

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CCV [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is CCV [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1938. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in London. My father [REDACTED] was Scottish while my mother, [REDACTED] was English. When I was four months old my parents moved to Canada. My father was a retired sea-captain and worked in the aluminium business.
3. When the war started in 1939 we were sent to Trinidad for my dad to build a sea-port to mine bauxite which was used to make aluminium to make aeroplanes. This was where my sister [REDACTED] was born in 1942. We then went back to Canada and then to New York.
4. After the war we went to San Francisco then to Shanghai where my dad worked as a port captain. After seven months we went to Hong Kong and then to Australia. We then went back to Hong Kong and in September 1950 went to England.
5. In a period of nine years I had gone to thirteen different schools.
6. The Korean war had broken out and my parents were reluctant to take us back to Hong Kong so left us with an uncle in Lenzie in Scotland. A couple had set up a

home in Painswick in England for kids whose parents worked abroad and myself and my sister went there for a while.

7. During term time they would tutor the children that were there under their care.

Fettes College, Edinburgh

8. I went to Fettes College in September 1951. It was my dad who wanted me to go there. I sat the common entrance exam, passed it and was thirteen years old when I first went there.
9. Fettes was a fee paying school and I know my parents paid a lot of money for me to go there. My recollection is that my mother came back from Hong Kong and took me there on my first day.
10. I don't recall much about my first day as, to me, it was just the latest in my first days at new schools so it just wasn't something I was concerned about. For me it was another new bunch of mates I had to make.
11. It was just after the war and the school were trying to encourage kids to go there. I was first put into Inverleith House which was a building the school had hired out. There were between twenty and thirty boys in that house, all aged about thirteen.
12. I recall that there was only one toilet in the house. I was in a dorm with about five others. I was there for the first term before moving to the main college where I moved into a dorm. It was an all-boys school

Routine at Fettes

13. We would get up and get dressed and, after moving to the main college, we would have to have a cold shower. There was always a prefect to make sure you didn't use the hot tap. After that we had breakfast which would be followed by chapel before we went to classes.

14. We had two classes then a break then two more classes followed by lunch. We had sports in the afternoon. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays were half-days. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays we did sports in the afternoon but then it was back to class.
15. There were two hours of studying in the evening after which we went back to chapel and after that we would have cocoa. Before bed we had a three minute hot shower, which was timed, and then I think bed was at 10 pm.
16. The prefects in charge of us were seniors in the school and were seventeen or eighteen years old. They ran the show. They changed every year as the older ones left the school.

Mealtimes / Food

17. Food wasn't pitiful but there was rationing because of the war and the school was doing the best it could in the circumstances. You would get only one egg a week and only four ounces of meat. Rabbit and fish were the only things not rationed so we got plenty of that. At breakfast and dinner we served ourselves. My recollection is that the food was okay.

Washing / bathing

18. You had to have a cold shower in the morning and got a three minute hot shower at the same time every night. At the start of the term you would be told that your time was, for example, 9:36 to 9:39 at night.
19. This was something we policed ourselves. Given that you were only getting three minutes you didn't want anybody eating into that time so we became quite good at timing it so as we didn't go over our allocated three minutes.

Religion

20. The school was Church of Scotland and Church of England and we had a minister from each and the services were combined. We were in chapel twice a day and also said grace before each meal. We would be there for half an hour and maybe an hour on a Sunday.

Leisure time

21. I took piano lessons and practised that a lot. For the first two years I was what was called a fag which meant that if a prefect told you to do something then you did it even if it ate in to your own leisure time.
22. I don't actually recall having much in the way of free time though any I did have I probably spent reading.
23. There were four Sundays a term when you were allowed to leave the grounds if you had permission from your parents. I was lucky and had relatives who stayed nearby. They were my uncle's wife's aunt and uncle. An elderly couple who stayed in Fettes Avenue.
24. If you went out on a Sunday, you left after morning chapel and had to be back by 5:30 pm.

Chores

25. I remember cleaning shoes and boots and collecting buckets of coal. I suppose you could say that any chores I had to do was at the bidding of the prefects. Basically it seemed that my parents were paying for me to be a slave to the prefects. This lasted throughout my first two years.

Clothing / uniform

26. You were always in a uniform of one sort or another. The only time I wasn't was during my visits to Painswick where I would wear civilian clothes which I would have left there from my previous visit.
27. At Fettes you either wore a kilt or long trousers which were paid for by your parents.

Pocket-money

28. I must have got pocket money because I recall that I would go to the tuck shop. How I got it or how much it was I don't recall.

School

29. I might be biased but I never felt that I ever got any tutoring or help. I feel that I should have got some guidance but it just didn't exist. It was a case of them telling us what they had to and we had to learn it for ourselves.
30. The whole system was that we had to work it out for ourselves. Most of the other boys had gone through the prep school and were used to this system but I had always been used to a system where, if you were struggling with work, there was somebody you could ask for advice.
31. There was simply nobody I could seek advice from and because of this I constantly struggled with my school work and only got two O'Grades in English Language and English Literature. I had actually sat seven or eight.
32. My parents were paying so much for me to attend that school and I always felt that the school were simply not giving value for money because of the way I was basically left to fend for myself as far as education was concerned.

Trips / Holidays

33. For holidays, I went back down to Painswick in England where I would meet up with boys and girls from all over the country whose parents also worked abroad. I went there by train by myself and unsupervised.
34. Painswick was night and day compared to Fettes and I loved it. The place was so relaxed and while you couldn't do just anything you liked, there were no rules. It was a wonderful place.
35. Other than that there were no other trips. You were stuck in the grounds and it was a caning offence if you wandered off grounds.

Birthdays and Christmas

36. I never spent Christmas in the same place two years running. I think I was at Painswick once and the following year my mother was at home. Birthdays weren't celebrated by the school though I probably got birthday cards from my parents.

Visits / Inspections

37. I never received visitors. Nobody had visitors and there was no policy in place for relatives visiting. I saw my parents during the summer of 1952 and then I didn't see them again until I left Fettes in 1954.
38. If there were official visitors who were inspecting the school then I was not aware of it.

Healthcare

39. There was a sanatorium with a doctor and a couple of nurses. During one term I was in the sanatorium on four separate occasions on dreamt up sicknesses simply to get away from the school.

Abuse at Fettes

40. The whole place was run under an atmosphere of fear. The cane was the main method of punishment and was usually handed out by the prefects. I was only ever caned once by the prefects and it was for something completely trivial.
41. What happened was that myself and others had come off the rugby fields and went in to the changing rooms. Three of us started throwing a rugby ball about in a way that meant there was no chance of us causing any damage.
42. However, a prefect saw what we were doing and told us that this was not the behaviour expected of gentlemen.
43. Later the whole house was gathered and told that the reading room was out of bounds. Myself and the other two boys who I had been throwing the rugby ball with were told to go and stand outside the reading room.
44. Shortly thereafter the prefects came up the stairs each holding a cane. We were then called into the reading room one at a time and the charges were read out.
45. In the room were two chairs back to back and I was told to kneel on one of them with my backside in the air. The four prefects then took turns of running at me and as they passed me each one would hit me on the backside with their cane. It was agony.
46. The prefects were seventeen or eighteen and were the only other people present during this. There were no adults present though they probably had to let the housemaster know what was happening.
47. During my first term, when I was in Inverleith House, the housemaster was called BXY BXY He once whacked me over the backside with the heel of a leather slipper. I can't remember what I had done but I do recall it being very painful and it left quite a mark on my backside.

48. The only other time I was caned was by an American exchange teacher. I had mouthed off to him and I think he just wanted to prove he could use the cane as well as any of the other teachers.
49. He hit me a couple of times but, to be honest, there was no anger in his strokes and they wouldn't have hurt a fly.
50. Anything could be a caning offence which meant that I spent my whole time there making sure I didn't do anything wrong. The whole place was run like a concentration camp and I couldn't wait to get out of there.
51. The way of life at Fettes was alien to me but not to the others, most of whom had gone through the prep school for Fettes so knew the ins and outs of things and how to follow the rules.

Leaving Fettes

52. I left Fettes in December 1954 when I was sixteen at the end of first term of fourth year. I think by this time my parents knew that I hated the place. I think my dad was disappointed that I hadn't made the most of my time there.

Life after being in care

53. After I left Fettes I moved down to London and stayed in a boarding house near to a hotel where my parents were staying. I had always wanted to fly and wanted to join the RAF but failed the entrance exam twice. It was a time of National Service and just about everybody failed the exam.
54. My dad got me job working on the docks in London but they knew how desperate I was to be a pilot and it was them who suggested I should move to Canada. I made

contact with a Canadian bank and they paid my passage there on condition that I work for them for two years.

55. I travelled to Canada at the age of eighteen with £20 pound in my pocket. I travelled by ship in steerage which took three weeks. I worked with the bank in Toronto for the agreed two years and then joined the Canadian Air Force.
56. I trained for eighteen months and then stayed with the Canadian Air Force for four years. After that it took me eight months to get a job with an airline. I wrote to 49 different airlines though I didn't want to stay in Canada due to the weather and their tax system.
57. In [REDACTED] 1965 I started with [REDACTED] Airline and worked with them for 33 years. After ten years I was able to get free air travel and so moved to Florida in 1976.
58. I married [REDACTED] when I was in the Canadian Air Force but she died from cancer at the age of 48. We had a daughter, [REDACTED] who also died of cancer when she was 41. I later married an air stewardess who died eleven years ago.

Impact

59. I am not the sort of person who thinks that others should shoulder the blame for my problems or mistakes and I doubt, in all fairness, that I would say that my time in Fettes had any great impact on my life.
60. I feel as if I was able to leave it all behind and moved on. My main complaint about Fettes isn't what it did to the rest of my life but what the place itself was like, how it was run and the lack of education I received.
61. I have had a good life and I doubt if even a better education would have improved it as I spent my entire professional life doing what I always wanted, being a pilot. The job was good to me while I was working and has been equally good to me in my retirement.

Reporting of Abuse

62. I once told my dad sometime in the 70's about what Fettes had been like but, while I was there I didn't say anything to anybody. It was something that you just didn't do. I think the partner I'm with now is probably the only person I have ever spoken to about my time in Fettes.

Records

63. I didn't know that there would be records of my time in Fettes and would be surprised if they still existed 64 years later.

Counselling

64. I did see a psychiatrist four or five times for what I would call personal problems but it had nothing to do with my time in Fettes.

Lessons to be Learned

65. I assume that things have already changed to some degree and I'm aware that corporal punishment has been banned. I do wonder though if the system that was in place can be changed. Certainly any changes that are made can only be for the good.
66. 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.

CCV

Signed.....

Dated..... 5 July 2018