

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Case study: English Benedictine Congregation

Witness statement of Abbot Geoffrey Scott

1. First, I would like to state at the outset that having been present at all the oral evidence and having read the written statements I am firmly convinced that abuse did take place at both schools run by the Community of Fort Augustus, and that speaking as I do on behalf of the English Benedictine Congregation, those who suffered and their families deserve a full apology for what they had to endure.
2. Secondly, my knowledge of Fort Augustus is limited and I have therefore been very dependent on the statements of the applicants. I am using my own statement to provide a context for these events based on my knowledge of the working of the EBC and for such assistance as it may be to the work of the Inquiry.
3. Thirdly, the offer of financial compensation from the EBC, using the residual assets of Fort Augustus, is being taken up, but I think there is more to be done in the area of support for applicants and their families. As has already been acknowledged in one of the statements, after-care of those who have suffered abuse is essential, and I believe that the EBC should have a greater role in supporting applicants who wish to access this type of support.

Biographical Introduction

4. As First Assistant Abbot of the English Benedictine Congregation, and currently abbot of Douai Abbey in Berkshire, I represent the English Benedictine Congregation's Abbot President and the English Benedictine Congregation in this phase of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI). I only became involved in the Inquiry process late in May 2019 and apologise for any lack of understanding and any failure to answer adequately questions put to me. It has been my privilege, however, to have attended all the hearings of evidence to date from the applicants. Their evidence has had a profound effect on me; little seven-year old boys went from their homes to a boarding school where some of them were to be abused.
5. For the record, my own career can be outlined briefly. I am from north east England. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1947. I attended a co-educational grammar school (1959-62) before becoming a boarder (1962-66) at Douai School in Berkshire which was attached to Douai Abbey, a monastery of the English Benedictine Congregation. That school closed in 1999. I joined the Community at Douai Abbey in 1966, studied philosophy and theology in-house which included a Diploma in Theology from London University. I then read Modern History at Oxford, gained a teaching Certificate of Education from Cambridge, and was awarded a doctorate by King's College, London, in 1984, my dissertation being the English Benedictine Congregation in the 18th century. I wrote my doctoral dissertation while teaching. I studied for this dissertation at Cambridge University and King's College, London. I began work on it in 1977. I then returned to become a teacher at Douai School (1976-94), where I was eventually head of department, director of studies, librarian, and headmaster (1987-93).
6. Between 1994 and 1997 I was chaplain to the English Benedictine nuns at Stanbrook Abbey, Worcester. I began lecturing at Oxford University and two of the English seminaries (Oscott College and St John's Seminary, Womersley) whilst at Stanbrook. Between 1997 and 1998, I was assistant priest in the Catholic parish at Ormskirk, Lancashire, run by the English

Benedictines, before being elected as Abbot of Douai in 1998, which office I have held for 21 years. St Anne's, Ormskirk, Lancashire, is a parish incorporated into Douai Abbey since 1890 when all the Benedictine parishes in England and Wales (then known as 'missions') were divided up between the three senior abbeys of Downside, Ampleforth and Douai.

7. Whilst abbot, I have sat on a number of educational and health trusts and on the councils and committees of various professional bodies. I have been a governor of St Mary's Convent School, Worcester and St John's College, Southsea, Hampshire. I am presently a trustee of Oulton Abbey Nursing Home, Stone, Staffordshire. I was a member of the Birmingham Archdiocesan History Committee. I am Vice-President of the Catholic Record Society, and President of the Catholic Archives Society. I am Chair of the English Benedictine History Commission, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. I have been First Assistant Abbot in the English Benedictine Congregation from around 2000, librarian and archivist of Douai Abbey, and from 2017, annalist of the English Benedictine Congregation. I was elected annalist of the EBC at the 2017 General Chapter. The annalist prepares a report for the General Chapter of the state of the archives of the EBC. The annalist's reports before the closure of Fort Augustus do not contain references to the state of the Fort Augustus archive. The annalist monitors the archive collections in the various monasteries and advises on their care. I visited Fort Augustus twice: in 1986, for an inspection of the archives, and in 1997, when the General Chapter of the English Benedictine Congregation met there. On neither occasion was the school in residence and I never visited the school buildings. The English Benedictine Congregation historical commission meets each year. To inspect the disposition of the Fort Augustus Archive, I was given the task over surveying the historical collections in particular. I was asked by the commission to go to see what there was in the Fort Augustus archive. I was interested in their historical collections. Fort Augustus prided itself on being the successor to ancient Scottish monasteries in Franconia. I was looking at the survival of papers from ancient Scottish abbeys in Franconia and the papers of Abbot Sir Oswald Hunter Blair. I did not get involved directly in the archives relating to the Fort Augustus schools. I do not recall that there was much material relating to the school. The school's working archive was likely to have been in the head master's office.

Part 1: The Past: Fort Augustus 1876-1999

Chronology

8. The history of the abbey of St Benedict at Fort Augustus has already been described in detail in various earlier statements, notably those of Abbot Richard Yeo. I only attempt a summary here. The abbey was founded in 1876 and became part of the English Benedictine Congregation. In 1882 it left the English Benedictine Congregation, the Community seeking a more enclosed monastic life, but re-entered The English Congregation in 1909. The abbey closed in 1999 and was suppressed by the Holy See in 2001.
9. A school was established at Fort Augustus in 1923 and this was closed in 1993. The preparatory school at Carlekemp, North Berwick was founded in 1947, but closed in 1977. Numbers of monks in the Community peaked after the Second World War, when it had two dependent priories in the USA (Washington, DC, and Portsmouth, Rhode Island) both of which survive, and are now dependent abbeys of the English Benedictine. In 1945 there were around 47 monks attached to Fort Augustus itself: 26 choir monks and priests, and 21 lay brothers, including between 8 and 10 teaching in the school. At the time of its closure in 1973, there were 4 choir monks/priests at Carlekemp. In 1998, the year before closure of the abbey, the resident Community numbered 11 monks. After the closure in 1999, five of the monks joined

various dioceses, and five transferred to other monasteries, while [REDACTED] remained [REDACTED] and eventually entered a care home before his death. The division between choir monks and lay brothers goes back to the origins of the Cistercian Order in the 12th century. Choir monks have the recitation of the Divine Office in choir as a priority and are normally ordained priests. The lay brothers perform various manual tasks, work on the farm, and are not bound to attend the choir office. They are not ordained.

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Archive

10. There has been justified criticism of the lack of documentary evidence available to the Inquiry, particularly from Carlekemp school. Archive collections are, of course, dependent on decisions made to deposit material and there seems to have been no clear protocols for this at Carlekemp or Fort Augustus itself. I inspected the Fort Augustus archive in 1986 and remember how little there was in it regarding the school. It was predominantly an historic monastic collection.
11. The archive was organised and catalogued by Sr Christine Johnson, the Keeper of the Scottish Catholic Archives, in 2001. She produced a detailed, but incomplete, handwritten index that fills five lever arch files. It organises the material by topics which are assigned an FA number, and then materials related to each topic are assigned sub-numbers. As it is handwritten, it cannot effectively be searched. It is also incomplete: entries do not always describe all the documents contained in that FA number.
12. Unfortunately, not all the materials listed in the handwritten archive remain and the EBC has not been able to locate these materials. We have attempted to locate them in the main EBC archive in Downside. I cannot say whether documents were removed from the archive before it was transferred to the EBC or have been lost since then.
13. The EBC came into possession of the archive when the Abbey closed in 1999. Ownership of the archive was transferred in 2011, when the assets of Fort Augustus were transferred to the EBC. In 2013, the archive was physically split into two parts. The bulk of the materials was stored at Downside Abbey. Records that related primarily to the schools were sent to the EBC's then solicitors in Edinburgh to facilitate responding to requests for records from former students.
14. In addition to the indexed Fort Augustus archive, the EBC has searched its own papers, files and archives for materials relating to Fort Augustus. These consist largely of folders of correspondence kept by Abbot Presidents. This material was not catalogued or indexed in any way.
15. The entire Fort Augustus archive and the relevant files from the EBC have been provided to our solicitors, who have digitised and indexed the bulk of the documents. The files that relate to the school are relatively few and incomplete. There does not seem to have been any systematic attempt to create or retain files on teaching staff or pupils so that depending on the years when a student attended the school there may be some or no relevant documents. In addition, much of the material related to Carlekemp is not in the archive.
16. In summary, the Fort Augustus archive contains the following records in relation to former students of the Abbey School: Parent account ledgers for 1947-1952, 1958-1968, 1977-1981; a relatively complete set of class lists for Fort Augustus Abbey School for most dates; brief pupil files for many of the students who left the Abbey school prior to 1969, but almost no pupil files for the years 1970 to 1993; an incomplete set of "housemaster reports" from the 1980s.

17. With respect to Carlekemp we have no pupil files for pupils before 1957, as they are missing from the archive. For 1957 to 1977, the files were arranged alphabetically and we have some files of students with last names starting with H through to Y.
18. There are incomplete files related to the teaching staff at Fort Augustus Abbey School and the files related to teaching staff at Carlekemp are not in the archive. There are a number of other more general files in relation to the schools, containing materials related to school activities, curricula, inter-staff memos, and so on. Again it does not seem that these files were kept in any systematic way.

History of the Abbey

19. Fort Augustus Abbey was founded in 1876 to become the first monastery of a revived Benedictine Congregation in Scotland, largely with the help of the Scottish Catholic hierarchy and members of the Scottish Catholic aristocracy. It was founded by Dom Jerome Vaughan (1841-1896), a monk of Downside Abbey. The English Benedictine Congregation was not consulted, and although the Fort initially fell within the jurisdiction of the English Congregation, relations were strained. Eventually, Fort Augustus became independent of the English Benedictine Congregation, and fell under the influence of the Beuronese Benedictine Congregation in Germany which aspired to a more enclosed, neo-medievalist and rigorous form of Benedictinism, rather different from the active and apostolic character of the English Benedictine Congregation. The monks of the Beuronese Congregation are more enclosed than the those of the EBC and have few external apostolates. They emphasise the celebration of the liturgy in choir, and have neo-medievalist traditions. A deliberate separation of monastery from school was part of the Beuronese influence. The abbey buildings at Fort Augustus were quite separate from those of the school. The monastery had its own enclosure which was private from the school. Not all the resident Community were involved in the school which meant that for the Community as a whole, the school was not their only priority. Although the Fort rejoined the English Congregation, Beuronese influence remained in the austere character of the Community's life and in the survival of lay brothers. The place always seemed remote from the rest of the English Benedictine Congregation, representatives from the Community often absented themselves from Congregational meetings, and there was a level of formality not found elsewhere. I remember evening recreation had the community sitting in order of monastic habit around a circular table. This means they were seated in order of the date when each had been clothed in the Benedictine habit. Being formed in this way can't have helped to develop a warmth among the monks towards pupils under their care.
20. The schools attached to the monasteries of the English Benedictine Congregation have a long history. To help us to understand the peculiar nature of the school at Fort Augustus we must remember that the small schools attached to monasteries in England were adjuncts to the monasteries themselves, which would have given greater priority at the time to their missionary work in establishing and supporting parishes in England. The task of tutoring individual pupils or teaching in the school alongside them was secondary to this apostolate. By the late nineteenth century these schools had expanded greatly. Fort Augustus, partly because of the Beuronese influence, never developed its own parishes away from the monastery. Once founded it developed its own school, reaching over 100 pupils. However it was never a large school because of their tradition which emphasised monastic life rather than teaching. The school was quite separate from the monastery and as a result of the Beuronese influence it is likely that some of the monks were not in favour of a school and were more intent on an enclosed monastic life.

21. The school reached its highest number of pupils in 1980 (133), after Carlekemp had closed and its pupils transferred to Fort Augustus. By the 1990s, numbers in the school had decreased to around 60 pupils. During the period when numbers in the school were high, there were eight monks and eight lay teachers in the school, together with ancillary staff. Carlekemp, at the time of its highest numbers of pupils had between four and five monks, and some lay staff.

Assets of Fort Augustus

22. The St Benedict's Abbey Fort Augustus Trust was established in 1936 and requested closure in 2010. That closure became effective in 2011. On closure the monastic property reverted to the Lovat Estate, its original owners, according to an original agreement, and the Fort Augustus Trust agreed that the residual funds and a piece of land in the village of Fort Augustus, detached from the monastery, should be gifted to the English Benedictine Congregation Trust. In 2018, the piece of land was sold to the Fort Augustus Community Company.
23. The assets of Fort Augustus remained in the St Benedict's Abbey Trust until 2011, when they were transferred to the EBC trust as a restricted fund. At the time the assets were transferred, the donated cash balance was £919, 468 and the estimated market value of the land was £650,000. The land was sold in May 2018 for £200,000.

Education in Benedictine Schools

24. It is often said that the Order of St Benedict is not primarily a teaching religious order. The Order of St Benedict, founded on the 6th century Rule of St Benedict and given a formal existence in the 9th century was not founded as a teaching order. St Benedict (c.488-547) gave the 'Opus Dei' (the work of God, that is the Divine Office recited in choir) as the principal work of the monks. Other work followed on from this. At the refoundation of the EBC in the early 17th century, the English monks took an extra vow to work on the English mission (that is, in parishes), and this was still operating in the 19th century. Fort Augustus had few of its monks working on the mission: most of them were resident in the monastery. The English Benedictine schools tried to offer a liberal and classical education which was promoted by a few charismatic monastic teachers. Fort Augustus Abbey was founded as part of that tradition. Like many other schools in the early 17th century period, the monastic schools were rather unstructured and informal, and the religious superior, until the twentieth century, was also the first prefect, or headmaster, of the school attached to the monastery. The finances of monastery and school were not separated. Once distinct headmasters appeared by the 20th century, monastery and school tended to drift further apart, especially by the second half of the 20th century when numbers of monks began to decrease in monastery and school. The impression left by a number of Fort Augustus applicants was that the abbot was a distant figure, and it is true he was hardly mentioned in their statements. Lack of monks holding teaching qualifications was also often mentioned by applicants. A teaching qualification, in addition to an academic degree, only became common in the monastic schools in the second half of the 20th century with the development of teacher training colleges. We heard from some of the applicants that the Fort Augustus monks in the school lacked teaching qualifications. That was not unusual.
25. By the end of the 20th century, however, the practice of education was, rightly, more controlled, but from the statements of the applicants, I had the impression that the Fort had not caught up with this nor introduced fundamental curricular reforms into its school which might have been

the case if some of the monks had undergone teacher training. Courses producing a certificate in education generally introduce students to a wide variety of teaching experiences. This was not so at Fort Augustus where monks seem generally to have known only one school, in some cases as pupils and later as teachers. The valuable features of the older monastic educational tradition could become replaced by unacceptable behaviour, a fall in acceptable standards, and abusive practices which were allowed to develop as a result of individualistic monk teachers doing their own thing over a lengthy period and having little awareness of any need for accountability. This ignorance of the norms which increasingly governed 20th century British schools seems to have been perpetuated at the Fort by a long-term decline in the Community's numbers which led to monks hanging onto senior pastoral positions for many years without any in-service training, to use that expression, and with little hope of their being replaced and succeeded by a younger generation of monastic teachers more conversant with modern educational philosophy and standards. The abbey of Fort Augustus and its two schools disappeared over twenty years ago. But we have to examine what we can of their past to understand how children and young adults came to be abused and the lessons which might be learned for the future.

26. Unlike other English Benedictine communities, Fort Augustus, as I have noted, had no outside apostolates beyond its school, except the local parish, which is why there was a tradition of some Fort Augustus monks, tired of teaching or for health reasons, sometimes being appointed as assistant priests in English Benedictine parishes. As far as I am aware, none of the monks working in such parishes have had allegations of abuse levelled against them. This enclosed monastic world had something to do with the austere German Benedictinism adopted by Fort Augustus early in its history which made it a rather different place from other English Benedictine monasteries. The abbey was located in the Highlands which contributed to its isolation. Among educational advances introduced into schools in the 20th century have been those emphasising the need to educate the whole person, socially and morally, as well as academically. I heard little of these initiatives appearing in the school at Fort Augustus. Housemasters seemed unaware of them, and in an all-male environment, the school matron did not seem to play a decisive role. There seems to have been an insufficient female presence, and we heard evidence of matrons colluding with the punitive regime.
27. Sometimes past Fort Augustus pupils have shown a striking loyalty to their old school, in spite of serious deficiencies which we now know to have existed. The best overview of both schools' complete history is [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) which demonstrates this loyalty. I sensed this too in the statement of 'Joseph' despite his awareness and criticism of abuse in the school. In a way the very monumentality of Fort Augustus as an institution made it a focus of Catholic Highland Scotland. It became a focus for Scottish Catholic loyalty, which is one reason why the story of abuse perpetrated there is so sad. Both I, having listened to the evidence from those who were abused at the school, and the EBC do not doubt that there was abuse perpetrated at Fort Augustus at the time the applicants were in the school. I speak for the EBC when I deplore the child abuse which took place at the Fort, therefore, and the EBC and I are acutely aware of the suffering it has caused. To the extent that previous statements on behalf of the EBC cast doubt on our acceptance that abuse took place, regret sincerely regret that.

Limitation of the approach to safeguarding in the past

28. There has been recent debate in England as well as Scotland about the failure of the English Benedictine Congregation to deal adequately in the past with safeguarding issues. In the

Constitutions of 1931 which regulated all the English Benedictine monasteries and were in use until 1978, therefore covering years when most abuse occurred at Carlekemp and Fort Augustus, the schools attached to the monasteries are not mentioned at all, except in relation to the appointment of the headmaster of 'the lay school'. School matters were dealt with internally, without much external regulation, or by the occasional government inspection which issued reports. Throughout the life of these two schools, the purpose of the quadrennial Visitation of the abbey by the Abbot President did not specifically refer to the school and the school was never mentioned in Visitation reports. This perhaps explains the failure of Visitation Reports to highlight school problems and abuse. Until the introduction of an advance report specifically relating to safeguarding was included in the 2019 Constitutions (Constitution no. 46), the subject was not mentioned in the general reasons for a Visitation laid down in the Constitutions, which only related to the monastery. If abuse had been brought to the notice of the visitors, which it does not seem to have been, it would have been included in the final Visitation reports compiled for the abbot, the Council, and the Community. Looking back at the earlier guidelines for reporting at Visitations, investigation of life in the monastery school should have been included.

29. Listening here to the statements of the applicants over the past two months, I believe that abuse did take place at schools run by the abbey of Fort Augustus. I therefore apologise on behalf of the English Benedictine Congregation to the applicants and any of those associated with them for that abuse. I apologise for the inadequate investigations conducted during the quadrennial Visitations which might otherwise have found evidence of abuse and should have led to steps to deal with the problem.
30. The school at Fort Augustus itself was always small and this perhaps contributed to its failure to develop a gradation of corporal punishment; at least, that was my impression listening to the applicants. Those pupils needing to be disciplined reached the headmaster for discipline too frequently and too quickly. There was no proper house master system. We have heard repeated in the evidence the same few names of those alleged to have been abusers. I knew Father [CIPHER WITHDRAWN] because of his historical work. He seemed a serious person. [CIPHER WITHDRAWN]. On occasion, I met Fathers [CIPHER WITHDRAWN] and [CIPHER WITHDRAWN] when they were old monks, but did not form any opinion of them.
31. Of course, cultures change over time and by the 1970s the practice of corporal punishment was beginning to decline until it disappeared in state schools in the 1980s and in independent schools by the 1990s. It is an example of how isolated Fort Augustus was from changing patterns of conduct that severe corporal punishment persisted there at least until the 1980s. I attended an English Benedictine boarding school in southern England in the 1960s which had similar structures to those at Fort Augustus of that time, but corporal punishment seems to have been much more persistent and brutal in Fort Augustus than that I knew in my own school. Pupils were beaten but with less severity than those at Fort Augustus. Furthermore, bullying seems to have been endemic at the Fort in comparison with the Benedictine school I attended. We heard from applicants that with a maximum number of 130 pupils, there were only two houses, established in 1940, although these increased to three when the additional numbers following the closure of Carlekemp moved to the Fort. Such large numbers per house with pupils aged 13 to 18, and a house system not made up of genuinely independent units, this must have made it difficult for two housemasters to manage. It is possible they found resort to frequent corporal punishment an easy, but inappropriate, remedy to assert control and improve discipline. What Fort Augustus appeared to have had in practice was a badly managed 'line' system, that is, division by year group, such as is typical in Jesuit schools, but

without the horizontal separation of age groups and separate 'play rooms'. This contrasts with the vertical house system found in English public schools.

32. We need to examine why the culture of Fort Augustus stood still for so long and why the institution developed such totally unacceptable aspects. These were partly the result of an isolated monastery closed in on itself, which was too small in terms of its school numbers to possess an enriching and broad curriculum and too enclosed to have been significantly influenced by changes in society outside. Statistics demonstrate that numbers of professed monks in the Community at Fort Augustus were rapidly declining from the end of the Second World War, a phenomenon which put further strain on the relationship between the abbey and its school, as the pool of monastic manpower for the school was reduced and those holding positions in the school were forced to continue. I suspect this might, in part at least, explain why three Australians were allowed to enter the monastery without sufficient checks being made on them.
33. In 1968 the Community was in no fit state to elect an abbot, and so the English Congregation appointed an administrator who was later elected abbot in 1975. The Community voted to close the senior school in 1984 when numbers had dropped to 91 but because of protests from parents and old boys, an action plan was drafted and the decision to close rescinded. In 1985, the abbot appointed an advisory board of governors, but it was too late, school numbers continued to plummet. This decline in school numbers seems to have forced the authorities to take on pupils who had severe personal difficulties and might have drawn more benefit from a school specialising in helping them with their problems. As we heard from an applicant's statement, this had disastrous consequences in one case. By the 1970s, boarding schools had become increasingly unpopular generally, and in 1977 Carlekemp closed. Eventually, the senior school was suddenly closed in 1993. In 1999 the Community itself decided to disband and the assets were taken over by the St Benedict's Fort Augustus Trust.

Movement of Monks

34. I appreciate this is a particular concern for the Inquiry because it is aware of the possibility of superiors moving known abusers to other locations as a preventative measure to prevent re-abuse, but without safeguarding strategies being put into place. This was the case in the past, but is less likely with the present emphasis given to safeguarding. Abbot Richard Yeo has already provided his own statement on the movement of monks. What follows here are some additional thoughts of mine.
35. Monks can be transferred to another monastery in two ways, either by going through the constitutional process of permanently transferring their stability, or for shorter terms on a temporary basis and for a particular reason, such as studies or convalescence.
36. The Constitutions from 1931 until the set of 1986 covered the period when Fort Augustus abbey and school existed. In current use are a later set of Constitutions published in 2019, after the closure of the school in 1993 and the suppression of the abbey in 2001. These all tend to concentrate on how a monk transfers his stability from the monastery of his profession to another monastery.
37. The 1931 Constitutions dealt also with the transfer of a monk to the 'mission', that is, parochial work (pp. 13, 38). Fort Augustus never shared the tradition of having its own incorporated parishes with its monks working in them on a missionary apostolate away from the monastery,

- but there are lots of examples of Fort Augustus monks helping out as assistant priests, but not as parish priests, in English Benedictine incorporated parishes. None of these Fort Augustus monks, however, transferred their monastic stability to another monastery, as far as I am aware.
38. The 1978 Constitutions continued to describe a monk's primary attachment to his monastery through his vow of stability, although it made an exception in terms of missionary work outside (pp. 20, 26). These 1978 Constitutions were the first to insist that if a monk was sent away for studies, it required the consultative vote of the Council of his Abbot (p. 16).
 39. By the time of the 2007 Constitutions, the reasons for movement of monks with the sanction of the Constitutions had become more numerous, and included reasons such as 'pastoral work', permission to live in a non-EBC monastery, to serve as a chaplain, and permission for a monk to accept an office in another monastery (pp. 18-19). The section entitled 'The Directory' in the Constitutions of 2007 (pp. 36-37) explicitly dealt with the transfer of a Benedictine monk from one monastery to another which is not EBC (p.16), or for a monk to accept an office in another EBC monastery (p. 18), and it laid down rules for the transfer of stability (pp. 36-37).
 40. This constitutional history is important for demonstrating how informal transfers of monks for brief periods were not covered by the Constitutions, and Abbot Richard appears to be correct in suggesting these were a rarely recorded feature until the 1990s. I presume that an abbot would pick up his phone and ring another abbot, asking if a monk might stay a few weeks in the latter's monastery, even for some months, to convalesce, etc. Such a monk would be a guest and his stability would remain unchanged, and that was what the Constitutions were interested in.
 41. Applications to transfer stability to another community might be deficient in crucial details. For concealed behind formal requests for transfer might have been details of individuals which were not relayed to the monastery which the individual applied to join.
 42. Two Fort Augustus monks were frequently named by the complainants, both Australian, Fathers Aidan Duggan (deceased) and MEV (subject to extradition proceedings).
 43. According to the Benedictine *Catalogus Monasteriorum* O.S.B. of 1965, Aidan Duggan was born in 1920, was professed at Fort Augustus in 1943 (aged 23), and ordained priest in 1950, and this entry continues to appear in the later *Catalogi* published every four years. His name, however, appears earlier in the 1950 *Catalogus*, as having been born in 1920, and professed in 1944 at the Australian Benedictine abbey of New Norcia (see evidence of 'Joseph' to the Inquiry), although according to the 1965 *Catalogus*, he is stated to have been professed at Fort Augustus a year earlier, in 1943. This might simply have been an editorial error, but if not, it indicates that he had already been professed in Australia and had then sought a transfer of stability to Fort Augustus. His name, furthermore, does not appear in the 1955 *Catalogus* at all, nor in *The Benedictine Almanac* of the same year as a monk of Fort Augustus. From 1956 until he returned to Fort Augustus, Aidan Duggan is listed as being at Carlekemp.
 44. I have not personally inspected any transfer documents for him in the Fort Augustus archives. But we now know that there was an early allegation of abuse levelled against Aidan Duggan even before he left Australia for Fort Augustus (see evidence of MDO, Des, to the Inquiry), and he might therefore have had a history there, known perhaps to his Australian Benedictine

superiors but not divulged to the then abbot of Fort Augustus who received his formal application to join the Community at Fort Augustus. I understand that the archived correspondence predating him applying to join Fort Augustus does not contain anything indicating he had been accused of abuse in Australia. This example illustrates how in the matter of the transfer of a monk the Constitutions might be followed to the letter but did not of themselves demand the inclusion of crucial personal details by way of reference accompanying the transfer application.

45. MEV [REDACTED] case is more straightforward. He was born in 1935, professed in 1956 (aged 21), and ordained priest in 1960. Although I have not personally inspected the surviving archival evidence, I understand it contains a letter from him dated 25 March 1954 in which he applied as a layman to join Fort Augustus, and did not transfer from another monastery. I do not know whether he knew Aidan Duggan, fifteen years his senior, before he joined Fort Augustus. Nor do I know why [REDACTED] Australians [REDACTED] CIPHER WITHDRAW came all the way from Australia to join Fort Augustus in the Scottish Highlands. We now have evidence that there was an early allegation of abuse levelled at MEV [REDACTED], but I have no details as to whether the allegation related to his time in Australia and before he entered the Community of Fort Augustus. If it did relate to Australia, then this is another example of how personal references relating to aspirants seeking to join Fort Augustus were inadequate through the withholding of crucial information. On the other hand, such information might have been known to the superior of Fort Augustus but remained confidential to him and was not placed on any record.
46. The regulations relating to the transfer of stability by monks from other monasteries continue to be found in the present Constitutions of 2018, published in 2019, with few changes (p. 81), although by this date Fort Augustus had been suppressed (2001). By the 1990s, however, a new phenomenon had appeared, the movement of monks from their own monastery to another on account of allegations of abuse made against them.
47. Before the Nolan report in 2001, there was a practice whereby monks accused of abuse were transferred from EBC monasteries which had schools attached or ran parishes. They were often sent temporarily to those EBC monasteries which had no schools by this time, and they were subject to restrictions agreed by the EBC superiors. After the publication of the Nolan report safeguarding measures developed, and any temporary movement occurred with the input of statutory authorities. During the evidence given by Abbot Richard Yeo to the Inquiry in 2017, he mentioned that he had allowed a monk, known as an alleged sexual abuser, to reside at Fort Augustus, around 1999, to swell the diminishing number of monks there and help with the clearing up before the monastery finally closed. Lady Smith asked for clarification about this, and Abbot Richard explained his decision was based on the fact that the school had closed and therefore there was no risk in the monk being there. Furthermore, the family of the young person abused did not wish to press charges. I have no idea whether any restrictions were placed on this monk during his time at Fort Augustus. However, the case against him was revived in 2012 and the monk was found guilty and received a custodial sentence. This provides a lesson in how great care must be taken in making decisions and moving monks who are alleged abusers to other monasteries, even in the short term.
48. This custom of moving alleged abusers seems to have been a policy resorted to even before the 1990s, as when Aidan Duggan had been quickly removed from Fort Augustus and its school in 1965, following what seems to have been an allegation of abuse against him by a pupil, and installed as chaplain to a convent of EBC nuns in the English Midlands (see

evidence by MDO and MGv). The nuns do not seem to have been informed as to the real reason behind the transfer.. However, by the 1990s, such moves were under more scrutiny as the Catholic Church and public opinion became increasingly aware of the phenomenon of child sexual abuse. Superiors, aware of their responsibilities to the survivors and to the alleged abusers, were faced with the difficulty as to where to place the alleged abuser. He might be sent for a limited time to a treatment centre like that at Brownhill in Gloucestershire, before dismissal proceedings were begun or a longer term residence was found. Thus monasteries without schools continued to be a option. In that setting they should have had little or no contact with children. We have heard that at Fort Augustus and Carlekemp young children were forced to live alongside their abusers. By removing the abuser that could be prevented. In addition the abbot was responsible for ensuring that the abuser's role was restricted so as to remove him from contact and involvement with children. He would be subject to restriction through him living in a community and joining in its activities rather than being put into some sort of solitary confinement, and, more importantly, such refuges were favoured by the probation service because they believed that there was less chance of an reoffending in such a location. The for his part was subject to agreed restrictions and a programme of counselling and perhaps treatment. His superior and his brethren continued to visit him often. This was the genesis of what later became known as the 'safeguarding plan'.

49. The overhaul of safeguarding policies after the various reports and establishment of national and Catholic safeguarding agencies after 2000 provoked major changes in the EBC's Constitutions and its practice. These impacted on movement of monks in a variety of ways. 'The Structures of Congregational Support' are designed to allow the Congregation and the President to help any of the autonomous monasteries in difficulties which apply to enter the Structures (2019 Constitutions, pp. 104-106). They allow for monks from other monasteries to be sent for a limited time to help the monastery experiencing difficulties, the necessary permissions having been given. The President is able to require for grave reasons a monk to reside in another monastery for up to four years, and a novice attached to a monastery in difficulties is allowed to do his novitiate wholly or partly in another monastery. These moves require that the necessary checks relating to safeguarding have been made before the transfers. These checks conform to the thorough EBC monitoring and referencing recommended in 'A handbook for Vocations Directors', (2019) which seeks to establish good practice in the EBC and which includes various forms of assessment, a DBS check, a listing in a national database of applicants to the religious life, and criteria covering psychological and psychosexual development.
50. There will continue to be movement of monks in the future, either by means of a transfer of stability or for a short-term residence in another monastery or another location, but their presence in such places will now be governed by means of security checks and the improved awareness among EBC monasteries of the importance of safeguarding by means of training courses.

Recruitment and training of individual monks, developments over the years

Recruitment

51. I state here what I believe took place historically at Fort Augustus Abbey in welcoming aspirants who wished to join the Community, since I have no archival documentation to hand. I

am presuming what was the custom at other EBC monasteries was generally also followed at Fort Augustus.

52. The EBC monasteries rarely advertised for recruits. They relied on their reputation and up until the 1970s there was a steady stream of recruits from their schools who moved from the sixth form into the novitiate. These young men had already begun conversations with some monks to that end whilst still at school. Fort Augustus was the only Benedictine house in Scotland until Pluscarden priory, a dependent house of Prinknash Abbey, Gloucestershire, was founded in 1948 near Inverness. As a Scottish abbey, Fort Augustus attracted Scottish recruits, but a number came also from northern England, particularly Lancashire. From the last decades of the 20th century, recruits were often older men. It looks as though Fort Augustus choir monks were generally recruited from professional Catholic families, lay brothers were manual labourers and the like. Besides Fort Augustus itself, its two dependent priories in Washington, D.C. and Portsmouth, Rhode Island, also needed to recruit for their respective communities. During the period they were dependent priories, they sent their novices for formation to Fort Augustus. Lay brothers, which were a feature at Fort Augustus, had a different and much briefer period of formation than the choir monks. The number of monks who were professed and persevered began to decline by the 1960s. Between 1962 and 1977, a period of fifteen years, there was only one profession.
53. The 1931 Constitutions provided directives in regard to recruitment. Having undergone a period of discernment and becoming more familiar with the Community, the aspirant would formally request entry into the novitiate. The Vocation Director, or some monk in a similar role, would then take out references for the candidate. These were usually from the candidate's employer, a friend, a medical report, and the priest of his local parish in order to ensure that he was a practising Catholic. These references should have been found in the Fort Augustus archives. If references were obtained, they have not been retained in the archive. The aspirant would then begin a period of postulancy, usually for a few months. After this, if he wished, he could apply to become a novice. This required the consent of the Abbot's Council and an examination by two senior monks regarding his origin, age, baptism, confirmation, character, reputation and knowledge. If he satisfied these two requirements, he would be clothed in the habit and his particulars recorded in the clothing register. The EBC had no role, formal or informal, in the recruitment of monks to an abbey.
54. The 1978 Constitutions, in addition to what was specified in the 1931 Constitutions and in line with canon law, demanded that the Novice Master be a priest, at least thirty five years old, and professed ten years. By the time that the 1986 Constitutions were issued, the new Code of Canon Law had been published (1983) and this contained a list of specific requirements required of anyone seeking to become a novice (canons 642-645). These remain in force in the recently published Constitutions of 2019.
55. A more rigorous policy in regard to recruitment, but one which sadly came after the suppression of Fort Augustus, was published as draft 2 in 2019 and entitled 'Test the spirits: A Handbook for Vocation Directors'. It emerged at a time when the EBC studies' programme was being overhauled and new guidelines issued, and also at the same time as safeguarding had become a principal concern in the EBC. The handbook detailed the roles and responsibilities of those involved in recruitment, the application and assessment process, the criteria for assessment, data protection and other legal considerations. Accompanying the handbook were reference forms for applicants to the monastic life, including those from parish priests, a

character reference, a lengthy 'application for monastic formation', an employer's reference, and a medical examination report.

56. The novitiate lasted two years during which the novice lived in separate accommodation from the rest of the Community and had limited contact with them. After the novitiate and after being passed by the conventual chapter for profession, the monk made temporary vows which lasted for three years, and then, in line with the same process, a monk made solemn profession which involved a life commitment. After the novitiate, the monk became a 'junior' and began his studies for the priesthood, two years of philosophy and four years of theology.

Training of monks

57. I speak here mainly about intellectual training. A human development course was not, as such, found as a discrete component in the Fort Augustus monastic curriculum, and the monastery had been suppressed before 'continuous formation' became a developed feature of EBC studies. However, the experience of life in the community was intended to help foster a degree of maturity in relation to human relationships at least among some of those who persevered. In regard to human development, it should be noted that a novice's progress is discussed three times in his novitiate year by the Abbot's Council (these events are known as 'perseverances'), and before his name is submitted to the conventual chapter for temporary and then solemn profession, individual members of the Community attend the Council to give the councillors their confidential opinion on the applicant.
58. The 1931 Constitutions, operating until 1969 when an experimental set of Constitutions was introduced, put great emphasis on the value of studies (pp. 26-27). As well as studying the humanities, mathematics, and natural science, junior monks were to spend two years on philosophy and four on theology. Both of which were to be taught according to the neo-scholastic system then fashionable which derived in turn from the teachings of St Thomas Aquinas. Unusually 'sacred eloquence' and Gregorian chant were taught in these theological courses, alongside scripture, church history, and canon law. The Inquiry may be interested to see that there were also classes in pastoral theology. In 1931, in addition to 'practical exercises', 'pastoral theology' consisted of courses in preaching, teaching the catechism to children and others, in hearing confessions, visiting the sick and assisting the dying. Monks might be sent away to study theology in another monastery, in Sant'Anselmo in Rome, or in a 'public Catholic university' provided they had completed their philosophy course.
59. The 1978 and 1986 Constitutions contain an abbreviated form of the 1931 description of studies (p.27 for 1978 Constitutions, p. 19 for 1986 Constitutions, 2007 impression). Of some importance, however, there is added to the 1986 (2007 ed.) Constitutions three paragraphs on 'Continuing Formation' as spiritual, theological and practical types of formation. This inclusion of 'Continuous Formation' was to feature, and be elaborated, in later editions of the Constitutions (e.g. 2007 Constitutions, pp. 76-77), and if it had been implemented at Fort Augustus, it would have been to the benefit of those monks attached to the school.
60. Current initiatives regarding training of monks began at the 2017 General Chapter when it was agreed there would be a biennial conference to encourage 'continuous education'. In July 2019, there was published a draft of a 34-page 'Formation in the English Benedictine Congregation, Ratio Institutions' which deals in detail with human, spiritual and pastoral formation in the various stages of the monastic life before it goes on to concentrate on a programme of philosophical and theological studies.

61. As far as possible, Fort Augustus attempted to provide from the 1930s an in-house philosophical and theological training for its junior monks. The Fort Augustus monks were sometimes joined by junior monks from Pluscarden Priory (later Pluscarden Abbey), near Inverness. More academic juniors were sent abroad to specialise in various subjects once they had covered the basic courses at Fort Augustus. The Benedictine college of Sant'Anselmo in Rome and some German abbeys and universities seem to have been the preferred choices. As numbers declined at Fort Augustus from the 1970s, there seems to have been difficulty providing separate professors for all the disciplines and some monks found themselves teaching more than one course. These in-house courses were supervised by the 'Magister Scholarum', an external Master of Studies elected by the EBC General Chapter, and not a monk of Fort Augustus, who monitored and advised on courses in the individual abbeys. In 1973 and 1974, I marked exam scripts on medieval history topics written by Fort Augustus junior monks.. The reports on these in-house examinations will be found in the Magister Scholarum's registers at Downside Abbey. As has been noted elsewhere, there never seems to have been any interest in sending monks away to study for professional teaching qualifications.
62. Despite the small size of the Community in the last years of its life, some of its members were intellectually able and I sense that the school's performance in public examinations was quite creditable.. I noted which universities and colleges some attended, which have good reputations. A number of monks joined the Community having already been awarded university degrees by universities. CIPER WITHDRAWN - DO NOT was responsible for a doctoral dissertation on the [REDACTED] before he became [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] Edinburgh. He published much and was [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] the principal Scottish Catholic [REDACTED] [REDACTED] On my two visits to the abbey in 1986 and 1997, I was impressed by the specialist holdings in the library, even if it was not well provisioned with modern theological works for junior monks. At the abbey's suppression the Cassidy library, which had been a separate collection of recusant books in the monastery library, was transferred to the National Library of Scotland.

Recruitment of lay staff at Fort Augustus

63. I'm afraid I can be little help in providing information on this topic. I have no knowledge of any lay staff employed by the abbey, although some have been mentioned to the Inquiry. Again, references should have been taken up for lay staff. The archive contains records in respect of some former lay staff for whom references were sought and obtained prior to their appointment.
64. If Fort Augustus had similar procedures regarding recruitment to those of other schools in this period, the headmaster would have advertised a post, drawn up a short-list, taken out references, discussed candidates with the deputy head and the head of department, and then interviewed the candidate. He would then offer the post to the successful candidate who, after thinking about the offer, might accept the post. The contents of a contract would have been discussed at the interview.

65. As the school closed in 1993, I think it is unlikely that safeguarding matters were referred to in a candidate's interview. The archive contains application forms but they do not cover any safeguarding matters.

Part 2: Present and Future

The Present and Future: The English Benedictine Congregation, 1999 to 2019

66. The English Benedictine Congregation (EBC) has had its own charitable trust since 1987 and the Congregation is currently made up of thirteen individual self-governing monasteries of monks and nuns. Three of these are in the USA. The English monasteries are each separate charitable trusts. The EBC can refer to the overall institution of which the individual monasteries are members, or it can refer to the Regimen which comprises the Abbot President's Council or cabinet of four members (the President and three elected abbots). These form the trustees of the EBC Trust. The Regimen has day-to-day oversight of the Congregation between the four-yearly General Chapters. The General Chapter is made up of superiors, delegates, and officials, and is the supreme legislative body of the EBC, on whose behalf the Regimen acts.
67. In regard to safeguarding, the EBC monasteries of monks and nuns in England fall under the jurisdiction of the safeguarding office in the diocese where each is found, except two monasteries which have their own safeguarding committees. Fort Augustus Abbey and its two schools no longer exist but the legacy of abuse attached to them continues to the present. The first part of this section of my statement will deal with this legacy and the second part will relate to safeguarding developments between 1999 and 2019 within the English Benedictine Congregation.

I. FORT AUGUSTUS: THE LEGACY OF ABUSE, 1999-2019

68. [CIPHER WITHDRAWN - DO I] with the consent of the conventual chapter of Fort Augustus, [REDACTED] closing the school at Fort Augustus in 1993. The disused buildings were turned into a heritage centre. In 1999, Abbot President Francis Rossiter was responsible for recommending the closure of the abbey of Fort Augustus after the failure of the heritage centre project. The St Benedict's Abbey Fort Augustus Trust', however, continued in existence until 2011. In 2011 the Holy See formally suppressed the abbey of Fort Augustus. [CIPHER WITHDRAWN] [CIPHER WITHDRAWN] the [REDACTED] died in 2018. In the English Benedictine Congregation, in 2001 Abbot Francis Rossiter was succeeded as President by Father Richard Yeo who was Abbot President from 2001 to 2017. He, in turn, was succeeded in 2017 by Abbot Christopher Jamison, the current Abbot President.

Allegations

69. As President, Abbot Richard became involved with the legacy of abuse left by the abbey. During his time as President it emerged that there had been other allegations of abuse. There seems, for instance, to have been a complaint made to Abbot Nicholas Holman in the 1970s about Father [MEV] [REDACTED] and the abbot had mentioned it to Father [CIPHER WITHDRAWN] then [REDACTED]. The abbot subsequently removed Father [MEV] [REDACTED] from all work in the school. According to Father [CIPHER WITHDRAWN] Father [MEV] [REDACTED] did not deny the allegations. He is now living in [REDACTED] Australia, and an extradition order has been

served on him. I do not know what investigation was undertaken at the time. The circumstances ought to have been recorded in the minutes of council for Fort Augustus.

70. In 2013, a BBC documentary entitled 'Sins of the Fathers' which incorporated footage from an earlier documentary I think of 1975, named seven Fort Augustus monks as abusers and claimed two monk headmasters had covered up abuse. Two of these monks by this time were living abroad, one in Canada and the other in Australia. Both had left the Benedictine Order and had been incardinated into dioceses in the countries where they were located. They remain there in 2019, but are subject to extradition requests so that they might return to Scotland to face criminal charges.
71. Letters of claims for compensation were received by the EBC Trust in 2013. The Trustees decided to seek agreements to settle these claims, using the residual funds of Fort Augustus, with the claimants after taking legal advice. These communications continue up until the present.

Visitations

72. The wording covering the purpose of an ordinary Visitation hardly changed in the various sets of Constitutions. A Visitation is carried out by the President or one of his assistants. The Community being visited may suggest the name of an assistant to help him, but the final decision is up to the President. The EBC Constitutions consistently give the purpose of a Visitation as follows: the preservation, strengthening and renewal of the Religious Life, including the Laws of the Church and our Constitutions. The Visitor shall therefore make careful enquiry into the spiritual and temporal state of the monastery (2019 Constitutions, p.103). All the monks of the Community are interviewed by the President and his assistant, about its life in general, including its financial state. The Visitors do not interview more widely and in particular they do not interview children at a school attached to an abbey. The Visitation lasts as long as the time the interviews and reporting back takes. Reports on what has been heard and studied are then prepared by the President for the Abbot, the Council, and the Community. The aim originally was that the Visitation would not take too long so that it did not interfere too much with the life of the abbey. At the time of the first allegations of abuse at Fort Augustus, the only way the English Benedictine Congregation might have exercised responsibility in relation to these was through an (extraordinary) Visitation. The last Visitation to take place at Fort Augustus when the school was still in existence was in 1990. The final Visitation of the abbey occurred in 1998, after the school had closed, and its main purpose was to discuss the closure of the abbey. No evidence of abuse was recorded in the visitation reports of either of these Visitations and there is no evidence of allegations of abuse in the surviving earlier visitation records.
73. As to archival evidence which might have helped to provide evidence from Visitations of abuse allegations, Columba House, Edinburgh, which had housed the Fort Augustus archive since the suppression of the abbey, closed in 2013. A decision was then taken by the Regimen to transfer the archive to Downside Abbey, Somerset. Because the abuse issue was beginning to feature in the media and in public opinion at this time, the Regimen decided that the archive be divided between the historic collections which remained at Downside and the 20th century material, especially school files which might contain details of abuse. The latter was moved to the English Benedictine Congregation's then solicitors in Edinburgh. Eventually, the bulk of this Edinburgh material was digitised by the Congregation's current solicitors in Edinburgh to facilitate research.

74. In 2013, a BBC TV documentary 'Sins of the Fathers' about alleged abuse at Fort Augustus, was broadcast and included an interview with Abbot President Richard Yeo. The programme produced a number of new allegations. As before, these were dealt with by the Abbot President acting on legal advice. The Regimen agreed to explore the possibility of paying compensation to those past pupils of Fort Augustus School who were believed to have been abused. The Abbot President felt at this point that there was no reason not to believe that abuse had taken place, given the evidence available. However, there were delays in offering to pay compensation because of a police investigation, the possibility of extradition orders being issued on some alleged abusers living outside the UK and the possibility of criminal proceedings.

Claims against Fort Augustus Abbey

75. All the English Benedictine monasteries in England are independent charitable trusts and the English Benedictine Congregation is also a constituted charitable trust. On 30 May 2010, the Trustees of St Benedict's Abbey, Fort Augustus and the English Benedictine Congregation Trustees entered into a deed of gift. The Trustees of the St Benedict's Fort Augustus Trust, which had continued after the suppression of that monastery in 2000, decided to transfer the Trust's residual funds to the English Benedictine Congregation Trust, and to wind itself up. Thus a cash fund and property were transferred. On 31 May 2018, the assets of the Fort Augustus fund were valued at £1,292,589.
76. In the summer of 2017, Abbot Richard Yeo was succeeded by Abbot Christopher Jamison as Abbot President, whom I represent at the Inquiry. Abbot Christopher dealt with the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England. Having assumed office he himself reviewed the evidence before each inquiry. He was clear in his view that abuse had taken place and that the English Benedictine Congregation needed to reflect on how it had failed to discover the abuse in the first place. Abbot Christopher accepted legal advice that the English Benedictine Congregation had no legal liability for abuse at Fort Augustus. However he decided it bore moral responsibility for that abuse since Fort Augustus was a member of the Congregation, the Congregation had failed to discover that abuse was occurring and it now acted as steward of the residual resources of the Fort Augustus Trust. He believed the possibility of financial compensation should be explored. He insisted that the English Benedictine Congregation needed to give a clear and honest apology to survivors, and hoped that all the EBC monasteries would join him in condemning the evil of abuse perpetrated by Fort Augustus monks.
77. Meanwhile, the EBC considered whether the residual funds of the Fort Augustus Trust could be used to meet any claims by survivors from either school. Having sought advice from the Charity Commission the Congregation concluded there was such a basis and thereafter has sought to meet claims made by former pupils. The Congregation has also agreed that senior members of the Congregation should be prepared to meet survivors, and to offer them a sincere apology for what had happened. The EBC did not, and do not, wish to subject claimants to court proceedings during which they might experience considerable distress. As I said at the start of my statement, that abuse was perpetrated at Fort Augustus and Carlekemp schools is not doubted.
78. This task of providing compensation for the effects of abuse was begun with the aid of specialist lawyers in England, and continues. The English Benedictine Congregation Trust believes it has no legal remit or authority to accept liability on behalf of the former St Benedict's Fort Augustus Trust. However, if such abuse had been uncovered at the various Visitations of the abbey in the past, or had otherwise come to the attention of the

Congregation, then the Abbot Presidents who conducted would have addressed the allegations of abuse and would have thus informed the abbot and other members of the St Benedict's Fort Augustus Trust, then operating, to deal urgently with the matter. It would then have been the responsibility of the abbot to care for the child who had suffered abuse and deal with the abuser. With hindsight the Congregation ought to have had responsibility and authority to take more direct action to safeguard children in the care of the abbey once abuse had been identified.

79. The acceptance of moral responsibility for abuse meant that the Congregation was satisfied that there was a basis for the payment of compensation to those who suffered abuse at Fort Augustus. By September 2019, a total of 12 complaints of physical or sexual abuse at Fort Augustus had been received by the English Benedictine Congregation Trust. These are being presently investigated and 10 have now been settled. There have been no further claims since the commencement of the case study.

The present and future: the English Benedictine Congregation, 1999-2019

80. During these years, the English Benedictine Congregation became much more actively involved in safeguarding issues, even though Fort Augustus itself no longer existed. Since 2000, the Abbot President became more involved in providing an independent oversight of the monasteries within the Congregation.
81. Before the publication in England of the Nolan Report of 2001, 'A Framework for Action', and the Cumberlege Commission Report of 2007, 'Safeguarding with Confidence – keeping Children and Vulnerable Adults Safe in the Catholic Church', the English Benedictine monasteries would have reported their responses to any allegations of child sexual abuse by monks and lay staff to the bodies and agencies identified in the Children Act 1989. The Congregation embraced the advice on safeguarding for England and Wales found in the 2001 Nolan Report. The same year that the Nolan Report was published, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome required religious superiors to report to it any clerics against whom there is 'at least probable knowledge' that they had committed sexual abuse of minors.
82. The Nolan report was followed in 2007 by the Cumberlege Commission Report in 2007. Abbot President Richard Yeo was a member of the Cumberlege Commission. As a result, he became aware of how important it was for the monasteries to develop a culture of safeguarding, and the monasteries themselves began to establish safeguarding policies and appoint their own safeguarding officers. Most of the monasteries in England eventually decided to adopt the safeguarding policies of the local diocese in which they were located. The Cumberlege Report recommended the setting up of the national Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS). The EBC Trust Safeguarding Policy was approved in July 2019 and covers those acting on behalf of the EBC Trust. A copy is appended to this statement.
83. Following these two reports, the EBC's General Chapter of 2009 issued a Definition which required the monasteries to conform to national safeguarding standards, and the 2013 General Chapter drew up safeguarding rules, one of which gave the Abbot President a supervisory role in regard to safeguarding. From this time, safeguarding audits were commissioned from an external professional person by the Abbot President in advance of the Visitation of each monastery.
84. Meanwhile, the EBC took seriously the advice given in the Carlile Report in 2011 on St Benedict's Abbey, Ealing which recommended that a monastic school should be clearly separated from the monastery adjoining it, especially in regard to its governance. All the

monasteries with schools have now been legally separated from the monasteries and are governed as independent charitable trusts with their trustees independent of the monasteries. Whilst the monasteries follow their own safeguarding policies and work with Praesidium (see below), the Benedictine schools are subject to safeguarding inspections by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate and the local authority designated officer (LADO). It is worth noting that the decrees of a General Chapter are discussed and voted upon by all the superiors of the monasteries, who are primarily responsible for safeguarding in their own monasteries, and by delegates of each monastery. However a constitution passed at the 2017 General Chapter allowed the Abbot President to make an act of compliance, in regard to safeguarding through an Act of Visitation. This means that the Abbot President may require a monastery to comply with approved safeguarding policies.

85. Since 2017, the monasteries have been visited by members of Praesidium, an independent US agency which advises and audits institutions on safeguarding matters, and which drafts a safeguarding report, with recommendations, for the Abbot President in advance of each quadrennial Visitation. Praesidium commissioned preventative training in May 2019 for superiors and safeguarding leads in the monasteries. The three most important topics discussed were prevention of abuse, responding to complaints of abuse, and supervision. In addition to checks and recommendations by Praesidium, one monastery commissioned an audit in early 2018 from the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE). Meanwhile, individuals have been encouraged to attend safeguarding courses and house customs have been revised to include material on safeguarding. House customs are rules drawn up by a community in regard to its daily life. They have no legal status and can be easily changed by community consent.
86. I am dependent for much of my summary information in what follows on the various recent statements on the EBC submitted to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England and especially on the closing statement to that Inquiry, dated 9 January 2019.
87. Those submissions concentrated on three main areas in relation to safeguarding: firstly, 'Responsiveness' (meeting survivors to give support and discuss redress, and the management of compensation claims), Secondly, 'Accountability' (the publication of independent audits of individual monasteries compiled by Praesidium). Thirdly, 'Transparency' (the centralised keeping of safeguarding plans of individuals by the Abbot President who also holds a central record of allegations of monks accused of child sexual abuse).
88. Over recent years we have sought to make improvements to our approach to human formation amongst the brothers. In this context by human formation I mean a lifelong commitment to integrity, personal growth and the development of a well-rounded character. As part of the improvements in the formation of individuals seeking to join the English Benedictine communities, better procedures for the admission of applicants to the monastic life through the creation of comprehensive application forms and a new curriculum were published in February 2019. To assist formation among individuals who are already members of the various communities, the Continuing Formation Commission was established in 2017 and is currently focussing on how human formation might apply across a monk's lifetime. The 2018 Conference entitled 'Taking Responsibility for my Monastery' explored leadership and how communities might change their culture. The conference included discussion on the importance of safeguarding. In his closing statement, Abbot President Christopher Jamison made the point that it is important that the right structures are created in the monasteries to drive important cultural change.

89. While the 6th century Rule of St Benedict remains the norm for Benedictine monks, canon law and Constitutions are today regularly updated to support safeguarding developments. It is not now possible for a monk who has been convicted of child sexual abuse to remain in his monastery. If he is a priest and receives a custodial sentence then he is to be dismissed from the clerical state (the priesthood). This is the procedure followed by the Church in England and Wales. For monks who have not been convicted of a crime, but where there are still concerns, the current practice is to produce safeguarding plans drawn up by safeguarding authorities monitoring safeguarding issues in individual communities. One relevant authority would be the safeguarding office of the diocese in which the EBC community is located. Such an authority would recommend such a plan to an abbot, to the community and the safeguarding officer

Lessons for the Future

90. The school at Fort Augustus eventually closed in 1993 and the abbey in 1999. Both institutions, as we have heard, were in a critical state before their closure. In any case, I think the other English Benedictine monasteries reacted too slowly to the need for improved safeguarding procedures. The IICSA reports and statements on three of the abbeys in England bear this out. It is likely that, had it survived, Fort Augustus would have been subjected to the same criticisms.. The older Constitutions to which Fort Augustus adhered before its suppression did not instruct monks in the importance of safeguarding the young nor in the value of seeking extra-mural help and advice from professional bodies outside. That said, much of the behaviour that the Inquiry has heard of ought not to have required any specific instruction for anyone to appreciate that it was abhorrent. Although we now have better structures in place, there is still room for us to develop and strengthen our safeguarding procedures. The introduction of Praesidium reports at Visitations is a positive move. However this is still a report commissioned by and for the EBC. I believe we ought to seek out a wholly independent form of monitoring to provide greater scrutiny and transparency of our safeguarding for the children in our care.

Conclusion

91. I want to conclude by repeating the sincere apology I offered at the outset to the children who were abused and to their families. The EBC accepts its moral responsibility for the abuse they sustained and in particular its failure to have oversight, through Visitations or otherwise, that could have identified abuse and prevented it continuing. The EBC is committed to paying close attention to the findings of the Inquiry and seeking to ensure the proper safeguarding of children now and in the future.
92. 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 accurate and true.

Signed _____



Dated _____

16 September 2019

Appendix to 'The Past'

The Constitutions of the English Benedictine Congregation, 1931

19 (9) A consultative vote of the Councillors is to be sought in the appointment of the Head Master of the lay school annexed to the monastery.

242 The Visitor in his Visitation shall aim at this one object, that the laws of the Church and our rules be observed faithfully by all. The President shall...make diligent enquiry according to the canons and Constitutions into the state of the monastery both spiritual and temporal, especially in regard to community life, the care of the sick and the studies. If he judge that there is any manner that requires observance or amendment, he shall endeavour discreetly to restore it to a better condition. If the monks need correction, let him get it done by their Abbot.

243 The Visitor ought not to delay in the monasteries, but should perform his Visitation not only diligently but quickly.

245 The President shall not make a local Visitation of Dependent Houses...unless he judge it necessary. In (such a) Visitation the President shall diligently examine the state of the Dependent House and consider the abbot's regulations for its discipline, just as he does in the case of the monastery itself.

(Note these Constitutions were in use at the period when abuse allegedly took place. Here is found a single mention of the school, The Constitutions indicate the delegation of authority for correction by the Visitor to the abbot, who should also conduct a Visitation of a dependent house, such as Carlekemp)

The Constitutions of the English Benedictine Congregation, 1977

87 The work of education traditional in the Order and especially characteristic of our Congregation admirably fulfils the law of work, the call of the apostolate and the furtherance of community life. Thus our schools form an integral part of the family life and work of the monasteries. While aiming at the highest educational standards demanded by modern life (*Gaudium et Spes*, 45), the monastic school makes its full contribution to the Church and secular society only when seen primarily as a school of the Lord's service by all who teach, learn and work therein.

88. The Abbot, having consulted his Council, shall appoint the Headmaster of any school attached to the monastery. Normally he should appoint a member of his community who hold his office under the Abbot in accordance with the Constitutions and is therefore responsible directly to the Abbot and Council for the management of the school. The Headmaster shall maintain the closest contract with the Abbot and always inform him in good time of any matter spiritual or temporal which affects the life or future of the school or monastery.

89. The Abbot may, with the consent of the Conventual Chapter in accordance with the needs of the School or the policy of the Monastery, appoint a layman as Headmaster on such terms and conditions as he may in consultation with his Council think fit.

263. The chief duty laid upon the President is that of visiting the monasteries of the Congregation, since the spiritual and temporal well-being of each monastery and of the Congregation itself may depend in large measure on the prudent and charitable manner in which this duty is discharged.

268. The purpose of the Visitation is the preservation, strengthening and renewal of the Religious Life including the observance of the laws of the Church and our Constitutions. The President therefore shall make careful enquiry into the spiritual and temporal state of the monastery especially in regard to its community life, and the observance of the vows. ...If he judges that there is any matter in which better observance or amendment is required he shall endeavour discreetly to restore it to a better condition, either directly or through the Abbot.

271. It is the duty of the Abbot to make a canonical Visitation of all dependent Priors...In his Visitation of the monastery the President shall diligently examine the state of Dependent Priors and Houses and consider the Abbot's regulations for their life.

(Note: These Constitutions were in use from 1977 until 2018, with some revisions and enlargements between 1981 and 1986, mostly to accommodate the new Code of Canon Law of 1983. For instance, the school at Carlekemp was closed in 1977 and that of Fort Augustus in 1993)

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45. It is the responsibility of the Abbot to ensure the compliance of the monastery, together with all pastoral work undertaken or sponsored by it, with approved policies with regard to safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, as this is required by the competent ecclesiastical and civil authorities.

46. The Abbot President may, after consulting his Council, at any time enquire into the compliance of the monastery with approved policies with regard to safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, as this is required by the competent ecclesiastical and civil authorities. He shall always do so during the course of an ordinary Visitation.

47. The Abbot President may, following an enquiry described in the paragraph above, summon an Extraordinary Visitation as described in Declaration 167, which may by Acts of Visitation require compliance with approved policies with regard to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, as this is required by the competent ecclesiastical and civil authorities.