

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ITM

Support person present: No

1. My name is ITM. I am known as ITM. That was the name that I was known by when I went to boarding school. My date of birth is 1959. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going to Boarding School

2. I was born in Rottenrow Maternity Hospital in Glasgow. I lived with my mother, my father, and my three siblings at Glasgow. I have an older brother called . He is one year older. My sister, is one year younger than me and my younger brother, is maybe five years younger than me. My father was an English Literature lecturer with a classics background. He taught at University. He has now passed away. My mother is still alive.
3. To cut a long story short, my mother and father had a pretty disastrous marriage. They split up when I was about five or six. That is part of the reason why I was sent to boarding school. My father always wanted to send us to boarding school, but not the ones in Scotland. He really wanted us to go to school south of the border.
4. The separation and subsequent divorce court case for them was absolutely horrible. In those days it was just a battle zone. There was lots of resentment and it was not fun. As part of the divorce agreement, my parents split responsibility for the education of the children in the family. My father had control over the education of the two older

kids, me and my brother. My mother had control over the education of my younger sister and brother. She sent them to local schools.

5. After the divorce, my mother moved to Bearsden and she is still there. I was sent to Bearsden Primary School for one or two years, but my father felt a boarding school education would be better for me and my elder brother. We were sent to Lathallan School, near Montrose, then onto Fettes College. My younger sister was sent to Laurel Bank School and my younger brother was sent to Glasgow Academy. I think the idea of sending us to boarding school was so that we weren't witnessing trouble at home and weren't being sent back and forward between parents.

Lathallan School, Brotherton Castle, Johnshaven

6.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

7.

8.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

9.

10.

11.

12.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

13.

14.

15.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

16.

17.

18.

19.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

20.

21.

22.

23.

24.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

25.

26.

27.

28.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

29.

30.

31.

32.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

33.

34.

35.

36.

37.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

38.

39.

40.

41.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Leaving Lathallan School

42. I completed my primary education at Lathallan School and did a thing called a 'common entrance exam' before I left. The exam is a common occurrence in boarding schools to determine which secondary boarding school you will move on to.
43. I began my secondary education at Fettes College which is where my brother moved on to after Lathallan School.

Fettes College, Edinburgh

Early memories of being at Fettes College

44. I don't remember anything about my first days at Fettes other than the initiation rites, inflicted on us by the prefects. They were absolutely ridiculous and quite shocking.

Boarding houses

45. There were six boarding houses at Fettes. They were: Arniston, Glencorse, Kimmerghame, School House, Carrington and Moredun.
46. I was in Kimmerghame house. Our housemaster was Mr RHC. He lived in the boarding house with his wife. I imagine he was also a teacher at the school, but I don't remember being taught by him, so can't say what he taught. There were no other adults in the building. That's simply not enough adults to supervise all of the boys. It felt like the house was run by the prefects. There must have been other teachers in

from time to time, but it's surprising just how much was delegated to the seventeen or eighteen year old prefects.

Routine at Fettes College

Daily routine

47. I wish I could remember these details more clearly. I guess we would have got up and walked to the dining hall to have breakfast, likely a couple of bits of bacon. After breakfast we would have gone back to our boarding house. We spent a lot of time marching back and forward between the two. We would have lessons in the morning, then lunch. I don't remember evening meals particularly.

Sleeping arrangements

48. In my boarding-house, there was one long dormitory upstairs. I don't know if everybody slept in there or if there was another room. In my dormitory, there were cubicles with partitions up to a certain height. Your head and shoulders would certainly be above the partition walls. There was a long corridor between these cubicles. There must have been thirty or so boys in that dorm. The first one or two cubicles were allocated to prefects who had to maintain order in the dormitory. The prefects would have been seventeen or eighteen. It felt quite ecclesiastical church like in terms of the dark décor. It was not my favourite place.

Mealtimes / food

49. At mealtimes, we had to walk up passed the old school building to the new modern dining hall, which to me seemed vast. My boarding house was probably furthest away from the dining hall. That's where everything happened at school; assemblies, announcements and so on.

50. The food at Fettes was fine. I remember mainly liking the food. I don't remember any issues at mealtimes, other than the odd food fight.

Washing / bathing

51. There were shower facilities in our boarding house. I'm a real visual memory person and I just can quite picture them.

Schooling

52. I didn't enjoy school. I was always trying to catch up. One of the reasons the education was so bad there, was because there was no contextual background. You could be learning French, but not know where France was. There were some things that I got on well with because I loved the subject. If I loved the subject it was fine, but anything I didn't love wasn't made possible for me to understand. I would panic any time I had to go into an exam because I really didn't know what was going on. There was never any real effort made to assist or support me. They just didn't know how to keep an eye on you if you were struggling.
53. English was my favourite subject. It was taught by an American guy who died a couple of years ago. I admired him. I thought he was deeply into his subject and that's great. Art was my great success and I had a fantastic art teacher. I did get my O'levels but I can't remember my grades. I know I did well in English and art as I did A'levels in those subjects.

Religious instruction

54. There really wasn't any great religious aspect to either the schooling or the boarding at Fettes. Religion was there and you spent quite a lot of time in the church, but you weren't really being taught anything. Confirmation was a thing that some people decided to go and do, but you had to want to do it. There were also Christian Study Groups which you could join and that was a good way of getting to go on camps. I think I went to Aviemore once, possibly more, with one of these groups.

55. I was savvy enough to know that you couldn't always trust people and I just thought there was something creepy about the whole religion thing. It wasn't for me.

Leaving the school grounds

56. It was possible for us to leave the school grounds at times. That led to various major and minor scandals during my school time. The school was naturally terrified of bad publicity. People were interested in public schools then, so of course they hushed things up as much as they could.
57. Drug use at Fettes was a shared problem with Edinburgh Academy and it got into the papers. It wasn't actually as big a problem as people thought. In those days, drugs were relatively new and we had hippies and all that sort of stuff. I was once rusticated for drug use when I was a naive fourteen or fifteen year old. My friend and I got stoned once above a pub in Comely Bank and I tried to buy drugs once in Princes Street, but was sold something that was probably plasticine. Somehow, we got busted and my friend and I were suspended for that. I knew at the time that we were the scapegoats. Some people at the school were doing proper drugs, but we were the ones who ended up out of school. I wasn't away long, but I was sent to think about whether I wanted to come back.
58. When we left the school grounds, we had to wear our uniform so we did stand out like sore thumbs. We were targets and people would wait for us outside the school gates. We were victims in that sense. We ended up involved in pitch battles with other schools, in which one boy from Fettes was blinded in a local park. If we went up to Princes Street we could find ourselves confronted by a bunch of kids from another school. I remember taking cover in a fast food restaurant from these guys who chased us all the way along Princes Street. That meant that going out of school wasn't just an exciting experience, it was also scary. That said, fighting was a part of life in those days.

Family Contact

59. I would say that, while I was at Fettes, I didn't see my parents any more than I saw them when I was at Lathallan, despite Fettes being significantly closer. Again, there would be open days that they could come to, but I don't remember them coming to the school very often.
60. Most of my contact with my parents was during the school holidays. During term time, I don't think we were encouraged to go home. There were plenty of boys who couldn't, because their parents lived miles away. I think it was a case of 'why should you be going home at weekends when other people aren't able to'.
61. I don't even remember my parents getting in touch very often by letter or telephone. They did occasionally send my brother and I things, but I think there was only really a telephone call if something was wrong. The only phone in the boarding house was in the housemasters office. When I think about it now, it makes me feel quite abandoned.

Pastoral care

62. Despite the limited parental contact, the school didn't provide any pastoral care. It was probably the housemaster's wife's job, but you never really saw her. I'm sure there were boys who felt very isolated. I had enough friends to be ok. I know my brother had a harder time than me. He was bullied in a way I wasn't.

Abuse at Fettes College – peer on peer abuse

63. There were ridiculous and shocking initiation rites imposed by the prefects. These were tasks which the new boys were given and you didn't really have a choice as to whether you participated. The tasks were set by the senior house prefects and I imagine each house had their own set of tasks. I think they called it 'fag's week'.

64. I remember nearly drowning in the swimming pool during my first week at the school. A prefect called [REDACTED] decided I was going to have a swimming race with him. While we were in the pool, he held my head underwater until I panicked. He did it over and over again. I also remember having to sit an exam full of dodgy questions set by the prefects. That could be taken as fun, but it wasn't. There was a sense that the consequences would be serious if you got it wrong.
65. The school sanctioned 'fag's week' in a similar way that universities sanction 'freshers week'. That initiation to the school was handed over to prefects to run which was just a ridiculous idea.
66. The prefects had a room in the house, just off the central communal area. They kept a very large urn in there, large enough to stick a small child in. If the prefect wanted to punish somebody, which they had no right to do, they would lift them up and stick their head in the top of this smelly urn. That's the kind of relationship you had with the prefects.

Abuse at Fettes College – specific incidents relating to me

67. The boys were beaten at Fettes [REDACTED]. I recall being beaten by the headmaster, Anthony Chenevix-Trench, on one occasion with a cane. I was also beaten by Mr [RHC] on more than one occasion, again with a cane. We had to drop our trousers, but got to keep our pants on. The cane would leave lines on your bum.
68. The boys talked a lot about strange teachers. Everyone assumed Anthony Chenevix-Trench was dodgy, mainly because of his peculiar manner.
69. I was sexually abused by a teacher at Fettes when I was around thirteen or fourteen years old. I had been cross country running, which I was good at. There was more than one teacher that would take us running, but on this particular day it was Mr [DXM] or [DXM]. I think he was a [REDACTED] teacher. I'd say he was in his mid-

thirties. He was quite a strange, slimy individual but for some reason or another, we trusted him at the time. He took me to the showers afterwards. It wasn't the normal showers that I would use after sports. I remember them being posher and smarter. They were possibly the teacher's showers.

70. Why I would be naked in the showers with a teacher, I don't know. It didn't occur to me at the time. Mr [DXM] or [DXM] was in the shower on the left hand side, looking towards the entrance. He began this ruse trying to explain how to breathe properly when running. His way of showing me that he was breathing properly was to have me hold on to his nuts while he had an erection. I don't remember him having an orgasm and I don't know if he touched me. I don't think he did. I have no memory of immediately before or after, or how I extricated myself for the situation.
71. I think there was another boy with me in the showers, possibly a boy called [REDACTED] but I don't remember that clearly. I did speak to [REDACTED] about it afterwards and he had a similar experience to me, but I can't be sure it was at the same time. I don't know how I would have brought it up to [REDACTED] if he hadn't been there.

Reporting of abuse whilst at Fettes College

72. [REDACTED] and I decided to go to the headmaster, Anthony Chenevix-Trench, to report what happened in the showers. I don't know how long after the incident we went to the head. I just remember the very scary walk to his office. I don't know what happened after we reported, but the teacher involved left shortly afterwards. I don't have any recollection of my parents being informed by the school or involved in any way. I never told them what happened.

Life after boarding school

73. I left Fettes when I was eighteen years old. I went to Dundee Art College which was amazing, but I dropped out during the first year. I went to live in the Western Isles for

a while and eventually went back to art college in Aberdeen to finish my degree and post graduate studies. After that, I lived in Spain for two years and I've worked with various theatre companies. I went back to the Western Isles and was involved in the setup of Scotland's [REDACTED] art centre. I also trained as a teacher, but that wasn't for me. Latterly, I've worked as a graphic designer for a number of years.

74. My partner at the time abducted my daughter through the night and took her to Edinburgh. That's how I ended up back in Edinburgh. I went through the courts to get custody, but my ex-partner accused me of everything under the sun, including child abuse. None of it was true and I came out the other side. My daughter is now thirty and my son, from my current relationship, is thirteen.

Impact

75. My family background and parent's divorce had a far bigger impact on me than school. I never told my parents about anything that went on at Lathallan or Fettes. After I reported it to the headmaster, I was able to think nothing of it. There's always the risk that I might have buried it in my subconscious somewhere, but I don't think that's the case. I never think about it as something terrible that happened to me. It's just something that happened.

Reporting of abuse after leaving boarding school

76. I have not reported any of the abuse I suffered at boarding school since leaving.

Lessons to be Learned

77. I'm quite sure that, since my time in boarding school, many changes have been made and they have got their act together, to some extent. I also expect there have been improvements in the pastoral care received by children and more involvement of

parents. Hopefully, the things I experienced are in the past. There are of course hundreds of changes that could have been made at the time I was there, but it's not really my thing to comment on that.

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

Signed..........
Dated.....19 July 2023.....