

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CZL

Support person present: No

1. My name is CZL. My date of birth is 1941. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going to boarding school

2. When I was growing up, I lived with my parents and five siblings. I had three sisters and two brothers. My three sisters are dead and my older brother is dead. Only me and my younger brother, are still alive. lives in Larbert. We are very close and we see each other on a regular basis.
3. I never saw a lot of my father because he was in the army for thirty years. He was in the Second World War. When he came out of the army, he got a job as a superintendent at Plean pit. He died when he was 57 of a massive heart attack. I'm not sure how old I was when he died.
4. Before I went to Queen Victoria School, I went to St. Ninian's Primary School in Stirling. It was a local authority primary school. I got a bus there every day. We didn't have strictness or military training there. We would have been too young for corporal punishment .

Queen Victoria School, Dunblane

5. I was sent to Queen Victoria School when I was nine years old. I think you had to be nine to go there. The ages of the pupils went up to seventeen, eighteen. It was a non-fee paying boarding school. In those days, it was only for boys. It was for the sons of Scottish soldiers, sailors and airmen. You had to sit an exam to get into the school. It was basic English and maths and if you passed that, you got in. The exam took place at the school. You were taken into the room and asked to do some sums. They made sure you could read and write properly.
6. I think there were maybe over one hundred children at the school. The commandant was in charge of the school, then there was the headmaster and various teachers. The people in these positions changed quite frequently, from what I can remember. We very rarely saw the headmaster or the commandant. The teachers were Royal Army Education Corps officers. Most of them were alright, as far as I remember. There were a couple of teachers who weren't very nice with the kids. I can't remember the names of any of the teachers, except for CRC, who taught
7. The school was quite strict. It was based on military training. We got our normal education lessons, but we also learned to march and look after our kit. The school was built on an army basis. There was dormitory after dormitory, then the headmaster's office, the commandant's office, the school and the chapel. There was a grand entrance to the school and the headmaster's office was on the right hand side. The hospital was about a quarter of a mile away.

Routine at Queen Victoria School

Mornings and bedtime

8. I was in a dormitory with twenty or thirty boys. Most of the boys in my dormitory were around my age. There was always a senior boy, that they called the senior monitor, who looked after each dormitory. We slept in army bunk beds, which were next to each

other. We got up at 7.30, 8 o'clock. We would go and get showered or washed and dressed for school. The showers weren't supervised.

9. We had to keep our kit clean. Our kit and lockers would be inspected in the dormitories. Sometimes, there would be snap inspections of our lockers. It was very much based on the military.
10. Lights out was at 9.30, 10 o'clock. The senior monitor slept in the dormitory, up beside the door. I can't remember any problems at night. They made us work quite hard so we were tired going to bed as nine, ten year olds. There were quite a few dormitories, so I'm not sure what happened in the other ones. I had my own pals. Five or six of us were pals and we sort of stuck together. I think there might have been some people who wet the bed, but I don't think it was a common thing. I think the staff sent them to the matron.

Mealtimes / Food

11. We went to the dining room for meals. All the boys sat together. The staff would walk about and make sure everybody was behaving. I don't think I liked the food very much. It never struck me as being great. It wasn't like home-cooked food. If you didn't eat your food, that was it. I never got in that situation. I don't think I was ever pulled up for that, even though the food was bad. I had quite a healthy appetite. I had to eat something because we were playing football, cricket and rugby and things like that.

Clothing / uniform

12. We wore full army uniform. It was a kilt, sporran, brogues, flashes, brown jacket, Tam O'Shanter, the lot. I remember my kit number was [REDACTED] which was a stamp they put on my clothes. For normal lessons, we wore navy blue shorts, a t-shirt, a navy blue jumper and black shoes.

Chores

13. We had to keep our kit clean, our shoes clean, our bedding clean. We had to make our beds in the morning, box-shaped with the sheets and blankets. Our lockers had to be kept tidy.

School

14. We went into classes after breakfast. We had normal classes, like maths, English and things like that. We had classes until about 11.30, 12 o'clock. We were then allowed ten minutes to go to the tuck shop. We could buy ourselves a sweetie if we had money. We'd share them around with people who didn't have any money or any sweeties.
15. We went back to the dining room for our lunch and then had classes or sports and swimming in the afternoon. It was military, military, military, all the time. We learned to march, we learned to salute, we learned to call our seniors, "Sir." We were taught to respect older people and property. It was very much based on the military.
16. I can't really comment on the standard of the education at Queen Victoria because I was only nine, ten years old. I achieved what I think would have been expected of me. I was smart. I kept myself smart and tidy. My uniform and kit were always tidy. My father would inspect me when I got home as well and give me advice about what to do and what not to do.

Leisure time

17. In the evening, we swapped comics about. We would read. We would do that in the dormitory. I can't remember a playroom. If there was one, I can't remember ever using it. When I stayed at the school for the weekend, I would go to the tuck shop. Sometimes, they would show a film in the cinema, Tom and Jerry, cartoons and things like that. We would go to the swimming pool, which was at the school. There would always be staff there to supervise us.

Pocket money

18. We didn't earn money, but we were given money by our families. It wasn't regulated by the staff. If we were given a couple of bob by our mum, dad or sister, we would keep it in our pockets. There were always tuck parcels sent from abroad. We would share out any sweeties.

Trips / Holidays

19. I can't remember any leisure activities out with the school. Sometimes, we would be chosen to go to Murrayfield for the Scotland versus England rugby match. There might be seven or eight seats left on the bus with the military pipe band. The school pipe band played before matches and they still do, in their red jackets. Once or twice, I was lucky enough to be chosen. We always got front row seats at the rugby. We loved it. It was a day away from the school.
20. I would go home for the school holidays. We got eight or nine weeks for the summer. I usually went home for the weekend although some weekends, I stayed in the school. I mostly got the bus. We had to wear our uniform home. I would walk down the hill from the school and stand at the bus stop. The bus would come from Dunblane to the school and then go to Stirling. I would change at Stirling and get the bus to Plean. I usually got the bus back to the school. Once or twice, someone took me in the car when I went home for the weekend.

Birthdays and Christmas

21. I can't remember any celebrations for birthdays or Christmas. There might have been celebrations at Christmas because a lot of the children's parents were serving abroad. Those poor wee boys were stuck at the school. They would stay behind.

Religious instruction

22. Religion wasn't really a part of school life. There was a church next to the school for the Protestant boys. About twenty or thirty of us were Catholic. On a Sunday morning, we'd march from the school, down to the chapel in Dunblane for Mass.

Visits / Inspections

23. There was a military band and a pipe band. Every year, a senior officer from the Ministry of Defence or a member of the royal family would come and inspect the boys. There would be a march past and things like that. We only really saw the commandant of the school when dignitaries visited. I couldn't say whether there were any official inspections.

Healthcare

24. There was a wee hospital in the school with four or five beds in it. If a child was feeling unwell, they had a sick parade. You could go and see the matron. If somebody had hurt himself in the gym, the matron was there. I think boys who wet the bed were sent to her. She would call the doctor if it was something more serious. On one occasion, I got a skelf from the gym, up through my big toe nail. I was squealing like a pig during the night. The senior monitor called one of the masters. The master must have taken me over to the hospital. The matron got up and put a cage over my foot because my toe was pretty badly swollen. The doctor came in the morning and took off what he could, as far as I can remember. I had to stay in the hospital for two or three nights.
25. The matron was a nice old lady. She was very kind. I think scarlet fever broke out a couple of times and the school was closed to visitors. We were seen by a dentist at the school hospital.

Running away

26. There were some incidents when children ran away. They went home and their parents brought them back. I don't know what action was taken because nobody in my group of friends ran away.

Discipline

27. Discipline was quite strict. It was based on army rules and regulations, marching and saluting. We had to stand to attention. It didn't bother me. I reacted quite well to that. I didn't think there was anything wrong with that.
28. I'll never forget the public expulsions. They were horrifying. I remember one in particular quite vividly. A couple of boys had been playing with each other, for whatever reason. I don't know if it was homosexuality, I can't remember. They had a rule in the school that there would be public expulsion. All the boys were marched into the drill hall. The parents involved were sitting at the back. The children or child involved would be brought on to a stage. The headmaster would read out what was going on and why he was being publicly expelled. The boy might also receive four or six strokes of the cane, across his buttocks. It was quite a horrifying thing to see. It must have been terrible for the parents involved as well. It was supposed to set an example, to make sure anybody who was thinking about doing whatever they had been doing didn't do so.

Abuse at Queen Victoria School

29. There was one particular teacher who took a dislike to me, but I think he took a dislike to most of the kids. His name was ^{CRC} [REDACTED]. He was the [REDACTED] teacher. He's the only teacher whose name I can remember. As you get older, you think about these things. He wasn't a very nice person by any stretch of the imagination. We had a nickname for him, ^{CRC} [REDACTED] because of when he went off on one.

30. When **CRC** hit you or gave you the cane, he seemed to get excited about it. I didn't know it then but I recognise it now. He had a thing about throwing his cane about for the least thing. If you were talking in class or throwing a bit of paper at your mate or doing a childish thing, he would drag you out of the class and give you a lashing with the cane. That happened quite often to me and other children.
31. **CRC** caught me talking to one of my friends, who sat beside me. I was dragged out of the class. He got me to lift the sleeves of my navy-blue jumper. I thought I'd get the strap, but he brought the cane out. He started slathering and hit me. One of the strokes caught me on my wrist. I had a complete and utter meltdown. That incident was the worst thing that happened to me at Queen Victoria School.

Reporting of abuse at Queen Victoria School

32. When **CRC** struck my wrist with the cane, it happened not long before a weekend, on a Thursday or Friday. That weekend I was due to go home. I think I got picked up by one of my sisters in a car. I was favouring my arm. Someone in the family must have mentioned to my dad that I'd been crying outside and favouring my arm. My father brought me in. He was a strict man, but very fair. He said, "What's the problem, **CZL**? Why are you favouring your arm?" I didn't want to tell him because I thought I'd get into trouble from him because I'd been in trouble at school. He said, "No, no, let's get it out and see what's going on." He went to take my hand and pull my jumper up and I remember flinching. My wrist was all swollen and I had a big red welt on my arm. He told me that he wouldn't punish me and that he just wanted me to tell him what was going on. I did tell my dad what had happened. My dad called my older sister, **CZL** through into the kitchen to give me some juice. I drank some Irn Bru or lemonade and had a sweetie to calm me down.
33. That happened on the Saturday and I was due back at the school at 9 o'clock on the Sunday night. My dad said I wasn't going back to school on the Sunday and that he'd take me back on the Monday morning. He brought me back up to school. We went in through the main entrance. He asked me where I did my **CZL** lessons. I showed him

the classroom. My dad came with me to the classroom. It was just after 9 o'clock and the class was full with maybe twenty pupils. CRC was there.

34. My father was furious. I'd never seen him like that. I'm not sure whether the words I recall are exact, but from what I remember, my father said, "Are you CRC?" CRC said that he was. My father then said, "Do you know who he is?" CRC said my name. My father then asked him whether he was responsible for the mark on my arm and drew back my jumper. CRC said, "Well, he was punished." My father said, "Not to that extent, he shouldn't be." My father noticed his cane. It sat in a little wooden groove on top of his desk. My father picked it up and said, "If you ever mark my son like that again, I'll take this cane and ram it up your fucking arse and bring it out your fucking head. Don't ever treat him like that again." CRC was totally shocked. He backed right off. He had slathers coming down his mouth and the sweat was breaking out.
35. The rest of the class thought my father was wonderful. They thought I was a hero. By 11 o'clock, my father had gone back to the pit in Plean. He'd given me a couple of half crowns for my pocket money. The tuck shop was open and all the kids were coming up to me.
36. CRC never struck me with his cane again. I don't think he did it to anybody else in my class. Later on, I heard others boys say that he was still pretty handy with the cane.

Leaving Queen Victoria School

37. I'm not sure when I left Queen Victoria School, but I was only there for two or three years. My father withdrew me from the school. He knew I wasn't happy with the various things that had been going on. There was the incident with CRC the public expulsions and various other things that I didn't like. I can't get the other things to the front of my head just now. My father had realised through ongoing conversations over a period of time that I wasn't very happy. He realised that I was getting homesick and

that I missed my brothers and sisters. I was about twelve or thirteen when I left the school. I went to St. Modan's High School in Stirling.

Life after being in boarding school

38. St. Modan's was a good school. I liked it there. It didn't have the military style discipline of Queen Victoria. I did alright at school. I got the bus from Plean to St. Modan's and back every day. It was just a normal school.
39. I didn't see a lot of my father. He worked and then he came home and sat in his chair and read his papers. Nobody could read a paper in the house without my father seeing it first. My sisters were older, but they weren't allowed to smoke in front of my father. He was very old-fashioned that way. My mother did a lot of things without my father's knowledge, punishment-wise. Only my brother and my wife know about it.
40. Life at home was terrible. My mother was a bully. We had certain chores to do, either bring in coal or break up sticks for kindling. If they weren't done in time or to her satisfaction, I'd be punished. If she thought I'd been naughty, I was punished. Her way of punishing was worse than at Queen Victoria School. There was a cupboard as you went up the stairs to the bedrooms. It was just as you came out of the living room. She locked me in there many times, in the dark. I'd be there for more than an hour. I think she knew that I didn't like it. One of her favourite ways of punishing me was that she kept her stick somewhere. She would say things like, "You, in trouble, go and get the stick." I was always terrified. She'd ladle into the back of my legs with the stick. Because of my mother, I will never, ever sit with my back to a door.
41. I don't know whether my mother treated my siblings in the same way. She always did it when my father wasn't in. My father wasn't aware of what was going on. We were always threatened never to tell our father what was going on. My mother was not a nice person. I daren't think what would have happened if my father had become aware of what was going on.

42. My younger brother was the only one who could handle my mother in later years. My mother insulted his wife and my wife. She caused ructions when she felt that she wasn't getting her own way. My younger brother would tell her to stop. I was more frightened. I was too scared to say anything back to her. I only stood up to her on one occasion. Not long after I got married, my wife had an operation. My wife was a nurse at the time and she went to help my mother out because she also wasn't well. She came back crying because my mother had a go at her. I saw red and picked up the phone. I told her never to speak to my wife like that or we would never grace her door again.
43. I thought the cane at school was bad, but it was awful living at home. I probably wasn't the greatest kid in the world, but I can't remember ever being disobedient. Our father made sure we weren't and instilled respect in us. The best thing I ever did was join the army to get away from home. When my mother died, I wasn't really sorry. She died in her sleep at the age of ninety.
44. After I left school, I got a job in Plean pit with my brother. I wanted away from home so I went into the army recruitment office in Stirling with my older brother, [REDACTED]. I joined the same regiment that my father had been in, the Cameron Highlanders, 1st Battalion. My dad was dead by then. We went up to Inverness for our training. Whilst we were training, the Cameron and Seaforth Highlanders were amalgamated into one unit called the Queen's Own Highlanders. We were sent on a recruiting tour of Wick, Thurso and the north of Scotland with the whole battalion. I then did further training at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh before going to Plymouth. Not long after I had turned eighteen, I left Plymouth on the HMT Nevasa to Singapore.
45. I was posted to the Selarang Barracks at Changi, Singapore for three years. I was in the regimental police. At the end of the three years, we were due to be relieved. We could put our names forward to have our time extended. I put my name forward and did another three years. I didn't want to go home. During that six years, I did three two month tours of Borneo during the insurrection. My military career lasted just over nine years. I came out of the military with an exemplary military discharge. I was medically discharged because I got hurt. I lost my kneecap and both the cartilages in my knees.

I also had other injuries to the small of my back. I went in front of the medical board at Chichester. I could have been downgraded to sit at a desk, but I didn't fancy that so I came out.

46. I didn't know what to do with myself. I bumped into a friend in Edinburgh. I told him I had no idea what I was going to do. He asked if I'd ever tried selling motor cars. I thought he was kidding, but he told me to have a go and just be myself. He told me to come down to a garage on Seafield in Edinburgh. I went that weekend and I sold about five or six cars. The boss came up to me at the end of the weekend. He shook my hand and told me I could start the next day. I worked my way up to management and got a job in the [REDACTED] in Edinburgh. I did very well there as well.
47. I have a great relationship with my wife. We've been married for thirty years and she's my best friend. I was married before, but that didn't work out. My wife is brilliant. We don't have any children together, but she has a son and a daughter from her previous marriage. I get on great with them and love them to bits.

Impact

48. I don't think my experiences at Queen Victoria have had as much as an impact on me as people might think. The only thing that triggers it is when I see something on the television. If I see a film with someone with a cane or something, I get taken aback. I must say that I'm much more affected by what my mother did to me. I think my time at Queen Victoria did me some good. It helped me with my future army career.
49. My wife and I have to sleep in separate beds because of my nightmares. I still have them once or twice a month. When my mother was alive, counselling might have helped me. Now that she's dead, I don't think that I need it. I do feel better for having talked about it.

Hopes for the Inquiry

50. I don't think children should ever be given punishment of the nature that was given at Queen Victoria. I hope that the Inquiry helps all those other children, I presume adults now, get peace. I hope it helps them to settle themselves in their lives and get on with their lives and hopefully have a good, fruitful, positive type of life. I know from seeing the news and reading the papers that a lot of people have been in much, much worse situations than I have and are deeply affected, psychologically and in other ways. It's a sin.

51. 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.

CZL

Signed.....

Dated.....

5/9/2019