

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Morag Carmichael MORRELL

Support person present: No

1. My name is Morag Carmichael Morrell. My maiden surname is Morrison. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1932. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I served on the Children's Panel for nine years from 1971 to 1979. It is a voluntary post. I don't have any professional qualifications but I had five children of my own. When I left the Panel, I didn't leave voluntarily. New blood was being brought in and they wanted rid of the original Panel members. I heard that the reason was, I took things too seriously. I took that as a plaudit. We had three Directors of Social Work during my time on the Panel and I was a thorn in their side. After I left the Panel, I was a Regional, and subsequently District, Councillor.

The Children's Hearing System

Recruitment procedures

3. I read newspaper articles about a new system of juvenile justice, the Children's Hearing system. I thought it sounded interesting. A friend and I went to a public meeting and got talking to Bob Hughes. Bob was an Aberdeen City Councillor and was on the Children's Panel Advisory Committee. Bob said I should apply for the

Children's Panel. The Children's Hearing is a decision making lay tribunal, made up of members of the Children's Panel.

4. I did apply, in 1970. I went through a series of interviews and get-togethers. I had a concern about children. It was quite clear, when you were growing up, that some children got a rotten deal. My mother had been on a committee to do with truancy and all that had an influence on me.
5. I was amongst the first appointments to the Children's Panel. I was 38 years old. It was quite a rigorous process. I wrote a letter, then I was invited to interview. A lot of people were invited to interview and some were fished out. Then, the real selection started and then the training started. From start to finish, it took the best part of a year. We were all lay people, more or less.
6. I was interviewed by Bob Hughes, Eileen Holmes, who ran the nursing training at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, and Professor Philip Seed, a sociologist. There were another two on the interview panel whose names I can't remember.

Training

7. The first training event was taken by Aberdeen City's Town Clerk. He talked about the legalities of the Children's Hearing system. The Town Clerk came back at the end of our training and reinforced the legalities. Bob Hughes and Professor Seed were there too. The Director of Social Work in Aberdeen City, came to a training event. Social work was changing a lot at that time. It was becoming more of a professionalism.
8. In our early training on the Children's Panel, we had lectures from Professor Seed. He had tremendous breadth of knowledge and information and did a lot of research. Apart from the formal lectures, the training was pretty informal. After each training session, there were questions. Then, the people who were to be members of the Children's Panel got together and had a talk amongst themselves. We talked about what we thought we had heard and whether we could have heard better information. We were

encouraged to sort out what we thought the issues were. Later, some Panel members, including me, were involved in the training.

9. Towards the end of the Panel member's training, the Children's Reporters were appointed. The Reporter is the person who keeps the Panel right on the legalities at the hearing and ensures that the decision made is legal. Some areas had former social workers as their Reporter. Aberdeen had a lawyer. The Reporter decides if a child and their family is going to come to a hearing or whether the child can be dealt with in other ways.
10. The Children's Panel Advisory Committee selected Panel members. The Committee had a session where they interviewed a lot of people. A handful of Panel members would be invited along to serve coffee and make the people feel at home. We would feed in at the end when the Committee was making its decision.

The Role of the Children's Hearing

11. The Panel could deal with children from newborn babies to young adults aged sixteen. If you had a child who was in care, you could keep tabs on him up until he was eighteen years old. Lord Kilbrandon spelled it out in the Kilbrandon Report which influenced the establishment of the Children's Hearings system. Kilbrandon said the child who was offending was very often the child who was offended against. That was often what you found. Part of my problem with the hearing's system was that the middle class children who committed offences got passed over. The middle classes got lawyers, their teachers would speak up for them and they didn't come in front of the hearings system. It might have been of more help to those children if they had.
12. Some children would come before the Panel because they had stolen something, they had fought or they had vandalised school property. Some crimes were petty and some were not. Other children came before the Panel because they were in need of care and protection. Social work or the police would report a case to the Reporter, who would decide what was most appropriate for the child. The Reporter would try

something informal to begin with, like a social worker to supervise the family, unless it was something hair-raising, when it would be brought before the Panel.

13. If a child were in need of care and protection, either the legal rights to that child had to be taken over, so that the child could live in a place of safety, or the Panel had to make sure that the parents understood they had responsibilities to the child. There was a lot of help around for parents, that we could help organise. Sometimes that worked, sometimes it didn't.

Practice and Procedure at a Children's Hearing

14. The hearing met on a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and sometimes on a Friday. The hearing was supposed to sit mornings, afternoons or evenings. Social workers practically never told parents they could have the hearing in the evening, which would help parents who were working. You could have an emergency hearing on a Saturday. That could be for a child who suddenly had serious injuries, or something like that. You might have three cases at a typical sitting, with 45 minutes to an hour for each.
15. There were three people on the Panel at a hearing, a man, a woman and one other. The Panel was a very mixed group. There were people like me, an architect, a fireman, a teacher and a panel-beater. There was a chairperson. In the early days of the Panel, in Scotland as a whole, the chair was almost always a minister or ex-minister. Our Panel chair was not a minister but his family were all Church of England. There was a rota system to sit on a hearing.
16. At the hearing, the Reporter was there, the child and the child's family. The child's social worker would come along. If the child was in care, the Reporter might invite along someone from the school, if it was a school problem. A lot of children were not doing well at school. That was alright to begin with. Later on, we had a lot of teacher members of the Panel. By and large, if it were a school problem, the teacher would take the school's point of view, instead of listening to the children. The child and his

family could also bring a friend along. Social workers did not insist that parents understood that they could bring someone with them.

17. You had to legally apprise the child of why he was at a hearing and make sure they understood. You had to be informal, you were dealing with children, most of whom had difficulties in following a formal situation. Sometimes there were members of the Panel who could not speak to children in a way that the child could understand. You need people on the Panel who can communicate with and listen to children.
18. The Panel was independent. Social workers thought that the Panel should rubberstamp what they wanted to do. Some social workers thought the Panel was intruding on their turf. Director of Social Work, Douglas Grant, was a lot more receptive to the Panel. Fred Edwards, another Director, would listen and you could get him to do something.
19. A lot of senior social workers weren't receptive. The message was that the Panel didn't understand social worker's problems and should back off. It took a long time before social workers understood that it was a legal situation and they were required to implement the decision of the Panel, that was their role. Some never learned. That caused a lot of trouble. Some social workers did not carry out the instructions of the Panel. We just wanted the children to have a positive experience in care. You maybe wouldn't find out that your instructions hadn't been carried out until the next year, if you were on the Panel at the hearing for that child again.
20. At the hearing, you would do your best to get the child to say something, even if it was, "Get lost." You ask the child if he accepts what he is alleged to have done or what has been done to him. Most of the children were boys, that's why I use the word 'him'. Some of the children didn't think what they had done was serious.
21. One of the schools we had, thought that any child who was in trouble, was a 'hanging offence'. That was difficult. The Head Teacher always came to the hearing. You had to throw him out. The school had no right to be at the hearing unless they were invited. Schools did not always understand that. The guidance system came along half-way

through the second year of the Children's Hearings. Then, you got guidance teachers coming along to hearings.

22. You had to explain to the child and the parents what the Panel's decision was. You hoped they understood and would ask questions if you hadn't got it right. The Reporter was effectively the legal advisor to the Panel, most were lawyers. Most of the time the Panel came together on what was the most likely solution. There was no casting vote for the Chair. If we differed, we just had to differ. We could dismiss the case or tell social work to implement our decision.
23. We would expect social work to supervise the child and see the family regularly, until they felt things had stabilised. We might say the child needed to go into residential care. Some children might need to go to a List D school. The Panel might say they would have another hearing in a few months. The child had to be reviewed within a year. You reviewed how the child and the family were doing.
24. If the social worker had not implemented the Panel's decision, you would expect the social worker to come back to a hearing a lot quicker and say that they couldn't, or wouldn't, implement the decision. Then, the child would be discharged or supervision would continue. Very few children were held in the Children's Hearing system for a long time. Those that were, were children taken into the care system. If children in care were being reviewed regularly, the hearing's system should be picking up on what else could be done for those children. Placements in residential care were often about where there was a spare bed at the time. That was quite shocking.
25. As new Panel members came through and social work calmed down a bit, there was a better relationship. I think now there's a better conduit for raising issues. We had all just started. We didn't know anything about social work. It was easy to say, this is where we are and this is where your place is. The Reporter was good, he kept the Panel in line occasionally. Everyone was finding their feet, which made difficulties for everybody, except for people like me, who thought, that was wrong and shouldn't be happening.

26. New Panel members would come in thinking they were going to sort out the children. One such member was a changed man after he had done one or two hearings. Once he recognised it wasn't just about the children but about families and schools too, he was a useful Panel member.

The Resources Group – Aberdeen City Children's Panel

27. On 24th August 1971, the Panel decided to set up a Resources Group with a remit to identify gaps in resources available to the Children's Panel and to press for those resources. The Resources Group discussed a number of topics, including the need to have volunteers to be an intermediary between social work and children and their parents.
28. One of the Panel members, Bill Knight, introduced a system to do that in the early 1970' s. The Panel had no money, so the Panel members paid for the advertising and recruitment. They recruited all sorts of people who were trained to act as intermediaries. It was very successful. Social workers didn't have the time to spend on each individual child in their caseload. The system has now turned into 'Befriend a Child'. The Americans had a system like that, as did the Dutch. The Dutch were quite well-advanced in their concepts of child welfare.

Personal concerns at the time

Parental Responsibility assumed by the Social Work Department

29. In the beginning, children who were taken into care under the auspices of social work had no rights at all. I was shocked. There were hundreds or thousands of children in care, who hadn't done anything wrong. The only people who had any responsibility to oversee these children was a social worker. These children could be moved around the whole care system, throughout Scotland, and sometimes into England. The Children's Hearing didn't necessarily know, nor did their parents, for instance where

social work took children into care because they said the parents were not good parents.

30. Social work had taken over the parent's parental rights. Social work would have gone before a Sheriff in court and said they needed to take the child into care because their parents couldn't cope. A lot of traveller children were taken into care, mainly in Aberdeenshire, for that reason. That is shocking. As far as I'm aware, it happened because the [REDACTED] at the time, Miss FSG [REDACTED] thought that traveller parents couldn't, or weren't, looking after their children.
31. There were a couple of girls who were traveller children who ran away to London. Their father drank. They had two older sisters who had houses in Aberdeen. They were brought to the hearing as being in need of care and protection. They were great children. The sisters wanted to take the children. Social work wouldn't pay a foster allowance, they wanted to take them into care. The girls didn't need to go into the care system. They were perfectly well-adjusted and were better with their own folk rather than being put in a children's home. Eventually social work decided they wouldn't pay a full foster care allowance but would pay some money to keep the girls in their sisters' homes.
32. At a hearing, the Panel met a child who was fostered in Shetland. The child was primary school age. The child alleged at the hearing that he had been interfered with by his foster father. The foster parents were both at the hearing but not the child's parents. The social worker jumped in and said the child told lies. She seemed quite convinced about that.
33. This was the first time I had had a child complain about the situation they were in. We didn't challenge the social worker. The Panel asked the Reporter, Graham Pearson, to investigate the matter. I never found out what happened because the child did not come back to a Panel that I was sitting on.

34. I wrote a few newspaper articles about social work taking over parental rights and the children having no rights. I went to a Labour party meeting where Donald Dewar was speaking. I asked what the Party was going to do about these 'Parental Rights Children'. Donald Dewar said to me to produce a paper and the party would take it from there.
35. Legislation went to Parliament on [REDACTED] in 1983. The effect was that all the children over whom the social work department held parental rights, had to have their cases seen by a Children's Hearing, to ensure that things were right. All children in foster care in Grampian were put before a Children's Panel at that point. I don't know if that happened again.

Unruly Certificates and Detention in Prison

36. Some children who ran away from Brimmond Assessment Centre were allowed back. Other children were never going to be taken back by Brimmond. The way to get rid of them was to get them into Craiginches Prison in Aberdeen. A policeman, I think of the rank of Inspector, had to sign the unruly certificate, to get the child into prison. There wasn't a pattern about unruly certificates that I could make out. The system was arbitrary. I discussed unruly certificates with the prison. The prison didn't want the children, they were children after all. I wasn't aware of other children, in other establishments in Aberdeenshire, who were subjected to unruly certificates.
37. It was worse for the girls. There was a very small female unit at Craiginches Prison, so they had to share with adult women. The boys were kept together. There would be two or three boys at Craiginches at a time.

Education in List D Schools

38. Children weren't educated in List D schools. That was awful. You would ask the staff if the children sat O' Grades and the staff said that they did. I never met a child who

sat an exam in a List D school. There was a List D school near Paisley, I think it was Gilsland School, where the headmaster was forward thinking and did provide education for the children. By the time I left the Panel, a number of the old headmasters of List D schools had retired.

39. I have provided a letter dated 31st October 1978, from George Keith, head teacher at Brimmond, to the Inquiry. The letter is in response to a request which I made to Mr ERM and goes into the educational provision at Brimmond. The letter says that Brimmond had three full-time and four part-time teachers. My understanding was that, in theory, the teachers came from Bankhead Academy when requested. The teachers from Bankhead didn't like to go to Brimmond. They couldn't be forced to go. I had disagreements with the head teacher on the subject. I believed the children at Brimmond were entitled to an education. Ian Calderwood was the Deputy Director of Education, responsible for education at Brimmond. He was also determined that the children there would have an education. George Keith resigned not long after he sent me the letter. He couldn't get his job done.

Use of Foster Care

40. By the time a child was about nine years old, social work took the view that they couldn't be fostered. There was one child in particular who I was concerned about and wanted social work to place in foster care. Social work said too much had happened in his life and it wasn't safe to foster him. Children of that age were being fostered in Denmark, Holland and parts of Canada. John Spencer, a Professor of Sociology, told me about Jewish children who had survived the Holocaust and were very disturbed children. They had, by and large, settled in foster care in Canada. Terrible things had happened to those children but they had still settled.

Visits to Children's Homes and Institutions

41. As members of the Panel, we could visit children's homes and other institutions. We had a book of Children's Homes in Scotland. If there were any Aberdeen children in a home, we would write to the institution and ask if we could visit. There was a small group of four women whose job it was to carry out the visits. Obviously the institutions put on their best face. Some just ran as they were. Some would tell us what they thought we needed to know, sometimes that was obvious. The visit would usually be in the afternoon, for two or three hours.
42. We would ask to visit on a specific date, we had four people to organise. Institutions would sometimes say, sorry we can't fit you in on that date, it's a shame you can't come on this other date. We would get a look round the place. Sometimes we got to talk to children. It could be one to one or in a group. The children knew what they were supposed to say. No children complained to us about their treatment. I wouldn't have pressed children in that situation. You had to pick things up as best you could.
43. We would ask where did the children in the home come from and how many children were from the Aberdeen area, what the education was like, what did the children get to do, what was the home like? We wanted to know what were the links with the community outside. We asked questions as we went along. If we weren't happy with the answers, we would take it up with the Director of Social Work and say they had to take it in hand. It wasn't our responsibility to say the home couldn't do something. Sometimes social work did something, sometimes they didn't. Sometimes the Director would say we didn't understand what was going on. That was a standard response.
44. Where a child had to go into residential care, you had to be happy with where they were going. Some of the places, even social workers hadn't seen. Placing children was about where there was a spare bed. That's not a way to place children.
45. We were welcomed to most children's homes. We visited all the homes in Aberdeen. Aberdeen had quite a lot of homes at that time. We visited List D Schools. We visited

one private children's home. We visited a school in Glasgow which was awful, it smelt of stale urine.

46. We visited a co-educational List D school in England. According to the teacher, the boys behaved much better when the girls arrived.
47. We never visited Doctor Guthrie's. I did want to see it but it was never practicable. They had girls from Aberdeen there. Doctor Guthrie's never welcomed people.
48. After a visit, we wrote a report up for our Panel newsletter. The report was for Panel members. If there was anything negative in the report, we would report that to social work and expect them to do something or we would not send children to the institution anymore.

Brimmond Assessment Centre, Aberdeen

49. I visited Brimmond both as a member of the Panel and as a councillor. I thought people should see Brimmond, so I took a party of Sheriffs' around and new Panel members. I went there every two or three months over a six or seven year period. Brimmond was built as an assessment centre. Before that, a children's home was converted into an assessment centre. Assessment centres were the way to go at that time, it was said. Whether you should take children away from home to assess them, when their problems are at home and you should perhaps assess them there, is another thing. Aberdeen City Council built Brimmond and Aberdeenshire Council provided the staff.
50. The theory was that children would go to Brimmond for two or three weeks whilst it was decided where they should go on to. That didn't happen, children could stay at Brimmond for weeks, months or years. Theoretically Brimmond housed children from age eleven to sixteen. I met a primary school aged child there, over whom parental rights had been granted to the social work department. I thought he was a young child to be in Brimmond. I was told he wasn't doing very well in his children's home, so he

was at Brimmond and had settled down very well. Many children at Brimmond were scary children, especially to children who could be victimised.

51. There were around twenty children in Brimmond, mostly boys with a handful of girls. There were a couple of rooms upstairs with four or six beds in. That's where the boys were. I don't recollect seeing where the girls slept. The walls at Brimmond were bare. I took up some movie posters which were donated by someone I knew. Mr ERM said, no, they didn't want the posters, the children would tear them up. Mr ERM was the SNR.
52. The first time I saw Brimmond, it was nicely decorated. The bedding was nice and modern with duvets. There was at least one school-room. I thought it was fine. I think Miss FSG was [REDACTED] then.
53. The next time I went to Brimmond, Mr and Mrs ERL-ERM had been appointed [REDACTED] Brimmond. Any colour had been stripped away and they had a cell. Before that the cell was a 'quiet room'. There was a bathroom on the landing next to the cell. Children couldn't access the bathroom, although that was the intention when Brimmond was built. ERL-ERM response was that the children would tear the bathroom up. If a child need to use the toilet, they had to ring a bell and hope somebody would turn up. At one point, I was taking people round Brimmond and there was an infant's potty in the cell. There was a peep-hole above the bed. ERL-ERM said that was to keep an eye on the child in the cell.
54. The cell looked across the main runway at Aberdeen airport, there was nothing to look at. The cell had the windows whitened out, the walls were white and all the bedding was white. There was a wash-hand basin which was white. That was the conversion that ERL-ERM did when they started at Brimmond. In Vietnam, they used all white rooms to get people's minds confused. When a room is all white, you can't see anything. Mr ERM was supposed to be a psychologist. He converted this isolation room into that. It was quite shocking.

55. I think the main form of discipline was that a child would be locked in the cell. Anything could get a child shut in the cell, such as, they had upset Mr or Mrs [ERL-ERM] they hadn't eaten their tea or they'd run away. [ERL-ERM] told us that, when they showed us round. We didn't have access to any children to ask them. I don't think the children got beaten up, that wasn't my impression. In my opinion, there was mental torture.
56. The staff at Brimmond varied. Some were very good but the very good staff just left. They had a member of staff who was just out of the army, he had been in the Special Air Service, the SAS. How do you get a job in a children's home when you are just out of the army? What qualifications did he have? He always seemed civil enough. Not long before Brimmond closed, I saw a member of staff who was very dirty.
57. Education was the responsibility of the city council to begin with, then the whole thing became regional. Ian Calderwood fought an ongoing battle over the provision of education. Nothing ever happened. The department could appoint teachers but they couldn't keep them because of the atmosphere in Brimmond and the lack of children allowed to go to school. Mr [ERM] said which children could and couldn't go to school, in the morning. I don't know if there was any reason why a child wouldn't be allowed to go to school.
58. I think Brimmond was a dull place to be. Some of the children were taken down to the community centre from time to time. There was a football pitch. There was a television in the dining room.
59. I only spoke to children from Brimmond if they had a Children's Hearing. Often [ERL-ERM] [ERL-ERM] would be there. I would ask [ERL-ERM] to leave. They had no right to be at the hearing. The children were scared, they weren't going to tell you anything about Brimmond.
60. I was told that any riots happened at mealtimes. I don't know why rows happened at that time. I think the standard of the food was alright. However, at every children's home I visited, I was concerned that the children did not get enough milk or fresh fruit.

61. When the children had home leave, they would come back and get the bus as far as it would go. They had to walk to Brimmond, up a dark road, with no lights. They were city children. It wasn't a good thing for them to do. There had been a couple of murders where stuff had been found around about Brimmond, although the murders were nothing to do with Brimmond. I said Brimmond had a bus, couldn't the children be picked up? The response was that the children wouldn't be there at the right time and it was good for them. It was back to the concept that children have to be responsible for their own actions. I couldn't believe it.
62. Once I became a councillor I took to the social work committee that Brimmond needed a serious review. A number of families in the area I represented, which was one of the most deprived areas in Grampian, would talk to me about Brimmond. The families would say Brimmond was a terrible place, there were always rows and children ran away from Brimmond regularly. Miss FSG who by then was in Grampian region, said there was nothing wrong with Brimmond. That went on for years.
63. Mr ERM said that boys who ran away from Brimmond went to a place in Holburn Street, Aberdeen, where they were quite safe. I heard him say that two or three times. A social worker told me that the place was a male brothel. I took it up with the police who said there was no such thing as a male brothel in Aberdeen. You have to be naïve to think that an old seaport such as Aberdeen would not have, amongst all the other brothels, a male brothel. By that time, one of Mr ERM sons had joined the police force. Aberdeen can be a very tight community at times. If children ran away too often, Mr ERM would take them to the police, who would then sign the child off on an unruly certificate to go to jail.
64. One night, I had a phone call from someone I knew who ran the Community Centre in Bucksburn, I can't remember his name. He said he had a child from Brimmond at the Community Centre, who had run away. The child was saying that he would go back to Brimmond but the staff at Brimmond would not let him see his social worker. The child agreed to hand himself in to the police. I spoke to Bill Adam and arranged that the

child would go to the police and be allowed to see his social worker. Bill Adam was the Chief Superintendent of Bucksburn Police Station. Policemen would tell you that, when they took a child back to Brimmond, they wouldn't necessarily be let across the door. Social workers would say the same.

65. Suddenly, Mr and Mrs ERL-ERM found themselves out of a job. I don't why. Mr ERM got a part-time job at Oakbank List D School as a swimming instructor. I was told he kicked a boy into the swimming pool and was right out of the door. Bill Rose, who was on the Board at Oakbank told me. He has passed away now.

Oakbank List D School, Aberdeen

66. SNR at Oakbank was . knew what job was, to educate the boys, feed them and help them keep in touch with their families. I think has passed away. I visited Oakbank often. It housed boys aged eleven to fourteen years old. At first the boys wore the grey uniform that all List D schools had. Eventually that became jeans.

67. Oakbank was not noisy. The food was adequate but dull. The school was undergoing renovation. The sleeping accommodation was being converted into single, partitioned rooms for privacy. Most of the staff were joiners and painters, to help the boys learn a trade.

Rossie School, Near Montrose

68. I visited Rossie School a few times. There wasn't anything nice to say about Rossie School. It was just wrong, the children were out working in the fields, farming and producing food. When I visited, I saw very few boys. I saw some dormitories. The head teacher retired and someone drove a tractor to his house and dropped a whole load of manure on his doorstep.

St Joseph's List D School, Tranent

69. Four of us visited St Joseph's in Tranent. It was run by the De la Salle Brothers as it was a Catholic school. It seemed okay. It was a Friday afternoon and most of the children were getting ready to go home, most of them to Glasgow. There was a boy whose bed had been made, everything thrown underneath it and the top cover spread over it. Father Joseph, or whoever was in charge, said to the boy to get off home, the boy was laughing and off he went.
70. We were invited into Father Joseph's office for a glass of sherry. He said practically all the children came from Glasgow. Father Joseph told us the children had not had much education before coming to St Joseph's and there was not much education at St Joseph's. He talked about the children as though they were people, which wasn't all that common in the List D sector. Father Joseph said the children had better all come back at the right time. He seemed to think they would come back.

St Ninian's School, Falkland, Fife

71. I visited St Ninian's School in the early to mid-1970's. The head teacher and his deputy made it clear to us Panel members, that they were ex-priests. They wore civilian clothes. I remember little of the school except it was noisy and chaotic. Afterwards, the head teacher was somewhat smitten with one of our younger female Panel members. He wrote to her, phoned her and sent her a necklace. We advised the Panel member to send the necklace back to the head teacher and to tell the Reporter what had happened. The head teacher's behaviour seemed very strange.

Longriggend Remand Institution

72. Longriggend operated as a remand facility for children from Glasgow. They had children from other places as well. Some children on unruly certificates from Aberdeen had gone there. I visited Longriggend once, for an afternoon, when I was a member of the Children's Panel. A father had said, at a hearing, that we weren't putting his son down to Longriggend. I had never heard of Longriggend and it obviously wasn't in the list of children's homes that the Panel had. Another Panel member, Mary Hay, and I thought we would go and see Longriggend and wrote to ask for visit. The other two

members of the visiting group didn't come. The newer Panel members didn't have time to do those things. Longriggend took a lot of finding and it took a long time to get there.

73. My initial thought on arriving was, this is like hell, it's awful. We were shown round. We asked about food, it was the kind of food you would get in jail, which could be good or not good. We had a look at some cells. Some were single cells and some were doubled up. There were posters on the walls. I was concerned about an avid Celtic Football Club supporter sharing a cell with an avid Rangers Football Club supporter. Longriggend was silent. That's what stuck in our heads, how quiet it was. We didn't see any children.
74. Longriggend was run as a prison, which wasn't appropriate for young children. It wasn't an appropriate remand facility for children who were in the care system. A child could be in Longriggend up until they were eighteen years old. The person who ran it was doing his best. Longriggend closed not long after our visit.
75. After our visit to Longriggend, I wrote a letter in July 1978 to the Home Secretary. I raised concerns about a number of things, such as meals, where meals were eaten, the diet. I asked about exercise and the screening of inmates, for football allegiances, on arrival. I had a reply dated 10th August 1978 from A. Walker at the Scottish Home and Health Department. Mr Walker agreed in his letter that there was an overcrowding problem. He said it was difficult to solve because Longriggend had no option other than to accept the people who were sent there by the courts.

Gilsland List D School, near Paisley

76. The school seemed very average. When we visited, the head teacher was very angry from the previous night where Rangers Football Club had played in Spain and the fans had torn the Spanish stadium apart. Some of the boys had stayed up to watch the match and he felt that the boys should not have had to see that. He felt the fans were letting down the country, the school and the boys.

A Large List D School, Glasgow – Name not known

77. When I visited this school it was very noisy and not clean. Lots of children were rushing about and staff were shouting. The image was one of confusion. It was run by Glasgow Corporation.

Privately run Boy's Residential School, near Stranraer – Name not known

78. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

79.

Balgay List D School - Dundee

80. Balgay School was very odd. The girls there were adolescents. We each got a girl to take us around the place. When the head teacher spoke to the girl who was taking me around, the girl stood to attention. We had lunch with the girls. Lunch was alright, apart from soggy cabbage, which I never ate and nor did the girls. The girl showing me around took me to a bit where we obviously weren't supposed to be in. The girl hadn't been long in Balgay. We went upstairs. In a room were six girls dressed in nightgowns and dressing gowns. They jumped off their beds and stood to attention at the bottom of their beds. The girl showing me around said that the girls had all come in that morning and were in that room so that they could have quiet time. I didn't believe it. You wouldn't get four or five girls coming in in one fell swoop, in a girl's List D school.

Lessons and Hopes

81. You will get people with an unwholesome interest in children applying to join the Panel and other institutions for children. You must have some system of weeding these people out.
82. People from outside the system should come into closed establishments, where children are, and recognise what they see.
83. I hope that, out of the Inquiry, will come a more enlightened system of dealing with children with difficulties. That will take a long time and a lot of money. Some people see children as enemies to be dealt with. People don't want to think about how children got to where they are. People only think about what they can do with children and getting the children out of the way. I would like to see a change in people's thinking.
84. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed...



Dated...

6th August 2019