

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Isabella Margaret Campbell

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is Isabella Campbell but I like to be known as Ishbel. Whilst I was working at Quarriers Village I was known as Ishbel MacCuish. My date of birth is the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] 1942. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Personal background and qualifications

2. I attended school in Helensburgh and I went to work for the Scottish Collieries Enginemen, Boilermen and Tradesmen's Association for ten years in Glasgow. My ambition was to be a children's nurse.
3. In either 1967 or 1968 I saw a secretarial job advertised at Quarriers Village at the Bridge of Weir. I applied to work there because it was a lovely place in beautiful surroundings and I wanted to work closely with children.
4. I started work as a secretary to the Assistant Superintendent of the Quarriers village Mrs [REDACTED] zQFP and stayed there for five years. Quarriers was a lovely place to work. I was given a choice of who I wanted to work for and I chose Mrs [REDACTED] zQFP as I would be working closely with the children in that role. I always referred to [REDACTED] zQFP as Mrs [REDACTED] zQFP, even on a social level. I was located in the general office which was called "Homelea".

5. I didn't reside in the Quarriers village whilst I was working there, as I travelled daily from Glasgow and latterly lived in my own home in Bridge of Weir.

Quarriers' Staff

Staff structure at Quarriers

6. Mrs ^{zQFP} started at Quarriers as a house mother in the 1950's and she left in 1974. Mrs ^{zQFP} was a formidable women for some people, but we got on together very well. Mrs ^{zQFP} was a strict lady who had a very strong strident voice. Mrs ^{zQFP} was very nice to the children and she knew the village inside out, she had previously been a trained nurse and house parent. Her role was to oversee the cottages in the village which housed the children, there were cottages for the boys and cottages for the girls, but that changed over the five years between 1967 and 1973.
7. Mrs ^{zQFP} responsibilities included maintaining the staffing levels in the cottages, which involved making sure that the cottages were staffed by house parents, adequate cleaning staff, and house mother and assistant house mother relief cover. She ensured that all received the necessary training and were suitable person's to work with children. Mrs ^{zQFP} however wasn't responsible for the Epilepsy colony which was based in different cottages. If any of the children or staff weren't happy, Mrs ^{zQFP} would go out to the cottages and visit them to ascertain what was going on would take any issues that she couldn't deal with to Mr Mortimer.
8. The children were encouraged to come into the office at any time to speak to members of staff, particularly Mrs ^{zQFP} and Mr Mortimer in the early years but latterly the social workers. The cottages however, were very much run as individual establishments within the Quarriers village, and some of the house parents discouraged children from going to the office as they wished to keep things within the cottages. Very often house parents used the threat of, being sent to Homelea as a means to control the children. Some house parents didn't like uninvited visitors.

9. Mrs zQFP would take her job very seriously and she would regularly visit the cottages to ascertain how well they were being run. If there was a problem with any of the cottages she would record it, and if she couldn't deal with any problem which may arise herself, she would take the problem to Mr Mortimer.
10. Mr Mortimer was a qualified Social Worker, he was the village's Superintendent and he had responsibility for the whole village. He had arrived the year before I started. Mr Mortimer dealt with all matters concerning the house parents and children, and the Social Work department in Quarriers home had to put all decisions through him.
11. Doctor Davidson was the Director of the village and he had an upstairs office in Homelea. Doctor Davidson was formerly the medical officer for Quarriers based in the Elise Hospital. The staff upstairs dealt with the financial side of the village, staff wages and the buying and selling.
12. Mr Bonella was the Quarriers Secretary, and he dealt with the financial affairs.
13. Margaret Orr and QDY were ex Police officers and they were the youth workers for Quarriers, and they worked within the village. QDY was the youth worker for the boys and Margaret was similarly for the girls. Margaret would go on to qualify as a Social Worker, and QDY would remain as a youth worker at Quarriers.
14. George Gill was the Senior Social Worker and was brought in to Quarriers as nobody was qualified as a Social Worker at that time.
15. Mr Mortimer, Mr A Bonella and Dr Davidson would compile the "Narrative of Facts" which was the title of the Quarriers Annual Report. The report would be produced annually in September of each year and would contain financial information from the secretary Mr Bonella, hospital information, epilepsy colony information and general information regarding the previous year. This would include children who had migrated to Australia and Canada.

16. There was a ladies visiting committee who would regularly inspect the individual cottages, these women were mainly the wives of the board members and they were very fine people. If they saw something which they weren't happy with they would report it to Mrs zQFP.

Personal role and duties

17. I provided the administrative support for Mrs zQFP and I was based on the ground floor of Homelea along with my colleague Anne Forgie who supplied the administration support to Mr Mortimer. The staff downstairs dealt with everything to do with the children and the cottages. I would often see the children when they came in to see any of the senior members of staff. The children were always listened to, and the children's first port of call was always to speak to their houseparent's, but if they couldn't or were finding it difficult, they would come into the office. Mrs zQFP would deal with the children and if there was a problem she would immediately refer them to Mr Mortimer and subsequently the Social Work department.
18. The house mothers and particularly the assistant house mothers, who were often from different parts of the world would come into the office if something had upset them. I knew every house mother, and I had to keep abreast of who was working where, their sick leave and their holiday entitlement.
19. I can remember accompanying Mrs zQFP when she went to a furniture store to purchase furniture for the village.

Role of Social Workers in Quarriers Village

20. Before I arrived at Quarriers they used to have youth workers and child care officers there was only two of them Margaret Orr and QDY they were both ex Police, one for the boys and one for the girls. They both resided in the village. Prior to the Social Work Scotland Act 1968 a few of the children needed the attention of Margaret Orr, and after the Act had come into legislation every child within Quarriers had a Social Worker assigned to them. Margaret Orr eventually became a social worker,

George Gill was the Senior Social Worker. There were about six hundred children at Quarriers when I started and five hundred when I left.

21. Bill Dunbar was at Quarriers before I was employed there, and he was a house father and latterly a child care officer in name before it became a professional position. Bill had an office in Homelea. Some years later I read that he had become assistant to Mr Mortimer. [REDACTED] was brought in to help the Social work department and each child was allocated a Social Worker. The Social Workers could enter the cottages as often as they liked and without invitation.
22. I attended some in-house Social Work training, which gave me an insight into the role of the Social Workers.

Children's Admissions to Quarriers Village.

23. The Social Workers used to see the families before the children were admitted to Quarriers, and the local authority would make payments to Quarriers for the children's upkeep. Once agreement had been reached that a child should be admitted to Quarriers, the Social Workers would go out and bring the children back. I would have had prior notification of the child's arrival and all of the child's needs would be met. All of the child's clothes and school equipment would be made ready, and if the child was to be attending school the school would be notified. Everything would be in place prior to the child arriving. On arrival at Quarriers, the children would be taken into their allocated cottage and the house mothers and their assistants would settle them in.
24. Most of children who came to Quarriers were upset and traumatized, Quarriers was quite a severe place to come to. The gardens were beautiful but the buildings were old and spooky!
25. Margaret Orr and George Gill would always identify which cottages were best for a particular child, and this also depended on what space was available. The boys and

girls were separated into different cottages when I first arrived, but in 1970 the boys and girls were placed together.

26. I carried out the administration for some of the admissions. I remember one admission in particular which was when a father came in with his baby, his son and his daughter. The father had travelled from Canada to be closer to his mother in law in Glasgow after his wife had died, but she couldn't accommodate them and he came to us. The children were placed in zQAJ cottage and the father visited regularly. The girl went into Mrs zQGE cottage two and she later became a nurse, married and went to Australia.
27. All the admission records were stored and filed in cabinets located around the perimeter of the large former kitchen which was the Social Work department. There was a file for every child.

Child Migration Process

28. During the time that I worked at Quarriers no children were sent from Quarriers to live abroad.
29. One of the roles that I had after I had been at Quarriers for about two years, was to deal with enquiries from Canada and Australia from former Quarriers children who had been sent to live in Canada and Australia. I would carry out the necessary record search and compile the letters back to the former children, Doctor Davidson would sign the letters.
30. The Child Migrant records held at Quarriers were terrific. There was a ledger for each boat and every child's name had an individual page which detailed their destination and personal details, which would include parentage. Some of the records contained letters from the children, as they were encouraged by Quarriers to write back every few months. Quarriers would maintain contact with those children who wrote to them.

Sometime these letters would go to the house parents directly and wouldn't necessarily find their way into the records.

31. Migrant records were kept in files in my office and when requests came in I would cross reference them with the entry to Quarriers which were kept in the room where the Social Workers were located. At the time children were being sent to Canada Quarriers built a reception area at Brockville Ontario. The files would remain at Quarriers even though the children were sent abroad.
32. Records showed that children of good character and who could read and write were sent to Canada which was a new country and required good citizens. There was regular contact between Quarriers and overseas. William Quarrier when writing about the children and their families was very direct.
33. Doctor Davidson would regularly meet former Quarriers children in Canada every two years and he would come back with ancestry requests which I would deal with and possibly my colleagues. Doctor Davidson would at times be approached regarding financial assistance for former Quarriers children.
34. I recall that a beautiful woman from Canada called [REDACTED] arrived at the office on her fiftieth birthday with her husband and she believed that she had been born in [REDACTED] and that she had come from the travelling community. From the records that we held I was able to confirm that she was born in [REDACTED] from travelling people and after she was admitted to Quarriers her parents had moved to [REDACTED].
35. [REDACTED] was parking his car when [REDACTED] was leaving in her car. When he came into the office he asked if that was a girl from a travelling family [REDACTED] and he commented that he had housed her in Aberdeen. I said that it wasn't her, and that it was [REDACTED] from a travelling family who had migrated from Quarriers to Canada. [REDACTED] said that she was identical to the women he'd housed in Aberdeen and she must have been her sister. Sadly the woman had left [REDACTED] before [REDACTED] could speak with her.

36. I remember that on one occasion a former Quarriers child who was residing in Canada at the age of thirty nine wrote to us requesting that we locate his mother as he had terminal cancer and he wished to leave his estate to her.
37. Contact was made with the mother. It was discovered that his mother never told her husband about the existence of the boy and didn't wish for her new family to be made aware that she had that child. Although she was pleased to hear about her son, she declined permission for Quarriers to pass her details to her son. I did hear that he had died, and I do not know if he left any money to Quarriers.
38. I recall being contacted by people who had been sent to Canada years before who were searching for any detail regarding their parentage. One person from Canada who I recall was called [REDACTED] who had five sons. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated that he had gone to Canada for a new life. He continued by saying that he had had a good life and was now ready to go into a better life. I was able to ascertain that [REDACTED] had six siblings. This man sent some money to cover the cost of postage, and he later sent back a donation.
39. Most of the people who contacted us said that their experience in Canada and Australia was hard but good and that they had been treated well. Very few said that it wasn't good. If a child had been adopted after being sent from Quarriers, then the information would be sent back to Quarriers to be entered into the individual's records.
40. I mostly dealt with the former children who were sent to a place called Dhurringile in Australia, which was a more recent migration location. I would give them the information they were requesting verbally and some were sent details by post. A lot of the children were from the travelling community. Burnfield House In Australia was the last place for children from Quarriers to be accepted and only for a brief period.
41. The Australian people appeared to be more disgruntled than the Canadian migrants about their treatment. These were children sent on the Canberra ship, and they were under different regulations than the Canadian children.

42. If the children were alleging that they were sexually or physically abused whilst in Canada or Australia then their allegation would be dealt with by Dr Davidson. I would be asked to locate their records.
43. There must have been in the region of about fifty or more former Quarriers children who had made contact either in writing, telephoning or in person when I was employed there. Some of the personal callers went straight to the cottages. Most of the people were seeking information about themselves and whether they had siblings and family. Not all of the information was good but nearly all were happy and satisfied with the information they had received and some of the information would have been copies of what was held in the office.
44. It is my understanding that after I left Quarriers a man was employed to solely deal with enquiries from the child migrants.

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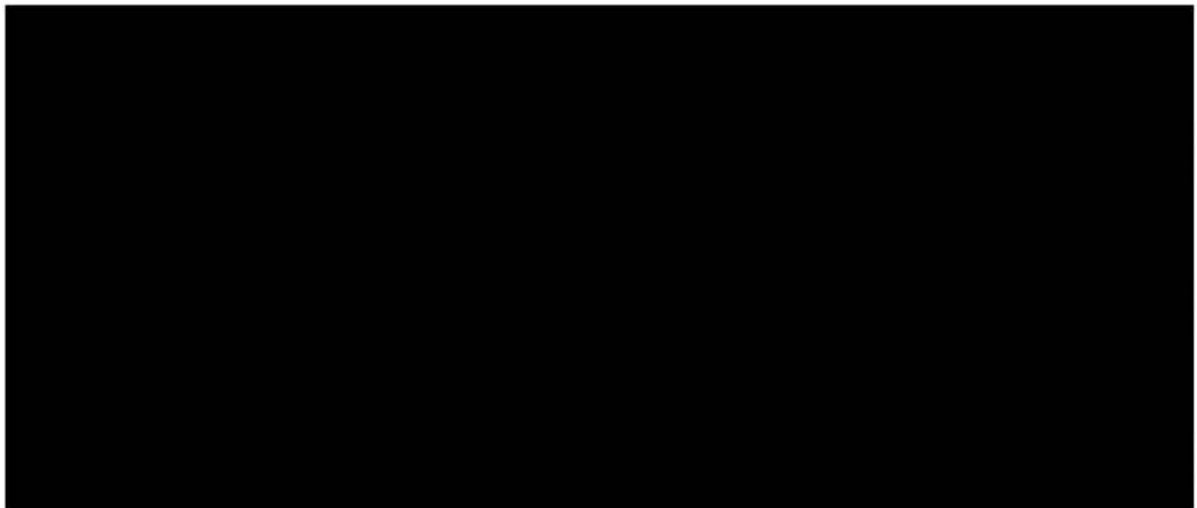
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78. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed....



Dated.....

5th February 2020