

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MNH

Support person present: No

1. My name is MNH My date of birth is 1948. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in either the Eastern or Western General in Edinburgh as MNH
MNH I can't remember which one was which.
3. My mum's name was and she married who was my father. I lived with my parents along with my younger brother He was four years and eight months younger than me. We used to live in Edinburgh. I went to Gilmerton primary school.
4. My dad was a bus conductor and driver. He used to work with the Scottish Motor Traction, SMT. My mum was a conductor until she got married and then she used to clean doctors houses. She had about three or four houses to clean but she used to do it from the time we went to school and before we come home. She was a hard worker.
5. My gran was a fishmonger, my mum's mum, and she had a shop in the Canongate. Her name was On holidays I used to go and stay with her. We used to get up and go down to the fish markets at Portobello. There was a big café over the road from the actual entrance to the fish markets and it had a big window. She used to sit me at this table and I had a big bacon buttie and a massive mug of tea

and I had to sit there. Jimmy the truck driver used to give her a lift back to the shop so I would be in the middle. I used to love it. I would have been six or seven years old.

6. When father died mum was struggling. She got a tenement house in Craigmillar. Uncle [REDACTED] was on the second floor. We got the top one and apparently the person that was on the top one swapped houses with mum. The house at Gilmerton was too expensive. I then went to school in Craigmillar.
7. My father passed away when I was eight. He had cancer. While he was being cremated I went into an orphanage for two weeks. It was in Edinburgh. It was on a busy road but I couldn't tell you the name. I went there myself, [REDACTED] would have been too young, he was only three. He would have stayed with mum.
8. I remember being at home when my dad was ill. I remember him quite well. He was thirty four when he passed away. It was the best thing he ever did. I couldn't stand my father. I hated him. He always wanted sons. He was absolutely chuffed when [REDACTED] was born. Having a little brother didn't mean anything to me until I saw this little bundle and I used to sit and feed him.

Life in care - Scotland

Unknown orphanage - Edinburgh

General

9. The orphanage was mixed, with boys and girls. I don't remember the matron's name who was in charge but she was a cow. She would have been ages with my grandmother so she would have been in her late forties, maybe fifties. I was in the orphanage just until mum got the arrangements and funeral done because kids weren't allowed to go to funerals.

10. The orphanage was a two or three storey place. I am not sure where we slept, it must have been dormitories because it was boys and girls so I presume that it would have been dormitories. I am not sure how many kids were there.
11. I don't remember much about the routine at the orphanage. It must have been the nurses that got us up because being eight we wouldn't have been able to do it ourselves. There was always two on day duty.
12. We dressed ourselves. We would go to the toilet by ourselves but be supervised. We would have gone for breakfast then off to school. I can't remember much about breakfast really. I wasn't in there long enough.

Schooling

13. I don't know which school I went to while I was there. It would have been the one associated with that area. I went to Gilmerton primary school first. We started school at five so I would have been in primary three by then. So I went to that school for a couple of weeks and then back to Gilmerton and then over to Craigmillar.
14. I remember there were two boys that came in. They had lost their dad and I think the mother was either in hospital having a baby or she was sick and they wet the bed. The matron made these kids wear nappies on the outside of their pants. She would make them walk down the street and on the other side of the street was a school. I still remember that. Those kids had just lost their father and they didn't know if their mother was going to be ok. The oldest boy would have been about my age and the younger one would have been five or six.
15. The matron was moved after that. She was there one day and gone the next. I couldn't have wet the bed then because she would have put a nappy on me.
16. You had to cross a bridge to go to the school. The matron told the staff that were taking the boys to school not to think about taking the nappies off because she would be watching. She told them she could see right down to the school. They couldn't do anything about it.

17. I think they must have put a report in about her because as soon as that was finished the matron was gone. That was beyond cruel. It happened the once when I was there but after that she was gone.
18. I was only there a couple of weeks and that happened in the first week. In the second week a new matron had taken over because it was her that said goodbye to me when Uncle [REDACTED] came to pick me up. She was a lot younger, she was gorgeous. To me the other one was too starchy. She didn't seem to have any kindness towards the kids whereas the other one did. I didn't know her name. She had blond hair. I would say that she wouldn't even have been in her thirties. I only ever saw her the once when I was leaving.

Returning home from unknown orphanage

19. When my uncle [REDACTED] came to get me I was like, "Am I going back to see mum am I?".
20. Life was fine. It was my mum, [REDACTED] and I. Gran used to come out every now and then when her shop was closed. So she would have Saturday afternoon, Sunday and the Wednesday afternoon off and just show up.
21. We wouldn't have stayed at Gilmerton too long after my dad died because mum would have found it too hard. Shortly after we moved over to Craigmillar. I think the only reason she moved to Craigmillar was that Uncle [REDACTED] said she had family there.
22. We were happy there. [REDACTED] and I used to play a lot together, he used to want to play with my dolls and I would let him. He liked pushing my pram around. During the school holidays I would go to gran's. [REDACTED] went into nursery when mum was working. We went to Butlins twice. Gran paid for the holidays for her, mum and us two.

Migration

Selection/information

23. After my father died my mother wrote a letter when she wanted to emigrate saying that she had a happy marriage. I told her that was a lie but she said they don't need to know.
24. My gran kept on at my mum to emigrate because she wanted to herself. My auntie [REDACTED] had emigrated to Zimbabwe around 1955-56 and gran wanted mum to emigrate so we could all be a happy family again. My auntie's name was [REDACTED]. She got called [REDACTED] because my gran was [REDACTED] as well. My gran never spoke to me for a fortnight when my first daughter was born because I had called her [REDACTED]. She wanted her to be [REDACTED]. I told her I don't want another [REDACTED] in the family, there are too many of them already.
25. Gran wanted to go to Zimbabwe, that was the main idea. She would have her two girls to look after her. But mum and auntie [REDACTED] never got on. So mum tried for Canada because it was closer to Scotland, but the Canadian government wouldn't take widows. They were worried that she would be on their welfare system. So she tried for Australia.
26. I told her I didn't want to live in Australia, I didn't know where it was. I told her that her and [REDACTED] can go, I would stay here with gran. She said no and put in for it. I don't really think that she thought she would be able to go, but she got the all clear.
27. When my mum told us we were going to Australia we had to have all the checks done, physical and dental. We were given an all clear in the checks. My mum didn't really tell us exactly where we were going. She said that we were going on a trip and we would be going on a boat and we would be fine. She told me to look after [REDACTED].

Leaving Scotland

28. When my mum was accepted for immigration [REDACTED] and I went to Knockhall House, in Kent. Somewhere near Tunbridge Wells. There were nineteen kids there. One kid was Danish. I was eleven when we went to Kent. We must have gone down in the [REDACTED] holidays because we never went to school in Kent. I went into year six in primary school when I came to Australia. I always thought we were in Kent for a month but apparently it was about two to three weeks.
29. I was aware then that we were going to Australia because we had to stand on our heads on the day we were leaving. Everybody had to do a handstand against the wall because we were going down under. One of the nurses told us. I had no idea where Australia was. All I knew is that we were going on a boat.
30. We went to London on the train. Mum and Auntie [REDACTED] must have taken us to Knockhall House. It would have been by train or bus because we had to come out of London and go to Kent. Either that or somebody must have come and picked us up and taken us down there. It was great. It was a big place, we were on an estate. You had miles and miles of places you could play and nowhere near the main road.
31. Mum bought us two new suitcases. I think she was given a list of what we were to take. There were nineteen kids in our party that came out and there was only [REDACTED] and I that got off in Western Australia. All the rest went over to the eastern states.
32. There were four adults in charge of us. Three women and a man. It was good on the boat. I don't know who the people were that accompanied us. They must have had something to do with the welfare because I don't think that they would let anybody take nineteen kids on such a journey. We left on the [REDACTED] 1959 and we got here on the [REDACTED]
33. There were four of us to a cabin. [REDACTED] and I were on one side and there were two girls on the other. [REDACTED] was only six so they kept him with me. One of the crew used to come around with cups of tea. We were right at the front of the ship. We could see down to the crew's quarters. The kids used to look down on what they

were doing and the crew would give us a wave and we would wave back. There was one man, he must have had kids, because when he had given out all the cups of tea he had this big thing of milk and he used to pass round the milk. He wasn't supposed to give it to us and told us not to tell anyone. That was every morning when he was on.

34. We got off the ship at Naples and taken up to see the ruins of Pompeii. We then went over to Columbo and taken up to a tea plantation. I always remember the ladies in their saris with baskets on their back. They were all walking and picking. It was a huge place, with lots of tea trees. At all the ports we called into we were taken on an excursion.
35. The food on the ship was yummy. We used to get porridge, toast and then whatever was going. Sandwiches at lunchtime and a main meal at night time. They put us to bed at half past seven. Too early for an eleven year old. Every night half past seven.
36. The journey took three weeks and four days. I used to love reading. One of the bunks had a light switch. So I got stuck in bed at half past seven and I read. One night I could hear this woman coming down so I switched the light off and I put the book under my pillow. She came in, walked over and told me that everybody was going to go up on deck to see Gibraltar light up when we went through the Straits of Gibraltar but because I had been reading when I shouldn't have been I wasn't allowed to go up. I didn't care. There was a porthole and I opened the window and saw it. Everybody was away so there was nobody there to tell her what I had done. I wasn't used to going to bed at seven thirty.

Life in care – Australia

Fairbridge Farm school, Pinjara, Western Australia

General

37. We arrived in Fremantle and we were sitting down having breakfast when this great big six foot six inch bloke came in. He looked at our table and said he had come to

pick up [REDACTED] He took us off the ship and showed us all around Perth. He got us lunch. He was the principal of Fairbridge. His name was MIP [REDACTED] MIP He was fine. He picked us up in his car and [REDACTED] fell asleep on his leg as he drove us to Fairbridge. I was going to move [REDACTED] but MIP [REDACTED] told me to leave him, that it was fine. The journey took about an hour and a half.

First day at institution

38. Fairbridge was very big. You got to the Fairbridge sign post and then it was two more kilometres to the gate. The Fairbridge estate was 3,300 acres and the actual village was 80 acres. So it was big. It had eight boys cottages and four girls cottages. The boys cottages were single storey and the girls were double storey, except one called Hastings. The girls cottages were all on the bituman road and there was Wolfe, Shakespeare, Clive and Hastings. Belfast was the dining room. There could be up to twelve girls in the cottage. The youngest one would probably be about four to five years old up to the age of fifteen. You left at fifteen.
39. When we first arrived MIP [REDACTED] showed me to my cottage. The girls cottages were at the front and the boys cottages went up towards the dairy. [REDACTED] was in Nelson, which was down a bit further. The first time I went to put my shoes on I got told that you don't wear shoes. It was the cottage mum that told me this. Her name was MZB [REDACTED] MZB I didn't like her at all. She had a daughter ages with me or a bit older in the cottage. I think MZB [REDACTED] might have been in her late thirties to early forties. I remember her very well. She was tall and skinny. She looked like she had swallowed a lemon. She always walked around with that look. She could be a bitch.
40. MIP [REDACTED] showed us to our cottage but MZB [REDACTED] showed us around. I had to call her auntie. She was no relation whatsoever. It would have been a lot better if they made you call her MZB [REDACTED] You would know where you stood. But to call somebody you didn't know auntie was just stupid.
41. [REDACTED] and I were separated. I could see him at five o'clock if he was playing in the park. We weren't allowed in the boys cottages and vice versa. They broke up that many brothers and sisters it was incredible how they got away with it. [REDACTED] felt

abandoned. When I first got there I went to go down to see [REDACTED] and I was told that I wasn't allowed.

42. The first cottage I was in was Wolffe. All the cottages were named after famous people. We had Wolffe, Shakespeare, Warren Hasting, Clive, Belfast, Nelson, Glasgow and Hudson was another one.
43. I went from Wolffe to Shakespeare, where the cottage mother was Miss Strathearn. She was gorgeous, she was lovely. She always had her hair in buns. She was a little bit shorter than me, a little bit chunky but she was really nice. She would have been in her fifties. I was then moved to Clive.
44. I think Miss Strathearn left just before I moved into Clive. If you were in charge of kids from the age of four or five up to fifteen, seven days a week for three months before you even got a break, that is a hell of a lot of responsibility to put on any cottage mother.
45. When you move from cottage to cottage you never really settled because you never knew when you were going to be moved again. Some of the kids had been there since they were four and that is all they knew.
46. Mr Brain was the deputy principal. MIP [REDACTED] got quite sick. He had very bad back problems, he had to wear a brace. It was a huge thing. He left Fairbridge and Mr Brain became principal. MIP [REDACTED] died quite young, after he left Fairbridge. His wife was a nurse. [REDACTED] was gorgeous. She went on to study to be a doctor and she was a doctor up at the King Edward Hospital.
47. Mr Brain was the principal when I left. MIP [REDACTED] had been there during my first two and a half to three years. There was also MZC [REDACTED] who was in charge of discipline, and MRU [REDACTED] MZC [REDACTED] always favoured the girls.

Mornings

48. Every day we had to get up and make our bed. The girl who was on kitchen duty had to get up half an hour earlier than the others. She had to put the porridge on, cut the bread, make the toast, skim the cream off the milk and whip it up. Then two girls did the cleaning up. One had to wash and one had to dry. We had to sweep the floors and then you had to get down on your hands and knees and scrub the lino and dry it. That was before you went to primary school. When I went to high school you had to catch the Fairbridge bus that took us to Pinjarra. So all of that had to be done before you went to school.
49. We had to get ourselves up. The cottage mother would stand at the bottom of the stairs and tell us it was time to get up. So we would get up or she would come up and waken the girl on kitchen duties first. You had to get dressed and then start breakfast and she would come in sometimes and help. You had to set the table, it was a long table with 2 benches, no backs on them. She would always tell me to sit up straight.

Mealtimes

50. For breakfast we had porridge and toast. You could have vegemite or jam with it. We used to have jam and cream because you did the cream. There was also honey if you wanted it and peanut butter.
51. I went for lunch in the dining hall. It was a short walk from the school. They used to do good meals. Depending on the cook, they used to be really good meals. We used to get sandwiches for lunch, a drink, toilet then back to school. We had hot meals at night time.
52. Dinner was at five o'clock. We used to have a main meal and sweets. We had one cook that didn't know how to do spinach and it was horrible. I can still taste it. He used to cook it and leave it in water so it was just stuff floating. He never used to wash it. You used to taste the grit. Every time we had that we always had custard with jam in the middle. If you didn't eat your dinner you didn't get the sweet and I

couldn't stand that stuff. It used to make me heave, so I never got my custard and jam.

53. Every other meal was fine. You used to get meat and veggies and chicken and veggies. The actual food that they gave us was good because it was self-supporting. They had a great veggie garden. It was huge. There was a little Italian man that used to do the veggies. He used to always grow rhubarb at the edge of the garden and the kids would go past and pinch a bit and chew on it. I don't remember his name. The food was good and there was always enough. They were never stingy with the food ever.
54. All the kids were in the dining room so there were twelve cottage mothers, the principal, the deputy principal, MZC and MRU all there watching everything that was going on. You were allowed to talk but we had to say grace first. Then everybody sat down and ate. We had our own tables.

Bedtime

55. Everybody slept upstairs. The cottage mother had a room off the laundry. It had a sitting room, bathroom, toilet and bedroom. It was like a little house. Her daughter slept in her room. I can't remember her name.
56. They started putting us to bed at half past seven, eight, half past eight and nine o'clock. The older ones that were fifteen could go to bed at nine thirty but no later. When I was eleven I was going to bed at eight o'clock.
57. I had problems with bedwetting. I think it started after my dad died but I can't see how it did. There is a place I used to go to in Edinburgh when I was about ten and it was to see somebody about my bedwetting. I can't remember her name but it was in an old house. It was a mental facility of some sort. I was a day patient. I think they were trying to find out why I started wetting the bed and if it was to do with my dad. I went once a week until we were leaving for Australia.

58. The bedwetting continued when I got to Fairbridge. It wasn't dealt with well. As I said it depended on the cottage mother. I would actually dream I was getting up and going downstairs to the toilet and that I'd made it but I'd wet the bed. One girl called me a piss head and tried to get me to go in a cold bath. I wouldn't go in and the cottage mother made her go in for a little while. The girls name was [REDACTED] She was older than me, about fourteen I think. The cottage mother was Miss Strathearn. I was in Shakespeare cottage by then.
59. In Wolffe, [REDACTED] MZB made you strip the bed and take the sheets down, wash them and hang them on the line. I'm not sure if she did it or I did it. She would say, "Oh you have wet the bed again", in front of the other girls. I didn't stop wetting the bed until I was about fifteen, about six months before I left Fairbridge.

Washing and bathing/Hygiene

60. You only had privacy if you went to the toilet. When you had a bath they had a copper in the laundry. You had to fill the copper up, light the fire and then you would put so many buckets of boiling water into the bath and fill it up. You would fill the copper up again before you got into the bath. Then the next two got in and you got out and then the next one filled it up a bit more. So we had to share the water.
61. The bathroom was off the laundry. The bath was in the corner as you come in the door. I think there were two toilets, I can't remember. We had a bath every day. Youngest ones first and then the older ones. You had to have a shower if you had your monthlies.
62. It wasn't supervised, you just got told to go and shower or bathe. The oldest had to put the water in from the copper into the bath. Then they came into the twentieth century and actually got a woodchip heater. So you just had to go in and turn the taps on to get hot water. The bigger boys used to come up and chop the wood to put in the woodchip heater. We weren't allowed to use the axes. The laundry was quite big because you had the copper, two troughs, rails to hang your coats up and then you had the stairs taking you up to the dormitory.

Leisure time

63. If we had time to ourselves we could go outside and play. We could go down to the sports area. That was more or less our time. We had games but it depended on the cottage mother. You could play hop scotch and stuff like that.
64. We got to read. There were seats that were also lockers and they had books and games, and you could pick what you wanted to do. You could just sit and do nothing or listen to the radio.
65. I used to feel sorry for the cottage mothers because they used to work something like thirteen weeks before they got a week or fortnight off. They were handling twelve kids from the age of five up to fifteen, seven days a week. That is a long time and if they are not your family it is hard. It must have been damn hard on them.

Trips and holidays

66. We used to go to Mandurah at Christmas time. They had like a holiday camp there. Half the kids would go on the first two weeks of the holidays and the other half would go on the second two weeks. It was for a fortnight every year, once a year. First thing in the morning, before you made your bed, you had to put your bathers on and run down and go in the ocean. We didn't come out again. I couldn't swim then. They did teach us swimming at Fairbridge. I was twelve or thirteen when I learned to swim. We used to go excursions with the high school, whether it had to do with history or some other subject.

Schooling

67. The primary school was in Fairbridge. We finished at half past three. When I left Craigmillar I had just started doing fractions but because we didn't go to school the

whole of [REDACTED] and half of [REDACTED] I'd forgotten how to do them. They asked me at Fairbridge if I knew how to do them. I told them I had just started, so they put me down to grade six, but I would have been doing my eleven plus in Craigmillar. So I was put down to the year before eleven plus.

68. At primary we got the usual, English, arithmetic, science, geography, history and sports. We used to go out and play soft ball, hockey, netball, football, cricket and tennis. I didn't mind school then. Mr Ibitson was the headmaster there. I don't remember much but I do remember him. He was a giant of man.
69. Domestic science was done at high school. But they used to come out to Fairbridge to do it. There was a cottage next door to the matron's cottage that had big kitchens and everything else like that. You learned how to iron your shirt on the table, how to make starch, make soap. You also learned dressmaking. I wasn't domesticated.
70. I couldn't see the sense in it. You are going back in time. They were teaching you to be self-sufficient. How to make things, make soap, but really, it was so old fashioned. They didn't seem to come past the 1900's. There was nothing modern. It was weird.
71. We got domestic science at Fairbridge once a week. They then built an extra bit on to the Pinjarra High School. So we stayed there and did our home science. Dressmaking, cooking, whatever. I stopped enjoying school at high school.
72. I just didn't want to be there at Fairbridge so I just didn't do my best at school. I liked Mr Auldwood. He was the maths teacher for second and third year high school and he was gorgeous. He is what I would call a teacher. Nothing was too much trouble. If you didn't get something you asked him and he would take the time to tell you where you were going wrong. He would tell you to try it a different way and once you got that concept in your head you understood what you had to do.
73. I got to wear shoes to go to high school as well as church, but we had to take them off as soon as we got back to Fairbridge. So we were back in our bare feet again.

74. I always got told that I could do better. All my reports said I could do better, that I am a scatter brain. I'd say it was because I didn't want to be here.

Healthcare

75. There was an infirmary in Fairbridge. The doctors used to come out and check us but if it was anything serious we went to Pinjarra Hospital. I had to get my appendix out. I think I was fifteen.
76. When I first went to Fairbridge my legs were bitten by mosquito's and I got six needles of penicillin. My legs were in bandages for six months. Sister Levers treated me. She said that I might lose my legs and I burst into tears. I had two big ulcers on them. I kept scratching them. The worse thing that you can do is scratch a mosquito bite. You put vinegar on it and it kills the itch.
77. MZB [REDACTED] dragged me up to the sister. She took one look at them and called me a stupid girl and told me I might lose my legs. She contacted the doctor and I got penicillin, which is thick. It was so sore going into your bum. Sister Levers will be dead now. She retired about 3 years after I went to Fairbridge.

Religious instruction

78. A minister that came from Pinjarra took the church services. I can't remember his name. He was tall, white hair, glasses. The church was opposite the principal's house. It was Church of England. I got confirmed in the Church of England because all kids at the age of twelve had to go for confirmation. I said to him that I wasn't Church of England and I didn't want to be confirmed in the Church of England. But I was told by the minister I was and that was it.
79. I joined the choir there. More or less as soon as I got there, I was eleven or twelve.

Work

80. You had duties that you had to do on a roster. For the first couple of days I did small jobs but they used to divide them between the older kids and the younger kids. So you would have an older kid and a younger kid doing the lounge and that was firstly moving furniture. They had wooden floorboards and they had to be polished so you had to get down on your hands and knees and put this polish on. They had what they called a bumper. It was a big square piece of wood. It was solid and they drilled holes in it to put a handle on and then they covered it with material so that you could run up and down to bring the shine up. It was like a buffer. What the kids used to do was the older one would hold the handle and the younger one would get on and we would go flying up and down to get it done. The same thing happened upstairs. They used to put all the beds at one side, do the floors, put all the beds back over the other side and do the floors and put the beds back.
81. We had to clean the windows and they had seats all the way round and they had to be polished. Everything had to be polished. That was on the Saturday morning. So you had two in the lounge, one in the kitchen, two upstairs in the dormitory, two in the bathroom and two in the laundry. You would be on kitchen duty every six weeks. They used to rotate.
82. The dorm went the full length of the cottage. You would come up the stairs and you would have bunk beds. Six at each side. Then you had two rooms, they were like squares and that is where you would put your clothes. Once a week you had to strip your bottom sheet off, put your top sheet on to the bottom and put a new sheet on the top. When you made your bed it had to be like the army. You had to have it that there was not a wrinkle in it.
83. Whoever was on kitchen duty had to go up to the dairy in the morning before we went to school and take the empty billy and pick it up on the way back. On Saturday when we had to do the cleaning, we had to count how many t-shirts, shorts, undies and singlets there were. We didn't have to worry about socks. We didn't wear them. It all got put in a big laundry basket. There was another laundry basket that had pillow cases and sheets in it. These were big wicker baskets, so it would take three

girls to carry them, one at each end and one in the middle. We had to take it up to the laundry first thing Monday morning and pick it up Monday night.

Christmas and Birthdays

84. Christmas was celebrated there. You used to have your Christmas dinner in the hall. We used to do the decorations and put them around the cottage and in the lounge and on the Christmas tree. We all had to sit down and make decorations and paper chains. We must have got a present as we had a Santa. I never worked out who he was. We would have the Christmas party in the hall. Santa would come through the door and your name got called out and you were given a present. We did a play and sang Christmas carols and all that sort of stuff.
85. On your birthday you got a card and I think we got a present, I can't remember. It couldn't have been that important. The card was probably from the principal and

MZC

Visitors

86. I don't remember any visits from the welfare while I was there. If they had come they would have been speaking to the cottage mothers not the kids.
87. Some of the kids didn't have parents. A lot of the farmers used to take them up to their farms in the school holidays. I went to a farm once but didn't stay. I had my mum. It was kids that didn't have parents that went to stay.
88. I couldn't wait to meet my mum when she came over. I was down having my bath about five o'clock in the morning. My cottage mother came up and said what are doing. I told her I was having a bath as I am going to see my mum.
89. Once mum got a house we could go up there for the weekend but it was once a month. Gran was there. We would go up on the bus on a Saturday and catch the train on the Sunday morning, so we more or less had a day really. Gran would take us to the station as mum was usually working. We would get the train from Perth to

Pinjarra and MZC or MIP would pick us up there. I never wanted to leave when it was time to go. If your parents weren't working you could go up in the school holidays and if they were working you didn't go.

90. Auntie Betty visited us at Fairbridge once. She was amazing. She had a car and decided to come down unannounced. She was mum's friend but we called her auntie Betty. She was lovely.

Family

91. I had very little contact with [REDACTED] at Fairbridge. I would see him in the dining room and say hello and that was it. I used to see him when we come up to see mum, I saw more of him then.
92. My mother had hoped to get a job as a cottage mother at Fairbridge when she came over. She said that she would be coming over but the only way she could do it was with the assistance of some scheme. The kids went out first and then the parents. But she was under the impression that they were going to get her a job as a cottage mother. When she arrived she found that because she had a girl and a boy she couldn't be a cottage mother. You either had to have a girl or two girls or a boy or two boys. You couldn't have mixed children. So when she got out here she told me that she didn't have a job.
93. I don't know who told mum that she wouldn't be coming to stay at Fairbridge. She didn't say anything at the time, but she did say that she was told she was going to be a cottage mother. They offered her a job in Perth instead.
94. She got the shock of her life but there was nothing she could do because of the scheme that we came under and we stayed at Fairbridge. The minute we got off the ship we became a ward of the State because we were classed as unaccompanied children. I was under the impression that as soon as my mum came out we were leaving Fairbridge and going home with her. It happened four years later.

95. I was never encouraged to write to my mum. MIP used to write and mum would write to him. We were never told if mum had written. We saw her once a month for the four years.
96. Gran would have retired when she was 69 so she would have come out when she was just turning 70. But as far as the welfare department was concerned she was too old to be responsible for a thirteen year old and an eight year old while mum worked. But mum was buying a house, she wasn't in a state house. She worked full-time, she always worked right up until the time she retired. So she never relied on welfare or anything like that.

Emotional care/support

97. There was no-one you could speak to at Fairbridge. You were a kid, you didn't go anywhere near an adult.

Personal Possessions

98. After seeing that lady about my bedwetting in Edinburgh mum said I could get two books. I got a big one on Elizabethan history, about all the people that were associated with Elizabeth the first, and then I got a little pocket size of Oliver Twist. It was only small, you could fit it in your pocket. I took it to Fairbridge. Mum had told me not to as I might lose it but I told her I'd keep it in my locker, but somebody pinched it. I don't know who. After that I never took anything that was personal to Fairbridge. It stayed with mum.
99. There were two rooms together, one had twelve fairly big boxes in it and your name was put on a box. That is where you put your undies, clothes and hung up your school uniform. The Fairbridge uniform was yellow and brown. We would wear this to church on a Sunday or if we were going out.

Discipline

100. Fairbridge was strict and regimented. It seemed to be that the boys got more freedom than girls did. Girls were restricted to where they could go, whereas the boys had a free run. They could go anywhere and a lot of the girls wondered why. Before I got there a girl tried to run away by getting on one of the horses and as it jumped the fence it's back foot went into a pothole and it ripped its stomach. The horse survived, it wasn't that bad but as a result no girls were allowed anywhere near the animals.
101. We had to walk around in bare feet. We weren't allowed to wear shoes. The only time you wore shoes was when you went to church or high school. I thought if we have to go without them for six days a week why do we have to wear them in church? We had to get done up in uniform, with a tie, socks and shoes. The girls pews were on one side and the boys on the other. There was a couple of pews separating them. It was ridiculous. You couldn't even go and sit with your family. It was stupid, it was pre-Victorian.
102. We wore a t-shirt and shorts in the summer and t-shirts, skirts and tops in the winter, and bare feet. We were wearing shoes when we arrived. They didn't throw them away I kept them.
103. The discipline was excessive depending on the cottage mother. Some seemed to have a knack with the kids. The kids absolutely adored them. They had good skills with kids. Miss Strathearn was one. She was good. You had to toe the line but you weren't in fear of getting belted every five minutes if you didn't. It depended on the cottage mother as to what kind of life you had at the cottage.
104. MZB would discipline you by giving you weeding to do. If you misbehaved you had to do a patch until that patch was green. She would come over and look at it and check it out.
105. It happened to me once. The whole cottage had to go out, but her daughter didn't come out. Somebody asked where her daughter was and I said something like she

was probably resting in bed, we couldn't have the little darling out here getting heat stroke. MZB heard it and told me to come over to her and I got a slap across the face. She said her daughter was sending a letter for her at the post office. My face stung for a while and I thought I better shut my mouth. She used to pick up anything and hit the kids with it. She hit an eight year old over the back of the legs with a coat hanger. She couldn't control the kids. It would be for something trivial, not picking up a t-shirt or not tidying your locker.

106. MZB was excessive. What person hits an eight year old with a wooden coat hanger on the legs? It was the way that she used to talk to you. Like you were dirt. I don't know how she was ever given the job of looking after kids. I think they were desperate for cottage mothers. She could be very cutting.

107. MZC was in charge of discipline. If any of the cottage mothers couldn't handle us then MZC was the one they would go and see and he would do the discipline. He would come up to the cottage and find out what was going on or you had to go down to his office. It had to be something really bad before you went down there. If you got too mouthy or cheeky then you had to go and see him.

108. For the boys this would consist of a good talking to or if it was really bad they would go down to his office and get the cane. He had all different lengths hanging up in the cupboard. I think he used to say to the boys pick one that you want. He only gave them one good slap across the backside. He was a lot leaner on the girls. They never got the cane.

Nature and frequency of abuse

109. I hated the place. I got picked on by four girls for a year and I had enough. I went running down and hammered MIP door. I was in tears and I was asking him to get my mother. I said I wanted my brother, I wanted my mother and I want to leave here. He brought me inside and that is when I got shifted from Wolfe to Shakespeare and those girls left me alone.

110. The girls in my cottage who bullied me were [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] They were probably a year younger than me but there were four of them all the time. It went on for a year. They put my hands up my back and twisted my arms up my back and threatened me that if I told the teachers they would do more damage. I was never a fighter. I wasn't brought up to fight. I couldn't understand why they did this, but I worked it out later that it was because I wet the bed. I was different, so they picked on me. I was picked on all the time. Every day I copped it. I didn't tell my cottage mother. I thought there was no point, that she wouldn't do anything. I would probably have been told to toughen up, something like that.
111. I ran away with another girl once. Strangely enough one of the girls who used to bully me. We left at ten o'clock at night and were picked up by the police by midnight. When the policeman brought us back he spoke with MZB [REDACTED] in the kitchen. We hung over the bannister and listened. He said to her that she shouldn't punish us as he thought we had a big enough fright from him picking us up. He told her just to talk to us the next day. She said she would. As soon as he was out the door she shouted on me to get down to the kitchen. Down came my pants and I got whacked on the backside with the belt. She said I'd made a fool of her. She went upstairs to belt [REDACTED] the other girl, but she told her that if she belted her then she would use it on her, so she backed off.
112. A couple of nights later we got called up to the MRU [REDACTED] place and we got a belting again. We were told we were being punished to set an example to the other children so that they don't run away. MZB [REDACTED] must have told her. It was about eight o'clock at night so how the hell it was going to stop the other kids from running away I don't know. We both went up there and we both got the strap. Turned around, down to our pants and belted on the backside and it was still sore from when MZB [REDACTED] hit me. It was a couple of days after MZB [REDACTED] had belted me and we got a couple of good whacks.

Reporting of abuse

113. I didn't tell mum what was happening. What was the point, she couldn't do anything. When you stepped off that ship you became a ward of state and they hung on to you like grim death. It would have upset her. We didn't tell her half of what was going on. She couldn't do anything. We were welfare kids as soon as we stepped off that boat and we were welfare kids until we walked out of Fairbridge.

Life after the institution

114. I wasn't given any preparation for leaving Fairbridge. I think MRU was glad to see the back of me. You got taken out to pick a dress and we got a list of what we were given. I went home with this battered suitcase and mum asked where the suitcase was that she got me. I told her that it would have been given to the next person leaving Fairbridge after I got there. Mum was furious.
115. At fifteen Fairbridge sent you on your way. I went home to mum. I was desperate to leave. I wanted to put Fairbridge behind me, I didn't want to be there. I was so happy when I left. I went into town a couple of years after and there used to be shops Myers and David Jones. On the top floor there was a big cafeteria. I went up there to have a sandwich and a cuppa and who should be picking up cups and saucers but MZB I thought, "You've come down in the world". Not that I have anything against people working there. She just thought she was so much better than that.
116. I worked in the government print for two years. When I went home I thought I would just have the holidays off but my mum said to me, "Don't think you are sitting down on your bum, I can't afford to keep you, find a job". So I found a job.
117. I was in my first job until I was seventeen. I got married at eighteen and had my daughter Three years later I had and then another three years later I had We lived in mum's to start off with and then we got a place of our own but we kept on moving. We had about eight moves in the ten years that I was married to him.

118. We separated after ten years and then I met [REDACTED] in 1979. We got married in 1983. We moved down here to Albany in 1989. [REDACTED] was a painter, he used to work for his dad. When his dad went out of the business he did not want to be the boss. All he wanted to do was paint, get a wage and come home. We had come down here to Albany for a couple of holidays and we liked it. The last time we came down for a holiday we looked around and we saw the house that we are in. The girls come down and see us. We have a lot of friends down here.
119. I didn't stay close to my brother [REDACTED]. He was a wanderer. He used to love to travel. When he was a teenager he got into trouble with police, but he pulled his socks up. By the time he was nineteen he could put his hand to anything. So he travelled and he worked and then he would travel again. He went all over the place but he finally settled. He passed away in 2013. I think he was very much like mum. She was very independent.

Treatment/support

120. I have never received any counselling or other treatment due to my time in Fairbridge.

Records

121. I applied for my records about twenty years ago. It was cottage mother reports, principal remarks, school, health, that sort of thing. There was a report by MZB [REDACTED] and she didn't know me at all.
122. I got records from Derek Smith. He has something to do with the secretary of Fairbridge Society. These are the records from the State Library but I got them copied and Derek Smith was the one that got them for us. I asked him when [REDACTED] died if I could get his records as well. He said he didn't see why not. So I have got his records as well.

Other matters for relating to migration

123. There was a thing a couple of years ago about abuse. The Western Australian Government brought it out. It was about verbal and sexual abuse of kids. They decided they were going to do a redress. The highest amount was going to be \$80,000 and the lowest amount \$25,000. But because they got so many people coming forward they had to lower it to \$40,000 maximum. [REDACTED] and I got \$13,000 each and we had to sign a form to say that we could not go back to the welfare again. That was probably about 2009 or 2010
124. They asked the names of people that had caused the abuse. I told the lady I spoke with that MZB [REDACTED] would be in her nineties now if she was alive. The MRU [REDACTED] would be the same. As a result I thought there was no point trying to get the police on to them. Half the time they wouldn't have remembered or they would be dead. So I never spoke with the police.
125. I have an Australian passport. The only reason I have this is because my husband is Australian. Our daughter is taking us back to Scotland in 2020 for a visit. I have never been back. I have an old age pension because I am over 65.

Impact

126. I am hopeless if it comes to being regimented. I can't handle it. Sometimes I look at some people that have got these jobs. You respect the job they are in but you don't respect the person doing it. They are not doing the job they are supposed to do. I don't handle discipline very well. I can't handle it at all. I have learned to shut up and listen and then make my mind up instead of going in with both feet.
127. I think my time at Fairbridge had an impact on me psychologically. I couldn't stand the place, I hated it. I hated being there. I just wanted to be at home with mum and gran and [REDACTED]

128. I am a bit wary about making friends. If somebody starts to get nasty I will back off. It is not for me, I walk away. I can't be bothered with it because to me it is a form of bullying. I separate myself from it or I stand up and tell them to get lost. I don't let anybody stand on me now.
129. Instead of knuckling down at school and learning, so that I could get a better job, I didn't. I didn't want to be at Fairbridge so I cut my nose off to spite my face by not learning. If you look through all the reports they say I could do better.
130. I think my time at Fairbridge has had a significant impact. I took my kids down to see it when I was an adult. I showed them the cottage and other things. I haven't been back again. They sometimes have a Fairbridge reunion and I will not go anywhere near the place. I don't want anything to do with it. As far as I am concerned that has gone.
131. As a youngster coming out of Fairbridge I found it hard to make friends. This was mainly because of the bedwetting. Any friend that I did make I tended to be too possessive. One of the girls told me it is alright to have more than one friend. I realised then that you can have a friend and that girl can also have another friend that you don't know. It took me a while to realise that. It was a neediness I think.
132. Because I married young I made friends my age. I have one friend that lives up in Beverley, I have known her for something like 35 years. I have a friend [REDACTED] who I knew from Fairbridge. I quite often see her. I've been to her place and she has been to mine.

Final thoughts

133. The lessons that could be learned are that if children go into any institution don't make them call people auntie, they are not relatives. They should be able to call them by their first name or a nickname. They should get people who understand kids. It has got to be two people. It's is not natural for kids to grow up with a single person looking after them. It is usually mum and dad, so something to the equivalent of mum and dad. Then they get the idea of what a family home is. Some of these

kids committed suicide because they couldn't cope once they were outside of Fairbridge. Their life was chaotic. Half of the staff should never have been allowed to be anywhere near kids.

134. Children should not be told lies about where they are going. The kids went to Fairbridge until the parents got accommodation or a jobs and then the kids went back to the parents.
135. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed... MNH
Dated... 04-11-2019