

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CBM

Support person present: No

1. My name is CBM. My date of birth is 1960. My address is known to the inquiry.

Background

2. My parents were called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They are both now dead. My mother died in 2002 having suffered from multiple sclerosis for years. My father died before her in 1980.
3. I was a late baby for the time. My mother was thirty and dad was thirty five when I was born. They met through a gliding club. We lived in Kirkintilloch. I have no brothers or sisters.

Life before Boarding School

4. I was two and a half years old when I first entered private education. I attended Partickhill School in Glasgow. It was a day school. My mother was hell bent on me going to boarding school from a very early age. I had childhood illnesses, one after the other. I remember being in hospital to have my adenoids removed. I was six years old. I remember the ward sister threatened to throw me out the window if I didn't behave. I was put in a full sided cot. Not long after that I was shipped off to boarding school. I was never given a reason why. I was told it was none of my business. My mum actually wanted me out a year earlier.

5. My mum was a very selfish woman. She was brought up in a very Edwardian environment. Her father was an Edwardian country gentleman. She didn't go to school till she was nine. She had had a governess. She had attended boarding schools in St Andrews during the war. She attended St Leonard's and St Catherine's. I don't think she had a very happy time.

Duncan House School, Moffat

6. I was only six when I was sent to Duncan House School in Moffat. It later changed its name to St Ninian's in my last year. It's now a retirement home for ex Royal Air Force officers.
7. Our family home was in Kirkintilloch at the time. The A74 was there but it still took an hour and a half to drive even though my dad had a powerful car.
8. We went down to Moffat with the caravan a few days before I was due to start. It was the only time the three of us went on holiday together in my life. I remember making an Airfix model of a Tiger Moth plane with my dad. This 'acclimatisation' period was a waste of time, we were never allowed out the school gates.
9. The school was two Victorian house joined together with a wooden bridge. There were about 60 boys at the school. There were three school houses. I was in Fraser House. One of the other houses was called Dowding. Dowding's house colours were yellow. Our house colour was red.
10. The school's ^{SNR} [REDACTED] was ^{CBN} [REDACTED]. His wife was called ^{CBW} [REDACTED].
[REDACTED]
11. I wasn't quite the youngest. The average age at the time was 7.4 years old. I saw this in one of my school reports recently.
12. All children boarded. We were all protestant, however two catholic boys arrived later. We had religion thumped down our throats. It put me off religion for life.

13. When I first arrived I was shit scared of this new environment. I wasn't used to that many people. This place was very militaristic. My mother's comment was that she very deliberately sent me to someplace with the least discipline. Later, when I went to Merchiston Castle School, no one believed the amount of discipline we had at Duncan House.
14. In my first year there I was taught by ^{CBW} [REDACTED]. There were six of us in the class. Our uniform was all grey and lightweight. We wore grey socks, grey shirts, grey shorts and grey jumpers. All were lightweight. We also had a raincoat which was also lightweight. We were given two ranges of footwear. We had a pair of indoor shoes and a pair of outdoor shoes. We had to wear a red cap and a red tie. The uniform was supplied by our parents.

Routine

School Day

15. In the morning a bell went and we got up. We went down to the classroom to do prep. This was equivalent to homework. If you weren't seen to be studying then all hell broke loose. We had to do this before breakfast. After breakfast we had to attend the school chapel. There was a break mid-morning. We had to do 15 minutes of physical training outside. We were also given warm school milk. We had class time after the break and then it was lunchtime. After lunch we had games. This seemed to be the routine every school day and classes afterwards.
16. I remember my first day playing rugby for games. It must have been one of my first days at the school. I put my kit on but I kept my pants on under my shorts. I didn't know that this was not the done thing. I got a rollicking from the ^{SNR} [REDACTED] for that. The ^{SNR} [REDACTED] liked to shout, he was very loud. He never used a belt for punishment. He used a cane or gym shoes. I don't remember if it was more than just shouting that time.

17. We played rugby in the winter. If the weather was bad we were sent on a run. I used to get lost. I didn't know the area. I tended to be a fat little bugger when I was young.
18. After rugby we had classes again. We did games for about two hours. After games we may have had to do some more prep, I can't remember. I do remember that teatime was 6pm.

Food

19. The food was shit. To this day I can't eat cooked tomatoes because of that school. For some reason we were given a bowl of what looked like stewed tomatoes. We had to eat a specific number. I don't know what would have happened if we didn't eat them. No one ever left any. We just knew that they had to be eaten.
20. It was porridge for breakfast. On many occasions there was carbon floating on top of the porridge. It had obviously been burnt. We were also served bacon and we had to eat all of that, even the rind and fat. The only food you were allowed to leave on your plate was either bone or gristle. No one was allowed to refuse any food in there.
21. You had to sit up straight at mealtimes. You would get a knee in the back or a clip round the ear. This was easy for the teachers as we were sitting at tables of about fifteen.
22. There was a top table for staff and guests. They appeared to eat exotic foods. I remember seeing them eating kiwi fruit and steak. We got standard food, I can't remember the specifics.
23. After tea I think we may have had more prep. We definitely had clubs and societies. One club was pottery. I was quite good at that. There was also a lino printing club and a calligraphy club. You signed up for these clubs when you arrived at school.

Bedtime

24. Bedtime would have been at about seven or eight o'clock. I remember it being earlier in the first term I was there but that was probably because I was young.
25. My dormitory was attached to the larger of the school houses. It was like a wing of this house. There were several dormitories in there. There was a small one for the prefects. The other dorms were bigger and we slept in bunk beds. There were three or four of us in a dormitory my first and second last term. The bedtime routine was always the same. We got changed. We then had to say prayers and then go straight to bed. No member of staff stayed in the dormitories with us but there was always staff around. The headmaster and his wife stayed in the main building.

Bedwetting

26. SNR [REDACTED] would beat anyone that wet their bed. He would beat them with his cane. I didn't have a problem with bedwetting. I had a problem of not wanting to go for a crap. I was given the cane by SNR [REDACTED] to get me out of that. That's how they dealt with it. The whole ethos was, if in doubt, cane the little bugger. I do remember that children who wet their beds would be caned.

Holidays and trips

27. We were never taken on any holidays. I remember we were taken to Hadrian's wall. We were to be taken in the school mini bus, a Bedford CA. It only had about eight or nine seats so we were packed into it like sardines. We were also taken to St Ninian's cave every year. It was down the Galloway coast. There was a beach and we were forced to swim in the sea. It became a bit boring after a few years. The sea was always cold.
28. On a Friday morning we were all taken to Dumfries baths. I remember being taught how to swim there. On a Saturday morning we had more classes then in the afternoon it was games.

29. I remember we were forced to go to the home international rugby matches for Scotland at Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh. We sat in the schoolboys enclosure on the half way line right down at the pitch side, at the front. We were frozen. We basically sat and froze our nuts off. We were sent with inadequate clothing. We sat in our school uniform. We were expected to take a travel rug to school but that was for your bed not for rugby matches.
30. For the first few years, we were allowed half days or one full day at the weekend for parents to come and take us kids out. I was the only Scotland based kid that was never taken out. My parents never visited or took me out for a half day.
31. There was no free time really. Maybe a bit on a Sunday. I think the idea was to keep us as busy as possible. There was a cheque book system and this was used if you wanted to buy something. You would have to go to the headmaster's wife and you bought whatever it was from her. I remember getting the odd plastic Airfix kit. We were also expected to donate to Oxfam using the cheque book system and buy a poppy in November.
32. I remember going home, my father came down and collected me. He took me back to Kirkintilloch. I was straight in to visit my mother. She was sitting up in bed with a headscarf on her head. I remember she was watching the Olympics on the TV in her room. This must have been 1968. The TV was on a chest of drawers. I didn't know at the time that she had recently had surgery. They thought she had a brain tumour, I found this out in January 2002. I was driving the executor of my mother's will to the train station and he told me what the operation was for. Years later they discovered she was actually suffering from multiple sclerosis. The operation changed her personality, but I didn't know that at the time. I was told nothing.

Birthdays

33. No fuss was made if it was your birthday at Duncan House School. If your parents supplied you with a cake then you had to share it with the whole school. I only got a cake once. I think this was for my birthday in 1972. I managed to get my dad to

organise a cake. He had refused to ice it, even though making wedding cakes was his speciality. He got a local baker to ice it. It was a better cake than anyone else had ever had.

Visits/Inspections

34. There was once a school inspection when I was at Duncan House. It was shortly before the [REDACTED] by ^{CBP} [REDACTED] and his wife. The school was given a spruce up. The old shredded bathmats were replaced and new pumice stones appeared to help rub out our any ink on our fingers from fountain pens. The Inspector was there during lunch. The food had improved. It was mince and tatties. We had been warned to behave. The very next day everything was put back to the way it was before. I don't remember the Inspector speaking to me so I don't know if any of the pupils were spoken to.

Medical care

35. The school matron had a room in Dundanion House. It was a medical room with a bed in it. No one ever got use of that bed. It was a case of tough love. I remember seeing Lucozade at the school. It came from the chemist but no kid ever got any of it. We never got any medical treatment unless it was absolutely necessary. If you got a cold, tough. I remember having a sickness bug and I ended up spewing all over the bed in the small dormitory. There were only three beds. I got a bollocking from matron because I didn't do anything to try to make it better. She shouted at me, she was very fierce. I was told to get the sheet off the bed. I remember just sitting there shivering and trying not to puke again. No comfort was offered. This was matron's way of making me feel better. I don't know how old I would've been.
36. There was no one to approach for help or if I felt down. There was one teacher when I first got there who was nice to us. Her name was Miss Money and she was an elderly teacher. She taught nature studies. I remember her giving us cuddles. That was only in my first year. We went to her house once as part of a nature walk. She lived outwith the school in a prefab house.

Abuse

37. I reckon the discipline from SNR [REDACTED] was abusive. It was over the top. Discipline was used all the time. I was on the receiving end many times. The caning was carried out in the privacy of his study. He would use a full stroke. His hand was raised over his head. He seemed to take great delight in it. If you cried, or jolted forward, you got more. If he started with a gym shoe, and you jolted forward or cried, he upped it to the cane.
38. I remember one specific incident. It was a Wednesday. I was in the French room doing afternoon prep. SNR [REDACTED] came into the classroom. I was about seven and a half years old. It was a sunny day. I was daydreaming and looking out the window. I looked round when I heard an enormous roar. SNR [REDACTED] grabbed me by the shoulder of my shirt and dragged me to his study. He started looking in his cupboard for a cane that wasn't broken. He gave me six strokes of the cane. I had red and purple marks on my back and on the back of my legs. The cane had split so it had hit me in two areas. He hit me over my clothes. I was basically hit for not paying attention.
39. I learned later that day that the school cricket team had lost and it would appear that I got his wrath. He vented his anger on me. I have a clear memory of this incident. It was SNR [REDACTED] who had taken the cricket team away that day.
40. You were hit for what seemed like anything. There was a feeling that little boys should be seen and not heard. SNR [REDACTED]'s way of dealing with anything was corporal punishment. There was no predicting when he would use the cane. The reason why SNR [REDACTED] doled it out may have been appropriate but the level wasn't. Six of the cane for someone that's looking out the window for a seven year old, that's totally inappropriate.
41. There was an incident when a block of butter ended up on the ceiling of the dining room. SNR [REDACTED] decided it was one of us younger boys. There was no way that it had been one of us. He went on at length about it for weeks and told us that

one of us had to own up to it and take six of the cane. So I eventually went to him and owned up to just try and get it over and done with. He actually turned round to me and said he knew I hadn't done it. I still got the six strokes of the cane. I had become so acclimatised to receiving this form of punishment. I knew I could cope with it.

42. The other teachers didn't use corporal punishment but the assistant headmaster used the gym shoe for punishment. CBW would spank you over her knee, it wasn't as sore. I suppose that was more appropriate for our age.
43. I was hit before my seventh birthday at the school. I felt terrorised, quite literally. I lived in fear. My parents had never ever lifted a hand to me before or since. I was also going through some bullying. The whole environment was something I was not used to. We were constantly being put down. We were never praised. It felt like they had adopted the military way of breaking us and then build us back the way they wanted us.
44. I'm guessing the caning was toned down towards the end of term so there were no physical signs of it when we went home. However, it felt like we were getting caned all the time. I don't know if they kept a record of all the punishments. One of the things I've thought of over the past 25 years is where are my records? The school is no longer in existence, so where are the records that I even existed?
45. The boys never mixed outwith school as we lived all over the country. There was one boy who lived in Bearsden in my first year at Duncan House. I spent time with him and his family. I remember they took me to the pantomime in Glasgow. I'm sure he was taken out of the school, I don't remember why.
46. There was bullying at Duncan House. There was an enormous amount of name calling. Initially I was called CBM I got called this as I used to say I ended up getting called girls names such as CBM I reacted to the name calling and became an easy target for the bullies. I was not manly but I was not what you would call a mummy's boy.

47. Apparently I was pretty cruel to the younger boys. I don't remember what was going on. I think this behaviour was down to my PTSD and depression.
48. The last couple of terms when I was at Duncan House, a SNR [REDACTED] arrived. His name was CBP [REDACTED]. He arrived with [REDACTED] and a Jaguar mark 10 car. He was an ex RAF fighter pilot.
49. CBP [REDACTED] did not use a cane for punishment. He used a horse crop. No one believes me that I had a SNR [REDACTED] who used a horse crop. He taught [REDACTED]. If he caught you copying a [REDACTED] word wrong from the board, a text book or internal exam paper, then you got a stroke of the horse crop for every mistake. He always struck you on the backside. I don't remember his temper being as bad as CBN [REDACTED]. CBN [REDACTED] I don't think he had such a problem with his temper.
50. There were changes to the school with the SNR [REDACTED]. In general, the ethos remained the same.

Sexual Abuse

51. It happened just before the winter term before the school changed hands. I can't think of a specific date. It must have been the summer term or a warm Easter. We were wearing short sleeves. I went from my classroom in Dundanion House to the toilet. Another boy came in. His name was [REDACTED]. He was bigger than me. I don't know if he was older. He was big built and an awful lot taller. He said to me to take my shorts down. He said I would enjoy it. He then sodomised me. I can picture that wee toilet. From memory this happened to me more than once. There was no one to tell. I didn't know if it was right or wrong. It left me for many years not knowing if I was gay or straight. I think I was only ten or twelve at the time.
52. Oddly, I saw a listing for a programme called the [REDACTED] many years later in the TV pages. It said at the bottom of the listing that if you were interested in this programme then you might be interested in a book written by a [REDACTED] that

accompanied the series. I freaked because I recognised the name. I wondered if this was the same person who abused me at Duncan House School.

53. I don't know if anything else happened of this nature in the school. There was a geography teacher called Mr Roy Tunley. He seemed to have a bee in his bonnet about what was happening at the school. We were told that Mr Tunley had raised some kind of issue and was trying to get something sorted. I don't know what that issue was.
54. Mr Tunley had been a missionary in Africa but he had had a stroke. He seemed to be paralysed down one side. He visited my parents at their home in Kirkintilloch. This had to be before October 1972 because we moved to Kinross then. I don't know what he came to say as I was kicked off to bed. He spoke with my parents. I think he told them some of what was happening at Duncan House. Shortly after his visit the school changed hands. I reckon Mr Tunley knew what was going on. I remember speaking to him at school and he put his hands on my head and prayed. The headmaster and his deputy had him sectioned and sent to the mental hospital at Carstairs.
55. After my father died in 1980, I started to get newsletters from Mr Tunley. I don't know if stuff had been going backwards and forwards before my father's death. It all tended to be religious based so I didn't really read them.

Reporting of abuse

56. I tried to persuade my mother to take me away. Admittedly I told the odd lie but she refused to take me out. My mother was the boss. She had the money. I doubt I told her I was being hit.
57. I'm sure the staff were aware of the strict discipline, the corporal punishment and the bullying. Some of the teachers were also guilty of the bullying in terms of the way they constantly had a go at you. I remember the deputy headmaster telling us to write a nursery rhyme or a story. I had no memory of being read a nursery rhyme

and so struggled to do as I was told. I also struggled to think of an imaginative story. That particular teacher was constantly having a go at me for not having an inventive mind. Perhaps if I wasn't suffering from depression, I might have been able to carry out the work.

Depression

58. The staff must have known I was depressed. As I understand it at the time, experts said that children can't get depressed. I didn't receive any support. The headmaster in my school reports refers to antisocial behaviour. With the benefit of knowing my condition now, and re-reading my school reports, I recognise the symptoms. I believe this was a reference to my depression.

Merchiston Castle School

59. I went straight from Duncan House Prep School to Merchiston Castle School in the autumn of 1974. My name was down for two schools. The other school was Strathallan School in Perth. I chose Merchiston as no one else from Duncan House was going or had gone there. In a meeting with SNR [REDACTED] CBN [REDACTED] before I left Duncan House, I said to him that it would give me a fresh start. I expressed that I had a better chance to go to a school that none of the other boys had been to.
60. I was quite glad to be leaving my prep school. I didn't have a clue what was coming. Merchiston Castle was an all boys boarding school. It still is to this day.

Dormitories

61. I remember there were four big dormitories. They were much bigger than I had been used to. There was a lot of room in between the beds. From memory I was on the first floor. There was no screening between the beds. A boy called [REDACTED] was in the bed next to me. We had the same date of birth ironically!

62. There was a clothes facility at the end of the dormitory. There was a shelf where you could put your clothes out. You could pick your own clothes. It was relaxed that way. There was a uniform. I can't remember when we got to wear our own clothes. Downstairs there was some kind of tiny kitchen. Here the boys could make toast or coffee. We also had access to a telephone. This could be used in your free time. I phoned home one night and my mum said that I sounded depressed. I wasn't aware of what that term meant at that stage. I think this was sometime in the first two years. I don't know if I phoned home a lot.

Food

63. There was a big dining hall. There were four areas where we could sit down as Houses. There was a raised area where the occasional teacher sat. The food was a lot better. I think the teachers had the same food as the pupils. I only remember teachers being there at lunchtime.

Teachers

64. The School had four different 'Houses.' Each house had a housemaster. The house masters lived in a bungalow behind the house they were in charge of. I think some of the teachers stayed on site, I'm not sure. Some of the teachers were right screwballs.
65. There was a teacher called Mr **zozk** He was incredibly tall and skinny. He claimed to be ex SAS. He wore starched collars that were so tight his neck was red raw. Bearing in mind this was the second half of the 1970's and not the 19th century, this was very odd.
66. The Latin master wore three of the cheapest Timex watches. He would wear them all at the same time and average out the time. He wore a different sports jacket every day. The story was he had knocked someone down in his car and they had died and never drove from that day on. He was a nice enough guy.

67. There was also a double barrelled German named teacher. He was older and if you got him excited he would pee himself. We tried to get him to do it, boys will be boys. He would get all frustrated and start to spit and all the rest of it.
68. There was also a teacher who lived behind Pringle House. Pringle House was where the younger boys stayed. Two or three of the boys had tea at another teacher's house behind Pringle House. They said that he had asked them what colour of underpants he was wearing. He then told them it was obvious as they were always the same colour as his socks. We tried to keep well away from this teacher after that.
69. The English teacher, Mr Spalding, was inspirational. He had a different style of teaching. He had long hair and was bald on top, the two didn't go together. He looked odd. He always looked like his hair was greasy.
70. No one picked up on my dyslexia.

Routine

71. When we got up in the morning we got dressed and went straight to the dining hall. Before nine we went to the assembly hall. I think this is where we were given out some information. I can't remember if we sang or not.
72. Then we had classes in the morning. It was then lunch then games. I think there might have been a couple of classes then tea. After tea we did prep. This was when we did our homework. It was carried out in a flat roof extension in the courtyard. This was built in the middle bit of the courtyard and it was split into two.

Clubs

73. There were clubs and activities that you could join. I remember trying to join the Young Farmers Club. I was refused membership. I was asked how many acres we had on the farm. I told them 75 and was basically told to piss off! There were boys who came from farms that had hundreds of acres!

Discipline

74. There were rules at Merchiston about the use of the cane. I believe that a teacher couldn't cane a pupil unless they sought approval of the headmaster. I was caned once. I had been caught with porn and I was caned. It went into the record as deceit rather than specifically why. The cane was used more in relation to rules and procedure. I remember another time I nearly got the cane and I managed to talk myself out of it.
75. The physical education teacher was ex-army. Our class was taken to the blue air hall. We were to play football. I had never played football before in my life and I had no idea what the rules were. I was to be goalie and I had to take my glasses off as I didn't want them to break. Of course I couldn't see a thing and when I started missing the balls the other boys turned on me. So I just turned tail and left. When the PE teacher came back in I wasn't there.
76. I was called to the PE teacher's study. To me, this meant I was going to get a beating. I asked him if I could speak and I told him the full story of how I knew nothing about football. I also told him about the constant bullying. He changed his mind and became very supportive I'm sure he told the headmaster.

Bullying

77. The bullying at Merchiston was very severe and homophobic in its nature. I was bullied from day one. The ring leader was a boy called [REDACTED]. The others joined in. [REDACTED] ended up being the chairman of the [REDACTED]. He was Chairman during the [REDACTED] of 2001/2 and I remember thinking at the time that his bullying at school had stood him in good stead.
78. The bullying wasn't physical, I occasionally got the odd shove. I received verbal insults every day. I couldn't walk down a corridor without someone shouting "watch out boys, bums to the wall". It was mostly the boys in my year. There was not bullying in the classroom as we were obviously being taught. The discipline in

boarding schools is much greater than in a local authority school. There was respect for teachers at boarding school.

79. Another boy in my year was also bullied. His name was [REDACTED]. He had a pimple on top of one ear so he was called '[REDACTED]'. He got a lot of digs about that. He also didn't walk right, I think he was borderline [REDACTED]. A few years ago, [REDACTED] tried to become my friend on Facebook. We had a discussion about school and he rubbished what had happened to him. He didn't see it as serious in any way, shape or form, so I didn't explain it to him. I think I mentioned the bullying at school almost as an apology for my bit of ribbing on him.
80. In my case, I thought if I could have a go at other kids, it would lessen what was happening to me. It was mainly the same boys who bullied [REDACTED] that bullied me. I was constantly being called a poof or a pooffer. I was also shouted at and the boys would shout "bums against the walls boys" whenever I walked down a corridor. It was soul destroying and tiring. In the bullies' defence they had no idea what had happened at Duncan House School. Maybe this explains why it had a worse effect on me. The bullies knew they were causing me distress but they didn't know that I had been raped. They just knew that what they were saying was working, that I would get worked up. It was fun for them. It lasted for a full three years at that school.

Reporting the Bullying

81. There was no one to report the bullying to. I did raise it with the PE teacher and he did try and get me involved with weight training etc. I think this was to try and bulk myself up and give me some self-respect. He approached it in the same way the army would. At least he took an interest.
82. When I mentioned the bullying to the house master in the autumn of 1976 it was ignored.
83. This behaviour made me feel lonely. I remember my mother telling she thought I sounded depressed when I spoke to her on the phone. Nothing was ever done

about it. The school's attitude was that it was character forming. All the boarding schools were the same at that time.

84. It affected my behaviour. I closed down. I was introverted. We were allowed to go out on our bikes but it had to be in groups of more than one. Of course I had no one to go out with so I decided to go out on my own. One day I met some local lads who beat me up and smashed up my bike. They threatened to throw me in front of a train. When I returned to school I was black and blue.
85. I wasn't the only one who was beaten up that day by this group of lads. However, because I had been on my own I seemed to have got the worst beating. I remember there being a big shock factor when I walked into tea that night in the dining room. I think the bullies laid off me for a while after that incident but it did start up again.
86. My father was called and he came down to the school and sorted out my bike. My mother didn't come, she wasn't interested and didn't want anything to do with it. I also spoke to police officers but I couldn't identify anyone involved. I wasn't taken to the hospital. I think matron looked me over and there was nothing broken so I was just left to it.
87. In third year we did our O'levels. We were given two chances to take them. We all had an interview with the housemaster about our choices. I remember discussing science topics. In the end I picked the wrong ones and didn't pass any. I remember telling the housemaster in this interview that I couldn't cope. I don't think I told him outright about the bullying. I told him as much as possible about being bullied without actually using that word. I told him that I kept losing my temper and getting into fights. It seemed that after the slightest bit of getting worked up I would just lose it. I would get into fights with those bullying me and anybody else. Normally no one would ever get hurt because I couldn't fight to save myself.
88. I don't know if my behaviour came to the attention of the staff but I raised it with my house master. His name was Paddy Houston. With benefit of hindsight, I'm taking my behaviour to be part of my PTSD. PTSD is a strange thing. The strangest things in the world can trigger it. It's easy to see what I was going through could trigger it. I

told Mr Houston that I couldn't cope with life at the school. I got no help, no interest. He later went on to become the deputy headmaster for many years.

Third Year Summer Term

89. It all came to a head in the summer term of my third year. It was 1977. I was sixteen years old. I remember I was going to go to see my housemaster to tell him again that I wasn't coping. It was a Sunday morning before going to church and we were getting changed into our kilts. I just lost my rag and hit out a boy called [REDACTED]. I hit him. It wasn't so severe. I then got changed into my own clothes and cycled all the way to my parents when everyone else was at church. At that time they had a farm [REDACTED] but they also had a house in Kinross. My mother had bought it a few years before and had done it up. I stopped off at this house in Kinross. My dad's best friend caught me at the farm and he called my dad.
90. My dad came to the farm from in Kinross. My mother didn't come, she didn't want anything to do with it. My dad took me back to school. In the car we had a big discussion about what was going on. Back at school, I remember the two of us trying to discuss what was going on with my housemaster and my dad asking my housemaster to allow me some sort of 'bolt hole' where, if things got bad, I could try and disappear to. He tried his damndest to get something done about it. My dad was told that no one got special treatment. The conversation was about how I was feeling and how I couldn't cope. I also spoke about the bullying behaviour. The headmaster referenced the conversation in my school report so my housemaster must have let him know. They both knew how it was affecting me. The school made it clear they were not going to make an exception to allow me to cope. I can't remember what my dad's response was but I remember feeling so chuffed he had stood up for me.
91. Near the end of that term, another incident happened. I was in the common room and I got into a ruckus with a boy called [REDACTED]. It was pretty serious. For some reason all the boys were allowed to carry pen knives. I really don't remember how it all happened but during a fight I went into my pocket and I took out the knife. The knife then entered [REDACTED]'s left arm. The knife fell to the floor. I do remember

picking it up off the floor and telling the housemaster what had happened. I think I was in his study. I was told to sit down and not move. He went to check on [REDACTED] I'm guessing they called for matron too. They must have contacted my parents that evening. I had been kept apart from the rest of the school. [REDACTED] ended up getting two stitches.

92. It was agreed that I would go home. I wasn't being expelled. I was to come back on exam days and be picked up straight after the exam. No other action was taken. I guess [REDACTED]'s father was in agreement with this approach. I was due to leave that school that term anyway.
93. As far as I'm concerned, this incident was a result of PTSD. I had been pleading for help and the school had basically told me to bugger off. After this incident with [REDACTED], it was like a bubble had been burst. It brought an end to me losing it with people. I have never hit another human being since this incident. I used to lose my temper through frustration. I would hit out with a hammer at a wheel of a tractor or a worktop or something like that. But now I just scream inside my head.

Perth High School

94. It had already been decided prior to these incidents that at the end of my third year at Merchiston that I would be leaving. My mother said it had all been a waste of her money, that I had been a waste of money and it was my fault. She used those exact words 'wasting all her money.' It was planned that I would go to Perth High School for fifth year. It was an incredibly stressful experience as I wasn't used to mixing with the opposite sex. I was quite happy there and nothing went wrong. Perth High School had a full range of subjects. I was not academic but I was practical. They had non-academic classes like metal work and woodwork.
95. After leaving Perth High School I attended Elmwood College in Cupar. I did a course in Agriculture and Engineering and then went on to do 3 farming courses.

Life after the School

96. Since leaving school I have suffered from mental health problems. I suffer from chronic treatment resistant depression. I reference PTSD but my psychiatrist will not diagnose me with this. He is dodging a bullet. There is also the possibility that I have asperger syndrome. This is being looked into. I've been on anti-depressants since 2000. I am also prescribed lithium. Two different psychiatrists disagreeing whether I suffer from bi-polar disorder.
97. I also suffer from type 2 diabetes. The inactivity from my depression has caused this, due to lack of movement. I generally don't look after myself. I also suffer from high blood pressure, high cholesterol and gout.

Relationships

98. The problem I had from a very young age was that my parents barely spoke to each other in my presence. I never saw any affection between them. They never went out. We used to get the odd visitor from the gliding club. My father was loved by everyone and no one wanted to have anything to do with my mother.
99. The boarding schools did no social education. The only females we saw were the cleaning ladies or matron. I had no idea what to do or how to be with a woman.
100. My only long term relationship I have ever had was with my ex-wife, [REDACTED]. I didn't know I was straight until I met [REDACTED]. We met in Auld years' night 1981/1982. I had just turned 21. I had kept on thinking that I must be gay up to meeting her.
101. When [REDACTED] announced that she wanted a baby. I couldn't cope. I told her at the time that I wasn't keen on financial grounds. The farm was losing £30,000 a year, I said it was down to money. In reality I just didn't want any child to go down the same route as me. [REDACTED] knew some of what happened. We had a son in 1991 and [REDACTED] left me when he was thirteen months old. She ran off with my son's godfather. I never knew you had to work at a marriage, so I didn't. I never saw my parents speaking to each other. I had no idea how relationships worked. I blame what

happened to me as a child. It wrecked my marriage and destroyed my relationship with my mother. When I told her I had been abused her exact response was "oh well, it happens." She disinherited me in favour of my son. I'm not bothered by that.

102. If I were to find myself in another relationship, I never want to forget the mistakes I made in the last one and hopefully I'll never make them again.
103. My relationships are crap. I virtually have no friends. I lost a lot of them when [REDACTED] left. We had both been part of a motor sports club and they let her affair develop between [REDACTED] and the man she had the affair with. I felt betrayed by the other members. I am condemned to be a single man for the rest of my days. Some of that might be down to my aspergers.

Educational Impact

104. They didn't diagnose my dyslexia at any of the schools I attended. I realise that dyslexia was not a big thing at the time. I remember a boy at Duncan House School had it so they knew about the existence of dyslexia. I left school with no highers, I couldn't have gone on to university. I did end up doing an Higher National Diploma. I tried to convert it into a degree but that's basically when I hit the wall with the dyslexia. I couldn't cope with the reading list.

Economic Impact

105. Basically I went bust. Most people go upwards when it comes to wealth. They start with no house and then buy their first one. Then the houses start getting bigger and bigger. Well I kind of went backwards. I started with a big house and got smaller and now my house is rented and I've got no money.
106. I think the fact I'm introverted and suffer depression has meant that I tend to think negatively. I have an incredible problem with motivation, which is down to the depression. I've always tended to have to be self-employed as I can't get a decent job otherwise.

After School Contact

107. I wrote to Merchiston Castle school many years after I left about the bullying and them not diagnosing my dyslexia. I got a curt reply from the headmaster saying that the bullying did not exist and that they had a clean bill of health. I just feel they will never be able to stop it in any school environment but the school should deal with bullying immediately.
108. For some reason, I went to see Paddy Houston, my former housemaster to tell him about the abuse. This was sometime between late 1992 and May 1994. He was very pleasant. I certainly wasn't shown the door. We didn't spend a lot of time talking about the bullying as his daughter was there. It wasn't a scheduled meeting. It happened in his home.

Records

109. I have kept all my school reports from Duncan House school and Merchiston Castle School. As I stated earlier, I have no idea where my school records are for my prep school as Duncan House school is no longer in existence. This worries me.

Support

110. I have been to a number of agencies. I have been to Kingdom Abuse Survivor's Project also known as KASP twice. I went to a support group in Falkirk but it just didn't feel right. I went back to KASP recently and spent time with a counsellor there but I think we may have hit a brick wall.
111. I have been teetotal since 1985. I've never done drugs so I've been very fortunate. I know a lot of survivors do turn to drugs to cope. I realised that I was still suffering from the abuse when my wife left me. My mother's sister and her husband had been visiting at that time. They live in Canada. When they went home I had a conversation with them both on the telephone. I just burst out with it that I had been abused at both boarding schools. They were both great with me. I don't know why I opened up with them. Maybe because my aunt has some experience with social

work. [REDACTED] leaving me acted as a catalyst. I suddenly started using the word abuse relative to what happened.


Lessons to be Learnt

112. I wouldn't condemn all boarding schools for everybody. I do believe there is a place for them. In general there are two types of people. There are the gregarious types who enjoy the boarding school lifestyle. I unfortunately was not one of those. I was the other type. I was shy and had self-esteem issues. For people like me, we should never have been sent to a boarding school. I could've been sent to a private day school like Dollar Academy.
113. I do believe that some of what happened would never happen now. Some of that might be down to legislation as there is no corporal punishment in schools now. I believe there is a much bigger focus on looking after kids that there wasn't then. We were just seen as a commodity. My son went to the local school in Kinross and then the local High School. I see him having friends that he has had since nursery. I have none of that.

Hopes for the Inquiry

114. I don't expect anything to happen for me. I feel I am able to draw attention to the two boarding schools that I attended. I already know that Merchiston Castle School is in the public eye. I would be interested to know if anyone else from Duncan House School has come forward.
115. We all have to do our part for society. I feel we have to learn from what happened and stamp it out. I would like these religious schools to accept what happened and to atone for what happened. It would be great for Merchiston to acknowledge what went wrong and apologise for their neglect when I pleaded for help.

116. 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... 28/03/2017