

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HKX

Support person present: No

1. My name is HKX and I am known as HKX. My date of birth is 1955. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going to boarding school

2. I was born in St Andrews and grew up in a small farming village in Fife. I lived with my older brother and our parents. My father's name was and my mother was called (née ). My father sailed in the merchant navy and he could be away from home for months at a time so my mother would often sail with him. It made sense for them to send both and myself to boarding school.
3. I attended the local primary school in our village from years P1 to P3. It had good teachers and I received a sound basic education. Children from the village school would normally move on to secondary education at the nearby high school in Methil, but my parents considered that to be unsuitable for us. The next nearest school would have been in Cupar, but it wasn't practical for us to get there on public transport from my village.
4. The local village GP told my parents he had the same concerns about local education and was planning to send his children away to boarding school at Morrison's Academy in Crieff. My parents decided to adopt the same solution, sending my brother to that school in 1953 when he was aged eight. was at Morrison's for ten years,

leaving in 6<sup>th</sup> form at the end of summer term, just before I started in the autumn. [REDACTED] has never talked to me very much about his time at the school, but his remarks have always suggested he never liked the place, or at least he didn't have a high opinion of it. Years later, he firmly declined an opportunity he was given to go back and visit the school with me.

5. When the [REDACTED] family in the village heard that I was being sent to Morrison's, they also decided to send their son [REDACTED], who was in my class at the village primary school. Two years later, [REDACTED]'s younger brother [REDACTED] was also sent to the school. Over the years, the [REDACTED] and my parents shared the transport duties to and from Morrison's at the start and end of term.
6. My parents' decision for [REDACTED] and I to go to Morrison's was driven solely by practical considerations. Morrison's was not considered an 'elite' school. When it came to my turn, the precedent had been set by [REDACTED] and there was no question about me going anywhere else. I was familiar with the school from visits to my brother, and just accepted the move there as a natural progression in growing up. However, although I had walked around the school grounds I had never been inside the boarding house and knew nothing of its ways.
7. I discovered once I started there that most pupils at Morrison's had parents who worked overseas or their parents lived in isolated villages in Scotland. My parents struggled to pay the fees and they couldn't afford to send me on extra-curricular activities like study cruises and sports/adventure holidays that were available. We did not take overseas holidays, and my experience of the world was limited to youth-hostelling around Scotland. [REDACTED] and I stayed in youth hostels while my mother stayed in nearby bed-and-breakfast guest houses. However, we were not alone in being financially constrained; there were many other boys at the school who were in similar or worse circumstances.
8. My father was a merchant navy shipmaster with command of large oil tankers. He had survived the terrible shipping losses of the Second World War, an experience which had left its mark on him. He was very intelligent, had excelled academically, and been

sent to study at Heriots School in Edinburgh. However, he never had the opportunity to go to university because he ran away to sea aged sixteen to escape his own parents.

9. My mother was born and grew up in India. My grandfather moved every few years throughout the sub-continent, installing radio systems for the British Army, so my mother grew up living on or near army bases, immersed in military and colonial culture. She attended various convent schools across India, including a boarding school in the Himalayan foothills. Although less academic than my father, she was very well educated in the traditions of history, geography and literature.
10. My family was not wealthy and we lived in a modest terraced house in our village. My father was not well paid for the senior position he held and he had already funded my older brother through boarding school for ten years. It was a struggle for him to pay my fees and continue to support [REDACTED] in his continuing studies after leaving school.
11. I was not helped by the limitations of my upbringing. At home I had very little male influence as I rarely saw my father and my brother was away at school. The adult environment I grew up in was female. The people in the village that I knew and our nearest neighbours were households of spinsters. My mother was also socially awkward as a product of her background so I had limited guidance on social behaviour. It meant I was very young for my years, but being exceptionally tall looked much older.

### **Morrison's Academy, Crieff**

12. I started at the school in autumn 1963 aged eight and I was at the school for five years from P4 to S1. I was only ever a junior boy in the school so my memories are not clouded by older teenage experiences as a senior boy.
13. I would not describe Morrison's Academy as being like the fictional boarding school St Trinians, and it certainly wasn't a laugh. It was more like Tom Brown's Schooldays or even Lord of the Flies. When I studied Lord of the Flies for my higher English I

recognised some of the behaviours and the stories in that book. When I took my own children to the cinema to see the first Harry Potter film I quickly spotted many similarities to my own experiences and had strong feelings of déjà vu. There are many things in that work of fiction which fit with my experience, but many things which do not. In the Harry Potter World the maturity of the children and their engagement with adult staff does not reflect my experience at the younger age of eight.

14. To me, and in my memories, Morrison's had a sombre, dark and unfriendly feeling. A threatening place but with a lot of positives mixed in amongst it. When I started at school I was already very tall for my age and felt very awkward as I overshadowed my peer group. [REDACTED] By way of example, in my first year at primary school, P1, the school had to bring in a desk from the senior school for me. That always made me the subject of fun as I was so tall, physically ungainly, not sporty, and socially awkward
15. Another issue for me was that [REDACTED] had attended the school from the age of eight in 1953 and had been there until the [REDACTED] of 1963. Our times at the school never overlapped. He had been [REDACTED] in the same boarding house for his last two years and there may have been some scores to settle. He told me more recently he didn't approve of the physical thuggery and tried to put a stop to it, but it had clearly come back by the time I started at the school. I'm not sure that my difficulties arose because I was [REDACTED]'s younger brother. I think the bullying was institutionalised and I was picked on because I was tall and awkward, and too immature to stand up for myself. The mentality seemed to be that because I was bigger I must be tougher than the rest of the junior boys, so the brutality was scaled up to match my size.
16. I was allocated to a boarding house called Dalmhor. It was about a quarter of a mile up the road from the school and is the last building on the access road to the Crieff Hydro Hotel. It was a medium-sized boarding house accommodating between thirty and thirty-four boys. I recall there being three principal staff members: the housemaster, the house matron, and a cook. The house master was Mr [REDACTED] PDS who lived in an annexe to the boarding house. He seemed relatively young to me, even as an eight year old. He was possibly in his thirties or early forties. He was

married, but his wife never engaged with the junior boys and had nothing to do with the operation of the boarding house except joining the top table at mealtimes. They didn't have any children of their own. I think the matron lived in the house so she could be on call at all times. I am not sure if the cook lived in or out. There was a stable block adjacent to the house which was used for staff accommodation, but I cannot remember who used it.

17. I don't know if the makeup of staff was the same in all of the houses. Most of the houses were of similar size and they may have had the same number of staff. Glenearn house might have had more staff as it was bigger. I don't recall ever seeing a booklet or letter with the boarding house rules set out in it. I certainly wasn't aware of any complaints system for either parents or pupils. The only written document I recall was a kit list that was quite extensive.
18. Behaviour in the house was supervised by the house captain and two or three prefects. I think they had been chosen by the house master. I think he chose the people who were best able to keep order on his behalf. The boarding house was very hierarchical. All the privileges were ordered by age. The prefects could use the front door entrance and the sun room. The house master interacted with the prefects only. The prefects told the senior boys what to do and told them to keep an eye on the junior boys. The house master rarely interacted with the younger boys, except for serious breaches of behaviour and discipline. The younger boys were looked after by the house matron.
19. Life revolved around the common room, the dining room and the dormitory. Everyone lived in the common room. The junior boys studied in there as well. The senior boys studied in the senior study room and I have provided the Inquiry a photograph taken in that room. That didn't open until part way through my first year. It was a relatively new addition and gave us changing rooms too. Then all the boys, apart from the prefects, had to use the changing room entrance to the boarding house.
20. Dormitories were always known as 'dorms' and identified by their room number. Dorm places were allocated in strict order of boy's age. Boys started out in the 'baby dorm', dorm 4, next to the matron's room, and then progressed through dorms 9, 8, 10 and

7, all on the attic floor. I think the house captain and prefects lived in dorm 2, back on the lower floor. Boys would only move up to a more senior dorm when space became available, and this was done strictly by order of age.

21. I spent my first four years in dorm 4, moving to dorm 9 in my last year. Four of us moved up together from dorm 4, leaving two slightly younger boys behind. We were joined in the bigger dorm 9 by a number of new boys who were just starting at the school in S1, the first year of the upper school. I started to feel more grown up being up on the top floor with the older boys.
22. I spent four years in dorm 4, sharing the six-bed room with mostly the same group of boys. We became close friends because staying together was our best defence against the older boys. Although we couldn't offer each other physical protection, we felt less isolated and were less likely to be picked on. We all slept in single steel framed beds. I have provided the Inquiry with several photographs I took with my own Brownie camera of my friends in the dormitories.

### **Routine at Morrison's Academy**

#### *First day*

23. My mother took me to school on my first day, I don't think my brother came with us and my father was away. I was dropped off at the door to the boarding house and mum took a photograph. I have provided a copy of the photograph of me in my school uniform taken in the garden of the boarding house on my first day.
24. There was no sign of the house master and the house matron came to meet me and took me to meet my year group. My mother handed me over to the matron at the door and left me, it was very quick. My mother never saw where I would be living and I think that was an organisational decision. The matron then left me with the other P4 boys in the boarding house. There were six P4 boys in total. I now cannot recall this matron's name and she left at the end of my first term.



25. I had stood on the grass in the garden to have my photograph taken by my mother. Immediately on arrival into the boarding house I was in trouble, and several of the older boys gave me hell within minutes for having stood on the grass as it wasn't allowed. I think this was more to establish their superiority over a junior boy rather than them having a concern for the grass. As the matron had disappeared there were no adults around.
26. Eight year olds are not self-assured and I felt a bit of a lost soul. Matron then allocated me to a locker and to a peg for my clothes and it felt very strange and impersonal. I do not remember there being any meeting or assembly to talk to us about the possibility of homesickness and who we could go to about it. I do remember that first matron coming into the dormitory at night to comfort boys who were very upset.

*Mornings and bedtime*

27. I shared a dormitory in the boarding house with a group of boys of similar age. At most we were just one class year apart. I spent my first four years in dorm 4, moving to dorm 9 in my last year. Four of us moved up together from dorm 4, leaving two slightly younger boys behind. We were joined in the bigger dorm 9 by a number of new boys who were just starting at the school in S1, the first year of the upper school.
28. The boarding house was very cold with only a coal fire stove in the common room and a gas fire in the matron's room. My dorm 9 was in the top floor of the building and seemed to have little or no roof insulation. At that time there were no fire doors in the stairway, so although some warmth crept up from the lower floors of the building into the upper hallway, little of it made its way into the dormitories. The window was always left slightly open for ventilation. One morning, there was an icicle hanging over my bed having been formed from the condensation and I was disappointed to have run out of film to photograph it.
29. At 8 pm we finished our study time and the sequence for going to bed would start. There was a fixed order to bedtimes based on dorm seniority. A rigid bedtime

timetable was needed to give everyone time in the small bathrooms that were available. As the baby dorm, dorm 4 always went to bed first at 8.00 pm. In my last year in dorm 4, aged twelve, we still had to go to bed at 8.00 pm but were allowed to keep the lights on for an extra half hour.

30. There was no talking after lights out. There would be severe punishment if any noise was heard through the door. We rarely saw the housemaster after dinner, so policing of bedtime was left up to the prefects. Any talking after lights out would result in lines being issued to be done later or corporal punishment delivered, there and then, depending on the prefect on duty, using his own slippers.
31. We were crammed together in that dorm room and there was a lot of close contact between different young boys. Masturbation was common in the boarding house and a cultural thing and regarded as normal. Boys were so exposed to peer pressure and you learned from your peers. Behaviours you might have been aware of later in teenage years you became aware of at a much younger age in the boarding house.
32. On one occasion several of the boys in my room took their PJs off and got into the same bed together. I was one of them and I can't recall now how it happened. One of the other boys initiated it. There were strange behaviours like that in a closed group. One of the prefects came into the room and shouted at us to ask what on earth we were doing. I just remember it as an embarrassing incident. We were eight and nine year olds with no guidance framework living a strange lifestyle with little adult influence.

#### *Mealtimes / Food*

33. I ate in the dining room of the boarding house with the boys from my house. Everyone sat in an allocated seat. The layout of the room was very similar to how the dining room is portrayed in the Harry Potter films. There were two long tables, one down each side of the room, and a shorter 'top table' across the window at the end of the room. The tables were wood and metal folding trestle tables, covered in brown linoleum. Boys sat on both sides of the long tables, leaving four lines of boys down the room.



The top table only had seats on the window side, so people sitting there had a clear view down the long tables and across the room. The house master, his wife, the matron, head boy and prefects sat at the top table.

34. Someone would ring a big gong fifteen minutes before a meal to warn everyone that mealtime was approaching. The gong would then be sounded twice, five minutes before the meal. The sound of two gongs was a warning to stop what you were doing and head immediately to the dining room. No running was allowed. Everyone had to be seated before the house master and his top table attendants entered the room. If you were late you had to go to the top table and offer an explanation. Late-comers needed a very good excuse or they would receive punishment, usually lines. On a few occasions the offender was told to leave the room without eating, but I think the cook would slip the boy his meal out of sight. This never happened to me, but I saw it happen to others.
35. The food was boarding school stodge. We lived in a fairly cold and rough environment and we ate a lot. There was very little heating in the boarding house and we were active children. We always had porridge in the morning and there were puddings like semolina, custard and steamed puddings. Old-fashioned stodgy stuff which I loved. The cook served the food onto plates in the kitchen while two junior boys carried plates from the kitchen to the dining room before serving them out. There was a rota for this duty.
36. Breakfast was at 7:30 am and that lasted half an hour and that was followed by a half hour break for last minute study before school. My memory is completely blank about arrangements for lunch, but [REDACTED] says that in his day he always went back to the boarding house to have lunch in the dining room. We might have returned to the boarding house since it was not far from the school, or the school's nearby Whitehall theatre may have been used as a refectory. I am not sure.
37. Dinner was at half past five. The gong would ring at 5:15 for dinner and again at 5:25 as a warning to get to the dining room. Everyone would be expected to be there for the house master coming in at 5:30.

### *Washing / bathing*

38. We used the bathroom next to dorm 4. There were three baths in there and I can picture them now. At first, the six boys from dorm 4 had to be in the bathroom together, taking turns in the three baths. Pairs of boys had to share the same bathwater, so we took it in turns to decide who got in first to enjoy the warmer clean water. This arrangement was relaxed over the years as we got older and took turns to come through from the dormitory and run our own bath.
39. We had a bath once a week. After closely supervising us, the first couple of bath times matron left us to get on with it. We knew that if we made a mess or weren't clean we would be in trouble as there was always a threat of punishment hanging over you. I think the bath day was mid-week for my dorm and other dorms had a bath on other days of the week.

### *Clothing / uniform*

40. I think we changed shirts and trousers once a week and underwear twice a week. Certainly not every day. Uniform was to be worn at all times, including after school and evenings. We had to wear a kilt on a Sunday.
41. Laundry was done by the boys. There was a rota for this chore. I think it was done once a week and it might have been on a Friday evening. Three or four boys were delegated and they had to wash all of the socks and underwear.

### *School*

42. At half past eight we would walk to school. One of the prefects would lead the P4 boys to school. After first year we would go down to school by ourselves and not in formation. There were six P4 boys in my boarding house who were in my class at school. There were about twenty-four or twenty-six boys in my class in total.

43. I started at the school in P4 and even at that young age I was in different classrooms for different subjects and we had to run from one classroom to another when the bell rang. I was well taught through old fashioned methods. We were expected to absorb the facts the teachers told us and not challenge them.
44. The curriculum was very focussed on traditional subjects. While in the junior school (P4-P7) I remember studying English, Mathematics, French, History and Geography. I won the class academic prize in S1, but got hell from other boys who thought I didn't deserve the prize because I had excelled at maths, physics and chemistry. Not proper subjects in their eyes because it didn't involve writing essays. Although it had a science department, the school was not strong on sciences.
45. It was a very old-fashioned curriculum. I had wanted to study German in S1, but the timetable didn't allow me to do that if I wanted to study science. I was forced to take Latin, a subject in which I had little interest and ended up hating.
46. The teachers were mostly male, and included many of the boarding house masters. The History teacher, Mr Williamson, had been house master at Dalmhor in my brother's early years at the school. Mr <sup>CFR</sup> [REDACTED], who I think was the [REDACTED] teacher, was housemaster at Dalmhor in my brother's later years. I think the housemaster in my time, Mr <sup>PDS</sup> [REDACTED], was the [REDACTED] teacher.
47. There were many teachers who were not associated with the boarding houses, and not all were male. I had a female class teacher in S1, although that was rare in the boys school. The head teacher was a man called J E G Quick and he was head of the school for the whole time I was there. [REDACTED] had been in [REDACTED] class at the school.
48. School finished at 3:30 or 4 pm. Then we were expected to take part in sports or go back to the boarding house. I wasn't sporty, but I was reluctant to go back to the nearly empty boarding house because I feared finding myself alone with some of the older boys. As a result, I often stayed on at the main school building.

49. Junior boys were expected to attend all home sports matches on a Saturday and support the school teams. We didn't attend away matches. Attendance at the sports ground was obligatory, and a register was taken by a duty prefect from the boarding house. The sport was always rugby in winter and cricket in summer. Sports were taken very seriously, and there was an expectation that everyone should participate.
50. There is a mill lade which flows through the middle of the sports field between the pitches. One winter, after heavy rain, it overflowed leaving the rugby training pitch a sea of very soft mud. There was no way the sports master was going to cancel practice. We were playing rugby and the ruck collapsed. The boy in the centre of it was pressed into the ground face-down and pressed into the mud so his back was almost level with the ground. He was virtually drowned and had to be resuscitated.
51. There was no contact between boys and girls in the junior years. The girls school was next door to the boys school but had completely separate grounds and had a separate entrance from the public road. Although sited in the same parkland, the two schools were separated by a high laurel hedge. A small gate gave access through the hedge between the schools.
52. Boys were not allowed into the girls' school grounds and vice-versa. You had to have a signed letter giving you consent to go onto the grounds of the girls' school. I was sent through there once when I was in S1 to deliver something. There was a milk bar in the town and older boys would meet up with older girls on a Saturday morning. I was too young for that.

### *Religion*

53. We went to church, boarding house by boarding house, and marched down as a house in military parade style. Different boarding houses were split up amongst the various churches in the town. Dalmhor boys attended what is now Crieff Parish Church, about a quarter of a mile from the house. We also said grace before meals, but it was brief.

*Work/chores*

54. On a Saturday morning all of the linoleum floors of the boarding house had to be swept and cleaned by the boys. I don't remember having to do the bathrooms and there may have been professional cleaners for them. We couldn't go out of the boarding house and into the town until it had been done. It was inspected by prefects and they looked for dust. If anything was wrong you'd be kept back to do more cleaning and you'd lose an hour of liberty.
55. The fagging system was not as bad as it had been in previous years, and how it is portrayed in some films. 'Fagging' in its original sense was a form of serfdom where you as a junior boy were obliged to be a servant to a senior boy and do his bidding at all times. In my years at Morrison's the system had evolved to be voluntary in most cases. There were a few senior boys who still treated their fags like slaves, and it was customary for the senior boy to pay the junior boy for their service. Junior boys would do it as a way of supplementing their meagre pocket money, in the same way today's teenagers might do a paper round.
56. We received one shilling pocket money and even in those days it didn't go very far. The going rate for fagging for a senior pupil was 6d per week, half a shilling in pre-decimal money. I fagged for several of the senior boys in my early years, some who were unpleasant and some were ok to work for. The best was Iain Leighton, who treated junior boys with respect. The sort of thing you had to do was polish shoes every evening and his shoes had to be perfect.
57. Each dorm ran a rota where two boys had to go downstairs and clean all of the shoes for everyone in your dormitory. We took it in turns and worked as a team. They were then inspected by a prefect. You also had to clean the shoes of the senior boy you were fagging for and it removed that chore from them. God help you if your shoes were not perfect. All the senior boys were wearing winkle picker shoes in those days.
58. In the early 1960s many of the senior boys wore fashionable 100% nylon shirts and they made everyone sweat like a pig. The shirts had to be rinsed out every day and



you had to scrub the grubby collars with a nail brush. This, along with cleaning muddy rugby boots and their laces, were the most onerous fagging chores which you had to do in order to be paid.

### *Trips / Holidays*

59. I was involved in just one trip in my five years that I can remember. In my first year, the first matron organised a picnic on a warm, sunny Saturday and we went on a bus to a farmer's field a few miles outside the town.

### *Leisure time*

60. On a Saturday we were all desperate to get our dinner eaten and be out of the dining room to watch Doctor Who which had recently started on TV and was shown at 6 pm. We weren't allowed to leave the dining room until the house master and prefects had stood up and left. Then there would be a mad scramble of thirty-two boys going up one flight of stairs to the first floor TV room. There was a pecking order for seats in the TV room. The senior boys were at the front and the juniors at the back.
61. We were allowed to watch TV on a Saturday only and that was by permission for special programmes. There was no TV allowed during the week as we would be doing homework. After dinner in the week we would be expected to study until 8 o'clock. The junior boys would study in the common room and had to take a fold-away wooden chair from the stack of chairs. You had to fold away the chair and return it to the stack before you could leave the room.
62. Study time was supervised by a prefect in the room. Later on, in S1, I could use the senior study room that was in the modern annexe to the boarding house. I have a photograph taken at the end of my S1 class. There is a house prefect, to keep order, and older boys in the back of the room and the youngest pupils at the front. As you got older you migrated to the back of the room.



63. There were regular Sunday walks after church and lunch and they started at 2 pm. We walked in groups of eight to twelve boys and the walks were up to two hours long. We walked for miles. One time, one of the senior boys took us into the hills to Turret Dam that was five miles away. It was winter and a blizzard started on the way home, leaving us wading through deep snow. One of the boys fell into a drain by the side of the road that was hidden in the snow. We were wearing our Sunday kilts and our thin gabardine cotton overcoats.
64. My dorm 4 had very little leisure time in the week because of our early bedtime. Late afternoon was the only time we had for leisure, after school and before dinner. Between dinner and bedtime we had study time. We could go out to the school grounds, but not into the town during the week. In summer time there was a hayfield opposite the boarding house to explore and trees to climb. We played adventure games. In the winter we had to stay in the common room and we spent time building Airfix models and reading comics.
65. We were allowed out with our family on a Saturday half-way through each 10-week term. I have a photographs of me with my father and brother on one of these half-term visits. I had to wear my school uniform even on those visits. I was expected to dress the part. If no-one looked I took my jacket off.

*Personal possessions*

66. Personal possessions were very limited. I had a small locker by my bed and everything had to be kept in there. I had a storage bay in matron's office where your spare clothing was kept. Also if you had an item of value it could be kept in a locker in the matron's office and if you needed it you could only get it if matron was there and you asked her to retrieve it. I also had my own peg in the changing room.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

67. I spent most Christmas holidays with my parents. I remember my first Christmas at the school my mother had sailed on a voyage with my father and I spent the holiday with my grandmother in Edinburgh.
68. Christmas and Easter holidays were two weeks long. My mother would drive up to Crieff to collect me and sometimes I shared the car trip with the [REDACTED] boys and their mum. I didn't dread going back to school after the holidays, at least not after the first year. It was more of a feeling of resignation, 'here we go again'. I didn't welcome going back and was fairly neutral as my whole experience had a mix of positives and negatives.
69. I was very isolated in the village when I went back there in the holidays as I'd become distanced from the friends I had from primary school. Holidays back in [REDACTED] were actually quite lonely. Within my peer group in the boarding school I had a lot of friends and a lot of support and shared interests, and it was nice to get back to that.
70. Birthdays were not celebrated in the boarding house. Any presents sent to you by your family would be passed onto you by the matron. The juniors were given the bumps, but that was to provide entertainment for the older boys.

### *Visits / Inspections*

71. The only time I saw my parents between start and end of term was at the half-term Saturday outing. My mother would always try to come, bringing my father if he was on shore leave. If my parents couldn't visit for half term I would go out with one of my dorm friends' family. On one occasion, a wealthy dorm friend's family took us out to Gleneagles Hotel for the day and sent us to play pitch-and-putt with their chauffeur.
72. I didn't speak to my parents about the bullying culture at school or about being unhappy in my early years. They would tell me to get on with it. I didn't have a very communicative relationship with my parents. My father was a man of few words and

didn't understand children. My mother came from a broken family and had a hard upbringing. She had been sent off to boarding school herself and she lived in a military culture. I never felt I would get much sympathy from her if I told her about the bullying culture at school.

73. My brother [REDACTED] sometimes came with my mother for the half-term visit and he is included in the photograph I have shared with the Inquiry of me in school uniform at half-term. He was working in Edinburgh at that time.
74. We were expected to sit in the common room and write home every week on a Sunday evening. In the case of the most junior boys, a senior boy would check you were writing a letter and not just drawing pictures. Not all eight year olds would know how to write a letter. I don't know if the school would read the letters. It wouldn't be impossible for them to do that behind the scenes. My mother would write back, but I don't think I have kept any of her letters. There was one telephone in the ground floor hallway for emergencies only.
75. To my knowledge, no adult came to the boarding house to speak to the children about the living conditions. They may have come around during the day when I was in school and I was not aware of it. I have no recollection of anyone's parents ever visiting the boarding house at any stage in my time there.

#### *Healthcare*

76. I referred earlier in my statement to the house matron who met me on my first day at school. She left at Christmas at the end of my first term. She had a living room next to dorm 4. It was actually Room 3. In my early years I think the matron used the adjacent Room 2 as a bedroom, but I think this was later used as a prefect's room. I'm not exactly sure of the later sleeping arrangements. My first matron was definitely in the house overnight, because she came into the dormitory in the middle of the night to settle an unhappy new boy.

77. The house master was more remote, because his living annexe was separate from the main building. There was also an adjoining stable block that was used for staff accommodation, but I am not sure who lived there. It might have been a groundsman.
78. Matron was available to answer any questions we might have, but from day one you were expected to fend for yourself. The first matron was good at offering emotional support. We all warmed to her. Her replacement was a stern woman, very well organised but not a mother substitute for the boys.
79. The third matron I remember from my last eighteen months arrived when I was aged twelve or thirteen. I remember thinking she was a strange person to be in charge of a boarding house. She seemed barely old enough to be an adult herself. We had a lot of trouble with older boys and it didn't give us a good feeling that in age terms she seemed very like the 6<sup>th</sup> formers.
80. The matron's quarters were supposed to be off-limits to boys, and I can clearly remember how uncomfortable I felt when I realised the senior boys were spending time in her room so it must have happened a few times. I saw individual boys both coming out of her room and going into it at different times. The door had been closed and they clearly were not going in there simply to ask a question.
81. Matron didn't punish the boys. She might shout. She was regarded as a neutral voice. She was seen as a general organiser, certainly the second matron was, and a person who you went to with questions. She was not a disciplinary threat to us.
82. There was a two-bed sick room in the boarding house for boys who were unwell and would be looked after by matron. I believe the second matron we had was a qualified nurse. I got the mumps and I shared the sick room with a boy from Canada, [REDACTED], who also had mumps. He then went on to develop meningitis and had to leave the school.
83. If a boy had a sporting injury there was a village hospital in the town that could provide basic medical treatment. There was also a doctor on call for the school. There was

one older boy who was hit in the face by a cricket ball and his jaw was wired together. I remember he was drinking with a straw for a few weeks. If you had a minor illness you would stay in your bed in the dorm.

84. In the centre of town there was a dentist. We ate sweets from the tuck shop opposite the main school gates. It was our only luxury. I ate too many sweets and probably didn't brush my teeth properly. I didn't have proper dental care at that age.

#### *Running away*

85. I can't remember wanting to run away, but I can recall being miserable at times. Especially in the early years I had no emotional engagement with others. It felt to me there was a huge void, having no normal family life.

#### *Bed Wetting*

86. I remember one boy in the boarding house called [REDACTED] who was from Fiji. His parents were ex-pats. He really struggled in the boarding school. He was awkward and didn't fit in and wasn't self-confident. He wet the bed in his early time there and the first house matron we had was sympathetic to him. My dorm was very supportive of him. We had a good self-supporting peer group and we felt sorry for him. No-one made fun of him, there was a bit of exasperation and that was as bad as it went. We kept his confidence and none of us wanted him to be in trouble with the older boys.

#### *Discipline*

87. The scale of discipline started at writing out lines, always given out by prefects, and most punishments were lines, usually 100 to 200 lines. This would involve writing out rules like 'I must not speak when I am supposed to be quiet' or 'I must not be late'. There was a set time in the evening to do it and it would eat into your leisure time.
88. Corporal punishment was used regularly, but was not frequent. I can't remember the belt, the old fashioned tawse, being used in the boarding house. I think it was used in

the school. My brother remembers a wooden coat hanger being used, but I don't. Most corporal punishment I remember was meted out by the prefects and that was three slaps with a leather slipper on a pyjama-covered backside. Some of them would really lay into you. I remember holding onto the steel rail at the foot of my bed whilst being hit with the slipper.

89. The most common reason for being beaten that way was for talking after lights out. Some of the prefects were better than others and some never used the slipper and always resorted to issuing lines, while others seemed to like to exercise their power over junior boys. Discipline would happen once or twice a year in school, but in the boarding house it was at least every few weeks that someone got slipped.
90. If your misdemeanour was really bad you would be sent to the house master who would see you in the matron's room. If you were summoned to see the house master you knew you were in big trouble and something bad was going to happen. I remember being summoned in that way only once. I can't remember why, but I suspect it might have been for the time when I blocked the serving of food at dinner, thinking it was a joke and I describe that incident below. I think the punishment I received then was the same as that meted out by the prefects, being hit three times on my pyjama backside with a leather slipper.
91. In my first year, soon after I arrived aged eight, I was in the dining room, sitting at the long table with my back to the fireplace. There was a narrow space behind me through which the boys serving the meal had to pass. I was bored waiting for my food to arrive and was fooling around in my seat. By leaning back I managed to block the passage, thinking that was a bit of fun to see how the servers would get past. I was quickly yelled at from the top table and told to stop holding up the serving of food. A short time later, while still waiting, I think I repeated the behaviour. I was told to leave the dining room.
92. Later in the evening I was summoned to see the house master who gave me a stern lecture about expected behaviour at table, after which I received a 'slippering'. I think that was delivered by the house master, although I know he often delegated administration of discipline to the prefects. When sitting at table I was to sit upright



and face the front, and not get in the way of whatever else was going on in the room. I was aged eight and had only recently arrived at the school.

93. I'm a civilian instructor with the RAF Air Cadets, a youth organisation that is run on strict hierarchical military lines. We teach the cadets to take responsibility, to lead and to respect authority. Officers command the sergeants, who in turn pass orders to the corporals, who in turn supervise the junior cadets. Although that looks similar to a Morrison's boarding house there are two significant differences. First, it is only for one or two short evenings a week, and secondly we have plenty of adult staff who stay in the background, monitor behaviour and provide appropriate coaching when needed. Any form of bullying is regarded as a serious offence.
94. My son was in the Air Cadets and has moved on to train as a pilot in the Royal Navy. I have closely watched his experience of Naval College and training. Between his experience and my work with the Air Cadets I understand much about military culture. It is now clear to me that Dalmhor boarding house was organised along military lines with a similar ethos. The house was managed by adults who had served in the forces through the Second World War, or at least had done National Service. They seemed to be trying to manage children in the same way you would organise a squad of soldiers.
95. Morrison's Academy had Combined Cadet Force. I have photos of my brother in the CCF. They had a hut at the back gate in the grounds. It was a senior school thing and I never got involved as I left the school before I turned fourteen. I understand it was mandatory and you had to join CCF.

#### **Abuse at Morrison's – peer abuse**

96. There was a culture of bullying in the boarding house. I have no awareness of any sexual advances, but there was widespread and overt bullying and physical thuggery. In my early years I lived in a constant state of fear, although this changed after two or three years as I grew older.

97. The biggest trouble makers were the younger teenagers, boys aged fourteen to sixteen, who wanted to climb the pecking order. They regarded the younger boys as entertainment or a nuisance. They would hang around the common room, just inside the door, and ambush younger boys as they passed. Their usual form of attack was to punch or pinch you on the upper arm. If you squealed they did it again and again until you stopped squealing. Another tactic they employed was to drop a pencil on the floor and tell you to pick it up, and then when you bent over they'd take a rugby kick up your backside, sending you flying across the room. It hurt, but the feeling of fear was much worse than the pain.
98. Most prefects tried to keep a limit on this sort of behaviour, but that limit was set by a culture that expected you to be tough and stand up for yourself. Also, the small number of prefects could not be everywhere all of the time. One boy, [REDACTED], who eventually became a house prefect, was actually part of the problem. I don't know if he behaved that way to all the younger boys, or whether he just didn't like me. In his middle teenage years he was one of the boys who caused most trouble. In sixth form he continued to be unpleasant, but was less brutal. I don't know if that was because his behaviour had mellowed, or I had become older, bigger and more self-assured.
99. There was no respite in the boarding house. There was nowhere else to go after school and no-one to talk to. The adult staff were remote, psychologically as well as physically, the prefects were generally remote.. Most prefects did not relate well to the younger boys who were often less than half their age. Everyone was trying to look 'grown up', so you quickly learned to dismiss and ignore younger behaviour.
100. The culture was one that expected you to be tough, independent and stand up for yourself, regardless of age and maturity. It was very military and army-like. You were expected to be tough, obedient and hierarchical, and not question it. Boys were expected to accept everything and just get on with life. This was drummed into boys from the age of eight.

101. Particularly in my first year, we were often punished when we didn't understand what we'd done wrong. Often, behaviour that was normal and acceptable at home turned out to be against the rules of the boarding house. We were given lines or sometimes 'slipped' to encourage the absolute adherence to rules and forms of behaviour. There was little engagement from adults and most guidance was provided by the prefects. The seventeen and eighteen year old prefects were not always good at explaining things to eight year olds, and we often would not understand or accept why our behaviour warranted severe punishment. Looking back, we were expected to turn into functioning adults the moment we stepped through the door. This expected level of maturity is portrayed in fiction like Harry Potter, but didn't exist in reality.
102. Most of the time punishment was sufficiently unpleasant to teach you to not repeat the behaviour, even if you didn't fully understand why it was not allowed or appreciate why it warranted such severe action. However, there was a clear distinction between what was seen as controlled corporal punishment and uncontrolled bullying. Corporal punishment was a threat that lurked in the background, although it was only exercised intermittently. Bullying was a constant threat, with incidents happening weekly if not daily.
103. Most of the real trouble for me had ceased by the time I was twelve. There was a gradual sliding scale, as you got older you got bigger and you learned the rules. There was a perception that the little boys were a nuisance and junior boys were not viewed in a supportive way by seniors.
104. There was one prefect, [REDACTED], who was particularly bad, sitting immediately to PDS [REDACTED]'s left in the 1968 photograph, and I kept out of his way. There was a small group of two or three boys who were a problem in the boarding house. Most of the older boys just ignored the juniors, but a few were supportive. I remember Ian Leighton (known as 'Leafy Leighton') as being good. We always tried to be near the good older boys, because we regarded them as protection from the troublemakers. There was no threat, in my experience, beyond physical bullying. When lessons were over I didn't want to go back to the boarding house after school and would delay it as much as possible. It did have an effect on me.

105. I suspect to some extent the staff didn't know what was going on between the younger boys and seniors in terms of peer abuse. The house master deferred to the prefects who then told the senior boys to keep an eye on what the younger boys were doing. Mr PDS was too far removed from what was going on and lived in the annexe and we only saw him regularly at mealtimes when he was with the prefects. I think there was an acceptance of a hard regime. Sometimes, the bullying was perpetrated or condoned by the prefects who weren't going to tell the house master.
106. I've spoken to my brother about the house masters and it seems they were on a varying scale of good and not so good. spoke very highly of Mr Williamson who was house master in his earlier years. Mr Williamson was lovely and so was his wife and they were supportive. Then there was Mr CFR and got on fine with him, but by then was an upper school pupil. My house master was Mr PDS and he was a very cold fish and I didn't warm to him. said he got on ok with PDS.
107. I heard a story from my brother that some of the boys before me had got so fed up with Mr CFR as the previous house master that they had got a dog turd and wrapped it up in newspaper, set fire to it and left it on the doorstep of his annexe. Then rang the doorbell and ran away. CFR came to the door and saw this blazing newspaper and stamped it out. The boys weren't going to do that to CFR if they thought he was wonderful.

### **Leaving Morrison's Academy**

108. I left Morrison's in 1968 when I was aged thirteen. This was because my parents moved to Edinburgh, where wider family lived. lived there too. Alternative education options were now available for me and day school also cost less money. There was also limited subject availability in Morrison's. It was a relatively small and traditional school. I was interested in sciences and I wanted to learn practical, technical, engineering topics and Morrison's couldn't offer what I wanted.



109. I was ambivalent about leaving Morrison's. The bullying for me was in the past, and the school community was a familiar, more friendly environment. However, my two long-standing friends from my village were leaving Morrison's and moving to Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh which is where their father had studied. At the same time I was offered the opportunity to live a normal, family, teenage life at home, which was something I didn't really understand since I had never experienced in my younger years my father and brother living full-time at home. My parents offered little advice and I felt pushed into a decision. In the end I settled on moving to a day school in Edinburgh.
110. I then started in S2 at what was then Daniel Stewart's College. It was academically very pushy with much more academic excellence in subjects that interested me. There was a lot of bullying. I thought the bullying at Morrison's was no worse than in Stewart's, but at Stewart's it was only for an hour or so in the daytime.
111. In my first and second years at Stewart's I was very aware of the bullying as it was hard for me as a new pupil trying to make friends in established social groups. There was a separate toilet block that I'd be too scared to go to as you'd be beaten up by an obnoxious group of teenagers that hung around inside that block. It was eventually knocked down and replaced. I felt there was a large number of school kids who were out of control and not being influenced by adults.
112. There were very few boarding pupils at Stewart's. In Morrison's I think more than 50% of the pupils were boarding and outnumbered the day pupils. In Stewart's it was the opposite. It was also a much larger school. I stayed at the school until I was eighteen.

#### **Life after being in boarding school**

113. I left school at age eighteen and went to study a degree in electronics at university and my entire career has been spent in engineering of one sort or another.

114. After I left Morrison's I never spoke to my parents about it. We would speak about life in general but I was never able to open the conversation into my life at boarding school. I did discuss it with my wife and she was horrified by my school experiences. She comes from the opposite end of the family background spectrum and from a very socially able family with very different social attitudes and behaviours.
115. I have visited Morrison's since I left, but [REDACTED] refused to ever go back there again as he had hated it so much. I have ambivalent views. I was happy to go back and look around the place. The school has changed physically beyond recognition. It is now more comfortable. I don't know what the culture is like now. I don't have a burning negative view, but I can still see the bad side of it.

### **Impact**

116. I regard my time at Morrison's Academy as just a phase of my life growing up. I had my childhood in the village, then five years in Morrison's and then five years living in Edinburgh and they were three separate packages of memories. I would never have wanted my own children to have been educated in a boarding school and that has been influenced, not only by own experience, but also by that of my wife's family.
117. I had no adult male role models in my village and all my friends were boys and no-one had sisters of their age and, where they did have sisters, they were much older. I went to a boys only boarding school and then to an all-boys day school. Then I went to university, which at that time was male dominated. I didn't really encounter girls until I was at university. Socially, I had a very narrow upbringing and it took many years for me to gain confidence in handling social situations that required sensitivity and subtlety.
118. Being at boarding school gave me independence and self-confidence. If you survived the school, it was constraining and when I look back there were things I missed out on. I also remember the camaraderie of the dorm room and the closeness of my group of friends. We pulled together against the older pupils.



119. The experience made me grown-up and self-reliant. When I was ten years old I went on a school exchange visit to a family in France. In the summer holiday I went over for two or four weeks. I flew alone from Edinburgh to Paris and changed planes at Heathrow as an unaccompanied minor. Two years later aged twelve I flew again to Paris, but this time had to get myself onto a coach taking me in to the city bus station. Unfortunately I took the wrong coach to the wrong bus station. I then had to find the Metro, buy tickets and make my way alone across the city with my luggage. I eventually met up with the family I was staying with, two hours late.

### **Records**

120. I have class photographs from my first year and from my last year at Morrison's and the photographs I took in the dormitories. I was never a strong sportsman and so have no sports records. I still have the class prize from my final S1 year. Any punishments or discipline were never recorded. I still have all of my school reports issued during my time at Morrison's. There were never any parents evenings held at Morrison's for the parents of boarding pupils to speak to the teachers about their sons progress.
121. There is a Morrisonian Club for old pupils and there is an annual school book that comes out. I had no interest in keeping up with it and I never joined the society, it is more for people who went all the way through the school years, but I left at thirteen. I always felt it was more relevant to pupils who had experienced the school's senior years and had more engagement with its activities and traditions.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

122. You cannot delegate the responsibility for supervision of children to teenagers. They don't have the life skills and maturity, and they propagate bad behaviours. They are no substitute for adult engagement. Teaching self-respect, self-reliance and leadership is not a substitute for emotional development. There was a complete lack


of emotional development in that closed community. My wife says it took her years to re-programme me in my view of life and the way I related to people. There was a big gap in how I looked at life and reacted to situations as a consequence of my schooling and my upbringing.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

123. Some people will have been scarred for life by their school experiences, much worse than I had, and I hope they get some kind of closure from this Inquiry. I'm well acquainted with PTSD from my father and his war time experiences on the Atlantic convoys during the second world war. He carried his memories with him.
124. I know there are a lot of headlines about sexual abuse, but there is also a lot of emotional damage caused by physical abuse and bullying of the type I experienced. While I managed to put my experiences behind me, I understand that many were not able to do that.

### **Other information**

125. 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.....03 August 2020.....