

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

IQF

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is IQF. This has been my name since birth. My date of birth is 1955.

### Life before care

2. I was born at home in Granton, Edinburgh. My mum was and my dad was . I was one of eight kids. We were four boys and four girls with about a year or two between all of us. The oldest was , who was about nineteen years older than me, then , then me. My mother had a baby after me and lost it, and then she had my sister, , who was three years younger than me and was the youngest of the family.
3. My dad had been in the navy and had come back and worked as a Chief Engineer on the Trawlers. My mum stayed at home and looked after us. We lived in a three bedroom apartment with the boys in one room, the girls in the other and my parents in the third room. The comradeship between us all at home was great because my mother kept us all together and looked over all of us. We were happy and well fed. I went to Wardieburn Primary School, .
4. One day when I was eight years old, my dad came in from work and picked me up and put me on his shoulders. I loved my dad. One of his colleagues then came to the house and asked him to go up to Aberdeen to join a boat that needed to go out. It couldn't

sail because the Chief Engineer had been sacked so they asked my dad if he would go up and join the crew to get it out onto the water. My dad packed a bag to leave. As he was leaving, I was outside with a wee girl from the street who was my friend, and my dad gave me money to get a cake for the two of us. He told me he'd see me when he came home, and left. I remember seeing him walking away with his bag on his shoulder. That was the last time I saw him. My dad died at [REDACTED] Dock in Aberdeen and never came home. That was in [REDACTED] 1963.

5. I had been fine at school up until then but I stopped going to school after my dad died. Sometimes I'd be at home and sometimes I would go to the top of the stairs at Granton and watch the boats coming into Granton Harbour, watching and waiting for my dad to come home. I didn't understand that he wasn't coming home because nobody explained anything to me after he died. We also struggled with money after that and would sometimes get clothes from the police station. One day I went to school with my mother's slippers on because I never had shoes. That was another reason I didn't go to school. I had a good headmistress, Mrs Brown, who tried to find out what was wrong with me but it didn't help. I struggled communicating with people.
6. A man called John Bachelor from the school board visited the house twice and spoke to my mum. I don't remember him talking to me when he visited or asking me why I wasn't going to school.
7. My mum and me were taken to an office at the back of Nicholson Street for what they called "a round table." There were people like doctors, accountants and other professionals around the table who told me I had to go to school. It was in the evening because these people all had jobs during the day. Nobody asked me why I wasn't going to school or told me what would happen if I didn't go to school. That was the first involvement my family had with the authorities.
8. I still never went to school. Then a few weeks or months later, there was a knock at the door and John Bachelor told my mum he was there to take me away. I remember my mum crying and telling me that I needed to go with this man. My mum had also been in care growing up and had had a bad experience and she knew the same was

going to happen to me. I started crying as well and the man just took me by the wrists and said "you have to come with me, son." He took me in a taxi to Waverley station and on the train to Dundee. I cried all the way because I didn't know what was going on. I was put in Balgowan, which was a List D school. This was about two years after my dad died.

9. My mum remarried after my dad died. My stepfather brought his two daughter into the family, and then he and my mother had another three children together.

### **Balgowan School, Dundee**

10. I was put in Balgowan in 1965, when I was about nine and a half years old. John Bachelor took me there.
11. We went over a bridge and past a wee shop, then there was a dip in the road just before a corner. We went round the corner and drove up to the school, which was on a dead end. There was a big sign and a driveway leading up to this big, fancy school building with spires in the centre. The school had its own grounds around it.
12. I remember going into the building with John Bachelor and the first person we met was the secretary who was called Marjorie Ireland. Mr Bachelor went into the office to talk to her. I then met Mr <sup>LIF</sup> <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED], and Mr <sup>LSB</sup> <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED]. John Bachelor left and I never saw him again.
13. Miss Ireland then told me I would get a change of clothes. She told me to go for a shower and put on my uniform, which I did. I then went to a woodwork class, which Mr <sup>LIO</sup> [REDACTED] took. Mr <sup>LIO</sup> [REDACTED] then showed me my dormitory and told me where I was going to sleep.
14. I didn't know how long I was going to be there or when I would see my family again because nobody told me. I went in there at nine and left when I was thirteen years old. I was then put back in a second time and left when I was fourteen and a half years old.

### *The school and layout*

15. Balgowan was an approved school for boys aged from eight to about fifteen years old. There was anything from 120 to 160 boys at the school during the time I was there. It was like a concentration camp.
16. The school was a beautiful old building with two floors. On the ground floor, there was the dining hall on the left hand side and a conference room on the right hand side. There were also offices and staff rooms, including the Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster's rooms and Miss Ireland's office. The bathrooms and toilets were also downstairs. You went down a few steps from the ground floor and there was a massive shower room with about thirty shower heads in it.
17. The dormitories were upstairs. There were two on either side of a long corridor. There was Wallace House, Grant House, Drever House and the younger ones were in another one. There was also a room for the night watchman to sleep in, which was in the middle of the corridor with two dormitories on either side, which he had access to.
18. Each dormitory had about twenty-five boys in them. You got moved up through the houses as you got older. I was in Wallace House when I first went in, which had boys aged eight to about ten. When I was a bit older, I was moved to Grant House, which had boys aged about eleven to thirteen. Just before I left, when I was fourteen years old, I had a private room to myself for a few months because I got the job of boiler house man.
19. There was a big stone compound space in the centre outside the school building, which was called the parade ground. There was also a tennis and football court.
20. All the classrooms were outside in transportable unit huts. There was an area beside the huts where vegetables were grown.
21. There was an annex to the right of the main building, which was detached. That was for the Dundee boys who never stayed in the main building. There was about thirty of

them. They were kept separate and kept in luxury compared to the rest of us. That was because their families stayed local and would come to visit and would kick up a fuss if their boys weren't treated well. Nobody told me that but that was my assumption.

### *Staff*

22. There was Mr LIF who was SNR, Mr LSB who was SNR and Miss Ireland who was the secretary.
23. There were teachers who taught in the school. I remember Mr LIO who taught woodwork, Mr ERM taught history, Mr IQH taught arithmetic. LID and LUP took physical education. Mr LID had been in the army and he went on to become a in the army afterwards. He taught us to make shoes while we were in Balgowan and he was often called "LID the cobbler."
24. One of the teachers was responsible for looking after the boys after school, into the evenings. They took turns so it was a different one every day. They would stay until it was our bedtime so they never stayed overnight.
25. There would be a night watchman who would supervise the boys overnight. There were a few of them who took turns. There was Mr IQI who lived up to his name, and another younger one.
26. There were other staff who helped run the place. There was the matron called Betty Carrie, and the deputy matron, Muriel Gray. There was Miss Wright and two other women in the laundry, as well as a seamstress. There were cooks in the cookhouse. There was a groundsman called Mr IPS, who took care of the grounds and gardens where vegetables were grown.

## **Routine at Balgowan**

27. There was a set time for everything. The place was run like the military. You could only walk one way in the corridors. It was a one way system and you were supposed to always know where you were going. You had to go forward, out the building and loop back round if you needed to go back.
28. In the morning, we were woken up by the night watchman and the first teachers on site. Everybody got up and went to the washrooms to get washed and to clean our teeth. We then all got dressed for school and went downstairs for breakfast.
29. After breakfast, we were in the parade ground for half an hour. We all stood to attention in a line and we marched around. It was all done military style. We did that Monday to Friday. Then we went to school for the day. We stopped for lunch and had classes again in afternoon.
30. One of the teachers would be responsible for looking after us after school. We got changed into our after school clothes and had more drill time and marched in the parade ground. Then we went in to get our tea. We had half an hour to go out and play in the parade ground after our tea. We could play football or whatever we wanted during that time.
31. We went back in to get showered and put our jammies on. Then we had some time in the TV room to watch a bit of telly before bedtime.
32. We all went up to the dormitories at 8:45 pm and bedtime was at 9pm. Nobody was allowed to talk once lights went out. That was when the teacher would go home and the night watchman would take over the night shift to supervise us.
33. On a Friday, everybody would be brought together and the staff would go through all the boy's names and call out how they had done that week, so if you had done anything wrong and had a mark against your name, it would be called out. Miss Ireland was my registration teacher so she called out how I had done.

### *Mealtimes / Food*

34. There was a cook house where the meals were made. The food was good in there. We used to say a prayer before every meal, which was "for what we are about to receive may the lord make us truly thankful."
35. Balgowan had big gardens and grew their own vegetables, which we ate at mealtimes. The food was ok but the portion sizes were not very big.
36. Sometimes the Glasgow boys would take my food. An older boy would come over to me or send someone over to take away my food. It didn't happen every day but it happened a lot, and I would just have to starve. I couldn't tell the teachers as the boys would then just beat me up. I don't know if the staff knew it was happening. I think they did but didn't bother to do anything about it.

### *Washing / bathing*

37. We got showered in the evenings. The shower room was just a big room with about thirty shower heads. There were no cubicles so boys would go in thirty at a time and just shower in front of each other.

### *Free time and Weekends*

38. If you had been good and got up to a certain grade, then you would be allowed out for two hours on a Saturday. We got some pocket money for doing chores so you could spend that at the shop if you got out. If you got to a really good grade then you would be allowed home at the weekends. I was only allowed home twice.
39. We could play outside in the evenings after we had our tea. There was a football and tennis court, but the Dundee boys got to play in that. The rest of us played in the parade ground. Boys hung out in wee gangs. There was always one teacher in the compound so boys would congregate round the back at the toilets, where they would

smoke. Everybody smoked in there so I started smoking about a week after I got there at nine years old. It was a weird experience but I felt like I had to so I could be part of the group. The staff knew we smoked and allowed it. Boys collected cigarette butts from bins on the way to church on a Sunday, and then emptied them into toilet paper and rolled cigarettes that way. Some boy bought cigarettes if they got out on a Saturday so you'd give them some of your pocket money to get you some. Other boys brought them back from when they'd been on home leave.

40. Everybody went to church on a Sunday. It was away down Strathmartine Road. We went in the side door and sat separately from the main congregation. There would be over a hundred boys walking down the street on the way to church. We would pass a pub on the way, and some of the boys would leave the group and quickly run to the back of the pub and collect cigarette butts from the bins and join the group again. The teachers never saw that.
41. The rest of the Sunday would just be spent playing outside in the parade ground. If it was raining, then we would be inside to watch telly instead of being outside. You weren't allowed to play when you were inside. They were really strict about that.

#### *Clothing / uniform*

42. I got given the Blagowan uniform to wear the day that I went in and I never saw my own clothes again.
43. The uniform was short trousers and jackets, but we had different colours for when we were at school and when we weren't. During the day we wore green jackets and shorts, with long, grey socks. After school, we wore dark blue jackets and shorts to muck about in. We also had a vest and pants to do sports in. On a Sunday we wore grey flannels and a red blazer to go to church in. That was nice. We had two sets of everything.
44. All the clothes had numbers sewn into them and we were allocated clothes by these numbers. I was number [REDACTED] when I went in, then I was number [REDACTED] when I needed



bigger clothes and then I was number [REDACTED]. There was also a seamstress in the school who mended the clothes when they needed mended, and you went to her when you needed something new.

45. There was a big laundry, and Miss Wright and two other women worked there. Once a week, we were told by a teacher to put our clothes in a wheelie basket and they went to get washed. We would use the other set that week until we got our own clothes back with our numbers on.
46. There was a shoe shop in Balgowan that we got our shoes from, because they used to make their own shoes when it had been an industrial school.

### *Schooling*

47. All the classes were in transportable unit huts and we had classes Monday to Friday. We got mostly woodwork and metal work. We did have other subjects too like English, maths and geography but there was more of a push towards the practical things. We never had any homework or anything.
48. The teachers were the same staff who looked after us after school. Mr LIO [REDACTED] who took woodwork was a really good teacher. I suppose the practical classes helped me learn some useful stuff. I didn't find the rest of the schooling very useful because I already knew that I wanted to be a chief engineer on the Trawlers like my dad had been.
49. There was a cadet force in Balgowan that Mr LID [REDACTED] took. I really respected the guy. He also taught me to tap dance.

### *Trips / Holidays*

50. We went away for summer camp for a week. Quite a lot of the boys would go. We sometimes went to Arbroath, where we stayed in a primary school and had an outdoor swimming pool. We took our own mattresses with us to sleep on. Sometimes we went to a lodge at Glenhead Farm, near Alyth, which had no electricity. There were big hills

at Glenhead that had BBS written in big letters on the white stones on the hills, which stood for Balgowan Boys School.

51. The summer camps were really good because it felt like you had some freedom. Some of that was run like the military as well because we would be made to go for big runs. LID [REDACTED] would put a stick with a high visibility jacket on it on the hill and tell us to go and run to it, touch it and run back if we wanted our tea, and he'd watch us through binoculars.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

52. Birthdays weren't celebrated. You would get a card if someone sent you one but that was it. The school didn't do anything for it. They knew though because LID [REDACTED] would sometimes say happy birthday to me. None of the other teachers said or done anything.
53. I stayed in Balgowan every Christmas and never got home. Other boys got home for about a week if they lived in Dundee or if they had good grades. There'd be about sixty out of 160 boys left in the school over Christmas.
54. We had a Christmas concert and the girls from Balgay School were invited over for a party.

#### *Visits and family contact*

55. I never wrote to my mum or spoke to her on the phone when I was in Balgowan. My mum never had money to come and visit me. She must have got money from somewhere and made the trip once, with my sister [REDACTED]. I hadn't been allowed to see her and only knew about it because I had seen her and [REDACTED] out the window walking away from the school. I knocked on the window but they were too far away to hear me. I went to run out the front door to go after them but there was a teacher there who stopped me.

56. I found out afterwards that she had been told a lie, that I was away at Glenhead Lodge, which was the summer school up in Alyth.
57. Only the Dundee boys got to go home at weekends. If you lived further away, you only got home once every six months or so. I was allowed to go home one weekend after I had been in there for about six months, because I had been good. I never returned to Balgowan when I was supposed to because I didn't want to leave my mum. The police came and got me from my sister in law's house because she informed the school that I was there. My sister in law, [REDACTED], was very strict. The police arrived at her house and took me to Drylaw Police station, where Mr <sup>ERM</sup> [REDACTED] came and collected me and took me bac to Balgowan. I got the belt when I got back.
58. I was allowed home one other time after that but I decided not to go back to Balgowan when I was supposed to. My sister in law, [REDACTED], contacted the school again to tell them I was there. That time, Mr <sup>IPS</sup> [REDACTED] came and collected me and took me back to Balgowan. I got the belt again when I got back.
59. One time my brother [REDACTED] came to visit me and took me out to see the James Bond film at the Vic Picture House in Dundee. That was the only visit I ever had in all the time I was at Balgowan.
60. I never had any visit from a social worker. I never went back to another round table. Nobody visited me or came in from outside to ask me how things were in there. I was just left there.

#### *Healthcare*

61. There was a medical booth on the ground floor, below the dormitories. Betty Carrie was the matron and Muriel Gray was the deputy matron. They were nice ladies.
62. I got a medical check the week after I arrived there, where they checked my teeth, height and weight.

63. Miss Carrie and Miss Gray dealt with everyday medical issues. A doctor also came into the school about once a month, and you would see him then if you had any problems that Miss Carrie or Miss Gray couldn't deal with. They even called a doctor in if a boy needed to see one.
64. A dentist would come to the school to do check-ups sometimes. If a boy needed to see a dentist, then he would be taken into town to see one.
65. One time, I went into the toilets just off the compound and I tripped over and banged my head against the stone wall and was knocked out. Somebody later told me that a boy had tripped me over. I was taken to hospital by Miss Carrie or Miss Gray that time.
66. I went to hospital to get my tonsils out as well and I was there for two days.

#### *Chores*

67. Everyone had jobs to do to keep the place clean, and certain people were picked to do certain jobs. One of the jobs was to polish and buff the floors in the big main halls on both floors. They were long halls, which were the length of the school, about 150 feet. We used liquid cream and a big wooden polishing brushes to do it. This was done every day. Three boys would be picked to do that and it would be done at 9 am for an hour while everyone else was in class, so you missed an hour of school. Different boys were picked every day so everybody got a shot. I loved doing it because it gave me a bit of a break from everyone else.

#### *Bed Wetting*

68. Bed wetters were called "pee in the beds." I was a bed wetter and if you had wet the bed at night, you had to go and tell the staff as soon as you woke up. I didn't get shouted at or anything for it. I just had to strip my bed in the morning and take it to the laundry. The women there would just laugh and tell me not to worry about it. There was no punishment for it or anything. I got a rubber sheet for my bed once they found out I was a bed wetter.

69. In Wallace House, the bed wetters were on the first few beds on the right hand side as you came in the door. In Grant House, we were put in the first six beds as you came in the door on the left hand side so we were all together. We got woken up four times in the night by the night watchman to go to the toilet. He would just get you up and you would go to the toilet. That helped me to not wet the bed at night most of the time. I think I only wet the bed twice during that time. I would strip my sheets in the night and sleep on the rubber mattress until morning.
70. If you had wet the bed and didn't tell staff in the morning, then you would get in trouble. You would have to go in front of the headmaster and get the belt or something, but I don't know for sure because that never happened to me. Miss Ireland had told me that you had to own up to things straight away if you done something or you'd get in trouble, so I always owned up.
71. I stopped wetting the bed after about a year so I wouldn't get woken up at night after that, but I would still naturally get up because I was in that routine. I still get up four times a night to this day.

### *Discipline*

72. There was a big board on the dining room hall with everyone's name on it. It was marked up in different colours to tell you what your grade was for the week. Your registration teacher would decide what marks you got, depending on your behaviour and how you got on at school, so the staff must have discussed it amongst themselves. If you got up to a certain grade, you got out for two hours on a Saturday. If you got a really good grade, you would be allowed home for the weekend. Not being allowed out or home was used as a punishment if you didn't behave well and get a good grade.
73. The place was really strict and run like the military. It was a one way system in the corridors and you were supposed to always know where you were going. If you were caught turning and walking the wrong way in a corridor, you'd get shouted at. You wouldn't get punished but you would get told off.

74. If anything went wrong, we were made to go out to parade ground, stand to attention and march around.
75. The night watchman's room was in the centre of the corridor and his doors would be open at night. If he heard even one boy speak at night after lights out, he would ask who made the noise. If a boy admitted to speaking, he would be sent to the headmaster's the next morning to get the belt over the backside. I never spoke at night time so that never happened to me.
76. Most of the time, boys didn't admit to talking and nobody ever told on anyone, so Mr [IQ] made everyone get out of bed and stand to attention at the bottom of their beds. Then everyone had to strip their bed and make it again. If one boy didn't do it properly, everyone would have to strip it and make it again. You could be up for hours stripping and making your bed. This happened about two or three times a week. It was strict as anything.
77. Mr [IQ] got every single boy from every dormitory out of their beds as a punishment, even if he knew which dorm the noise came from. The other night watchman, who was younger, would just make that one dormitory from where the noise came, get up and strip their beds. All the other boys would still wake up from the racket, but they didn't all have to get out of bed.
78. Although none of the boys would tell on the boy who had spoken at night, that boy would get a hard time from all the boys the next day.

### **Abuse at Balgowan**

79. [LUP], the gym teacher, would make us race up the climbing ropes. There were five ropes and five boys would race up them, touch the ceiling and come back down. [LUP] would sometimes push boys up from the bum when they were climbing up the climbing rope. He made out it was a joke but all the boys talked about

him doing that and about him looking up your shorts as you climbed up, so there must have been something weird about it. There was no need for him to do that. He pushed me up by touching my bum once. I was about twelve years old at the time. I told him I was going to tell Mr LID and he never did it to me again. I never did tell Mr LID. Apart from that, there was nothing sexual that I experienced or heard about while I was there. I think if anything sexual had happened, all the boys would have talked about it and everybody would have known about it.

80. Mr IQH had . If he thought you were being smart, he'd bang you on the back of the head or clip you on the funny bone .
81. I heard about some boys getting a good skelping from teachers but I never saw it happening to anyone else. Boys would get sent to the headmaster's office for punishment but nobody ever got hit in front of other boys, but everyone knew about beltings because the boys all talked about "the birch," which was the strap with lots of strands that you got belted with. You could also hear screams coming from the open window of the headmaster's office when a boy went in for punishment. I think they did that on purpose to scare other boys into behaving. I got the belt a lot.

#### *Running away*

82. I ran away after a week of being in there. I couldn't do without my mother and I wanted to see my dad because it still hadn't been explained to me that he wasn't coming back. I ran away from Balgowan and got as far as Dundee Train Station, but I was caught by the police before even getting on the train. He recognised my uniform and took me back to Balgowan and handed me over to Mr LIO, who was on duty. I had only been away for about three hours in the afternoon. I was told that SNR would give me my punishment the next day.
83. The following morning, my name was called out at parade and I was told to go to the medical room, which I did. Mr LIF Mr LSB and another teacher were there. I was bent over the table face and belly down, with my backside in the air. I was held down by Mr LIF and the other teacher. One of them grabbed my wrists and the other grabbed my

ankles. Mr LIF pulled down my shorts and pants and then Mr LSB hit me over the buttocks with the birch loads of times and really hard. I think he hit me about six times. I was screaming out loud from the pain and the window into the compound was open so other boys could hear my screams. I was then chucked out into the compound without getting a chance to compose myself, so all the other boys made fun of me for screaming and crying.

84. I ran away about nine times after that. I would be away for two to three days at the most before the police would come and get me and take me back. I would always get the belt when I got back. One time I was belted because I never came back from a home visit when I was supposed to. It was quite bad that time because they had to spend money to send someone to go and get me from my mum's.
85. I remember Mr LID seeing me in the compound after one of the beltings. He told me I needed to stop screaming and crying in the compound because that was making things worse for me with the other boys.
86. There were always three teachers there so two could hold you down and the third could belt you on your buttocks. They drew blood from me three times but I never screamed again. I would bite the inside of my mouth to try and stop myself from screaming out loud. The pain from the beltings was so much that I made my mouth bleed by biting so hard. They hit you more times if you didn't scream because they wanted the boys outside to hear me scream so they could send a message to them. I wouldn't scream so they would stop when they thought I had had enough. I still have a scar in the inside of my mouth from where I used to bite down.
87. I went to Betty Carrie after three of the beatings because I was so hurt I was bleeding. The first time I went to her, she was dressing my backside, which was pouring with blood. She went out and I heard her talking to the headmaster saying that this shouldn't be happening and it wasn't right. It never changed anything because I still got the belt a few times after that.



88. One time I had been belted and was in a really bad way. This was about a year and a half after me being in there. Miss Carrie had put cream on my backside that time and I had gone up to my dormitory to get some clean pants or something. That was when I saw my mum and my sister out the window walking away from the school. I knocked on the window but they were too far away so I went to run out after them but was stopped by a teacher. I found out after that she had been told I wasn't there. I think they sent her away because I had been beaten pretty badly and they didn't want my mum to see that. It must have been Miss Ireland who sent her away so I think all the teachers knew about the beatings. I know my mum would have been really angry if she had seen the state I was in.
89. The last time I was belted was because I ran away during the Christmas concert. The girls from Balgay School were invited over for a dance, and some of the boys started making fun of me in front of the girls. I was embarrassed so I ran away. [REDACTED] and another two boys ran away with me that time. We had to climb over a fence and a big gate at the back of the building and go down to the main gates at the back where Strathmartine Psychiatric Hospital was, about a mile away. We went in the back so we could go out the front gates, but as we got there, we saw Mr LIF walk in. He told us if we went back to Balgowan with him there and then, nothing would happen but that we knew what we would get if we ran away. I took that to mean that we would get a beating if we ran away. I decided to run away because I knew I was going to get a beating either way and I wanted to see my mother. The other three boys went back with Mr LIF. They told me they got a bad beating, but I got it worse when I was brought back by the police.
90. One time, when I was called into Mr LIF's office to get the belt. He was writing something in a folder that I saw had my name on it, so think they must have had to keep a record of when they belted kids.
91. The teachers who I remember being involved in belting me were Mr LIF, Mr LSB, Mr IQH and Mr ERM. Mr LIO was involved with holding my legs one time, but I don't think he wanted to take part in it because he didn't hold me tight. You could tell the ones who didn't want to do it because they never hit you as hard, and the ones

who enjoyed doing it because they really went for it. Mr **LSB** always hit me really hard with the birch. Mr **LID**, who had been an actual **█** in the army, never hit me once. I don't think he hit anyone.

92. The Dundee boys never got punishment like the rest of us. I think that is because their families stayed local and would visit, and if they found out about any beatings, they would make a fuss and complain.
93. Mr **LSB** ended up dying of a heart attack while trying to put a fire out, outside of the school while I was at the school.

*Peer abuse*

94. The other boys in there were in there for committing crimes like stealing or stabbing. I was just in because I hadn't been going to school after my dad died. I wasn't like the other boys and that made things hard for me. I cried every night for three weeks when I first went in. This made the other boys pick on me and bully me. They all called me a dunce because I was in for not going to school. I think they would have had more respect for me if I was in for committing a crime.
95. There were boys in there from all over, including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Aberdeen, Orkney, Shetlands. The Glasgow boys hung together with each other, and the Edinburgh ones hung together. They had gangs and never got on with each other. I wasn't really in a gang but I was considered to be from Edinburgh so I got some protection from the Edinburgh boys who were a bit older than me. One of the older Edinburgh boys, **█**, was quite hard so nobody messed with him. When he and his pals left the school, the Glasgow boys thought "Hallelujah," and then started bullying me.
96. I bumped into **█** years later and he told me they had wound the Glasgow boys up before they left, so that was probably why they took it out on me and I got bullied.

97. A boy called [REDACTED], who was from Govan in Glasgow, and his pals were the ones who gave me a hard time. I got beat up a few times by them. [REDACTED] was about a year older than me.
98. There was only ever one member of staff in the parade ground when all the boys were outside and those times were hard from me because I would get picked on. The beatings from [REDACTED] and his pals were quite nasty. It would usually happen in the toilets or outside the toilets. I would get pushed to the ground and then they would kick me all over my body and face. My face would be bruised and stuff.
99. Sometimes the teacher would come to the toilets afterwards and find me on the ground after being battered. They couldn't really do anything about it. They would ask everyone at the parade if anybody saw what happened, but nobody ever said anything. I never told either because it would have made things worse for me.
100. [REDACTED] would send someone over to take my dinner off me quite regularly because he wanted to eat it. I would then have to just starve. The psychological abuse was quite bad. They would tell me I would be getting battered and so I would spend all my time waiting for it and not know when it was coming.
101. The staff never saw my food being taken or me getting a beaten. If they had, they would have had to do something to stop it because it was their duty. I do think they knew what was going on because they saw me injured but they didn't do anything to stop it.
102. One time I woke up in the medical unit after being knocked out by banging my head on the toilet. I don't know what happened that time but two days later, a boy told me that Mr LIO [REDACTED] had stuck his foot out and I had tripped over it and banged my head on the toilet. I didn't think it would have been Mr LIO [REDACTED] and then another boy told me it had been one of [REDACTED]'s friends who had tripped me up. I didn't see who did it. A teacher must have picked me up then and took me to the medical room after I was knocked out. I was told the boys were put on parade to ask who had done it to me but nobody spoke up.

103. LID ██████ told me I needed to stick up for myself and fight back. I put up with the bullying for a long time before I decided I needed to fight back because I had had enough. I told LID ██████ that I was going to and he just told me to make sure I didn't go too far. I fought back the next time ██████ hit me and I battered him. The bullying stopped after that and we became friends.

### **Reporting of abuse at Balgowan**

104. All the staff in there knew about the beltings in there because lots of them took part, and the ones who didn't, saw the injuries or heard about it. Miss Carrie dressed my wounds and told Mr LIF ██████ that it wasn't right, but it made no difference. Miss Ireland saw blood on my leg one day at registration and asked me about it. I said I had gotten the birch. She said she was going to talk to Mr LIF ██████ but I don't know if she did.
105. LID ██████ was a brilliant guy and I could talk to him. He knew I was getting belted by staff and also badly bullied. He spoke to me and told me I needed to stop crying in front of other boys and start fighting other boys back. He never asked me the name of my bullies because he knew I couldn't say or things would get worse for me.
106. One time, I told PC Oliver at Drylaw police station that I was getting beaten up at Balgowan, and he said that this was what happened in those kind of places, but he also said I shouldn't have been put in there just for truanting. I never told anybody else from outside about it because there was nobody to tell.

### **Leaving Balgowan**

107. I knew I was leaving a week before I left. Marjorie Ireland told me I would get to go home the following Friday and she would send a letter home to my mum.

108. The day I left, I went up for breakfast and then was told to go upstairs to get changed. I was given my train ticket and went home. I was about twelve or thirteen years old at the time.

### **Life back at home**

109. Life was good back at home. My mum was married to my stepfather by this time so he was in the house, as well as my two stepsisters and three other kids that my mum had had with my stepfather. She was also working three jobs. Life was perfect and I was happy to be home
110. I started going to Ainslie Park High School about a week after being home. I think I went into third year. I went there for two months. I didn't enjoy school because I was being intimidated by other kids and getting the belt from teachers because I wasn't doing as well as the teacher thought I should have been.
111. I stopped going to school and after about four days of missing school, there was a knock on the door. The police were there and they took me to Drylaw Police Station, and then Mr [redacted] came to the police station and took me back to Balgowan. There was no round table or anything that time.

### **Balgowan List D School, Dundee – second time**

112. I was still twelve or thirteen years old when I was put back into Balgowan. I was upset at being away from my mum again and struggled for the first month, but then I got over it.
113. Things were the same as before for a few months. I used to give the boiler house man a hand doing his job. I then got to the point where I didn't have to go to school so I got the job as the boiler house man. This involved working in the boiler house, doing outside work in the gardens, keeping the driveways tidy, doing the bins, and just

keeping the school clean and tidy. The new job also meant I got my own room which was directly opposite where the nightwatchman slept.

114. I enjoyed being at Balgowan when I was working. I enjoyed the job and did it really well. It made me feel like I meant something to them and gave me some self-worth and purpose. I liked have responsibilities.
115. I was allowed to go home at the weekends once I started working. This time I went home and returned to the school on time so that I could get out again. The school had changed the rules for going home by this time and boys could only go home once a month, so I got home once a month.
116. LID [REDACTED] was in charge of the Cadet Force in the school. He promoted me to Regimental Sergeant Major. I was really proud of that.
117. I never got the belt or anything during my second visit.

### **Leaving Balgowan**

118. I was made the boiler house man and that got my grades up. After I had done that job for a few months, Marjorie Ireland and Mr ERM [REDACTED] sat me down and told me that my grades were up and that meant I could get out in about a month, so I knew I would be leaving soon. She told me that boys normally got kept in until they were fourteen years old but that I was getting out at fourteen and a half.
119. I left Balgowan when I was fourteen and a half years old. The seamstress asked me which fabric I wanted for my suit, and I chose one. She made me a pin striped suit and I wore that when I left with a bag under my arm. I was given my train ticket to get home, said cheerio at the door and left. I felt proud and had a tear in my eye because I had enjoyed the last few months of being there, but I was still glad to be leaving.

120. The day I walked out of Balgowan, that was me done with being in care and with social workers.

### **Life after being in care**

121. I moved back in with my mum and stepfather. I started working on the Trawlers a few weeks later, just before I turned fifteen years old. I spent every spare minute I had in the engine room to find out how that worked. I was away for two weeks at a time, then home for two or three days.
122. When I was nineteen years old, one of the Chief Engineers got sacked and the Captain, Janders Wood, made me Chief Engineer. It was the proudest moment of my life. I kept that boat running for six years. I stopped working on the Trawlers when I was 29 years old.
123. I had started drinking when I started working on the Trawlers because all the other men did and I was a pure alcoholic. I got married and my daughter was born when I was about 21 years old and I didn't want her to see me as an alcoholic so I decided to stop drinking. I had a tough six months but I stopped drinking and have never touched a drop since.
124. I got a job through Manpower Services and worked in a community centre in Wester Hailes as a community worker. I helped people with their problems, which was mainly drug use.
125. I went to Moray House College for a while and could have been a social worker but I didn't finish the course. I pulled away from that course and the job in Wester Hailes because I felt that I was doing the people there a disservice. They needed to manage their lives themselves instead of relying on me. A few of the people I worked with are still in touch with me because I got them off drugs.

126. I went into joinery work and then security work. I had my own security company. I had a heart attack in 2008 and had a triple bypass. I retired then and passed my company on to my son. I moved back to Kirkcaldy about six years ago. I can't work now because I am on so much medication for my heart and I am diabetic.

### **Impact**

127. I still have a scar on the inside of my mouth from where I would bite down when I was getting the belt in Balgowan. As an adult, I can't stand watching a kid get hit and I always stop someone if I see them hitting a kid.

128. I started smoking at nine years old, a week after I arrived at Balgowan School. The staff knew all the boys smoked and allowed it. I carried on smoking for a long time after that and only stopped when I got my triple bypass in 2008.

129. I drank a lot after I left care, and that caused me a lot of depression. I went to the doctor and to the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for depression, but it went away when I stopped drinking when I was 21 years old.

130. There are certain foods that I can't eat, like vegetables and rice. I ate them before I went into Balgowan, but not after I was in there. I think I must have had a bad experience with vegetables and rice in there.

131. I was really close to my siblings before going into care, but I felt like a stranger to them when I came back home from Balgowan. I never really had much of a bond with them after that, except for with my sister, [REDACTED].

132. I don't have one photograph of myself as a child, and I find that hard to accept. I don't know if there are any at Balgowan.



133. I think about what happened to me in Balgowan every day of my life. My partner has told me that I am restless when I sleep, and scream out and lash out with my fists. I don't know that I do that.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

134. I have never reported anything to the police about what happened at Balgowan. I think there is only Mr **IQH** who works there from the teachers that I had. I know Mr **LSB** died.

### **Records**

135. I have managed to get some records from Dundee City Council, but a lot of it is redacted and most pages are missing. They have said that there may be more records in Balgowan archives but I have not managed to get anything more.
136. I got only one letter from Angus City Council, which refers to the boys of Balgowan as "inmates." They have nothing else. I am quite disappointed that I have not been able to get any proper records of my time in care from any of the local authorities, social work or Balgowan. I feel that it is really disrespectful.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

137. I was taken away from my family for not going to school. I wasn't going to school because my dad had just died and I wanted to be with my mum. My mum and me have always thought that if the authorities had just asked and found out the reason why I wasn't going, they could have talked to me and helped me, instead of separating me from my family and putting me into care. Not one adult asked me why I wasn't going to school. It robbed me of time with my family and it has had an impact on the rest of my life. Authorities need to talk to children and find the best solution for them instead of just taking them away from their families.

138. I was taken from my family and put into a place that was really far away, and full of boys who were in there for getting in more serious trouble. This led to me getting bullied a lot because I didn't fit in. I didn't belong there. Authorities need to think about what is best for the child, and if they do need to be put a child in care then it needs to be somewhere that is right for that child.

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

IQF  


Signed.....

Dated..... 13 / SEPTEMBER 2023 .....