

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LYX

Support person present: No

1. My name is LYX. My date of birth is 1977. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. My father is LYE and he was born on 1935. He was a child migrant at Fairbridge Farm, Vancouver Island, Canada between 1945 and 1949. He married my mother in 1974. I am their only child.

### Discovery of father's life in care

3. I have always known that my father grew up in care. He never spoke about it but he was always proud of his Scottish heritage. He was born in Glasgow in Scotland and then he was put up for adoption as he called it. I knew that he had gone to Fairbridge Farm on Vancouver Island. I also knew that he then went to work for the family on their farm after leaving Fairbridge. As a kid I thought that he had been adopted by the who were a family who lived in Princeton on the mainland in Canada. Growing up I knew them as Grandma and Grandpa.
4. When I was growing up, my dad had continued to have contact with the after he left their farm. I think Grandma died when I was seventeen. I remember my father and I going to the funeral in Princeton. Then Grandpa passed away too. We would visit them where they still lived in Princeton. I think it was one of their sons who had a ranch on top of Copper Mountain. We would visit and it was the first place I had ridden a dirt bike and held a gun. We would go up and visit them every summer,

we had a lot of contact with them. It was only when I started investigating my father's past that I realised that he had only been with them for three or four years.

5. I didn't know anything about my dad from when he left the [REDACTED] farm. I knew some basic information but I didn't know any of the details.
6. I was at work one day in [REDACTED] 2018 and I was scrolling through Facebook. A photo popped up on my newsfeed about British Child Migrants. I clicked on the article and I was reading about British Home Children. There was a picture of kids arriving at Fairbridge Farm. When I saw it, I knew right away that my dad was in the photograph. I had never seen the picture before but the names were attached and I saw my dad's name. The photo had been in one of the Fairbridge Gazettes.
7. I sent a message to the lady who had posted the article and asked her where she had gotten the photo. Her name was [REDACTED] and she said she had got the photo from a woman called Pat Skidmore. Pat writes the Fairbridge Gazette. [REDACTED] mum had been in Fairbridge Farm at the same time as my dad. She then sent me a photo of her mum in the choir and I was able to identify my dad in that photo too. Her mum and my dad were standing two rows apart. She called me about ten minutes later and we spoke for about three hours.
8. I also spoke to Pat Skidmore and she sent me a couple of photos from Fairbridge Farm. I went over to see my dad and I showed him the photos. He was upset and said that he hadn't seen the photos before and he started crying. We didn't have any pictures of my dad as a kid.
9. I started to ask him all these questions and he went to his bedroom and returned with a pile of documents. I had never seen this file before and I asked him where it had come from. Something had happened in relation to his work in the 1980's, I think it was something to do with his pension, and he was told that he was not a Canadian citizen. He then applied to British Columbia archives on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1985 and received this documentation that he had given me.

10. He gave me this file and I took it home and spread it over my kitchen table. I put all the documents in chronological order. I then started to read through it. I saw that he was put into the care of the Fairbridge Society at the age of three. He was the same age as my son is now when he was put into care. I couldn't fathom how someone could give up their child at that age and I started crying.
11. His birth certificate was within the file. It named my dad's parents. Before that, I had not known the name of my grandparents. I knew that he had lived with his granny before he went into care but I didn't really know anything else. I started to make notes.
12. I was speaking to [REDACTED] the woman I first contacted on Facebook, and she sent me photos of Benington Emigration Home. She had gone back to England with her mum to see it. My dad had been at Benington House near Hertford before being sent to Canada.
13. There were groups on Facebook about Fairbridge and I put up a post on the Fairbridge Farm, Canada Facebook page. I also put something up on the Dumbarton Memories page because my dad had lived there with his granny before he went into care. This was on the [REDACTED] My posts had basic information about my father and that he had come to Canada from Scotland.
14. All these people started to message me. My phone did not stop buzzing or beeping for three days due to the amount of messages and emails I was receiving. Most of them were local historians and there were a couple of women who were specifically researching the home children. I was receiving all this information including my grandmother's marriage certificate, my grandmother's death certificate and how my grandfather had died in a [REDACTED] before my dad was born.
15. A woman contacted me and said that she had found this woman called [REDACTED] in Australia. She said she had carried out research on ancestry and every name I had given her was on the web site and that [REDACTED] was my aunt. I also received a message from [REDACTED] saying that she had some information for me but she wanted to confirm with her sister and that she would call me the next day. I had no

idea who she was. I messaged [REDACTED] on Messenger and told her about the information I had and it had lead me to her and asked her to confirm if it was true. The next day she messaged me but unbeknownst to me she had also phoned her sister [REDACTED] in the States, because she was the only one who knew the full story. [REDACTED] confirmed everything to [REDACTED] and that my dad was their brother. She then messaged me and confirmed what had happened to my father.

16. My dad's sisters, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] started sending me photos and information about my family. I found out that my father had seven siblings from his mother having had three different relationships. His mother was [REDACTED] and his father was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was born in 1906 and had married [REDACTED] in about 1926. She gave birth to my father's sister [REDACTED] and she later divorced [REDACTED]. In between marrying her next husband, [REDACTED] she dated my father's father, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] died before my father was born. There was a two week period when [REDACTED] was pregnant and [REDACTED] being killed. I don't think either of them knew she was pregnant. At the time, from what I gather, she was still legally married to [REDACTED] so she gave my father that surname on his birth certificate.
17. My dad was born in [REDACTED] 1935 and [REDACTED] married her second husband, [REDACTED] in December 1935. My father was an illegitimate child. She gave my dad to her mother, Granny [REDACTED] to look after and she went back to work. My father stayed with his granny until he was three.
18. [REDACTED] went on to have children with her new husband, [REDACTED]. She had [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. There was another baby born in-between who died in the Blitz, during the bombing of London. I can't remember her name. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and all their children emigrated to Australia in 1954. By that time, [REDACTED] was married to [REDACTED] and they emigrated to America.
19. Granny [REDACTED] sister was apparently involved in some way with the Fairbridge Society and encouraged her sister to send my dad away so the family name would not be blemished. How much of that is true, I don't know. Granny [REDACTED] wrote to these societies and asked them to take dad in. She told them it wasn't safe for the boy to

play outside by himself where they were staying, that she was aged 65 and didn't know what would happen to my dad if something should happen to her. She asked if he could be placed in their care.

20. My father was placed into the care of the Fairbridge Society in 1938. I found out that he was initially placed in Middlemore Emigration Home in Birmingham, then evacuated for a time to live with Mrs [REDACTED] in Shropshire and then moved to Fairbridge House Benington in Shropshire. Eventually, in 1945, my dad was sent to live on Fairbridge Farm on Vancouver Island, Canada. He was sent on SS Bayano.
21. Granny [REDACTED] went to look for my father when he was in England and they moved him. Within the Fairbridge documents I later received, there is a letter she wrote saying that she was coming to see him in the August and he was shipped to Canada in the [REDACTED]. She died never knowing where my father ended up in life. It makes me furious when I go through that file knowing what my father had to go through. He was not told about his family and wasn't given any information about them and they weren't given information about him.
22. I now have so many photos on my phone of family relatives. I have a photo of my grandfather, [REDACTED]. One of my great cousins on my dad's side sent me the photo. I hunted for information about him, I wanted to know about him and what he did. I have also been sent a photo of my great grandfather on my father's side. I can't remember his name. I was also sent the newspaper article about my grandfather's death [REDACTED]. These are the kind of pictures people were sending me and I was blown away. People were sending me emails and messages. I found out all this information in such a short period of time.
23. I have been told that [REDACTED] my grandfather, was a bombardier but I would love to find out about his military career. He was also a goalkeeper for the [REDACTED] football team. I messaged the [REDACTED] soccer club to get information about my grandfather. Total strangers have been bending over backwards to try and help me find this information. It was really humbling that people would be willing to help someone on an Island on the Pacific coast of Canada just because my dad was born

in Dumbarton. It makes my Scottish pride swell, I am very proud of my Scottish heritage.

24. The information I found out made me question my surname. I am a [REDACTED] and should never have been a [REDACTED]. Due to legal documentation, my surname is [REDACTED] but the discovery about my father's real parentage changed everything. The name [REDACTED] was acknowledged on my father's birth certificate as he is designated LYE [REDACTED]. That tradition has continued as my middle name is [REDACTED] and one of my son's middle names is [REDACTED]. That was done before we even knew that [REDACTED] should have been my father's surname.
25. When I was reading my grandfather's birth certificate, I found out that his father was [REDACTED] who was a railway guard and that [REDACTED] was his mother. My grandfather's birth was registered in 1906. When my mother went through the paperwork she said that my grandfather was [REDACTED]. However when I started to look through the files and reading the certificate from the Fairbridge Society, [REDACTED] wasn't his last name, it was his occupation. He was a dyer in a textile factory and dyed fabric. He was employed by the [REDACTED] Silk Works in [REDACTED].
26. It has been such a journey of discovery. Every time someone sends me information about my family I get so happy. I was being sent information that I had never had and never knew. I spent about three months everyday on my phone doing research. I wanted the information, I wanted to know who all these people were and what they did. I knew everything about my mum's side of the family but I knew nothing about my dad's family. We didn't have any of the information and neither did he.

### **Informing Dad of his family**

27. I spent a couple of days compiling all the information I had received over the phone and I went to see my mum and dad to speak to them. I remember I had a list on the back of an envelope of information I wanted to tell them. It had names and dates written all the way down as it was the only thing I had in my truck when I was receiving



all this information. When I arrived, they had company and I respectfully asked them to leave as I had something important to discuss with my parents.

28. I sat down on the sofa and I started to tell them what I had found out. I explained to dad what had happened to him when he was eighteen and had received bus tickets to go and see a family in Detroit. In 1954, his sister [REDACTED] found out where my father was and sent bus tickets to Fairbridge Farm and they had forwarded them to the Grandma and Grandpa [REDACTED]. My father remembered visiting a couple in Detroit in 1954 but had no idea who they were. He remembered getting off the bus and a woman shouting a name he hadn't heard of before. He remembered leaving that night and going back across the border. He was to return the next day but he was not allowed across the border again as he didn't have a visa. I don't know how he got across the border the day before. When he wasn't allowed back across he just left and never tried to go back again.
29. I told him that it was his sister [REDACTED] who had sent him the bus tickets and that she had met him with her husband [REDACTED]. I had been told that it had been her intention to look after him but she never knew where he went after he couldn't get across the border again. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had put him up in the hotel in Windsor, they went back across the border to get all his paperwork because they wanted him to go and live with them. When they went back to the hotel the next morning, he was gone. She had no idea where he went and had no way of contacting him. He had no idea that it was his sister. When I told my dad who she was he got upset. I started to tell him about all the family he had. I was giving him all this information and he was getting upset. He had always thought that he had been an only child and had been abandoned. I was throwing all this information at him and showing him the pictures on my phone to back it all up.

### **Contact with Dad's family**

30. As we were sitting talking, my Auntie [REDACTED] phoned from Australia. I hit the video call button and her face popped up. I was so excited and I handed the phone to my dad. My Auntie [REDACTED] was with her. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] live close by to each

other. There were tears from everybody. None of them had met my dad and no-one apart from [REDACTED] knew that he existed. [REDACTED] only found out that morning when I had spoken to her on the phone and we had chatted for an hour and she had confirmed with [REDACTED] who we were.

31. [REDACTED] had not told my father in 1954 about his family and who she was. She did not tell her other siblings about my father either. She felt that this responsibility lay with their mother [REDACTED] [REDACTED] died in 1985. My dad's brother [REDACTED] passed away shortly after his mother died when he was 49. They are buried together.
32. We chatted with them for over an hour. For 83 years, my dad had no idea that these people even existed. We ended the call and told them we would call them tomorrow and that we needed time to process everything that was happening. My Auntie [REDACTED] then phoned. Again, I pressed video call and her face appeared on the screen. My dad recognised her as the woman he had met in Detroit. He even remembered Uncle [REDACTED] car. When she saw him on the phone, she called him LYE [REDACTED] It was the same name she had used back in 1954 when she saw him in Detroit and he didn't recognise the name. This was the name they had used for him when he was a boy living with Granny [REDACTED]
33. My dad's great grandfather was called [REDACTED] and he was an apprentice on the Cutty Sark. In Scotland, [REDACTED] is a nickname for [REDACTED] and he used to be called [REDACTED] and that's what [REDACTED] always called my dad as a kid. My dad had said that this woman in Detroit had called him a name that wasn't his and he didn't know why. It was a lightbulb moment for my dad as he had remembered being called that name in Detroit. She hadn't seen him or talked to him for about fifty/sixty years. She kept asking him where he went and why he left. She now calls him every Sunday. She said that she had lost him once, she was not going to lose him again.
34. After the video calls, dad was blown away, he was stunned. He was trying to process all this new information as fast as he could. I was so excited about telling him all this information. There were a lot of tears and I'm sure it took him days to process it. When I received more information I would go back to my dad and show him pictures of his



mum and his grandmother. That process is still going on and will do so until the day he dies.

35. I now have so many relations all over world, in Australia, Scotland and England. When I started on this journey, the Child Migrants Trust (CMT) said they would pay for us to go and visit our family members and we have applied for passports. We have continuing contact with the CMT about the restoration fund.
36. We have also had contact with my father's brother [REDACTED] wife. We have spoken to her a couple of times but we haven't had any contact with his brother [REDACTED]. As far as I'm aware, [REDACTED] is a bit of a recluse. I have been told he is aware of my father but we haven't been able to contact him. All my father's siblings, apart from [REDACTED], are in New South Wales, Australia. [REDACTED] is now in Taylor in Michigan.
37. I want to meet all my family. Dad is now 84 and I don't want any of them to die before they can all meet. I am pushing as hard as I can to get this process moving. They have spoken to each other on the phone and seen each other online but I think the physical meeting between them is so important.
38. My aunts are pleased to be in touch with us. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have been beyond welcoming. Contact with them has been a very positive engagement. Dad was very worried about that when I first told him about his family. I bought my mum and dad an iPad and set them up on Facebook so they can keep in touch with my dad's family. The hardest part about keeping in touch is the time difference between us and Australia. I try to talk to Auntie [REDACTED] at least once a month. It's easier as she is in the States.
39. It has been a great experience keeping touch with the family. There has been a lot of stress and a lot of heartache and tears. It makes me more determined than ever to get all the information.
40. Auntie [REDACTED] is moving into a new house and once she is settled she is going to send us the whole family book that she has researched. I can't wait to get it. She has traced

our family history back to the 1400's and we are direct descendants of Robert the Bruce and Mary Queen of Scots. It's great to have that family history that we never knew about. I have trouble keeping track of it.

41. What I don't understand is why he was the only child in the family to be placed in care. The other siblings had grown up their whole lives with their mother. When I talk to Auntie [REDACTED] and Auntie [REDACTED] all they ever tell me is how loving [REDACTED] was and how great a mum she was. They don't understand why their mum would give up a child. We will never know now why he was the only one given up. I think it may have been because he was illegitimate and that during that period of time, it wasn't acceptable to have an illegitimate child. Granny [REDACTED] even writes about the fact that he was an illegitimate son in a letter to Fairbridge.

#### **Relationship with my father**

42. Dad and I didn't have a good relationship growing up. It's only in the past year or so since I have found out about his background, that we have become close. I want my dad to know that although he was given up, and that he spent time in these homes, he does have a family and that he was loved and cared for. When you see the letters Granny [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] wrote, it shows he was cared for, it shows he was loved. They tried desperately to find him. I want to put his mind at ease as it bothered him his entire life.
43. After I found out about my father's childhood, it helped me understand why my father was the way he was when I was growing up. Having been bounced around homes and having never been shown love, that would mess up anybody. It took 41 years before I had this information to know why my dad was the way he was when I was growing up.
44. My dad was an alcoholic. He didn't care about me. As long as he was partying and drinking with his friends, everything was good. My mum did everything for me, she was the one who raised me. It was hard for me growing up. Like any kid, you just wanted to hang out with your dad. He was good with the car and we did car stuff

together but he was never a dad in other senses. I can think of only one time that he actually played with me. The rest of the time he was too busy drinking and partying.

45. My dad and I would get into so many fights when I was growing up. He was awful to me and my mum. As I got a bigger and stronger, I put a stop to the behaviour towards me and my mother. Now I have gone through all this discovery I think his behaviour was to mask the pain of a bad childhood. I gave him a big hug one day after we had gone through some information and I told him I was sorry. I was sorry that people felt it necessary to treat him that way as a child.
46. As a father myself, I don't understand how people could have given up their child. It bugs me every day when I read his files that he was cast aside. I will never understand why a parent would do that to a child.
47. We always grow up thinking that our parents are immortal. My mum fell and broke her leg and she hasn't been able to leave the house for a long time. My dad looks after her all day, every day. I worry about what would happen if dad suddenly died. I have to look after my own family and I have to look after my parents. I'm stuck right in the middle and it's tough. I have all these commitments and it can be hard.

#### **Recovery of Dad's records**

48. I recovered my dad's Fairbridge file after [REDACTED] put me in touch with the Child Migrants Trust. She had done all this research for her mum. She put me in contact with them and I messaged them. I sent my request originally to the CMT in Australia and they said they had no information about LYE [REDACTED] They forwarded my email to the CMT in England. They then contacted me and said that they would get all the information in relation to my father and then send it to me. About a month later, this huge file arrived. I think my mum went through it first. I don't think my dad looked through it. I think he has blocked out a lot of his childhood. I don't know if it's because he chooses not to remember or doesn't want to remember. They didn't charge anything for sending the file, they just sent all the records that they had. I have passed a copy of the file and other papers to the Inquiry.

49. I have sent an email to the CMT recently requesting my dad's records from Middlemore Emigration Home, Birmingham. They said they will look into it and that the records are held in the Birmingham archive.
50. I tried to phone the archives at British Columbia Museum in Victoria, Vancouver Island. I haven't got hold of them yet but will chase this up. I will request my father's file from them too. It's always good to have it all.
51. I haven't really had any contact with the Prince's Trust, who took over Fairbridge, about my dad's records. I remember sending them an email about something, it may have been to sign a release form but I can't remember.
52. Within the files I have recovered, when you read the notes and the letters, they talk about my dad in an uncaring way. They refer to him as "the boy" or "this child." They didn't care. It has changed now but back then they just didn't care. He was just another kid, another toss-away of society.
53. When I went through the file, I got so angry about the lies that were told, especially to my great grandmother. She hunted for my dad and every time they would tell her where he was and that he was doing great. There are copies of all the letters that my father's grandmother wrote to him that he never got. There are also letters [REDACTED] wrote to my dad but he never got them and they are all in the file. Someone must have had them. I can't believe people treated the kids like they were nothing, like they were slave labour and lip service was given to my great grandmother by telling her he was doing great.

## **Records**

54. From my dad's Fairbridge file, he was in a children's home called Middlemore in Birmingham from 1938. There is a letter to Edinburgh Council in September 1939 telling them my dad has been evacuated to an address in Shropshire. And then in

1940 he is billeted to live with Mrs [REDACTED] He is then moved to Fairbridge, Benington and then to Fairbridge, Vancouver Island.

55. There is a form in the file that states that my dad was supposed to go to Australia and he was sent to Canada first. He was then supposed to leave Fairbridge here to go to Fairbridge Australia. He wasn't sent because of the war going on in the Pacific between the Japanese and America so they didn't want to send him on a boat and risk getting torpedoed by the Japanese. Had he gone there, and the fact the rest of the family had emigrated there, there would have been so many coincidences. There were so many occasions where he could've been connected back with his family but it just didn't happen.
56. There are forms dated [REDACTED] 1938 and [REDACTED] 1938 both signed by my father's grandmother. It is not quite clear why there are two forms signed by my father's grandmother. There is a letter stating that she got the form signed again and was hoping that it is all right this time. This was in relation to the form dated [REDACTED] 1938 where my father's grandmother's signature is witnessed by a Miss Cochrane. There is also a form of [REDACTED] 1938 from Edinburgh Council that is signed by my father's mother where it appears they want to make sure that my father is to be given into care. Miss Ashley is the social worker mentioned. The form from [REDACTED] 1938 was witnessed by Granny [REDACTED] who I think may have been her cousin, I'm not sure. The form dated [REDACTED] 1938 is witnessed by a doctor, looks like a Dr Harvey, whose practice was [REDACTED] Dumbarton. His signature appears alongside my father's mother's signature. Coincidentally, my father's signature is very similar to his mother's signature. When my dad saw his mother's signature, he cried.
57. On [REDACTED] it doesn't say which year, my great grandmother wrote a letter asking for her grandson's address. She says that his last address was with a Mrs [REDACTED] at the Grove in Brookhampton. She says she wrote to Mrs [REDACTED] who told her to write to Birmingham and the Secretary there told her to write to them. I don't know who this was addressed to. They were bouncing her around. She wanted to know my father's address so she could send him a parcel for Christmas as he would be disappointed not to receive his parcel. She also states that she is willing to visit at

any time as she was staying close by. They moved my dad from Mrs [REDACTED] then to Middlemore and then to Benington in Hertfordshire. Granny [REDACTED] was not informed of his moves until weeks later. It's clear from this letter she has no clue where my dad was.

58. The file mentions my father breaking his arm in 1941 when he was with Mrs [REDACTED]
59. There is a letter in [REDACTED] 1944 to what looks like the Secretary of Fairbridge from my great grandmother, asking if her grandson is still at the school. She is asking about the usual Christmas party and about sending a gift. The return address is c/o [REDACTED] I have not yet been able to figure out who [REDACTED] is. There are a couple of letters in the file which have the same thing written on them.
60. There is a letter to my dad's grandmother telling her that he was being sent to Canada and was due to sail on [REDACTED] 1945. The letter is dated [REDACTED] 1945. She probably wouldn't have got that letter until he was half-way across the Atlantic. They gave her three days' notice. Every time he was moved to a different place, they didn't bother to tell her until weeks or months afterwards.
61. My father's grandmother wrote a letter on [REDACTED] 1945 saying that she had not been home when the letter had arrived informing her that my dad was being sent to Canada. She said that it had been her intention to visit her grandson in [REDACTED] of that year if he had not been moved. She also asks if she can be sent photographs and that she would be willing to pay for them. She also asks if he would be allowed to answer her letters. He was moved to Canada before she could visit.
62. In a letter to the Director of the Fairbridge Society from the Principal, dated 10<sup>th</sup> May 1949, it says that my father depended a great deal on correspondence from his grandmother and from [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is his sister but she is referred to in the file as a family friend. That was not true. [REDACTED] comments in her undated letter to my father that he should sign his letters to a friend with "Love" or "Kind Regards" as he was signing his letters "Yours sincerely." He was clearly sending letters back to his family.



63. There are a number of half yearly reports from Fairbridge Farm, Vancouver, within the file. These are a compilation of a housemother's report, a day school report and the Principal's report. They talk about my dad's behaviour and they write to Edinburgh Council about it. They ask about his background and ask why this child is behaving this way. He was sent to a clinic where monthly blood samples were taken as they thought he was possibly epileptic, but that's not true. There is not a history of epilepsy that I am aware of.
64. There is a letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 1948 from the Principal to the Secretary of Fairbridge advising the use of the drug Triodine to control my father's outbursts. He maybe had explosive rage disorder. I don't think back then they had a term for his behaviour, but now perhaps they do. I have since found out that this medication was used for sedating farm animals, like horses. They were drugging him into submission, to conform to their ways. He was clearly a child who wanted love and affection.
65. There is a letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> September 1948 from Miss Ashley, the social worker at Edinburgh Council, where she mentions concerns about my dad. In the letter, it seems to give an explanation after analysing the reports sent to her. She says that none of these behavioural problems presented themselves before my dad went to Canada and raises something about the first cottage mother, Mrs QDG [REDACTED]. Either Miss Ashley visited Fairbridge or had someone report to her and she took the view that Mrs QDG [REDACTED] should have never been in charge of children. That's my interpretation of this letter. It was Miss Ashley who recommended that my father should be migrated to Canada.
66. There is a document within the file dated 5<sup>th</sup> October 1948 which mentions the time when my father was sent to hospital after being kicked by one of the priests. There was a note on it by the CMT when I received the file from them querying why this was never investigated. Why was an eight year old child kicked hard enough to have a cyst on his buttock? It appears that there was a cyst that required to be drained. I asked my dad about what had happened and he couldn't remember what he did but the priest kicked him. His time in hospital is documented within the file and it appears he was admitted to hospital on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1943 with an abscess on his rectum having

been kicked on the buttock three days before and discharged on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1943. The letter was sent to an AA Cunningham, medical Superintendent and was sent by a Mr Drury, the surgeon. This was before he left for Canada. In the file there is a document dated 11<sup>th</sup> October 1943 advising that my father had been sent home from school and given syrup of figs. He was complaining of swelling and pain on his left buttock but he clearly was not admitted to hospital until December. Why did they delay his treatment? To me that constitutes child abuse, why wasn't it investigated?

67. In the records it mentions my dad's pre-occupation with the letters that he never got from his grandmother. [REDACTED] also wrote a letter and I have since spoken to her and she has confirmed that she wrote it. Dad never got her letters either. Also within the records it mentions that Dad wrote letters to [REDACTED] but [REDACTED] never received them. There's another letter from [REDACTED] asking why she hasn't heard from my dad and asking if he is even getting her letters. She's asking for his shoe size so she can get him a proper pair of ice skates. None of these letters were ever received by my dad. Whoever was in charge of these letters made a point of my dad never ever being able to have contact with his family. There is a letter from his grandmother saying she had received a present from him but we have no record of what that might have been. My dad remembers getting a watch from Granny [REDACTED] for Christmas one year but it got stolen. It is the only thing he remembers getting from his family.
68. There are photographs of my father as a child within the file. I think my dad is about three or four in the first photo and the other photo looks like it was taken around about the time he was being sent to Canada. It looks like he is wearing a uniform. We did not have any photos in the house of my father as a child before we received these ones.
69. I can't believe the way they refer to these children in the records, it's like they don't even care about them. There is no compassion or love when they refer to the children. When I go through this file and see how the children are referred to, it's like they had a cavalier attitude towards the kids. It's as if they are nothing and it makes me mad. Although there is a past history between me and my dad, he is still my dad and I still

love him. To read how people talked about him and referred to him, it makes me so angry.

70. I have so many questions but I'll never be able to get them answered. The people who could answer my questions are dead and gone. From my understanding, Granny [REDACTED] was like a dumping ground as there were other kids from her family who were dumped on her. She sounds like the one of the greatest women in the family as she took in these kids and raised them as her own.
71. I have done some research on the Fairbridge Society and I think their intentions were sincere. It was supposed to give kids a better opportunity but that's not what eventually happened. The children sent to Canada and Australia were neglected and abused. I feel all the information these people told my great grandmother were lies. Why did they make these promises that he would be happy and well cared for? When you read the reports, he's clearly not happy and not being treated well. There were clearly abuse issues, from his behaviour it's clear there were things going on that that were affecting his mental well-being. Why was nothing looked into? He was a happy go lucky child in England but he was having fits of rage in Canada. What happened to him between there and here? Why did his behaviour change? Who let this kid become a sullen, sulky and angry little boy? There was obviously a reason for the change in behaviour.
72. I know from when I was born, the relationship I had with my dad was greatly affected by his childhood experiences. I feel bad for him. We have a much better relationship now that I have read his files. I have made up my own gauge about what went on. I now totally understand the way he is. Our relationship is better now. Knowing my father's background has given me a better appreciation of my dad. I think of my own son who is the same age as my father was when he was taken into care.

### **Lessons to be learned**

73. Governments are now trying to acknowledge that they made mistakes and they are trying to provide redress to the people involved. This should have happened at an

earlier stage. Sadly, many people have now died and will not be able to be financially compensated. Amends need to be made and people will have to be made accountable. I hope something good comes out of it for future generations of kids in care.

74. A lot of things shouldn't have happened. There was a lot of misinformation and miscommunication that shouldn't have happened. I feel those responsible should be held accountable for what happened. Going forward, knowing that there are still children in care, children should be given every piece of information that they can get if they want to know about their families. You hear of children who are unable to access their file, they're not allowed to know who their parents are. I think that is wrong. There are going to be situations where there are parents who are still alive and they are able to make contact with their children. This process was not made available to my father. If the process had started earlier, he might have been able to find and meet his mother and his family.
75. As a family, we have lost years and my dad has lost the opportunity to have a relationship with his mother and his family. The other half of my father's family were in complete shock as they didn't know they had an older sibling. All the time we lost over the years, we can never get that back.
76. There needs to be something in place so kids in care can find their families and have contact with them if they want to and to not be passed around from place to place. There shouldn't be any hindrances for people to freely access their files. That would not be appropriate in every situation, if, for example, the kids come from abusive backgrounds.
77. There needs to be deeper background checks into these homes. Some of the people in charge of these children were more abusive to them than the parents they were taken away from.
78. I'm grateful that the Scottish Government are starting to make amends for this and I hope whatever they come up with, whatever their plan is, they end up doing the right

thing. I hope they apologise and make financial restitution to these people or their families. I'm glad the UK Government took responsibility. I just wish the Canadian Government would take some responsibility for what happened. They should apologise to these kids who were sent here from Commonwealth countries. I read somewhere that 1 in 10 Canadians owe their heritage to a British home child. One hundred thousand kids were sent here as British home children.

79. Last time I checked, there are only nine people alive who went to Fairbridge Farm, Vancouver Island, my dad being one of them. There used to be forty/fifty people who attended the Fairbridgian Society re-unions. It's gone from a weekend event down to a lunch. Some of them had good experiences and others had bad experiences. My dad said his time in Fairbridge Farm wasn't a terrible experience. He had his trials and tribulations there. But overall, I feel his treatment by the Fairbridge Society was abusive.
80. I just hope the Inquiry is not handcuffed as to what can be put forward. It brings me hope that because the Inquiry is independent they will be able to lodge an accurate report without being hindered by red tape. I want to thank the Inquiry for the work they are doing as these stories need to be told and for what happened to be known.
81. My father's experiences are not just something that affected him, it has affected the whole entire family. It has affected me and how I raise my own two children.
82. When my dad was three years old, he completely disappeared one day from his family. One of my cousins in Dumbarton, Scotland, told me that her father, who was [REDACTED] Granny [REDACTED] nephew, remembered giving this small boy his scarf and wrapping it round his neck the day he was sent away. That was my dad. [REDACTED] died never knowing what happened to that little boy and it haunted him. No-one ever knew what happened to Dad. It impacted on everyone's life.
83. I think the family thought that what they were doing was right but there was nothing right about sending my father away. It could have been a better opportunity for kids without a family but my father had a family who loved him and wanted to keep in



contact with him and they weren't allowed to. That wasn't right and it wasn't fair. His grandmother obviously loved him as she spent so much time looking for him. I think she died in the 1960's so when Dad left Fairbridge in the 1940's there was still time for him to contact her if he had known he had family.

84. I've been trying to get as much information as I can to give my dad to give answers to all the questions that he must have. It's a bit like trying to put all the puzzle pieces together a little bit.

**Other information**

85. 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.

LYX

Signed.....

Dated..... November 28, 2019 .....