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Monday, 11 October 2021

(10.00 am)

LADY SMITH: Good morning and welcome to our second week in our new premises. Could I begin by apologising for the heat at the moment. Could you just bear with us. As you may appreciate, this being a new fit-out and a new system, it's still taking a bit of adjustment and calibration. We are on the case. If anybody needs to take a jacket off, I'd rather you did that than be uncomfortable in this, so do all you can to keep yourself comfortable and we'll keep working on trying to adjust the heating.

Mr Brown.

MR BROWN: My Lady, good morning. I would ask my learned junior to read the first statement and we'll be doing it turnabout pretty much.

LADY SMITH: Thank you very much. Thank you.

'Duncan' (read)

MS BENNIE: Thank you, my Lady. The first read-in is a statement which bears the reference WIT.001.001.7571. My Lady, this witness wishes to remain anonymous and he's adopted the pseudonym of 'Duncan'.

"My name is 'Duncan'. I was born in 1958. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. Prior to going to Gordonstoun, I stayed with my

1 parents and two sisters in Sussex and attended prep
2 school. Prep school was an unhappy experience. The
3 school was not run very well and the headmaster and his
4 wife were absolutely unsuitable as school leaders.

5 When my mother was young, she was brought up in
6 Aberlour and attended the prep school to Gordonstoun.
7 I was sent to board at Gordonstoun approximately
8 600 miles from my home. I was 13 years old when I went
9 to Gordonstoun.

10 We were on holiday during the summer of 1971 and we
11 visited Gordonstoun. I began attending the school in
12 the September. The school was set in a beautiful
13 location, but I found the boarding house to be very
14 austere. The seven different houses were spread over
15 a large campus.

16 On arrival I did not know anyone at the school. At
17 Gordonstoun there were about 420 pupils divided into
18 different houses with approximately 16 each. Each house
19 contained boys of all ages.

20 At the time of my arrival there, the headmaster was
21 John Kempe. I was allocated to Altyre House but later
22 moved to Cumming House because of severe bullying.

23 Altyre House was feral and I found it to be the
24 worst of the houses. The housemaster had no control
25 over the house. Both the housemaster and John Kempe

1 have since died.

2 Weak management of the school and houses had a bad
3 effect on the social cohesion of the school.

4 In September, during my first term, the senior boys
5 were good and did their duties without there being too
6 many issues. The behaviour of the older boys
7 deteriorated. I am not sure if this was an effect of
8 the school deteriorating, it is difficult to say what
9 the cause was. The relationship with my peers and the
10 boys at the top of the school behave abusive.

11 There was an assistant housemaster and he possibly
12 stayed within one of the rooms. The head boy had his
13 own bedsit. The remainder lived in dormitories with 15
14 to 20 boys. Study rooms had six desks and were very
15 cramped. Later in school life there were other study
16 rooms used by just two or three boys in each. The
17 larger study rooms and dormitories did not allow for any
18 peace or privacy while you were at Gordonstoun. They
19 later built more houses on the grounds and the study
20 rooms for one person became more common, which was
21 a huge improvement.

22 The school had a linen room where ladies worked.
23 Some of the boys would use the ladies as agony aunts.
24 There were no other female staff giving pastoral care.
25 I do not recall any cleaning staff and we would look

1 after the dormitory houses and study rooms ourselves.

2 In my second year girls were admitted, as the school
3 became co-ed. When I left there were around 120 girls
4 and I now believe girls make up about 40 per cent of
5 an intake.

6 There was a telephone box for each house. This was
7 situated outside the house and was used for contact
8 between the boys and the families. We would have to
9 queue in the cold in those days if we wanted to use it.
10 In later years the telephones were re-sited into the
11 halls of each house.

12 We would be woken about 7 o'clock and then go out
13 running in our shorts for a short distance. It was then
14 back to the locker room and a cold shower. We then
15 dressed and had to walk about half a mile for breakfast
16 in Gordonstoun House and then into chapel. You would be
17 carrying all the books you required for the day. They
18 amounted to quite a weight.

19 Food initially within the school was terrible. In
20 later years a refectory was built and things improved.
21 We supplemented our diet from outside. I recall
22 Scottish cheddar and oat cakes with fondness.

23 Classes started between 8.30 and 9 and there was
24 a tea break in the morning and after lunch we had
25 activities. The formal sports we took part in were

1 rugby and cricket. After activities it was back to the
2 house for tea and toast. Some days there were more
3 class about 5 o'clock for around an hour and a half.
4 Between 6.30 and 7 it was supper time. Prep was between
5 and 8 and 9 and into bed any time between 9.45 and
6 10.30.

7 On Saturdays we attended classes in the morning and
8 organised sport in the afternoon. Sundays we attended
9 chapel in the morning. It was completely feral the rest
10 of the day.

11 On Wednesdays it was services day. We were part of
12 the combined cadet force, the public school version of
13 air or army cadets. Services also involved coastguard,
14 navy, Fire Service and other services. We would attend
15 for about two hours in uniform. It began in the first
16 year with boys attending expedition training, learning
17 to use primus stoves and tents. We would visit the
18 services during the first year and at the end of that
19 year we chose the service we preferred. I joined the
20 navy cadets.

21 We would be encouraged to cycle and visit some of
22 the local sites. Sometimes that ride would be about
23 15 miles.

24 My O-levels were disastrous, as were my A-levels.
25 This was not uncommon at Gordonstoun as the education

1 standard was not great. My achievements were definitely
2 impacted by bullying issues. They did not breed
3 achievers. Having talked with others this was not too
4 dissimilar to many other public schools. Staff do make
5 more of an effort now but are restricted by rules and
6 government directions.

7 The education at Gordonstoun was second-rate. They
8 had a great difficulty in recruiting teaching staff
9 because of the remoteness. Some of the staff were also
10 involved in expeditions. They could be away on
11 expeditions during the school terms as well as during
12 holidays."

13 My Lady, I now move on to paragraph 23:

14 "Abuse at Gordonstoun.

15 There was a general deterioration with the
16 relationship with my peers and I was having a hard time.
17 There was abuse from many directions. I became very
18 defensive whenever I was under pressure and this
19 impacted throughout my adult life.

20 The school prefects (Colour Bearers) were some of
21 the older boys. The white stripes were house prefects.
22 They, along with Colour Bearer candidates, handed out
23 penalty drills to the others in their respective houses.
24 This would involve walking or running around the south
25 lawn for half an hour to an hour. This was a tedious

1 punishment and was handed out on an individual basis.

2 The house had an additional system of punishment
3 called emergency calls. This consisted of time spent
4 doing domestic chores. It was handed out by whatever
5 Colour Bearer was on duty. The punishments could be for
6 anything and would include running or walking in lines.
7 Other punishments could be for being late for classes or
8 sports.

9 The prefects did not control the general nastiness
10 between the boys. There was very little guidance on how
11 you should behave. Perhaps if they had tried to be
12 nicer things would have been better.

13 I moved to Cumming House because of bullying issues
14 in Altyre House. It took almost two years because my
15 housemaster was hardly interested. My experience of
16 abuse was similar to many at the school. Some boys
17 became involved in bullying cliques and thereby managed
18 to avoid being bullied. Housemasters were made aware of
19 the abuse and bullying but did very little about it.
20 I do not think the head was effective in his role.

21 Peter Larkman was the housemaster at Cumming House
22 and he later became the headmaster at another school.
23 He was more involved when abuse was reported and would
24 follow up on those incidents. This house was not feral
25 as the previous one. He could not solve all the issues

1 but he did try to improve things.

2 In the main people did not use their authority.
3 There were things reported to them but most of the
4 issues were not acted upon. This would range from mild
5 to extreme repetitive teasing, escalating to more
6 serious assaults. I was aware of some of the incidents.

7 I did report some of the abuse to the housemaster at
8 his house. I was given a cup of tea from his wife and
9 then sent on my way without any further action. The
10 housemaster's wife was nice to the pupils but quite
11 meek. The staff were probably afraid of losing their
12 role as there were no similar jobs locally.

13 Other than unpleasantness at Gordonstoun I did not
14 see anything that would warrant police involvement. My
15 parents were aware that I was unhappy at Gordonstoun.
16 We did look at other schools but a move never
17 materialised.

18 After leaving school I joined the merchant navy.
19 I was there for about six years before I left. I really
20 enjoyed the sailing aspect of life. I later went into
21 financial services and computer industry and have been
22 there ever since. My career has been marked by mistrust
23 of authority.

24 I am married and have three boys. They at all
25 attended private schools. The youngest went to

1 a different school. Two of them have done really well
2 but my other son found his experience at the other
3 school began to resemble my own experiences at
4 Gordonstoun, as a result of this he did not make it
5 academically. They all boarded at public school but not
6 until they were 13.

7 I joined a support group, Boarding Concern. They
8 believe that under 13s should not be in boarding
9 schools. With my son's experience I feel they may be
10 correct.

11 In summer of 2013 there was a Facebook page set up
12 for former Gordonstoun pupils. This grew into
13 a membership of around a thousand people. I am no
14 longer a member of this group as it was evident that
15 there were things being posted on this forum which were
16 inappropriate.

17 A new Facebook page was set up under the title of
18 Independent Gordonstoun Alumni Global Support Network,
19 G2. I am still a member of this group. Within a week
20 the group amassed around 120 members. I did not know
21 many of those in the group. There was such
22 an outpouring of different issues we put some
23 restrictions on what could be discussed on the open
24 forum, this included no publishing of staff names.
25 People had to adhere to confidentiality or leave the

1 group immediately.

2 During one discussion one of the members revealed
3 a particular unpleasant experience. This led to others
4 in the group revealing similar experiences. On this
5 page I would subdue some of the bullying that emerged in
6 the group. As the bullying lessened, the group turned,
7 and more people were revealing their experiences.

8 A month after starting the new group, known as G2,
9 I was contacted by a girl asking to talk and we
10 exchanged numbers. She disclosed that whilst at
11 Aberlour House she was raped by a member of staff when
12 she was around 12 years old. She talked to people at
13 the school at the time but none since. She told me that
14 she was aware of other girls who had been sexually
15 assaulted. In the group she later revealed her identity
16 and her allegations. I had to delete her name and
17 assign a nickname and delete references to her real
18 identity. This was to protect her and keep it all
19 private. The police later found another witness
20 corroborating this allegation. Unfortunately the case
21 failed when the witness was too unwell to attend court.

22 I spoke with her and advised her that she should be
23 contacting the police. I made initial approaches and
24 obtained the name of the officer in charge who she
25 should speak to. I made her aware that the information

1 I had was hearsay. There was no pressure for her to
2 talk to him but he awaited for her call.

3 She was having trouble discussing the assault with
4 her husband and children. I was also aware the details
5 were affecting me. I was given advice on how to deal
6 with this through the National Association for People
7 Abused in Childhood, along with Boarding Concern and
8 Tom Perry of Mandate Now.

9 The next night another separate lady made contact
10 via the Facebook page. She disclosed she was raped by
11 a senior boy when she was around 14 years old. The
12 young lad concerned was her boyfriend. This incident
13 totally ruined the relationship she had with her father.
14 She did not want to take this matter any further but we
15 were providing a point of contact for her outpouring.

16 The following evening another girl contacted me and
17 reported an incident. She described lying on her bed
18 within the dormitory when she was around 16 years of
19 age. Some boys from one of the other houses invaded her
20 house. Two of the boys were in bed with their
21 girlfriends. Another boy leapt onto her bed and was
22 trying to have sex with her. She fought him off and
23 nothing further happened.

24 The next day she reported to the headmaster at his
25 house. She was given a cup of tea by his wife. He

1 never turned up and she was sent away. The next day she
2 was called to his office and he demanded the name of the
3 boy concerned. She was reluctant to name him as he was
4 a popular boy from the school rugby team. She was
5 informed by the headmaster that if she would not name
6 the boy she would be excluded from the school for two
7 weeks. She borrowed some money from a friend and ran
8 away from the school. It was only to be for a short
9 time but she never returned.

10 One incident in particular was alleged to have
11 occurred within Bruce House where it was claimed that
12 there was a rape den in the undercroft. It was alleged
13 that there were ring bolts fastened to the walls. Some
14 of the boys taken there were 13 or 14 years old.
15 I believe one boy may have been reported to the police
16 and that Malcolm Jones from the child abuse unit at the
17 police was aware.

18 There were incidents at the swimming pool involving
19 an assistant housemaster. One of the victims had
20 approached me and made me aware of the circumstances.

21 As a result of the allegations made against the
22 school I contacted the headmaster through his secretary.
23 She said he would return my call but he never did.
24 Following reminders he eventually called back and asked
25 if the incidents were actually something to do with the

1 school. I made him aware he had obligation to report
2 the matters to the governors. He was told that by not
3 informing the governors he risked being sacked as
4 headmaster. I also informed him I expected a letter in
5 writing that the governors were now aware. I thought he
6 was taking me seriously but again he sent me away.
7 I could not let this be ignored and contacted one of the
8 governors direct and made him aware. Through this
9 influence the school began to take notice.

10 There were other discussions regards serious
11 bullying and beatings.

12 I met with Tom Perry, founder of Mandate Now, and
13 a former headmaster who was a former child protection
14 inspector in England. He had a greater knowledge of the
15 procedures than I did and offered to meet with myself
16 and senior staff at Gordonstoun. He gave them informal
17 advice to improve things.

18 Tom Perry and I met the new headmaster, Simon Reid;
19 the chairman of the governors of Gordonstoun, Professor
20 Eve Poole; one of the governors and a member of staff,
21 Sabine Richards. During those discussions the
22 headmaster stated things were so different now that it
23 did not affect the current school. I told them I wanted
24 things dealt with properly. Improvements had to be made
25 with their child protection policies. I pointed out to

1 them that staff were not encouraged to report anything
2 externally of the school and that whistle-blowers risked
3 being excluded. This approach had to change. The
4 policy should be put in place for staff, as part of
5 their contracts, to report things externally and if
6 things were not reported then this would lead to staff
7 being sacked. To date I have not seen the new contracts
8 to verify whether this policy is in place, though I am
9 assured it is."

10 My Lady, moving to paragraph 51:

11 "I remain very defensive. I may suffer from a form
12 of PTSD from my time at Gordonstoun and impacts my
13 relationships. I do not react well to criticism and
14 though I am not a very good team player, I am
15 self-reliant. Gordonstoun did not set people up for
16 what life required.

17 I have a good group of friends. I understand myself
18 better now than I did as a younger man. Gordonstoun
19 made me self-reliant but distrusting of authority.

20 I would like the Inquiry to endorse Mandate Now and
21 the mandatory reporting of suspicions of child abuse in
22 regulated settings. Failure to report needs to be
23 a criminal offence. I would hope that corroboration
24 laws in Scotland be re-examined especially with regard
25 to sexual offences.

1 Independent oversight of schools is required but it
2 seems the schools are reluctant. Gordonstoun has
3 a psychologist to assist people reporting incidents but
4 at this time she still has to report to the headmaster.
5 It needs to be independent. The headmaster is under the
6 impression that nothing like this is happening today.
7 We pointed out that we suspected since there are no
8 changes in the law, abuse is still occurring within all
9 schools.

10 Changes need to be made by Gordonstoun but they are
11 still reluctant or certainly very slow.

12 I have not sought any support for myself in relation
13 to any of this. I find this involvement with the
14 Inquiry cathartic. As much as I have not sought
15 compensation previously it does not mean I will not do
16 so in the future.

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 My Lady, the statement is signed and it's dated
22 20 March 2018.

23 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

24 Mr Brown.

25 MR BROWN: My Lady, this is the witness statement of

1 'James', who was born in 1961. Obviously 'James' is
2 a pseudonym for anonymity purposes.

3 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

4 'James' (read)

5 MR BROWN: The statement is document WIT-1-000000374:

6 "My mother and father originally stayed in Glasgow
7 but moved to India to follow my father's work. I was
8 born in Calcutta. We moved back to Glasgow when I was
9 18 months old. I have two brothers, one three years
10 younger than me and one 10 years younger than me.

11 I had a very happy childhood with my parents. My
12 father was absent a lot of the time as he travelled with
13 his work but I had lots of other family relations
14 nearby. Life was just that of a normal happy young boy.

15 I know that it was very important to my father that
16 I was given every opportunity to be as successful in
17 life as he was. He had gone to Keil School, Dumbarton,
18 which was a boarding school. His father also went to
19 boarding school. We visited four or five different prep
20 schools and it was decide that I would go to Aberlour
21 House. I didn't have to do any sort of entrance
22 examination.

23 When we visited Aberlour we met with Toby Coghill,
24 the headmaster; and the matron, whose name I can't
25 remember. I was shown around the school, at least all

1 the good stuff, and everything seemed very pleasant,
2 nice and fun. My parents decided that this was where
3 I was going to go. I didn't really have a say in the
4 matter.

5 We subsequently had a trip to Edinburgh where we
6 bought all my uniform and kit that I needed. It was all
7 put in my father's old school trunk and it still had his
8 name on it. This trunk was sent ahead of me to Aberlour
9 so it was there when I got there. I had just turned 10
10 when I started at Aberlour in 1971.

11 Aberlour was the prep school for Gordonstoun. I had
12 never been to see Gordonstoun but I was to find that
13 Aberlour was run very much along the same principle as
14 the senior school. I think there would have been around
15 80 boys. The youngest were eight and they along with
16 some of the nine-year-olds were kept together in the
17 same dorm which was close to the matron. The other
18 dorms were all mixed with boys from 9 up to 13. Just
19 before I left Aberlour about six to eight girls started
20 living in Aberlour.

21 The building itself was a Georgian mansion house
22 situated at the top of a hill. It was midway between
23 Aberlour and Craigellachie. As you enter the main door
24 into the main hall, on the right was the staff meeting
25 room and the headmaster's study. On the other side was

1 a common area and another big room where Sunday services
2 and Scottish country dancing took place. There was
3 a library and music at the back. Next was the dining
4 room, matron's room and the kitchen.

5 There was a staircase leading up to the first floor
6 which had a view looking out to the River Spey and on
7 the opposite bank was a whisky distillery. Upstairs
8 were around seven dormitories with 12 to 14 boys in each
9 one. In each dormitory was at least one senior boy who
10 was the head of that dormitory. The bedroom windows in
11 the dorms were kept wide open all night. The showers
12 and baths were on this floor. There were six to eight
13 baths along one wall. The sinks were in the middle and
14 on the other side was a row of showers. The showers
15 were not in cubicles and it was just an open area.

16 Also on this level was the photography room.
17 Outside were outbuildings at the back of the main
18 building, including stables, which were the classrooms.

19 The matron, whose name was possibly Miss Potts, was
20 a nice smiley person. We could go to see her after
21 breakfast if there was something wrong. Quite often we
22 would make things up so we could just go to the
23 sanitorium just to get some TLC.

24 Toby Coghill also taught humanities at the school.
25 This was like history. I would estimate there to be

1 between 20 and 25 teachers at Aberlour. Practically all
2 the teachers either stayed in the building or in
3 cottages on the grounds. The duty teacher would sleep
4 in their own bedroom overnight, whether that was in the
5 building or in a cottage. There would be someone you
6 could go to through the night if necessary but I can't
7 remember who that was.

8 First day.

9 My parents dropped me off at Queen Street station in
10 Glasgow to get the Inverness train. My father shook my
11 hand because he didn't do hugs and told me to have
12 a great time. Meantime my mother was in tears as
13 I left. I was with six other boys who I didn't know.
14 Three of us were going to Aberlour for the first time
15 and we were crying. This was the first time I had been
16 away from my parents like this.

17 A group of other boys who were from Edinburgh got on
18 somewhere along the journey, possibly at Perth, and
19 joined us. A [REDACTED] teacher at Aberlour was with them
20 and he travelled the rest of the journey with us. By
21 the time we got to Aviemore, which was where we got off,
22 I had got to know the other boys. We all then got on
23 a bus and were taken to Aberlour.

24 I can't remember who met us when we arrived. I do
25 remember that all the new boys were kept together and we

1 were allocated one of the senior boys who showed us
2 around and who we shadowed for a couple of weeks until
3 we learned where everything was, what the format was and
4 what we were supposed to do.

5 Mornings and bedtime.

6 We were woken up every day about 7 o'clock by a hand
7 bell, then the duty teacher would come round to make
8 sure we were getting ready. The senior boy who was head
9 of dorm would also make sure we were getting ready. We
10 all had to make our own beds with hospital corners.
11 Every morning, regardless of the weather or the time of
12 year, before we did anything else, we were made to put
13 our shorts and gym kit on and go for a run outside. It
14 maybe only took five minutes to run around the triangle,
15 but it was their way to try and toughen us up. We were
16 then made to take a shower, then a cold shower and get
17 dressed and go for breakfast. We then had school
18 classes through the day.

19 Bedtime was more or less straight after prep,
20 possible around 7.30 or 8 o'clock. The duty teacher
21 would come in and tell us that it was time to switch the
22 lights off. There was no talking allowed after the
23 lights went out.

24 We had our breakfast, lunch and dinner in the same
25 dining room. The tables sat six or eight boys. We were

1 told where to sit and every week they changed tables
2 around so you got to know everyone. A teacher sat at
3 the top of every table and ate with us. The food was
4 served to us at the table. Breakfast was usually
5 porridge and toast and possibly eggs. Lunch was things
6 like sausages and eggs and there was a pudding. Dinner,
7 like all the meals, were basic but it was hearty
8 Scottish food. I don't recall there being any issues if
9 there was any food that you didn't like or if there was
10 any left on your plate.

11 After our meal we took it in turns to gather up the
12 dirty plates and cutlery and clear the tables. Every
13 day after lunch we would line up in the queue as we were
14 allowed to take one sweet from the Quality Street tin.
15 That was the only sweet really that we were allowed.
16 The only other sweet we got was a reward for writing
17 good letters home.

18 We had a bath probably once a week. It was in
19 an evening and must have been organised. The matron or
20 the teacher would organise it all. Either the matron or
21 the duty teacher would supervise us. The rest of the
22 time we showered. We had a hot shower after sport at
23 school. We were only made to take a cold shower in the
24 morning after our run.

25 Beside our beds was a locker where we could store

1 our clothes. There was another locker downstairs where
2 the rest of our clothes were. This locker had to be
3 kept spotlessly clean, as did our shoes in there.

4 For school we wore a uniform of blue corduroy
5 shorts, which we wore all year round, grey shirt and
6 V-neck sweater.

7 After lunch we were encouraged to lie on our beds
8 for half an hour to rest. We could read a book if we
9 wanted to. We weren't allowed to talk during this
10 period. We would then get our sports kit on. What we
11 wore depended on the time of year as to which sport we
12 would play. It was cricket or tennis in the summer and
13 rugby in the winter. Participation in sport wasn't
14 optional. It was always team games we played and you
15 were put in teams according to your physical ability.

16 After dinner we would have prep, which was homework
17 for around 45 minutes. We did this sitting at our desk
18 in the classrooms. During the school week we didn't get
19 any real playtime or downtime to do what we wanted. We
20 didn't get to watch the television. After prep we had
21 to get ready for bed. It is fair to say that every
22 minute of every day was accounted for.

23 On Saturday afternoons we had sports, as in games
24 like rugby, cricket or whatever. Later on we may get to
25 watch a film in the meeting room. On a Sunday afternoon

1 we had games. Sometimes we would do Outward Bound stuff
2 or get sent on a long run.

3 Trips and holidays.

4 We were taken out very rarely. I remember at some
5 point going on a day trip to Gordonstoun. I was in the
6 choir so I got out quite often to sing at the church.
7 We didn't visit museums or anything like that. The only
8 other times I was out was when the [REDACTED] teacher took
9 me out in his car and he abused me. Sometimes he used
10 to take me out and we would walk his dog or he would
11 take me into the village of Aberlour. He took me to his
12 girlfriend's house which was in Aberlour.

13 I was at home over the holidays and I remember he
14 would send me books to read. One was Wuthering Heights.
15 I have never read it and never will. My mother once
16 queried why he was sending books but I didn't know what
17 to say.

18 School.

19 We went from class to class depending on what
20 subject we had. The teachers stayed in their class.
21 I started in my third form. The form teachers were
22 Miss Port, who taught English, and Miss Cochrane who
23 taught maths. They were okay. We had classes on
24 Saturday morning too.

25 Before I went to boarding school I was often the top

1 of the class in most subjects. When I got to boarding
2 school that all changed for me. I think it was partly
3 because the level of teaching wasn't as good and partly
4 because I didn't enjoy school. The teaching at Aberlour
5 was more about life and practicalities rather than
6 a good basic education.

7 Chores. There was a rota of chores that we had to
8 do through the week. We did sweeping of the floors and
9 cleaning and other duties like that. I can't remember
10 when we did these chores.

11 Birthdays and Christmas.

12 On your birthday you were allowed to choose seven
13 friends and you had a birthday tea with them. It was
14 just the usual main meal but cakes would have come from
15 the bakers in Aberlour. This was the only time you got
16 to eat something sweet like this. This was a real treat
17 and there were tactics used in this process. I always
18 choose boys whose birthdays were coming up soon and
19 didn't fall in the holidays. That way they would choose
20 me to go to their birthday teas and I would get a cake.

21 Visits/inspections.

22 In the first term that I was there from September
23 to December my parents visited me once. They came to
24 Aberlour village and stayed overnight. I was really
25 upset when they left. Parents were allowed to visit

1 once or twice in each of the three school terms. My
2 parents came roughly in the middle of each term. They
3 were allowed to come on a Saturday and take me out and
4 return me on the Sunday. They would come on the
5 Saturday and pick me up then take me to Carrbridge where
6 they stayed in a house for a few days. They took me
7 back to Aberlour on the Sunday. Sometimes I was allowed
8 to take another boy out with me.

9 Phone calls home were not allowed at any time apart
10 from at birthdays, when we were allowed to call our
11 parents. Every Monday morning in the first period the
12 form teacher would make us all write letters home to our
13 parents. In the third form, my first year there,
14 Miss Cochrane and Miss Port told us that if we wrote
15 a good letter and our parents replied saying it was
16 a good letter we would get a Crunchie or a Mars Bar.
17 This meant they would have to read the letter.
18 I suppose it was their way of reading what we were
19 saying.

20 I am not aware of any official visits by anyone
21 doing any kind of inspection of the school or for any
22 other similar official business. It may have happened
23 but outwith my knowledge. I was certainly never asked
24 how I was getting on at school by any adult.

25 Running away.

1 After my first Christmas holiday at home from
2 Aberlour, when it was time to go back I really didn't
3 want to go. I was only 10 and I was in a bad way.
4 I went back and later decided to write my mum a letter.
5 I wrote it in red ink and I told her that if they didn't
6 come and get me by the next Saturday I was going to run
7 away. I sneaked out of the grounds and posted it in
8 Aberlour so the staff couldn't read it. My parents
9 didn't reply and didn't appear on the Saturday morning
10 so when classes were going on I got on a bike and cycled
11 away. I wrote down what I was planning on doing in my
12 Oor Wully annual.

13 I got about 14 miles away on the bike when
14 Toby Cogill caught me and drove me back to Aberlour. On
15 the way back he told me that I had ruined the day for
16 all the other children and the teachers because they had
17 all been out looking for me. He never asked me why
18 I had run away. When we got to Aberlour I was paraded
19 in front of the whole school and I was made to apologise
20 for what I had done. Cogill told me that on this
21 occasion he wasn't going to beat me. It was when he
22 said that he wasn't going to beat me that I became very
23 frightened.

24 Coghill then took me into his office and called my
25 mother and father. My mother was in tears. I spoke to

1 my father and he asked me if I wanted him to come and
2 take me home. Coghill was there and listening to the
3 call so I just said that I would be all right.
4 I learned that they hadn't seen my letter that day as
5 they had been out. Nothing much else was said that
6 night.

7 I was aware on occasion of other boys running away
8 and I believe one boy got as far as London.

9 Discipline.

10 Mr Coghill had three canes which he kept in his
11 study. There was also the chance that you would get the
12 slipper from him. There was discipline in the school
13 classes, particularly from the [REDACTED] teacher. Most of
14 the teachers would use the canes. It didn't happen to
15 me very often. I was never caned by Toby Coghill and
16 never saw it happening to any of the other boys but
17 I know from the other boys who were caned that it did
18 happen. Caning would happen in his office.

19 Bed-wetting. If you needed the toilet through the
20 night there was nothing to stop you getting up and going
21 to the bathroom. Some of the younger boys however did
22 wet the bed. The staff were mostly compassionate in the
23 way it was dealt with and the boys weren't ridiculed or
24 made to feel embarrassed about it. These boys had
25 rubber sheets on their mattresses.

1 Abuse at Aberlour house.

2 Aberlour was a completely alien environment to me.
3 I had been brought up in a very loving home, although
4 being Scottish it wasn't too touchy-feely. After the
5 occasion when I ran away and Toby Coghill made me
6 apologise to the rest of the school, that was when
7 I started to build the wall around myself and learn how
8 to protect myself.

9 Is it was a male [REDACTED] teacher who abused me. He
10 lived in his own house at the end of the drive. It all
11 started probably before I was 11. He would have been in
12 his 30s and was English. The first time anything
13 happened was in his classroom. He asked me to stay
14 behind after a class. He was at his desk and asked me
15 to stand next to him. He was always very warm and
16 friendly. I think that first time all that happened was
17 he hugged me. To be honest, I didn't think there was
18 anything wrong with this. It progressed after that.

19 He also taught photography so had access to the
20 darkroom where the photographs were developed. That was
21 where the abuse really started. There were virtually no
22 lights in there so it was almost completely dark. This
23 was where he started touching me and it continued for
24 a couple of years. Initially it was outside my trousers
25 but it progressed and he actually touched my naked

1 penis. He was always very nice to me, gave me sweets
2 and he allowed me to walk his dog. He was someone who
3 gave me a lot of love and attention, something I didn't
4 have. The abuse probably happened once every week after
5 it started. He abused me in the darkroom, in his
6 classroom, in his house, in the car and on camping
7 trips. It was always the same thing that he did to me
8 in these places. He touched me but never asked me to
9 touch him.

10 There was one time when I was in the sanitorium for
11 around a week or possibly two weeks. I had pneumonia,
12 probably from when we were canoeing and I capsized. He
13 came to visit me in the sanitorium and he again put his
14 hand under the covers when I was in my bed and touched
15 and abused me.

16 He would come into the dorm sometimes during the day
17 and sometimes it was in the evenings and just tell me to
18 go with him. As far as I remember it was mostly in the
19 evenings. That was when he took me into the darkroom,
20 which was on the same floor as the dorms. Any of the
21 teachers could come into the dorm for no particular
22 reason. I saw other teachers come into the dorm and
23 they took other boys out. I think this was usually in
24 the evening. I can't remember who these teachers were
25 or who the boys were. I can't say if it was the same

1 boys that were picked out. I am sure all the boys knew
2 what the teachers were doing but we didn't openly
3 discuss it. I wasn't abused by any other teacher and
4 I didn't see any other boy getting abused.

5 We occasionally went on camping trips at the
6 weekend. There could have been six to ten other boys on
7 these trips who might all have been in the same class.
8 I do not know who organised these trips. The [REDACTED]
9 teacher came with us. There were probably other staff
10 there but I can't remember. He took me into his tent
11 and abused me. The abuse was the same as what happened
12 in the darkroom. He was very clever when he was abusing
13 me in respect that there was never anyone else there.
14 It was always just him and me. He never really spoke to
15 me when he was touching me.

16 Some of the teachers would come into the dorm and if
17 you were caught doing something you shouldn't, they
18 would bend you over, pick up a slipper and hit you on
19 the backside over your pyjamas. I can't remember the
20 names of any of the teachers who did this.

21 There is nothing concrete to say that any of the
22 other teachers were abusing any of the other boys. It
23 was just my intuition that told me that they were. None
24 of the other teachers ever abused me. When I was living
25 in that environment with the [REDACTED] teacher who was

1 abusing me I was starting to protect myself and
2 emotionally building a wall around myself, I could see
3 the signs of it. Even though I knew what he was doing
4 wasn't right, it wasn't something I would ever talk to
5 anyone about. Some of the boys talked about it because
6 it almost became competitive to try and get the most
7 attention and get the best treats from him. There was
8 almost jealousy. We never openly spoke about the actual
9 abuse.

10 A few days after the one time I ran away the [REDACTED]
11 teacher slapped me across the face with an open hand.
12 This was in the classroom in front of all the other
13 boys. Apparently I had wasted his Saturday afternoon
14 because he had been out looking for me and he had been
15 sent the wrong way. I just remember being embarrassed
16 getting slapped in front of the whole class. The
17 embarrassment was worse than the pain. Hitting in class
18 was pretty uncommon. I don't remember being hit by any
19 of the teachers at any other time.

20 Aberlour was cold and unloving. It wasn't
21 an environment conducive for young children to learn.
22 There was nothing about the school that was particularly
23 positive. I imagine that life at Aberlour boarding
24 school was like living in a borstal.

25 I never told anyone what the [REDACTED] teacher was

1 doing to me when I was at Aberlour. He never told me
2 not to say anything to anybody and I knew it wasn't
3 right but I couldn't share it with anyone, I just knew
4 I couldn't. The warmth and attention that I was shown
5 by him was positive for me but the abuse from him was
6 negative. I was very afraid, although he never said
7 anything to make me fear him. After I left Aberlour for
8 Gordonstoun I never heard from or saw him again.

9 I didn't enjoy my time at Aberlour. I disliked it
10 before the abuse started. I didn't know before I went
11 to Aberlour what the expectations were after Aberlour.
12 When I was there I was to learn that the natural move
13 was to go to Gordonstoun to further my education.
14 Aberlour was the feeder for Gordonstoun. There was
15 a Common Entrance exam to get into Gordonstoun but
16 because of the relationship between Aberlour and
17 Gordonstoun you could fail the exam but still get to
18 Gordonstoun.

19 I was 13 when I left Aberlour. I was delighted and
20 happy that I was free and could leave it all behind me.
21 As far as I remember, I left in December 1974 and after
22 the holidays at home started at Gordonstoun in January
23 1975."

24 Moving on to Gordonstoun boarding school.

25 "There were boys and girls at Gordonstoun. The age

1 of the children was from 12 or nearly 13 up to 17 or 18.
2 There were two houses for girls and seven or eight for
3 boys. When I arrived at Gordonstoun I was put into
4 Hopeman House, which is where the newbies, as they were
5 called, were put. I was there with a few boys who had
6 been at Aberlour. There would have been about 50
7 children in Hopeman. Most were 12 or 13 but there were
8 also some seniors in there to basically look after us.
9 We didn't have any dorms any more, we had single rooms.

10 Hopeman House was on two levels and was H-shaped.
11 The boys were on one side and the girls were on the
12 other side. The housemaster had a study upstairs.
13 There was a bungalow on the other side where the lady
14 responsible for the girls lived. All the houses were
15 different. After I left there when I was older I went
16 to the house called the Round Square. In my last term
17 I was one of the senior boys in Gordonstoun House. Part
18 of our duties were to look after the young boys and make
19 sure they knew what they were doing.

20 There were a lot of English and some international
21 students at Gordonstoun. If children didn't get into
22 Eton or Harrow the parents seemed to send them to
23 Gordonstoun. I would guess that 80 per cent of children
24 were from the south of England.

25 Everything was just much bigger than at Aberlour and

1 there was a feeling that we were more grown up. I had
2 a much better feeling about Gordonstoun and it felt like
3 a new beginning and that I could leave everything behind
4 me from Aberlour, close the door and start afresh.
5 Gordonstoun was very similar to Aberlour because
6 Aberlour took their routine from Gordonstoun. The only
7 difference was that we were a bit older so we were
8 treated as such and had more freedom. It was a much
9 more enjoyable experience. It was far warmer and in
10 general a more inviting place. I felt a part of
11 something special rather than being institutionalised.
12 You were expected to look after yourself and expected to
13 participate in things going on at school.

14 I finished off in Gordonstoun House where in my last
15 year I was one of four senior boys."

16 We then move on to the routine at Gordonstoun but
17 I'll start at paragraph 64. This is leisure time:

18 "Outwith class times we were allowed to go out of
19 the grounds more or less when we wanted. They actually
20 encouraged us to do other things. Sometimes we'd go
21 into Elgin at the weekends. We had great freedom which
22 didn't exist at Aberlour. Outward Bound was a huge part
23 of the school environment. We did things like
24 mountaineering and canoeing. In fourth and fifth form
25 we were encouraged to become part of the local services.

1 This might be as a retained firefighter so bleeps had to
2 be carried and be ready to go at any moment to the fire
3 station in Elgin. I joined their training corps.

4 There was regular organised sport. It depended on
5 the season as to whether it was rugby, hockey, cricket
6 or tennis. Everyone was expected to participate but
7 no one was forced. We had radios in our room so we
8 could play music. There was a television in Hopeman
9 House which we could watch.

10 When I was about 15, myself and another boy bought
11 an old Vauxhall Viva car for £15. We hid it in the
12 woods and we worked on it and got it going. We made
13 money from the other kids by taking orders for
14 cigarettes and booze and we would drive down and get it
15 for them. None of the staff at the school knew about
16 it. We had a good little business until one day the car
17 disappeared.

18 School.

19 Historically I have to say that children weren't
20 sent to Gordonstoun because they were clever, it was
21 a school that you went to because it was worldly,
22 outward bound and it made you a man. It wasn't the sort
23 of school that was highly thought of for its education
24 or for preparing children for Oxford or St Andrew's
25 Universities. A number of children came from families

1 with lots of money so they felt they didn't have to do
2 anything and their life was planned for them.

3 The classrooms were dotted all over the place. The
4 bell would ring at the end of each period and you made
5 your way to the next class whenever that was. When
6 I arrived at Gordonstoun I went into the third form. In
7 the following years I did fourth and fifth form.
8 I didn't get many O-levels so for the next term I was in
9 5B rather than sixth form. I didn't stay at school for
10 A-levels. I left with six O-levels but didn't try to do
11 any A-levels. We didn't get any form of sex education
12 at Gordonstoun.

13 Again we had prep, which was our time to do
14 homework, every night between 7.30 and 8.30 so there was
15 nothing else arranged between these times. I enjoyed my
16 education at Gordonstoun. I made many friends and it
17 was much more fun than at Aberlour.

18 Senior pupils.

19 As a senior boy you were given responsibility but
20 there were different levels. Most was to look after the
21 junior boys. Senior boys could not punish or discipline
22 the younger boys. If something happened the senior boys
23 would report it to the housemaster who would decide if
24 there was to be any punishment.

25 Outwith our houses we were not discouraged from any

1 sort of contact with the opposite sex. Often school
2 dances and things like that were arranged which both
3 sexes went to.

4 There was a sanitorium which was run very
5 professionally. I don't recall having any significant
6 health issues.

7 Gordonstoun was multi-denominational but Anglican is
8 what was preached so it was Church of England. It
9 wasn't forced down anyone's throat. Everyone sung
10 a hymn in the morning before classes and then we had
11 a church service on a Sunday. I can't remember if this
12 was optional.

13 We didn't really have any chores to do. Cleaning
14 ladies came in and did all that sort of stuff. All we
15 had to do was keep our studies clean and tidy.

16 There were no real restrictions of how often my
17 parents could visit. They came two or three times every
18 term.

19 I can't really say I experienced any boy getting
20 disciplined. I never saw anyone getting caned. They
21 could withdraw some privileges, get sent home for a week
22 or two or at worst get expelled. Any bad behaviour in
23 the classroom may have resulted in boys getting sent out
24 of the classroom and made to stand in the middle of the
25 square, which was nothing more than embarrassing because

1 everyone could see you. There was no violence or
2 inappropriate level of punishment. I never experienced
3 any bullying when I was at Gordonstoun and I am not
4 aware of any of the other boys being bullied. The
5 senior boys never used the younger boys to clean their
6 boots or do any of their menial chores. We all did
7 those ourselves.

8 I am not aware of anyone having issues with
9 bed-wetting. I don't think anyone I knew wet their bed.

10 Abuse at Gordonstoun.

11 Within two weeks of being at Gordonstoun, probably
12 between 8 and 9 o'clock at night, a senior boy came into
13 my study and told me that Mr Kempe wanted to see me.
14 Mr Kempe was the headmaster at Gordonstoun. I would
15 still have been 13 and it was January. I walked the
16 half mile or so in the cold and rain to his house. When
17 I arrived Mr Kempe told me that Toby Coghill, the
18 headmaster of Aberlour, was in their drawing room and
19 wanted to see me. Mr Coghill told me that he wanted to
20 know about what had gone on with myself and Mr KME
21 when I was at Aberlour. I told him all about the
22 teacher touching me. Mr Coghill thanked me and
23 left.

24 About two weeks later, after lights out in Hopeman
25 House, a senior boy came into my room and told me that

1 the housemaster wanted to see me. I put on my dressing
2 gown and went to his study. He took me in and I sat
3 down. The headmaster told me that he had something to
4 show me and he handed me a letter which was from
5 Toby Coghill to him. It read that I had been involved
6 with a teacher and that I was probably a homosexual. He
7 wanted the housemaster to know so he could keep an eye
8 on me. When I had finished reading the letter the
9 housemaster asked for the letter back, then, holding it
10 up, said that he would probably never tell anyone about
11 this. I immediately knew what was going on and I felt
12 very uncomfortable about what he said. It was common
13 knowledge in Gordonstoun that the housemaster had abused
14 other boys. By common knowledge what I mean is that
15 a lot of the schoolboys talked about it. No one
16 actually said they had been abused, it was just general
17 chat.

18 I told the housemaster that I knew who and what he
19 was and that he wasn't to come near me and if he touched
20 me I would make sure everyone got to know. After I said
21 that I got up and left. He never did touch me and
22 nothing was ever said again about it. I had only been
23 in my new school for two weeks, I had made new friends
24 and was excited, looking forward to the future and here
25 I was thinking: here we go again. Throughout the rest

1 of my time at Gordonstoun there was an ever-present fear
2 that the housemaster would use that letter against me in
3 some detrimental way.

4 I think it was horrific that Toby Coghill wrote such
5 a letter to the housemaster but even more horrific that
6 the housemaster would present that letter to me at only
7 13 years old with the intention of abusing me. After
8 that incident everything was fine between myself and the
9 housemaster. I would say we had an understanding
10 because I also knew about him, and we never discussed
11 the letter again. I was never physically or sexually
12 abused by him or anyone else when I was at Gordonstoun.
13 This period of my life should have been fun but it
14 wasn't. I felt I had something to hide and I had built
15 up a wall to protect myself and I couldn't let anybody
16 in.

17 After the horrific abuse I suffered at Aberlour and
18 the incidents in the first few weeks at Gordonstoun,
19 I didn't suffer any more abuse at Gordonstoun. The
20 housemaster was always there but nothing was ever said
21 about what happened. He was also my [REDACTED] teacher and
22 he was with me throughout my education at Gordonstoun.
23 I did quite well in [REDACTED] I suppose I had a fairly
24 normal time at Gordonstoun after that.

25 I never told anyone else apart from Toby Coghill

1 about the teacher touching me or anyone about the
2 housemaster approaching me when I was at Gordonstoun.

3 I left in 1978 when I was 17. I was not sad to
4 leave.

5 Life after boarding school.

6 I was not particularly academic and didn't go to
7 university. I initially worked in a bank and then
8 became a stockbroker. I joined the family business in
9 America. I would say that is when I started having
10 a normal life. I realised by that time I was gay and
11 I had told my parents and they were absolutely fine and
12 supportive of me. I still work in America.

13 Impact.

14 A positive impact on me from being at Gordonstoun
15 was that it left me with the ability to go into any
16 situation with anyone and even if I was anxious I would
17 be comfortable. I am very comfortable around people
18 regardless of gender, ethnicity or race. When I came
19 back to Glasgow at 18 I probably came over as big-headed
20 and pompous but this was just because I was given the
21 ability to be comfortable around people and confident.

22 Because I had been through therapy I am now able to
23 say, because I am able to understand why, I actually
24 looked forward to the abuse because I was getting
25 attention. I know now that the abuse wasn't my fault.

1 I didn't do this. I was only a child and wasn't the
2 abuser. I was being abused and I was one of many at
3 Aberlour.

4 From a very young age the abuse made me build a wall
5 to stop people from getting close to me and to protect
6 myself. That barrier is still there to this day and has
7 affected my ability to form relationships with people.
8 I have never felt that I want to settle down and be very
9 family-like and have children and a dog. I know that
10 this goes back to my time in boarding school. My sexual
11 relationships have been affected by my experiences in
12 boarding school. After I left Gordonstoun I took risks
13 I shouldn't have, partly because I wasn't able to form
14 normal lasting sexual relationships. Sex was easy to
15 get at this time because I wasn't looking for anything
16 lasting, it was just physical contact. I felt guilty
17 and I knew what I was doing was wrong and I shouldn't be
18 doing it, just like I knew it was wrong when I was
19 abused at Aberlour.

20 For about ten years following this period where
21 I took risks I was worried that I could possibly have
22 HIV and it was only when I eventually plucked up the
23 encourage to go for a test did I get relief when I found
24 out it was negative. I am lucky that I came through
25 that period in my life healthy and well.

1 I think my education would have been better and
2 I would have left with more qualifications had I gone to
3 the local comprehensive school. My education was
4 affected too because I was constantly trying to protect
5 myself in that environment and hide.

6 I try not to think too much about the abuse
7 I suffered in boarding school. If the topic comes up in
8 conversation I don't avoid it and I will talk about it.
9 I don't go out of my way to tell people that I have been
10 abused.

11 Treatment/support.

12 I was about 27 when I first went for any kind of
13 therapy. This was all about me accepting that I was gay
14 and building up to tell my parents. When I told them,
15 both my parents were very accepting and my father said
16 that he knew anyway.

17 The last time I had therapy was about two years ago
18 and this continued for around 18 months. By the end
19 I felt I had told my story too many times and I had
20 received more than enough therapy so I stopped it.

21 Reporting of abuse.

22 I have never reported any of what happened to me to
23 the police. I was not aware if my mother ever reported
24 any of the abuse or what she had found out to anyone in
25 authority.

1 When I was 27 I heard about a therapy event in
2 Chicago called Landmark Forum for people with personal
3 issues. I went to this three-day event where we all had
4 to stand up and share our issues with hundreds of other
5 participants who were all basically strangers to me.
6 I invited my parents to come over for the last day of
7 the event. On this last day all the participants stood
8 up individually and relayed their stories to the
9 audience. My parents flew over with absolutely no idea
10 what they were coming to. They heard me speak for the
11 first time about what happened to me and this was the
12 first they were aware of the abuse that I had suffered
13 at Aberlour. They were horrified.

14 As part of this therapy we were told, following the
15 event, to write a letter to the person who had affected
16 our life and to forgive them. I wrote the letter to
17 Mr Coghill. In the letter I explained how I had been
18 left by my parents in his care as a child and had been
19 abused. I further went on and talked about the time
20 when I was at Gordonstoun at Mr Kempe's house and I told
21 him all about the abuse and a week later when the
22 housemaster showed me the letter from Coghill advising
23 that I was probably gay as I had been involved with
24 a male teacher. I also described my disappointment that
25 he had never passed on any information to my parents and

1 of his lack of compassion. At the end I said I forgave
2 him and the [REDACTED] teacher. I have given this letter
3 to the Inquiry.

4 My abuse had a massive impact on my parents. My
5 mother was annoyed at my father for sending me to
6 boarding school to be abused. They both felt guilty
7 that they had sent me away from a loving family home to
8 somewhere that I was obviously unhappy and subsequently
9 sexually and emotionally abused. My mother could have
10 had a far more extravagant lifestyle had she not sent
11 her children to boarding school. Her life was changed
12 when she heard about my abuse and she obviously spent
13 a considerable amount of time and more money in tracking
14 down my abusers.

15 Lessons to be learned.

16 I hope that by coming forward it may give me some
17 form of closure. I also hope that if, by sharing my
18 experiences, it stops one child from experiencing what
19 happened to me in boarding school then it will have been
20 worthwhile coming forward. I want this to help not only
21 people who have been abused but also help parents and
22 other people and children to prevent them from going
23 through what I have or at least enable them to step back
24 and question what is happening. If it is talked about
25 amongst children then hopefully it will teach them that

1 what happened to them is wrong and encourage them to
2 speak out.

3 Had the environment I was in been more warm, loving,
4 caring and open then I would have been more willing to
5 go to an adult and share what had happened to me. It
6 was cold and too disciplined, for example making us run
7 outside first thing every morning and the cold shower
8 afterwards, and with every minute of every day accounted
9 for. It wasn't a loving environment conducive to
10 sharing any information like that.

11 I am not sure how the abuse that happened to me can
12 be stopped from happening to others. One way I suppose
13 to reduce the likelihood is by having much more
14 stringent checks on staff and teachers. It can't be
15 assumed an unmarried male or female teacher is going to
16 be an abuser, that just wouldn't be fair. There may
17 already be more involved checks now which weren't
18 available back then. I don't think abuse in these kind
19 of places can be stopped but hopefully at least it is
20 can be reduced. If it is made easy for abusers to get
21 into these sorts of positions then abuse is going to
22 continue to happen.

23 I don't agree with same sex schools and these
24 shouldn't be encouraged.

25 Other information.

1 Around three or four years ago when my mother and
2 father were moving house I found a file compiled by my
3 mother. Within this file were documents and letters
4 between my mother and other parents, solicitors and
5 Gordonstoun School. I realised that after I had told my
6 mother she took it upon herself to find the people that
7 had abused me. She even employed private investigators
8 to try and trace them. I put the file away and had to
9 find it when I knew I was coming to speak to the
10 Inquiry. According to the file the [REDACTED] teacher was
11 traced to Thailand in the mid 1990s. It would appear
12 from notes in the file that my mother made contact with
13 him and warned him that she was watching his movements.
14 She also wrote to other parents of boys who were at
15 school with me.

16 Within this file are also copies of letters my mum
17 sent to various people and their responses. One of the
18 letters is to Mr Kempe, the headmaster at Gordonstoun,
19 written by my mother and dated 23 November 1994. In the
20 letter she details how she found out about me being
21 abused at Aberlour and excerpts from the letter I sent
22 to Mr Coghill dated 9 November 1994. Parts of the
23 excerpts include my meeting with Mr Coghill at
24 Mr Kempe's house where I disclosed to him the abuse when
25 at Aberlour.

1 The response to this letter from Mr Kempe is dated
2 27 November 1994. Mr Kempe states that he cannot recall
3 Mr Coghill coming to his house to speak to me and
4 believes that Mr Coghill had a very difficult task of
5 dealing with and dismissing the [REDACTED] teacher, which
6 he was able to do thanks to my help. I am sure that
7 Mr Kempe must have been aware of why Toby Coghill came
8 to see me at his house just after I arrived at
9 Gordonstoun. He would definitely have been aware as in
10 the letter from Mr Coghill, Mr Kempe was present when he
11 was interviewed about the allegations.

12 There is a further letter dated 27 April 1995 from
13 my father to Toby Coghill mentioning the letter from me
14 dated 9 November 1994 and expressing concern as to what
15 steps were taken in relation to both the [REDACTED] teacher
16 and the housemaster and if they were still currently
17 involved in teaching.

18 Toby Coghill in response wrote in a letter dated
19 2 May 1995 that he knew absolutely nothing about me
20 being involved in the [REDACTED] teacher episode and even
21 stated he was surprised to hear that I was. He denied
22 having received my letter dated 9 November 1994. He
23 states he was aware of three boys who claimed they had
24 been abused by the [REDACTED] teacher but I was not one of
25 them. He confirms that he interviewed the [REDACTED]

1 teacher in the presence of Mr Kempe but the [REDACTED]
2 teacher denied the allegations, however he was later
3 dismissed by Mr Coghill when he received confirmation
4 from other sources. Cogill stated the [REDACTED] teacher's
5 name was part of the Scottish Education Department and
6 other necessary agencies to ensure his name was on
7 a confidential list of people who should not be
8 appointed as teachers. He also stated that he could not
9 recall the housemaster other than the name of someone
10 who was a temporary housemaster.

11 There is a further letter dated 26 May 1995 from
12 Toby Coghill acknowledging receipt of my letter re-sent
13 by my father. He again denies any knowledge of me being
14 involved, blaming his poor memory. Mr Coghill wrote
15 a further letter on 14 July 1995 stating he had tried to
16 look through records to try and jog his memory but had
17 found nothing that could assist him.

18 There is a letter from my mother dated 28 July to
19 the [REDACTED] teacher, who appeared by that time to be in
20 Thailand. She indicates the massive impact his abusive
21 actions had on both me and my family, especially
22 breaking my mother's heart.

23 Another letter of significance is one my mother
24 wrote to Toby Coghill on 5 December 1995. She expresses
25 her belief that he has been negligent in his post as

1 headmaster at Aberlour and how he very conveniently
2 appears to have lost his memory.

3 Also within this file are letters between my parents
4 and solicitors which relate to my mother's requests for
5 them to locate the whereabouts of the [REDACTED] teacher
6 and the housemaster. Attached to the letters are
7 investigation reports compiled by private investigators.
8 I passed this whole file compiled by my mother to the
9 Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.

10 My younger brother didn't go to Aberlour, he went to
11 a school in Edinburgh. I was home by that point and
12 even his school seemed like it was lots of fun and
13 everything was great, but when I spoke to him about it
14 he told me there was abuse there too. That just
15 confirmed to me that just because the place was warm and
16 friendly didn't mean there wasn't abuse.

17 I read about the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry a few
18 years ago, so I went online and read about it.
19 I decided that what had happened to me was over and done
20 with and I wanted to leave it all in the past. My
21 brother told me last year that he had received an email
22 from the Inquiry asking him to come forward. I read the
23 email and decided at that point that if it helped any
24 child in the future from experiencing what I had had,
25 then I would speak about it and I contacted the Inquiry.

1 I have no objection to my witness statement being
2 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
3 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
4 true."

5 And it's signed on 24 July 2020.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

7 Ms Bennie, when you're ready.

8 'Pauline' (read)

9 MS BENNIE: My Lady, the next statement bears the reference
10 WIT-3-000000539.

11 My Lady, this witness wishes to remain anonymous and
12 she's adopted the pseudonym of 'Pauline'.

13 "My name is 'Pauline' and I attended Aberlour from
14 1978 to 1983 and Gordonstoun from 1986 to 1988.

15 Going to Aberlour was an adventure for me and I had
16 my big brother there to comfort me in times of
17 homesickness. There was a strict routine at the school,
18 with morning runs, cold baths (after warm showers) and
19 chores for all. For example, every day after breakfast
20 the children swept the floors in the dormitories,
21 classrooms, dining hall and corridors. We learnt that
22 the rules were to be followed and if they were broken,
23 then there would be punishment; a valuable lesson in
24 discipline, whether we appreciated it at the time or
25 not. The dormitories had no carpets, the heating didn't

1 always work and the food was the same every week, at
2 least for the first years I was there until the chef
3 changed. To describe life there in one word I would use
4 spartan. However, despite all that, I felt at home and
5 well cared for. The teachers were kind and encouraging
6 and we had a matron who was our mother away from home.
7 It may sound as if it might have been a harsh life but
8 at the time it was wonderful. We had expeditions,
9 plenty of sports, amazing music and drama productions as
10 well as the character-building lessons that life at
11 Aberlour house provided.

12 Aberlour was a big family and I came to know not
13 only the children in my year but also in the years above
14 and below me. I have very fond memories of the teachers
15 and student teachers that attended from Australia and
16 never did I feel ill at ease or unsafe. Not once did
17 I feel the staff acted in any way inappropriately.

18 I was teased whilst I was in my last year and life
19 became miserable, but looking back it was, in a way, my
20 own fault. I was [REDACTED] and I took my duties too
21 seriously and made myself very unpopular with my fellow
22 pupils in carrying out those duties. I was supported
23 and at times comforted by the teachers and the
24 headmaster but never once felt that their support and
25 comfort was inappropriate.

1 But I left Aberlour, never intending on continuing
2 to Gordonstoun.

3 However, after three years in a day school in
4 London, I did return to Gordonstoun because I realised
5 that the life there and the opportunities provided were
6 second to none.

7 My life at Gordonstoun as a 16-year-old was much
8 different from my life at Aberlour as an 8- to
9 13-year-old. I was stronger, older and more mature.
10 Thus, the teasing/bullying that came my way as a result
11 of my final year at Aberlour had no effect on me at all.
12 Perhaps with my experience at Aberlour I should have
13 been more sensitive to any other forms of bullying and
14 teasing but I didn't see any obvious bullying around me,
15 nor did anyone ever tell me that a member of staff had
16 acted inappropriately. However, as I also didn't attend
17 the lower years of the school and entered directly into
18 the sixth form, I was perhaps not best placed to notice
19 such things as I was sort of in a different world.

20 We had morning runs at Gordonstoun too and
21 discipline was also very much part of our daily lives.
22 I knew that there were children misbehaving but felt
23 that those who were caught were disciplined accordingly.
24 Looking back I do not remember ever feeling unsafe in
25 the presence of any teachers or staff, with perhaps one

1 exception. I do remember joking with friends about the
2 OKX and that one should not find oneself alone with
3 him. But because I knew him from my years at Aberlour,
4 I didn't think much of it, I just thought he was a bit
5 weird but I personally never felt uneasy in his
6 presence.

7 For me, perhaps the most telling testimony to my
8 belief in Gordonstoun is the fact that when I became
9 a mother myself, my wish was to send my children to
10 Gordonstoun as well. Financially though it was
11 an impossibility until my mother said she would help.
12 I know it's the best education I can possibly provide
13 them. When I visited to show my daughter the school,
14 the first time I had been back in a long time, I was
15 thrilled to see just how much the school had stayed the
16 same, but also how it had improved. The level of
17 pastoral care there is amazing, with matrons in each
18 house and teachers specialised in pastoral care.
19 I learned that thankfully the philosophy of the school's
20 founder has remained unchanged but the school now
21 provides support for the children at every turn
22 including two student counsellors. We didn't have
23 school counsellors back in the 1980s but which school
24 did? I find that Gordonstoun has moved with the times
25 but has still managed to retain its unique mix of

1 academic teaching whilst also preparing its students for
2 the real world.

3 On the whole, I loved my time at both schools,
4 despite the perceived hardships and the bullying.
5 I have many wonderful and happy memories and in this age
6 of easy communication I have connected with people who
7 used to tease and bully me and have formed friendships
8 despite our ancient histories.

9 To me Gordonstoun is simply the best school I know
10 and I feel extremely lucky and blessed that I am able to
11 send my children there. I have 100 per cent trust and
12 faith in the school's management for acting correctly
13 should any incidences of bullying or inappropriate
14 behaviour come to light and in the teaching and pastoral
15 staff in looking after my children.

16 I have no objection to my witness statement being
17 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry and
18 I would be happy to furnish more information as
19 necessary. I believe the facts in this statement are
20 true."

21 My Lady, this statement is dated 29 December 2020.

22 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

23 Mr Brown?

24 MR BROWN: My Lady, I'm happy to continue. I'm just
25 thinking about the shorthand writers.

1 LADY SMITH: Yes, and then we've just had three left.
2 I think we should probably have the break now, that
3 would be helpful. Thank you.
4 Very well, we'll take a short break now and then
5 return to the other readings after that.
6 (11.13 am)
7 (A short break)
8 (11.32 am)
9 LADY SMITH: Mr Brown, when you're ready.
10 'Benjamin' (read)
11 MR BROWN: Thank you, my Lady. This is the statement of
12 'Benjamin'. It's witness WIT-1-000000453. He was born
13 in 1967.
14 "I was born and brought up in Surrey. I attended
15 an all-boys prep school in Surrey and loved my
16 experiences there.
17 I lived there until 1980 or 1981. My parents were
18 splitting up at this time and that is what led me to be
19 placed at Aberlour and then Gordonstoun as a boarder.
20 I was about 12 years of age when I first walked into
21 Aberlour school and although I had left a good school
22 experience in Surrey I loved the feel of Aberlour from
23 day 1. I became a fee-paying boarder at the school,
24 which was regarded as the junior school of Gordonstoun .
25 I went to visit Aberlour on an 'open day' prior to

1 enrolling there. I don't think that I had to sit
2 an exam but I was interviewed by the headmaster at the
3 time, who was Toby Coghill. It was a very informal
4 interview.

5 I started at Aberlour very soon after and was to
6 spend a whole year there prior to going to Gordonstoun.
7 The school was mixed sex and there must have been around
8 120 pupils. The age ranges were between 7 to 13.
9 I would estimate that at least 90 per cent of the school
10 would go on the Gordonstoun for secondary education.

11 Aberlour was a very large sandstone building set in
12 50 acres of its own grounds. There were two classroom
13 blocks. Most things, like eating and some of the
14 classes, went on in the main house. The main building
15 is now used by Walker's shortbread company.

16 There were about six dormitories for boys and three
17 for girls. There were about 10 to a dormitory and they
18 had bunk beds. I think that the younger children were
19 together and from about ten years onwards the dorms were
20 in a mixed age group.

21 The school was divided up into houses. I think that
22 there were three or four different houses. They existed
23 so that there could be sporting competition between the
24 houses. I was in Rinnes House, with all the houses
25 named after local mountains.

1 I have to say that this was the most ideal place to
2 be a young boy at school. You could play sport, run
3 around the countryside of the Scottish mountains, you
4 were with like-minded people and my experience of
5 Aberlour was that it was a wonderful place and I had
6 a fantastic year there. I was never abused by staff or
7 my peer group and I never witnessed any abuse of other
8 pupils.

9 I was in a very good year group and when we went on
10 to Gordonstoun and completed our education with a couple
11 of pupils going to Oxford and Cambridge and other good
12 universities with many becoming very senior people in
13 their chosen careers.

14 I met some of the other boys on my first day. I am
15 still great friends with them. Similarly I remain
16 friends with many of the girls in my year.

17 Toby Coghill was the headmaster and stayed with his
18 wife in a large house in the school grounds. He was
19 a great man and what you would describe as the typical
20 headmaster of the time. He was very supportive and
21 approachable.

22 David "Tatty" Hanson was the science teacher and he
23 was an inspiration to most of the pupils. Richard Woods
24 was a geography teacher and he would come on the trips
25 and expeditions we were encouraged to undertake. I got

1 on very well with him. He was a lovely man."

2 Moving on to the routine at Aberlour I'll start at
3 paragraph 21:

4 "I think the younger boys were in bed by 7 and the
5 older boys like myself were in bed from 8.30. I think
6 that bedtimes, which included brushing teeth and
7 washing, were supervised by the matrons. Teachers were
8 always available to deal with any issues as they lived
9 in the house. There was always a staff presence.

10 I don't recall any incidents through the night where
11 the staff were needed but I do remember being caught out
12 of our dormitory at two in the morning by some staff.
13 It was near Christmas so I don't think we were punished.

14 I was very comfortable at Aberlour, although some of
15 the younger boys may have been sad and missing home.
16 The matrons were women in their 60s and they were very
17 maternal and caring. The whole school was a very caring
18 place. There were a lot of brothers and sisters. My
19 sister was also there."

20 Moving on to paragraph 27:

21 "We had very small classes and because the school
22 was not selective in its pupils the teachers had to deal
23 with a few children who had issues like dyslexia. The
24 teachers were able to spend time with pupils who had
25 learning difficulties. We also had some very bright

1 children. I didn't enjoy science but the science
2 teacher, Mr Hanson, would make it interesting.

3 This was the final year of junior school for me and
4 I had to sit the Common Entrance exam to get into
5 Gordonstoun. I didn't get brilliant grades but
6 I managed to get into Gordonstoun. Any pupil that
7 didn't get in went to other schools like Rannoch.

8 There was a very thorough report card sent to my
9 mother when I finished my first year. There was always
10 a lengthy report written by the headmaster which formed
11 part of the report card. It was a very honest report.

12 Sport and leisure activities.

13 Most pupils were encouraged to play sport but not
14 all pupils were sporty, so they could indulge in other
15 activities at other times during the week. They could
16 play chess, do photography or go swimming, amongst other
17 activities on offer.

18 There was a television and at weekends we had a lot
19 of leisure time. We played table tennis and indoor
20 sports. We could go for long walks or go on a bike ride
21 but always within the school grounds. If you were going
22 to leave the grounds you needed the permission of
23 a member of staff and you would be given a time that you
24 had to return. This only happened in your final year.

25 We had to write home once a week.

1 I recall one trip which was called Medieval Madness,
2 where the whole school went to a ruined castle and we
3 all dressed up in period costumes. We had a hog roast
4 and slept out under the stars. It was a great thing to
5 do for young children and there are not many schools
6 that gave opportunities like that.

7 I would always go home during the holidays and my
8 mother would come and pick me up at school. My mother
9 would come and watch the odd sports match on a Saturday
10 if we were playing locally or at home. I would see my
11 mother every few weeks at these matches. I can't
12 remember if there were regular family visits. As long
13 as you told the staff I think there were not any
14 problems being taken out by your parents at the weekend
15 and going for a meal.

16 I don't recall many other visitors to the school and
17 I don't remember any inspections by the authorities.

18 If you were ill you went to the 'san', which
19 I assume was short for sanatorium, which was run by the
20 matron. They could deal with most of the medical
21 issues. I recall that it had four beds. If people were
22 upset they could go there and speak to matron or seek
23 out their favourite teacher.

24 I don't think that anyone ran away at any time that
25 I was at Aberlour.

1 Discipline/punishment.

2 In the time I was there they still used the cane but
3 I never saw anyone being beaten with it. I think the
4 headmaster would be the only one allowed to cane a pupil
5 but it never happened to me and I don't recall being
6 told about anyone receiving the cane. A more common
7 punishment was that you could also be made to stand
8 still in the hall for ten minutes to give you time to
9 reflect on your behaviour.

10 There were prefects at the school but they were
11 called officers and consisted of the older, more senior
12 boys. They were not there to punish but were there to
13 administer and guide. There was a rank hierarchy but
14 I can't recall how it went. I ended up becoming
15 an officer having worked my way through the ranks and
16 I think that all I had to do was offer advice to the
17 younger pupils. I did not witness any bullying at
18 Aberlour and it would not have been tolerated.

19 The ethos of the school was based on the educational
20 workings of Kurt Hahn. It was very much an environment
21 where children were taught teamwork and independence at
22 the same time. We had to think on our feet and the
23 expeditions were hard physically.

24 It was a great place for a 12-year-old who loved
25 sport. It also helped to prepare you for senior

1 education at Gordonstoun.

2 During my time at Aberlour I had been well-prepared
3 to adjust to senior schooling at Gordonstoun where the
4 ethos of Kurt Hahn continued. I knew what to expect and
5 I looked forward to schooling there with the friends I'd
6 made at Aberlour. I was now 13 years old.

7 I had been to Gordonstoun on a few occasions to
8 attend school plays or concerts. I also knew some
9 people who were at the school. One of my sisters was at
10 Gordonstoun and was two years ahead so it helped with my
11 relatively easy transition.

12 Gordonstoun 1980-1985.

13 I went with ten of my best mates from prep school.
14 It was quite daunting being in a house with older boys.
15 We were assigned mentors or shadows who helped us with
16 the routine. I would estimate that there were 500 boys
17 and girls at the school. The age range was 13 to 18.

18 There were five houses for boys and two houses for
19 girls. You were put into a house when you first
20 arrived. I was put into Round Square House.

21 There were dormitories holding around ten boys. The
22 boys were mixed ages with two from each year. I think
23 if you requested to be in the same house as your
24 siblings this would have been allowed.

25 Gordonstoun had a very large imposing central

1 building (G-House) which had admin offices and a boys'
2 house. It was a very long campus and near to the 'far
3 gate' were three houses: Bruce, Altyre for boys and
4 Windmill for girls. There were squash courts, swimming
5 pool and gym and an area where 'the services' were
6 located. There was a refectory where everyone ate and
7 next to it was G-House. My house, Round House, which
8 looks like a large doughnut, was next and then you had
9 the classrooms. Next to the classrooms was a girls'
10 house called Hopeman and a boys' house called Cumming.
11 Just outside the grounds was another boys' house called
12 Duffus. I would estimate that the school grounds were
13 at least 150 acres. Bruce House and Altyre House were
14 old Nissen huts left after the Second World War.
15 I think these have now been updated into more swanky
16 accommodation.

17 It was a tough school and I could see how some
18 children would find it hard. You were in the middle of
19 nowhere and some children could not adapt as easily and
20 missed their home life. There were 500 children in
21 a school in the middle of nowhere and it was the 1970s
22 and 1980s. Many kids were starting to experiment with
23 smoking and alcohol, so I suspect the school would be
24 worried about this.

25 All pupils were treated the same whether you were

1 a prince or from a far less affluent family. There were
2 quite a few pupils who were at the school on
3 scholarships but as a pupil you would never know and it
4 was a level playing field for all. The school was
5 renowned for providing scholarships for the less well
6 off, indeed roughly 40 per cent of the school had some
7 sort of fee reduction.

8 I was never subjected to or witnessed any abuse on
9 any of the pupils during my five years at Gordonstoun.

10 The ethos was very similar to Aberlour and based on
11 the Kurt Hahn module. You had to show initiative. You
12 were consequently being tested.

13 When I was in the lower sixth I was given a job by
14 the deputy headmaster, David Byatt, which was to look
15 after guests. If a guest arrived at the school they
16 were shown round by a senior pupil and I had to organise
17 the rota by leaving notes for school guides at different
18 places to advise them who they were meeting, when and
19 where. As there were no mobile phones and social media
20 at that time, so communicating between pupils was
21 difficult.

22 Taking part in expeditions you could be given
23 a starting and a finishing point and then told to make
24 your own way without any help from the staff. These
25 expeditions were a great way to learn as you were on

1 your own with your friends. It was part all of the
2 school ethos and taught you independence.

3 Staff and school staffing structure.

4 The headmaster was Michael Mavor, who sadly died in
5 2010. The deputy headmaster was David Byatt.

6 Underneath them were ten housemasters, then there were
7 heads of department and their teaching staff. I got on
8 very well with David Byatt, who was very approachable.

9 My housemaster was called Angus Miller. He was like
10 a father figure to me especially in the view of the
11 breakup of my parents' marriage. I went to him with any
12 issues I had. I also had a tutor for academic issues,
13 who was a lovely and very approachable man. I got on
14 very well with my classics teacher. I was not academic
15 but classical civilisation was my favourite subject
16 because of the way it was delivered.

17 My housemaster, Angus Miller, became Round Square
18 headmaster as I started my first term there. He would
19 not let you sit in your room. He encouraged you to go
20 out and try things. He made sure that you contributed
21 to your house. He provided the pastoral care and was
22 a lovely man. I am still in touch with him to this day.
23 Many of the staff spent 20 or 30 years teaching at
24 Gordonstoun.

25 I think that there would have been about 25 members

1 of staff living on the campus while the rest lived in
2 nearby houses. If you needed to speak to a member of
3 staff at any time there were always plenty available.

4 The only teacher who was there when I was there and
5 I heard about being accused of abuse and subsequently
6 being jailed was Mr Keir. My dealings with him were
7 that he was a very quiet man who wouldn't say boo to
8 a goose.

9 Prefects.

10 There was a head boy and a head girl called
11 Guardians. There were also prefects who served for
12 a year called Colour Bearers. The heads of house were
13 called house helpers.

14 The main role of the Guardians was to lead by
15 example. They put their back into everything. They
16 encouraged others to try things they may never have done
17 before. I remember being persuaded into singing in
18 an opera, which I would never have thought of until
19 I actually did it.

20 I don't think the Guardians ever dispensed any
21 physical discipline but I seem to remember that they
22 could make you run around the south lawn if you had been
23 misbehaving. It was called penalty drill."

24 Moving on to the routine at Gordonstoun School
25 starting at paragraph 68:

1 "There was not a huge emphasis on the academic side
2 of schooling. It was more effort put into sport and the
3 principles of Kurt Hahn. You were always doing
4 something and I am sure there was no schoolchild as busy
5 as a pupil who attended Gordonstoun.

6 I don't recall any initiation ceremonies carried out
7 by the pupils as a test that had to be passed. It would
8 be considered as a sort of bullying and was not allowed.

9 Washing and bathing.

10 There were communal showers and two baths available
11 to you. There was also a cold shower that had a large
12 shower head which we used regularly as part of the
13 school regime. It was refreshing and helped with skin
14 complaints. There was no supervision by staff in the
15 showering area.

16 There was a sanitorium on campus which was staffed
17 by matron and her staff. There were about 20 individual
18 rooms. There was also a doctor who came in every day
19 and held a clinic there. I do recall that you were
20 measured and weighed every term to check on your growth
21 and development. I think I saw the doctor on a few
22 occasions with minor rugby injuries.

23 If you had any issues or concerns you could go to
24 a senior pupil or your housemaster along with any other
25 teacher that you got on well with. I was in a very

1 strong year and we had very few complaints about the
2 school. I was never aware of any complaints system that
3 was in place. I can't recall anyone ever running away.

4 The food was very good and I think the school won
5 prizes for their food. The meal times had to be
6 staggered as the refectory could not cope with all the
7 pupils. You were fed when it was your house's turn.
8 There was always plenty of choice.

9 There was toast and coffee on the go most of the
10 time if you needed it in the evening in your house.
11 There was also a tuck shop and you could buy sweets and
12 drinks if you wanted. I think that your parents
13 provided the school with your pocked money but I can't
14 recall.

15 There were some chores to perform and you had to
16 clean the house inside and out. We had to pick up
17 litter and on rotation the house had to clean the
18 refectory. It was all about respecting the community.
19 You didn't drop litter or you would be letting people
20 down. The senior boys who were Colour Bearers would
21 oversee the chores being performed.

22 At the weekends it was more relaxed and there were
23 dances on a Saturday night at different houses. There
24 was also inter-house sports on a Sunday. There was
25 always something to do and you found that you would be

1 involved in it whatever it was.

2 Combined Cadet Corps and Services.

3 There were several services that were available at
4 the school, including the Fire Service, the coastguards,
5 surf lifesaving and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF).
6 I was involved in the coastguards. We were auxiliary
7 coastguards and would have to go on to the lookout post
8 and monitor shipping going past when the weather was
9 poor. We were also trained to fire a line out to a ship
10 that was in trouble called the Breeches Buoy. We were
11 trained to rescue people who became stuck on cliffs.
12 The service training usually took place on a Wednesday
13 afternoon.

14 Bullying.

15 There was a zero tolerance to bullying and this was
16 reinforced by Mr Mavor and Mr Miller. The only incident
17 of bullying that I recall was one boy who was bullied by
18 two other boys. This was dealt with very quickly and
19 both the boys, whose names I can't recall, did not
20 return after a Christmas school holiday. It happened in
21 my house and my housemaster had to deal with it.

22 School rules/discipline and punishment.

23 There was a ban on smoking and drinking and also
24 having sexual relationships with any other pupils.

25 I was part of a group who were involved in stamping out

1 anti-social behaviour in our house. I think for smoking
2 it was two strikes and you were out. If caught drinking
3 alcohol it was one strike and you were out. Drugs did
4 not exist when I was at Gordonstoun, although I believe
5 before I arrived there were some pupils asked to leave
6 after being caught smoking cannabis.

7 Some of the policing of the school was carried out
8 by the pupils themselves which was part of the growing
9 up process. It encouraged the pupils to take
10 responsibility. You would rarely hand anyone over to
11 the staff unless the incident was significant with
12 a major breach of the school rules. You would have
13 a word with them and tell them to behave. It was always
14 felt that if you brought disrespect on your house then
15 the other members were not going to like it.

16 There was a daily training plan that you had to
17 adhere to. It was all done on trust. There was a list
18 of about ten things you had to complete every day for
19 the first two years of school when you were a junior.
20 You could see a senior boy every day who would confirm
21 that you had completed the plan. You were expected to
22 own up if you failed to complete any of the tasks. They
23 were simple things like how to brush your teeth or
24 taking a cold shower. Persistent failure to complete
25 the plan meant that you were required to do press ups

1 with ten press ups per task you failed to complete. The
2 press ups were not supervised by the older pupils. It
3 was expected that you would complete them in your own
4 time.

5 There were discipline measures. They still used the
6 cane but I was never subjected to it. The headmaster or
7 the housemasters were the only teachers who could use
8 the cane. There was detention on a Saturday night which
9 stopped you to going to dances or social events. There
10 was house gating where you would be confined to the
11 house for a period of time. There was also rustication,
12 which meant you were sent home.

13 On one occasion I was caught drinking when I was
14 about 15. I had a long chat with my housemaster and he
15 agreed that it may have something to do with the breakup
16 of my parents. The housemaster used his discretion and
17 as a result I was house gated and that was the end of
18 the matter and I was not punished further.

19 There were a lot of expeditions and walking to the
20 tops of mountains. You carried large packs and would
21 end up dirty and sweaty but you would have accomplished
22 the expedition. This helped us all doing our gold Duke
23 of Edinburgh's Awards and we found the required
24 expeditions very simple, so we effectively doubled the
25 amount of miles required to make it harder. You were

1 aware of the staff who also oversaw most of the
2 expeditions without interfering unless necessary.
3 I never saw any accidents or pupils being hurt or taken
4 to hospital despite the fact that we were mountain
5 climbing and abseiling down the mountainsides. You also
6 learned to sail aboard the school sailing vessel Sea
7 Spirit.

8 When you were a senior boy you could go out to
9 Lossiemouth or Elgin and have dinner on Saturday
10 nights. You needed the permission of a housemaster to
11 go there. You didn't have to wear a school uniform but
12 you still had to conduct yourself properly as it was
13 felt you were representing the school. Some of the boys
14 were 18 and could drink in the pubs. Elgin and
15 Lossiemouth were not friendly environments for
16 Gordonstoun pupils.

17 My mother did visit on the odd occasion and I would
18 go out for a meal or she would watch a match that I was
19 playing in. I don't recall any official visits from
20 school inspectors.

21 There were report cards sent directly to your
22 parents after every term so they could keep a eye on how
23 you were progressing.

24 I think that Gordonstoun by giving you the
25 challenges that they did on a daily basis helped greatly

1 and prepared us more for university and other careers.
2 We seemed better prepared than anything I have seen in
3 the modern teaching methods my children were exposed to.
4 You were taught a lot of independence and could make
5 your own decisions. They taught you resilience to
6 overcome problems.

7 I spent the first year out of school teaching
8 English and sport at a sister school to Gordonstoun in
9 Australia. I was still in touch with Gordonstoun on
10 a regular basis. I came back to the UK and resat my
11 Highers to improve my grades. I then went to Herriot
12 Watt University in Edinburgh where I obtained my degree.
13 Thereafter I entered the world of finance and have
14 worked in the City ever since.

15 I have kept in touch with the school. My house
16 Round Square has the odd reunion and so does my year
17 group. I occasionally attend a yearly golf outing
18 organised by the Gordonstoun Association. I still keep
19 in touch with some of my friends through social media.

20 In the early years after leaving school I kept in
21 touch with some staff members but this involved writing
22 letters and was difficult. If I was in Aberdeen I would
23 call into Gordonstoun in person and speak to the staff.

24 Impact.

25 Gordonstoun provided me with collegiate friendships

1 that have been preserved through my life. I always feel
2 that the education I received at Aberlour and
3 Gordonstoun makes me feel that there's more in me.
4 Being faced with adversity I feel I can try to deal with
5 anything and face up to difficult tasks. There are very
6 few things that are insurmountable. It has made me
7 enjoy a challenge and have the strength to take it on.
8 I am proud of what former pupils of Gordonstoun have
9 achieved in all fields. There are many examples of
10 their success, including Olympians and leaders in
11 academic fields. My own daughter went to Gordonstoun as
12 a boarder between the ages of 13 and 17 and also had
13 a very positive experience.

14 Reasons for contacting the Scottish Child Abuse
15 Inquiry.

16 I'm not sure how I learned about the Inquiry,
17 I think I may have seen it in the press. I have never
18 discussed my intention to give evidence to the Inquiry
19 with any staff from Gordonstoun. I have mentioned to my
20 peer group and my siblings that I intended to give
21 evidence. Gordonstoun provides an education that other
22 schools pretend to provide. They have an ethos which
23 they maintain. Other schools and companies should
24 listen to what is done at Gordonstoun and learn from the
25 school's motto 'Plus est en vous', which, translated,

1 means 'More is in you'.

2 I am bored reading the adverse publicity Gordonstoun
3 receives. There are always references to the time
4 Prince Charles and other royal family members spent
5 there. Headlines like 'Colditz in kilts' upsets me and
6 I want to give you a very different slant.

7 Other information.

8 I have lots of experience of different schools
9 through my own children being placed at schools in the
10 southeast but also my eldest daughter attending
11 Gordonstoun. I felt the staff at Gordonstoun and
12 Aberlour were so passionate about their subjects. Many
13 of the staff were long-serving and enjoyed the subject
14 they taught. They also liked the children and were
15 passionate about all-round education. They had
16 a full-time vocation teaching the children which
17 unfortunately I don't see replicated these days.

18 The school continues to provide excellent pastoral
19 care. It may be slightly different from my time in the
20 '70s and '80s. The teachers you were in class with one
21 day could the next day be climbing a mountain, running
22 in a cross country race or sailing with you. My
23 experience at Gordonstoun was very positive.

24 I have no objection to my witness statement being
25 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.

1 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
2 true."

3 And it was signed on 6 October 2020.

4 LADY SMITH: Thank you. Ms Bennie.

5 'Mary' (read)

6 MS BENNIE: My Lady, the next statement to be read bears the
7 reference WIT-3-000000095. My Lady, this statement is
8 dated 14 September 2020. The witness wishes to remain
9 anonymous and has adopted the pseudonym of 'Mary'.

10 My Lady, the statement begins with the following:

11 "In the spirit of full disclosure, please be aware

12 that I have worked with Gordonstoun [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED] helping to compile their response to the Inquiry.

14 As a result, I am fully aware of the details of that
15 submission and of the nature of the accusations which
16 have been made against the school since 1934. However,
17 as a former pupil, whilst I completely and informedly
18 understand that Gordonstoun must be held accountable for
19 the mistakes of the past, I do also feel compelled to
20 share my own positive experience of life at school, to
21 help provide a counterbalance to the distressing
22 negative experiences which have been, and absolutely
23 should be and must be, shared.

24 My name is 'Mary'. I currently live in Scotland but
25 was born in London and brought up in Surrey. I was sent

1 to Aberlour House in January 1979 after an assessment
2 concluded that I was dyslexic. This is not severe, and
3 indeed by the time I was diagnosed I had overcome a lot
4 of the problems I had with spelling and writing.
5 However, at the time it was my mother's understanding
6 that only three schools handled this well and
7 Gordonstoun was one of them. Because my family is from
8 Aberdeen and because my mother liked what she read about
9 the school, I was sent to Aberlour and subsequently to
10 Gordonstoun.

11 I was at Aberlour House from 1979 to 1980. I was
12 there for five terms.

13 I was at Gordonstoun for five years, from 1980 to
14 1985.

15 I very much enjoyed my time at Aberlour although
16 I was very homesick at first. The other children were
17 friendly and funny and I quickly settled in and made
18 friends. We were expected to make our own beds and keep
19 the dormitories clean. By my recollection, the biggest
20 girls' dormitory had 10 girls in it in bunk beds. We
21 showered every day and were expected to jump in a cold
22 bath after our showers. This was fleeting and not much
23 fun but it was fine. I don't recall the day-to-day
24 routine particularly, the beds were comfy, we had duvets
25 and beloved cuddly toys. We listened to music in the

1 dormitories and I remember having fun. In leisure time
2 we could roam around the grounds. In the winter we
3 sledged down the drive, we skateboarded and watched
4 films on Saturday night. We had dances and went to the
5 village on Saturday with some pocket money to buy
6 sweets. We had to do a morning run in the morning --
7 the girls wore culottes and their cardigans and a pair
8 of shoes for the run. We ran around the school and back
9 indoors again. It was bracing but didn't happen in bad
10 weather. The teachers were strong characters, the
11 school work was enjoyable and we had matrons who looked
12 after our well-being. It was adventuresome and good
13 fun. The food wasn't great but we got a sweet after
14 lunch every day and break time was good, with biscuits
15 and juice. The older girls were kind to the younger
16 ones, in my experience, and the boys and girls mixed
17 well. We had assembly every day and a chapel type
18 service on a Sunday. We played a lot of sport, come
19 rain or shine, and went on quite demanding expeditions
20 in the summer. I wouldn't want to do those again but
21 I am really glad I did them.

22 I was at Gordonstoun for five years from September
23 1980 to July 1985.

24 I was in Hopeman House for the first three years and
25 moved to Gordonstoun House, which was a new sixth form

1 girls' house at that time, for my sixth form.

2 I absolutely loved Gordonstoun and made great
3 friends there who are my friends today.

4 In Hopeman, we had our own rooms with half walls
5 (called horse boxes), which I actually think is an
6 inspired way of accommodating young people in a boarding
7 environment, and which sadly a school inspector decided
8 wasn't. We had our own private spaces but also couldn't
9 get lonely or detached. Because I came from Aberlour,
10 I already had friends at school who came too, but also
11 made friends with new students. We had appropriate
12 bedtimes, could shower when we wanted. We went on
13 various camping expeditions with subjects like geography
14 and geology or as a member of a boarding house or a year
15 group, and went sailing on the school sail training
16 vessel in fourth form and sixth form. I loved both my
17 cruises. I didn't love expeditions but I have some very
18 fond memories of wandering around the west of Scotland
19 with good friends helping each other out with the need
20 to keep going to get to a campsite. There was a san
21 where we could go with any health concerns. I stayed
22 there only once with a heavy cold. I had to do weighing
23 and measuring at the start and end of every term and
24 that was awful but par for the course in those days. We
25 went to the cinema occasionally and to Inverness and

1 Aberdeen for the theatre. The boys went on
2 international sports tours.

3 We had to do a morning run in Hopeman. I have no
4 recollection of doing it in Gordonstoun House but assume
5 we must have done. It was a pretty lax affair by the
6 time I got to school. It was a bit of a bore. My
7 sister used to do it with her duvet around her
8 shoulders.

9 I have a summer birthday so didn't have a birthday
10 at school. In Aberlour these were marked with a party
11 and the best cakes ever from Walker's, which sadly they
12 don't make any more. At Gordonstoun you could have
13 a 'brew' (like a tea party) and invite friends. Parents
14 could come and visit if they were able, by my
15 recollection. Certainly my mum brought stuff over from
16 Aberdeen for my sister's 18th. Christmas was fun --
17 marked with a carol service and a Christmas meal. We
18 did shows at Gordonstoun for elderly people if we were
19 in community service and it was all quite festive. But
20 term ended before actual Christmas obviously.

21 At Aberlour, post was delivered every day at break.
22 We wrote home every Monday morning first thing and could
23 call home from the school call box on our birthdays or
24 our parents' birthdays. Parents could come and take us
25 out for lunch or the odd weekend and we had open day and

1 half term.

2 At Gordonstoun, post was also delivered every day,
3 we could write and ring home whenever we wanted but had
4 to queue for the boarding house call boxes.

5 They generally put siblings in the same boarding
6 house, so I was in the same house as my older sister and
7 I could see her whenever I wanted to.

8 By my recollection we could go home for two weekends
9 a term, have lunch on a Sunday also, and there were half
10 terms. Because my mum lived in Aberdeen, she often came
11 through to school productions and sports fixtures, so we
12 saw her quite a lot.

13 Discipline and punishment.

14 At Aberlour, I don't personally remember
15 particularly getting into trouble. If you talked after
16 lights out and wouldn't stop, you might get sent to
17 stand in the hall outside the staff room. Occasionally
18 girls were made to run up and down steps outside for
19 a similar infraction. I think girls got the slipper but
20 don't recall anyone actually getting it. Boys were
21 caned, which I hate, but not regularly by my
22 recollection. A friend of mine got caught ringing
23 doorbells and running away in the village and I think
24 she had to write to everyone whose doorbell she had
25 rung. You did not want to incur the wrath of certain

1 teachers and consequently didn't. I think the French
2 teacher wasn't beyond using a ruler to get attention.

3 At Gordonstoun, equally, I didn't personally get
4 into much trouble. There were charts which you had to
5 get signed to confirm your whereabouts as a punishment.
6 I was put on chart but I don't remember what for and it
7 wasn't for long. I got detention a few times -- which
8 was spending Saturday evening in the maths block
9 writing. Once I can remember for swearing in
10 a basketball lesson. My brother was caned in third form
11 and that was awful, but caning stopped soon thereafter.

12 I was reasonably academic and did well in my
13 A-levels. The only teaching that was not good in my
14 opinion was maths, but some of the maths teachers were
15 good. Some of the teachers were remarkable. I did
16 a lot of extracurricular drama, both on and back stage,
17 which I loved. And I competed for the school in public
18 speaking and debating in local and in one instance
19 a national competition.

20 When I left school I took a year off then I went to
21 Westfield College at London University.

22 Eight years ago my husband and I moved up to
23 Scotland so that our girls could attend the Gordonstoun
24 junior school and subsequently Gordonstoun.

25 I felt very strongly that the school would give them

1 something they could not achieve elsewhere, which was
2 an active childhood alongside a good education.

3 As I said at the opening, I am working with the
4 school on the response to the Inquiry and have helped
5 compile it so far. I have personally provided
6 information regarding two incidents of abuse which took
7 place to my knowledge during my time at the school.
8 I am aware that there was bullying in the boys' boarding
9 houses and that it could be brutal for the younger
10 members of the house. I also believe that in my time at
11 school this changed, and that by the time I left
12 bullying was not the problem it had been in the early
13 1980s.

14 I distinctly remember one instance, which is
15 reported to the Inquiry, where the headmaster read
16 a letter to the entire school from parents who had just
17 removed their son from third form because he had been
18 bullied, and the real shock that it caused everyone.
19 I always thought that was a brilliant thing to do,
20 actually.

21 But the thing is this, the one side of boarding
22 school life that never gets acknowledged or celebrated
23 is what a life-enhancing, even life-saving experience it
24 can be. Of course this doesn't offset the distress of
25 others, but it is still worth remembering. My home life

1 was chaotic and distressing and all the while
2 Gordonstoun provided us with routine, good nature,
3 security, warmth, good food, company, friendship,
4 guidance and actually love. Teachers got to know us as
5 people, not just students. I felt understood,
6 appreciated, entertaining, interesting, troublesome,
7 exhausting, supported and worthwhile. I was able, for
8 eight months a year, to breathe, not to worry, to have
9 fun, to learn, to challenge and be challenged.

10 Of course pastoral care wasn't what it is today, and
11 I am so happy that the school has changed in all the
12 ways that it needed to and has stayed the same in all
13 the ways that it needed to. There was nowhere I could
14 think of as comparable for sending my children, and that
15 is even understanding the fact that bad things sometimes
16 happened, which I fully understood even when I helped
17 with the Inquiry.

18 I have no objection to this witness statement being
19 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.

20 I believe the facts stated in this statement are true."

21 My Lady, this statement is signed by Mary.

22 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23 'Angelo' (read)

24 MS BENNIE: My Lady, the next statement bears the reference
25 WIT-3-000000172. My Lady, this witness wishes to remain

1 anonymous and he's adopted the pseudonym of 'Angelo'.

2 "I am writing this letter to highlight the systemic
3 neglect and abuse I suffered as a boy pupil of Aberlour
4 House and Gordonstoun from 1976 to 1985. My concern is
5 that you may focus on one-off events and abusers and not
6 understand how we were institutionally neglected, how
7 the culture of bullying was well-established and
8 accepted, and why many of us suffered events whose
9 consequences still impact our lives.

10 The events I describe for me were life-altering and
11 have significantly affected outcomes in my life. After
12 seeking help from a therapist, I understood that these
13 incidents were not things to be ashamed of, but things
14 that happened to me as a child in environments in which
15 I was not protected and that I should speak up about
16 them. I shall attempt to document some of them below.
17 It is by no means exhaustive but an indication of the
18 kind of things that would happen daily or weekly to us.
19 I can have these events corroborated by three to five
20 people with whom I am in contact. They were daily and
21 commonplace.

22 About me: I am a successful [REDACTED] I have
23 [REDACTED] I am a [REDACTED] At
24 Gordonstoun I achieved fairly good academic results and,
25 once I became a senior, was active in school life. Yet

1 at the age of 53 years, I am still wrestling with what
2 happened, seeking therapy for and trying to modify my
3 behaviour to the standard of a normal person.

4 My intent here is not to expose one individual or
5 seek convictions but to show you what life was like for
6 us. Essentially, the school failed in their duty of
7 care and protection to us. Gordonstoun was worse than
8 Aberlour, but I will list events from both.

9 Aberlour.

10 Aberlour had a less violent culture than
11 Gordonstoun. I went at nine years old. The point
12 I would like to illustrate here is how the school didn't
13 take care of us or our well-being rather than pointing
14 at any specific abuser or alleging sexual abuse. It
15 just seems to me the standards and controls were poor,
16 and as a parent I would be deeply upset if my child
17 reported this.

18 Chinese Burns: at Aberlour in Darnaway dormitory on
19 the ground floor. We have been playing around as kids
20 do getting ready for morning inspection. We have been
21 giving each other Chinese burns for laughs, horsing
22 around and swearing. Our teacher has been listening
23 outside. He comes in and is angry. He gives us all
24 adult Chinese burns himself to punish us for the
25 swearing, I think. I just remember 12 kids sobbing and

1 holding their forearms. He says, 'I'll show you what
2 a real Chinese burn is like.'

3 A teacher's study. I am playing outside with
4 friends under trees. The teacher calls me in as if I've
5 done something wrong. He takes me into his study and
6 draws the curtains in the middle of the day. He gives
7 me sherry to drink. I'm close to 12 years old. He
8 makes me feel special in glowing school reports and
9 tells me I have a gift [REDACTED] I like him very
10 much, but years later there are parts of our
11 relationship that concern me that might be described as
12 grooming. I don't feel that his behaviour towards me
13 was appropriate.

14 Watched in the showers. The same teacher watches us
15 in the showers often. There's already a matron there to
16 supervise us. Why is a grown man watching boys shower?
17 In addition, a teacher has photos of us in the shower.
18 Why are teachers photographing us in the shower? Why
19 are adults watching us?

20 I am forced to fight other kids to avoid getting
21 beaten up, I'm forced to fight other boys. We punch and
22 hit each other to avoid being beaten by the bullies. We
23 are maybe 10 or 11.

24 We copy our weekly letters home from the blackboard.
25 A teacher has to approve what we've written before it's

1 sent. I use cartoons on my mails to try and communicate
2 with my parents. We are so hungry we steal milk from
3 the corridor and drink it in the bushes. I hide fruit
4 in my jumper and eat it under the bed covers at night.

5 The ice forms on the inside of the windows. We are
6 not allowed to close them. Snow falls on the ends of
7 the beds nearest the windows. It hits minus 20 degrees
8 but the school insists we still wear shorts and we must
9 run every day topless before breakfast.

10 The toilet seats and floors are covered with semen
11 for the next 10 years. My job was to wipe it off when
12 I was assigned toilet cleaning and many other kids were
13 cleaning toilets as part of our normal duties.

14 Kids have repetitive nightmares and sleepwalk
15 screaming. It all goes unreported. We are not allowed
16 to use the telephone to call.

17 My feeling here is just the standard of care
18 extended to us was poor. Perhaps this was the accepted
19 nature of institutions at the time, but when I read it,
20 it resembles a borstal or a camp for juvenile offenders.

21 We had to stand in the middle of the room naked. We
22 read erotic passages from books with flashlights pointed
23 at our genitals to see if we become erect. There is no
24 abuser here, but it's an indication that we are not
25 being taken care of in a way our parents would expect.

1 Gordonstoun.

2 I was in Altyre House at Gordonstoun. From the very
3 first night we were bullied and it was apparent there
4 was little involvement from the teachers in the safety
5 of well-being of kids after class hours. At 9 pm the
6 juniors would go to bed, and we were thus captive for
7 bullying. It was apparent that new kids needed to be
8 'taught a lesson' and our weaknesses probed.

9 The door would be kicked open and four or five
10 seniors would come in and bully us. For years we had
11 our nipples twisted and it would have been a very
12 unusual day if you didn't see black and blue nipples of
13 least one kid in the showers. It was a perennial thing
14 for us. Beds would be tipped over with us under the
15 sheets, dead arms and legs given, and just outright
16 beatings. Finally the door would close and you would
17 hear the sobbing of the other boys in the darkness. It
18 was as if we were part of a sport. It was well known
19 and accepted bullying was taking place amongst the
20 pupils.

21 Children were bullied to the point of a nervous
22 breakdown or collapse. My good friend had a temper that
23 would suddenly crack. He was bated constantly as a game
24 to see when he would explode, a kind of mental torture.
25 Kids would fiddle with his stereo or take his books

1 waiting for the moment he lost it. Some kids had
2 breakdowns from the bullying and were mentally
3 destroyed, having to leave the school. There was a long
4 tradition and acceptance of bullying. It was considered
5 a senior's right.

6 Typical events for me personally and others on
7 a weekly basis would be wedgies. Bullies would grab
8 a kid and pull his underpants up until they were ripped
9 off over the head. Obviously this would leave welts on
10 the legs from the friction and is exceedingly painful.
11 I, like many others, would be lifted up and hung from
12 the coat pegs in the hall in Altyre by my underwear.
13 This is something you would see weekly. These are not
14 one-off events. Shreds of underpants were a common
15 sight.

16 Kangaroo Court: again another bullying fun event was
17 to convene 'Kangaroo Court' in the main room of the
18 house. This shows you the publicly accepted nature of
19 the bullying. It was an excuse to find some junior
20 guilty of some imaginary crime and punish them for it.
21 There were hot water heating pipes that ran through the
22 ceiling. In my case, with a friend, we were made to
23 strip naked or hang from these pipes in front of the
24 crowd. Even though the pipes burned, the first person
25 to let go would be punished further.

1 Personal property hardly existed. Your locker, your
2 food, your bike, your duffle coat; at any point any or
3 all of these items would be stolen. You would see
4 seniors wearing your duffle coat, as they had the names
5 on the shoulder, but you couldn't ask for it back. You
6 would find your bike in the bike shed stripped -- no
7 wheels, no brake pads. Your tuck box would be routinely
8 raided to search for food, your locker emptied for clean
9 clothes. There was no consequence for stealing.

10 Later in life, I have had issues where I either
11 accept relationships that are not safe for me or people
12 treat me in ways that are not physically safe for me.
13 No one can understand why I don't leave or change locks
14 or call the police, and I believe this is why. Over ten
15 years you become habituated to this unsafe world and
16 accept it as normal.

17 My brother was tied to a chair and thrown out of
18 a window, maybe an 8-foot drop.

19 Seniors fired a crossbow through the study walls
20 (plasterboard) while kids were in the room during study
21 time. These things are typical and went on for years.

22 Darts were thrown down the corridors where kids
23 were. It was considered a sport to see if you could hit
24 kids in the legs.

25 Personally I received a black eye when I pointed out

1 that a boy had stolen my scarf from my locker. I walked
2 around for weeks with a black eye. No teacher ever
3 asked.

4 Mr Whippies were given out. A Mr Whippy is when you
5 force a kid's head down the toilet and flush so his wet
6 hair then resembles a Mr Whippy Ice Cream. Just
7 a normal day.

8 A teacher came into the common room to announce that
9 a pupil had been expelled late in 1985. He had been
10 caught twisting a kid's nipples with pliers. We were
11 supposed to be shocked. He told us if we ever see
12 anything like that we should report it. These kind of
13 things had been happening daily for us kids for years
14 and now, after five years, they were telling us this was
15 wrong. It was considered a right to bully and it was
16 looked forwards by each successive year, the privilege
17 of beating up the new sprogs. I later became a senior
18 at Altyre and announced a zero tolerance towards
19 bullying, for which I was condemned by other pupils.
20 After I left the school, I heard the kids returned to
21 bullying.

22 When I went to university I began to realise my
23 childhood had not been like other kids, no one else had
24 these kinds of experiences. My new English teacher at
25 London University would ask me to sit beside him in

1 front of the class and stroke my knee. I did this
2 because I had no boundaries and was conditioned to this
3 kind of behaviour by Gordonstoun.

4 There was a shared delight in creative bullying.
5 Kids would have a noughts-and-crosses board drawn on
6 their back and be sent to find a specific senior at the
7 other end of the school to add a cross and then have to
8 return for the original senior to add a cross, and so
9 the game would continue with the hapless 'board' running
10 to and fro. These were not official punishments, just
11 whims of older kids.

12 People were locked in laundry baskets and placed
13 under a cold shower on their birthday. A typical game.

14 Typical event: being thrown into a drainage ditch on
15 the way to supper. Bullying was just part of daily
16 life. I got off easier than many others.

17 I was aware that one or two boy pupils were being
18 raped by other boys. Many of us were well aware in the
19 sense we heard rumours or gossip. I know how a kid who
20 has been raped walks. I am ashamed that I didn't speak
21 up or understand this. The culture of not telling and
22 silence was so strong amongst pupils.

23 I could go on with the behaviour that I experienced
24 at Gordonstoun. These are typical incidents, not things
25 that lead to convictions I understand, but over years

1 and years it had a lasting impact on me. I find myself
2 in therapy at 53 still learning to behave like a grown
3 man because of the mental damage I suffered. Of the
4 four closest friends I had at school, none of us has
5 been able to sustain a marriage or have a boss. We are
6 all working for ourselves. I suspect our trust in
7 authority was devastated.

8 Personally, I have had problems with poor
9 boundaries, having grown up in a world where boundaries
10 were not respected. I was unable in life to speak up
11 for my needs, having spent a decade in a place where to
12 speak your need was only a clue to bullies as to how
13 they could further torment you. My marriage failed
14 because I have never learned to speak up for myself,
15 because I lived so long in a world where my needs were
16 of no account.

17 As I said in my opening paragraph, I am trying to
18 illustrate at Gordonstoun there was a wide and
19 well-accepted culture and tradition of bullying. The
20 school failed us by not only not identifying this, but
21 failing to protect us from this behaviour and exposing
22 us to long-term mental health damage. This was not what
23 we deserved and my intent here is to contribute this
24 account for the record so that future pupils may avoid
25 this chaos that still haunts me decades later."

1 My Lady, this statement was signed by 'Angelo'.
2 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much, Ms Bennie.
3 MR BROWN: My Lady, that's the end of today's readings.
4 There are few still to make up, but we will make them up
5 during the course of the week.
6 LADY SMITH: That's fine. And we start with a witness in
7 person tomorrow morning?
8 MR BROWN: We have three live witnesses again tomorrow, one
9 again by video link.
10 LADY SMITH: Very well. I'll rise now until tomorrow
11 morning when I'll sit as usual at 10 o'clock. Thank you
12 very much.
13 (12.23 pm)
14 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am on Tuesday,
15 12 October 2021)
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I N D E X

'Duncan' (read)1
'James' (read)16
'Pauline' (read)51
'Benjamin' (read)56
'Mary' (read)77
'Angelo' (read)85

