up hell about this and I was eventually  
24 allowed to move on to the next year.

25 Gordonstoun found me a summer job and I was paid for

1           doing this work.

2           There was a small church in the grounds of  
3           Gordonstoun. This would hold services for individual  
4           houses every seven weeks. There was no restrictions on  
5           who could go.

6           I knew one of the boys who was Jewish. His faith  
7           was accommodated on a Friday.

8           On a Sunday evening we would all go to the church  
9           service at the services centre within the grounds. It  
10          was just a big hall. You didn't have a choice. You had  
11          to go.

12          I don't remember any inspections at the school.  
13          There might have been but I don't have any knowledge of  
14          these.

15          I had no engagement with the housemaster regarding  
16          counseling or reviewing how I was doing at school.

17          There were no parent and teacher meetings at  
18          Gordonstoun. It wasn't practical due to where a lot of  
19          the parents lived. There was reports sent out to the  
20          parents.

21          Discipline.

22          There was only very occasional use of corporal  
23          punishment at Gordonstoun. I never received this  
24          punishment. There was an emphasis to instill  
25          self-discipline by following your daily training plan.

1           One of the few times I was aware of someone  
2           receiving corporal punishment was when two students were  
3           disciplined. I don't have first-hand knowledge of what  
4           had happened. I think I heard about them being  
5           disciplined when it became common knowledge around the  
6           school.

7           An older boy from Round Square had a crush on  
8           a younger pupil. Round Square was one of the other  
9           houses in the grounds of Gordonstoun. The younger boy  
10          worked in the quartermaster's store as he was attached  
11          to the navy. The older boy locked the other boy in the  
12          store and made a sexual advance on him. The boy managed  
13          to get out of the room and reported it to the staff.

14          I heard that the perpetrator's father was called  
15          into the school. Mr Chew told the father that if he  
16          beat his son with the cane then he might be allowed to  
17          stay. After the father had caned his son, Mr Chew said  
18          the school didn't tolerate the sort of behaviour the son  
19          had been involved in. The pupil was then told to leave  
20          the school. As I have said, this was the talk around  
21          the school but I didn't see anything first hand.

22          When I did hear about the punishment for the student  
23          I found it totally abhorrent. I thought there was no  
24          sense of justice in what had happened.

25          In my last year at Gordonstoun I was a boarder. My

1 father made this decision. I think it was to try and  
2 make sure that I got decent A-levels.

3 I stayed in a dormitory within Duffus. The  
4 dormitory had between six to eight boys in it. It was  
5 all boys around the same age as myself. I think that  
6 each dormitory had boys of roughly the same age. There  
7 might have been about a year of a difference but not  
8 anything more.

9 I would say there was more constraint as a boarder.  
10 I remember it always being very cold at night due to the  
11 windows being open.

12 By the time I moved in as a boarder I was a lot  
13 fitter. I was now a senior pupil but I never got to the  
14 top of the 'greasy pole' as a senior prefect.

15 There was a house helper who had his own room at  
16 Duffus although the prefects had responsibility for the  
17 dormitories.

18 As a boarder I had to do the morning runs. We ran  
19 about four or five hundred metre in all weathers. The  
20 only time we didn't do it was when it was blowing  
21 a blizzard.

22 Abuse at Gordonstoun.

23 I always thought of bullying as part of the scene at  
24 that time. One of the seniors in my house bullied me  
25 and I held a grudge against him. The senior thought of

1           himself as the house hard man. I think he was about  
2           three years ahead of me.

3           After sport you always had to have a shower. It  
4           would be a warm shower then a cold shower. When I came  
5           out of the shower I would be flicked with a wet towel by  
6           this senior. It didn't leave a mark or a bruise on me  
7           but I didn't like it. This happened numerous times to  
8           me. His friend would also do the same thing to me.  
9           This bullying started not long after I arrived at  
10          Gordonstoun.

11          I think the same thing with the wet towel would have  
12          happened to other pupils. I honestly cannot remember.

13          The senior would also serve the food at meal times.  
14          On one occasion when I went for my food he denied me  
15          having a dessert. He said I wasn't getting any as I was  
16          too fat.

17          The senior came back to the school as an adult  
18          whilst I was still there. He gave a lecture in the  
19          classroom. He would have recognised me. I thought he  
20          would have said sorry, but he didn't.

21          There were also [REDACTED] who bullied me. When I was in  
22          the showers they would come in behind me with their  
23          hockey sticks and pull it back through my legs hitting  
24          my testicles. This happened more than once. It was  
25          nowhere near as bad as the bullying I received from the

1           senior.

2           I have told my partner and sister about the bullying  
3           which I received at the school.

4           Leaving Gordonstoun.

5           You could sit external exams at the end of each  
6           year. When you were old enough you could sit certain  
7           A-level exams for specific universities. These weren't  
8           for specific exams for entrance to the university. It  
9           was just extra if you needed to sit these.

10          I had a place at Aberdeen University to study  
11          medicine. I couldn't take it up as I didn't pass  
12          French. I always struggled with that as a language.

13          I secured a place at Robert Gordon's College  
14          Aberdeen to study pharmacy. After about a year I moved  
15          to Lancaster University and studied biological sciences  
16          and then I managed to get my degree in this subject.

17          The family home was still in Keith. I would still  
18          go back there. I did have a few different jobs when  
19          I was back in Keith.

20          In the mid-60s my sisters moved to New Zealand. Not  
21          long after this my father retired and also moved there.  
22          Eventually I joined them and started to get into  
23          teaching.

24          I taught chemistry and biology at the same school  
25          for 30 years before retiring.

1           In 1992 I had an exchange with a teacher from  
2           Kilmarnock. Whilst I was there I went back to  
3           Gordonstoun. I enquired at Duffus House. I was given  
4           short shrift. The staff weren't rude but they weren't  
5           particularly helpful towards an ex-pupil.

6           I had another visit to Gordonstoun in 2018. The  
7           staff member I spoke to was very present, more helpful  
8           than my last visit. I was able to walk right through  
9           the grounds from one side to the other.

10          I did join the Gordonstoun Association. I just  
11          wanted to see what my old school cohorts were up to now.

12          About four years ago a female from the Gordonstoun  
13          Association phoned me. She kept calling me sir, which  
14          I asked her not to do, and I eventually hung up on her.

15          I have never kept in touch with anyone from my time  
16          at Gordonstoun. I haven't been to any reunions.

17          Lessons to be learned.

18          In my opinion going to Gordonstoun was a complete  
19          waste of time for me. It didn't have the desired effect  
20          on me in terms of my education. It might have made me  
21          a bit more self-reliant.

22          As a fee-paying school the education standards  
23          should have been much higher. As a parent I would have  
24          been appalled at how bad the education provided was.

25          I think that there should have been more oversight

1 by the staff. The pupils were more or less left to get  
2 on with it. You weren't really encouraged by the staff  
3 to do well.

4 There should have been more inspections of boarding  
5 schools. I think that the bullying still goes on.  
6 I don't think Gordonstoun was worse than any other  
7 school. I would like changes to be made so that there  
8 wasn't this opportunity for bullying to take place.

9 There should be something in place to report  
10 incidents. It might be that this is now in place for  
11 that to happen.

12 I have no objection to my witness statement being  
13 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.  
14 I believe the facts stated in the witness statement are  
15 true."

16 My Lady, the statement is signed and it's dated  
17 15 March 2020.

18 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

19 MS BENNIE: My Lady, the next witness statement bear the  
20 reference WIT-3-000000096.

21 My Lady, this witness wishes to remain anonymous and  
22 he's adopted the pseudonym of 'Harry.'

23 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

24 MS BENNIE: "I reside in England. I was born in 1950 and  
25 I am now 69 years old.



1 I am married with three children and a grandfather  
2 of two.

3 I was a boarding pupil at Gordonstoun School  
4 from [REDACTED] 1964 to [REDACTED] 1968. I was not, nor have  
5 I ever been, a member of the school staff nor management  
6 nor of its alumni association.

7 I have visited the school three times since I left  
8 in 1968.

9 Abuse.

10 With respect to the first sentence of the attached  
11 notice and the notice's entire second paragraph, I have  
12 nothing to say, save that whilst I was at school there  
13 was no child abuse known to me, nor did I ever hear any  
14 rumours of any such abuse occurring or having occurred  
15 previously at the school. Today I would be extremely  
16 surprised to hear that anything of that kind had  
17 occurred.

18 Bullying.

19 Although it might be outside the main focus of your  
20 Inquiry, I would add that there was negligible bullying  
21 by staff or boys at the school whilst I was there.  
22 Of course, there were occasionally harsh words and  
23 unpleasantness, but that is a proper part of growing up.  
24 It was not systemic and there was nothing to which the  
25 term bullying could be applied. The overwhelmingly

1 positive nature of the relationships between the pupils  
2 and between the pupils and the staff came as a surprise  
3 to me when I arrived at the school because I had  
4 previously experienced an environment at my preparatory  
5 school, a very traditional one elsewhere, which was  
6 socially different, more hierarchical, and in some ways  
7 repressive. I well recall, many years ago in my 20s,  
8 not long after I had left school, reading a press  
9 interview of the great hotelier, Lord Forte, in which he  
10 said that he could tell within 10 seconds of entering  
11 one of his hotels whether it was being well-managed.  
12 This reminds me of the sharp realisation as  
13 a 13-year-old entering Gordonstoun that I had arrived at  
14 an institution having an entirely different corporate  
15 culture from my prep school and one that was completely  
16 wholesome.

17 When I joined the school, the backgrounds of the  
18 boys seem surprisingly diverse to me. There were the  
19 sons of Lossiemouth trawling skippers and Liverpool  
20 seamen, of highland farmers, pub owners, garage owners.  
21 Each had its own distinctive ways of speaking, some of  
22 which were very hard for me to understand. The overall  
23 effect was that the school was remarkably classless.  
24 I think the ordinary British social class system was  
25 completely absent from the school whilst I was there.

1           To put it succinctly, the school was set up by  
2 radicals. They were part of a small movement of  
3 educational reformers who, during and after World War I,  
4 had decided that the British public and state school  
5 system had some serious shortcomings. They included  
6 service chiefs (at a time when the Royal Navy and the  
7 army operated their own secondary schools), prominent  
8 academics and HM Inspectors of Schools.

9           Gordonstoun was set up in 1933 and its radicalism  
10 was still apparent when I was there in the 1960s.

11           These reformers took a close interest in the  
12 co-educational boarding school called Salem in southwest  
13 Germany. That had been set up by Kurt Hahn, a former  
14 German diplomat who had been a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford  
15 pre World War I and had British connections. Several of  
16 the reformers and other British student teachers visited  
17 and stayed with him at Salem.

18           That is relevant to your Inquiry insofar as concerns  
19 Gordonstoun because Mr Hahn's two core concerns were (1)  
20 character development and (2) the fostering of a sense  
21 of duty to the community, both the school community and  
22 the wider local community. Those core principles were  
23 exported to the school in Scotland when Salem was closed  
24 by the new German government in 1933 in reaction to  
25 Mr Hahn's published objections to that government. Some

1 of the reformers mentioned became early governors of the  
2 school.

3 The duties and the services.

4 The sense of duty is at the core of the school's  
5 system. All the pupils are assigned constantly rotating  
6 duties within the house which might for a junior pupil  
7 involve waking everybody at 6.50 with a hand bell or  
8 tidying the bicycle racks in the evening. A pupil in  
9 his mid teens was appointed captain of juniors, whose  
10 task was mentoring and helping them generally. The  
11 house captain was called the helper, and his task was  
12 quite literally to help everyone. There were also  
13 duties on a wider school level, especially for the older  
14 pupils.

15 Equally important was the system of services. These  
16 were largely directed towards the external community and  
17 they were operated by the pupils in the sixth form. For  
18 instance, from the earliest days of the school in the  
19 1930s, the school operated a fire service, a coastguard  
20 service and a mountain rescue service, all fully trained  
21 and accredited. There was also a community service.

22 I was a member of the pipe band, which spent a lot of  
23 time entertaining the elderly residents of care homes in  
24 Elgin and elsewhere and performing in aid of charity at  
25 locations such as Kyle of Lochalsh where there were

1 commonly large crowds of people waiting for the ferry in  
2 those days before the bridge.

3 Character development.

4 When I arrived at the school, there was - so it  
5 seemed to me - a strange lack of peer pressure.  
6 Individualism and eccentricity was tolerated at all  
7 levels, even warmly encouraged. However, particular  
8 prestige was attached to anyone who had done something  
9 especially creative or something which was deemed to  
10 benefit the community. Actually, that was much more  
11 prestigious than achieving good academic results or on  
12 the sporting field.

13 I feel that the efforts made by Mr Hahn and others  
14 under this heading were successful but I find it hard to  
15 pin down exactly why. One thing is very clear: there  
16 was a strong realisation that the best education happens  
17 away from the classroom and the sports field, indeed  
18 competitive sport was restricted to only twice per week.  
19 The reformers in the 1910s and 20s had started to  
20 generate huge pressure for the inclusion of outdoor  
21 activities in British schools beyond the conventional  
22 sports such as football.

23 As for the school, the organised outdoor activities  
24 partly took the form of expeditions and seamanship. The  
25 expeditions were really about climbing. I went on

1       a number of these, some of which were compulsory, others  
2       voluntary. As someone once said, the particular is more  
3       poignant than the general. So I will try to give one  
4       example from when I was 14.

5       This expedition was organised by two of my language  
6       teachers at the school who had been childhood friends in  
7       the Lake District before going to Cambridge. They were  
8       very keen mountaineers. I believe that they had agreed  
9       to go climbing together on the west coast on a weekend  
10      off, but then decided to take a few boys with them. It  
11      was simple for the boys to volunteer for such things and  
12      four of us did so. After classes on the Friday, we drew  
13      tents and equipment from the school's store and went off  
14      in one of the school's Land Rovers. We arrived  
15      somewhere unknown to myself long after dark, probably  
16      around 11 o'clock or later, and we pitched the tents.  
17      There were two three-man tents and I was invited to  
18      sleep between two of the teachers in one tent whilst the  
19      others slept in the other.

20      We awoke at dawn. I found that we were camped  
21      immediately below what seemed to be a very large and  
22      steep mountain. We spent most of the day climbing it  
23      and then back down to our tents and returned to the  
24      school on Sunday.

25      I mention that weekend because it seems relevant in

1 my brief attempt to describe the school's ethos for the  
2 purposes of your Inquiry. I feel school activities of  
3 that kind are much more difficulties nowadays because of  
4 changes in society that are not necessarily for the  
5 better. I spent two nights sleeping between two  
6 Master's which was perfectly straightforward at the  
7 time, but I feel in itself would start all kind of hares  
8 running if it were to happen today, and a day climbing  
9 a potentially very dangerous mountain all without any  
10 parental knowledge let alone any informed consent but  
11 throughout under extremely competent care.

12 In point of fact, this kind of experience for  
13 a child is exactly the reverse, diametrically opposed to  
14 child abuse. It was made possible by the practical and  
15 friendly relationship that existed between staff and  
16 pupils at the school.

17 In this respect, I could mention several other  
18 slightly similar situations. For example, my  
19 birdwatching expedition to Cape Wrath with the biology  
20 teacher, with a couple of other boys, which was quite  
21 unforgettable.

22 Perhaps the relationship between staff and the boys  
23 at the school were always unusual in comparison with  
24 conventional schools.

25 Your Inquiry and my summary.

1           I have mixed feelings concerning your Inquiry. I am  
2 warmly supportive of it. Plainly it is a good thing.  
3 Simultaneously, I do not feel that anyone could do  
4 justice to a school like Gordonstoun by following your  
5 list of topics as contained in the lower part of the  
6 attached sheet. Indeed, I feel a sense of irritation  
7 reading that list: those topics seem too superficial by  
8 far, especially when one considers, as I do, that real  
9 education starts outside the classroom, that  
10 extracurricular activities are formative, and that those  
11 things do not fall under any of your pro forma headings.  
12 For instance, the school cruises and expeditions cannot  
13 be described as trips in any normal sense of the word.  
14 They were stretching, hard work, by no means touristic  
15 and certainly they were not educational in the classroom  
16 sense. Sometimes they were wet and frightening, which  
17 was partly their point. Their formative value was that  
18 they served to demonstrate to oneself that one could  
19 survive, even flourish, in adverse conditions (and one  
20 did survive because of the quality of the staff). As  
21 such, they were confidence-building.

22           Did my Gordonstoun experiences help me in life? It  
23 is hard for me to say, but I do feel that if Gordonstoun  
24 had consisted merely of classroom education and trips  
25 (in the usual sense) it would have been very dull.



1           What certainly benefitted me was the broad social  
2       mix or cocktail of people at the school, both pupils and  
3       staff. That was truly extraordinary. I learned from  
4       many such people and it was their diversity which seems  
5       important in retrospect. I gained some knowledge of  
6       their lives, families and concerns of disparate  
7       individuals, more importantly I gained an interest in  
8       communicating with them, which has been useful to me.  
9       Although I spent my entire working life in Central  
10      London, my work was mainly carried out for overseas  
11      professionals and business people. One cannot flourish  
12      in that market, which is competitive and demanding,  
13      unless one positively enjoys dealing with people from  
14      a different social background and outlook to one's own.

15           I am now retired having been a lawyer in private  
16      practice in Central London for 41 years  
17      post-qualification.

18           I believe the facts and matters set out in this  
19      witness statement are true. I have no objection to my  
20      witness statement being published as part of the  
21      evidence to the Inquiry."

22           My Lady, the statement is signed and it's dated  
23      24 September 2020.

24      LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

25      MS BENNIE: My Lady, I think the proposal was to read five

1 statements but in view of the time.

2 LADY SMITH: I don't think so.

3 MS BENNIE: Thank you.

4 LADY SMITH: I think Mr Brown has decided to let us away.

5 Is that right, Mr Brown?

6 MR BROWN: Thank you. I think I said four or five. Four is  
7 ample.

8 LADY SMITH: Well, we've made good progress and caught up  
9 quite a bit.

10 Very well. Thank you all for your attention today.  
11 As I said earlier, we will be sitting on Monday morning,  
12 but there won't be any live witnesses. We'll be looking  
13 at a number of statements that people have provided and  
14 those will be presented, but we will be finished before  
15 lunchtime on Monday, if that helps anybody with their  
16 other arrangements.

17 Otherwise, I wish you all a good weekend and for  
18 those of you who are coming back on Monday, I look  
19 forward to seeing you then. Thank you.

20 (4.05 pm)

21 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am  
22 on Monday, 11 October 2021)

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