

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PLB

Support person present: No

1. My name is PLB my date of birth is the 1964. I am 53 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. The children's homes I want to tell you about are (1) Ladyfield Children's Psychiatric Unit 1971 – 1972, (2) Harmeny House, Balerno, near Edinburgh (3) Merkland Children's Home, Moffat, for two spells between 1975 – 1976 and 1978 – 1980, (4) Closeburn Assessment Centre for two spells between 1976 and 1978. I cannot be sure of the exact dates and I cannot remember the names of a lot of the people I met in the care system.

Background

3. I was adopted as a baby at six months old by and . Three years later they adopted my sister . My sister was very manipulative, and over the years she succeeded in splitting up my adoptive mother and father. My mother and slept in one room while my father and I slept in another room. My father was very docile. I never met my birth parents as this was the procedure when you were adopted.
4. All the way through my life my mother has been influenced by my sister. In later life my sister was instrumental in getting my mother to change her Will to leave everything to her. She also caused my mother and father to divorce. She was the

cause of all my early life problems as I was accused of doing things that she had done like killing the budgie or stealing things.

5. I am still having legal battles with my sister over the estates of my mother and father. Basically she has taken everything and I have been left with nothing. She convinced my mother that I had a mental illness because I didn't pay her enough attention when she was a young child.

Life before care

6. My early life before care was spent trying to stay out of trouble with my mother as my sister was manipulating my parents and telling them that I was misbehaving all the time. My sister would steal things and then blame me. My mother always believed my sister [REDACTED].
7. My mother thought that I had mental health problems. She contacted the social services and I was seen by psychologists. They all told my mother that there was nothing the matter with me. I was eventually put into Ladyfield Children's Psychiatric Unit at the Crichton Hospital Dumfries at the request of my mother for further examination.

Ladyfield Children's Psychiatric Unit, Crichton Hospital, Dumfries 1970

8. I was placed in this institution for about two weeks when I was six years old. I don't remember much about it, but it was felt by the staff that there was nothing the matter with me. There were no instances of abuse, and I can't provide you with much information about this place.

Leaving Ladyfield Children's Psychiatric Unit, Crichton Hospital, Dumfries

9. When I left Ladyfield at age six I went home for a while but my sister [REDACTED] was still causing trouble for me. When I went into primary five I was sent to Harmeny House in Balerno near Edinburgh. I don't know why I was sent there but it was at my mother's request.

Harmeny House, Balerno near Edinburgh 1973 – 1974

10. I was at Harmeny House for about a year. Again I have no real recollection of being there, but there were no incidents of note and I assume that I was treated well. At the end of primary six I returned home where I remained until the end of primary seven.

Leaving Harmeny House, Balerno 1974

11. I remained at home till I started secondary school. I was most of the way through my first year when Peter Harley called at the school and took me out of my geography class. He discussed my home situation with me and he told me that I would be better off at Merkland School where I would not have the problems with my sister.. He asked me if I would like to go to Merkland Children's Home in Moffat. Peter Harley was the head house parent at Merkland Children's Home. He took me to Merkland to look round the home and introduced me to all the staff. At the time he tried to persuade me to stay at the home from that moment on. At the end of the tour I told him that I didn't want to go there.
12. At that time I also requested that Peter Harley take me back to Dumfries High School where I had to collect some football programs. I got the impression that he wasn't going to take me back and he even offered to collect my clothes from my mother's house. I told him that if he didn't take me back I would accuse him of

kidnapping me. I smelt a rat as I didn't want to stay there. I was trusting my instincts and felt that something was wrong.

13. I do remember that I attended children's panels. My mother was convinced that there was something not right with me, and despite the social workers and psychologists telling her that there was nothing wrong with me she persisted in trying to get them to declare that I had a mental illness. She kept changing social workers when they didn't agree with her. She was still being manipulated by my sister.
14. The psychiatrist that saw me at the Crichton Hospital was called Dr Curragh. He kept telling my mother that there was nothing wrong with me. It was around this time that my parents divorced and my sister went to live with my mother.

Merkland Children's Home, Moffat 1976

15. During my first year at senior school and two days after my visit to Merkland Children's Home I was at the pictures with my friends. I came out of the cinema and Peter Harley approached me in the street. He grabbed hold of me and forced me into the back of a mini bus. I was tied up with washing line. My friends I was with were also trying to rescue me. There was another man who I didn't know in the mini bus who sat on top of me to keep me calmed down. I was then taken to Merkland Children's Home in Moffat. I was kidnapped. I was taken there against my will. I think I was sent there because my mother was hitting me and it was for my protection. I think it was the decision of the local council.
16. On arrival at the home my clothes were taken off me, and I was put into bed. I was completely naked. It was a Friday night. When I woke up the morning after I was given a pair of pyjamas but no slippers. This was to stop me from running away.
17. I remember I got up and went down to the television room, and all the other children were watching Saturday morning television programs. I didn't know any of them so I just sat in the corner on my own. I felt strange just sitting there in my pyjamas.

18. I was in pyjamas for three to four days until I was taken on a holiday to Gatehouse of Fleet.
19. Merkland was mixed sex and had one female and two male dormitories. There was a dormitory for older boys and one for younger ones. There was a total of about twenty children resident. All the residents were of school age and attended local schools. I did recall that when a lot of the boys left Merkland they joined the army. The school was not a secured place and you could come and go.

Routine

Mornings and bedtime

20. We were woken up by the staff in the morning. We then went down for breakfast. After breakfast we had to do some cleaning jobs which included drying the dishes and tidying up after breakfast. Everyone had a different job and this is how you earned your pocket money by doing the jobs. I always got the worst job which was doing the dishes because JDW allocated them and she didn't like me.
21. I first arrived during the summer holidays. I did not need to attend school. When the holidays were over we would then walk to Moffat Academy to commence schooling.
22. There was a playroom, a television room and good grounds to play football. There was a five-a-side football pitch where I spent most of the time playing with the other boys.
23. Bedtime varied depending on what age you were. Each of the dormitories also had a television. During my first spell at Merkland I was in the younger boys dormitory and for the second spell I was with the older boys.

24. There was a bath and a shower room. Every Sunday night was bath night and Mr Harley always supervised the baths. If you came home from weekend leave on a Sunday he would bath you. You could have a shower at any time.
25. I went home every weekend to my mother's house. This didn't start immediately but it built up to every weekend. I would also spend large chunks of the school holidays at home. I stayed out of the way of my sister and played with my pals. My sister was still sleeping in my mother's room and I slept in the same room as my father.

Bed-wetting

26. I was a bed wetter when I was living at home because of the way I was treated by my mother. I continued at Merkland. Most days at Merkland I would be forced to keep on my wet pyjamas and sheets until they dried. I also received a belt on the back side from a sand shoe. It was always Peter Harley that his you.

Staff

27. PH-JDW [REDACTED] ran the home. There was [REDACTED] house parents. There was also a cook, cleaning staff and a laundry lady. There was a local lassie called JDV [REDACTED] who lived nearby and helped out. She was not resident at the home.
28. The house parents who also lived at the home had three sons called [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and another I can't remember the name of, but he was by age the middle son. I also can't remember the names of the house parents. The house parents did change from time to time.
29. I remember a man who I met first met at Harmeny House in Balerno coming to Merkland to work. His name was John Deer and he was a very nice caring person. He was a big Welshman. PH-JDW [REDACTED] didn't take to him and made his life a misery. They bullied him because I think he had discovered what had been going on. I remember him leaving the home in tears after a short period of time.

30. There was another man called PXG [REDACTED] who came to work in the home. I think that he had previously worked with PH-JDW [REDACTED]. He was a small statured man and he didn't do anything to me but I suspect that he was abusing some of the very young boys.

Discipline

31. There was a formal discipline where Mr Harley would get you to bend over a chair, lower your pyjamas trousers and use a belt on your naked backside. This was a regular occurrence during the week and was often done in front of the other boys. You would be disciplined for running away or skipping school. JDW [REDACTED] would often get Peter Harley [REDACTED] to beat you for literally anything. She used yo get pleasure from watching the beatings. I am also certain that JDW [REDACTED] was well aware of the sexual abuse Peter Harley [REDACTED] was subjecting the residents of the home to. The beatings were very violent and very regular. I don't remember it happening to any of the girls.
32. On one occasion when I ran away when Peter Harley was on holiday. There was a houseparent at the home called John Deer who was a Welshman. He gave me the belt on that occasion. It was a recorded punishment which I accepted as the penalty for running away. He was a decent man and didn't try to injure me with the belt he was obliged to punish me .

Food

33. My memory of the food was that it was fine and I had no complaints. When we were at school we had school dinners, and when we were on holiday we got three meals a day.

School

34. I attended Moffat Academy when I was resident at Merkland. In my second spell at Merkland I did well in my preliminary exams and the school anticipated that I would get all A grades and a couple of B grades. I sat six o'levels but failed them all.

35. *Religion*

36. There was no religion discussed and I wasn't made to go to church.

Holidays

37. The first week I arrived at Merkland was during the school holidays. I was taken on a camping holiday to Gatehouse of Fleet. There must have been about ten boys on this camping trip, but I can only remember [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] being there.

Running away

38. Between the spells I spent at Merkland I must have run away on at least six occasions. You got punished when you were brought back to the home. Peter Harley would make you drop your pyjamas in front of the other children and hit you with a belt on your bare backside.

Birthdays and Christmas

39. You spent the school holidays at home for as long as my mother wanted me. You were at home for Christmas for nine days. Mr Harley would make you open the birthday cards in front of him and check for money. If there was money he would pay some of it into your account . I don't know what happened to the rest. Birthdays were not really celebrated.

Pocket money

40. You did get pocket money and it was enough to buy sweets and cigarettes. I can't remember how much we got, but it seemed to be enough to get by on.

Visits/Inspections

41. I was getting visits from my family when I was not getting home at the weekends. After the visits Mr Harley would search you for any money.
42. There was a designated social worker who was assigned to me. She was called Fiona Douglas. She got on well with my mother. She was an occasional visitor at Merkland.

Medical care

43. There was a local GP in Moffat that we could use and a dental surgery had just opened up. There was also a school nurse at Moffat Academy that I had access to if I needed it. There was plenty of medical help.

Abuse suffered at Merkland Children's Home

44. The abuse started on the first trip to Gatehouse of Fleet. I had only been at Merkland for a few days. The rest of the boys were away somewhere and I was alone with Peter Harley. I was told to accompany him in the minibus to get some supplies. He drove me up a country lane and raped me in the back of the minibus.
45. I didn't know what to make of it. I was horrified, hurt and bleeding. I wasn't aware of what sex was all about. This was the first time that it happened and I was terrified. I was alone in the world. I couldn't tell anyone what had happened. I can't describe to anyone the feeling of isolation and loneliness. I couldn't believe it was real. This was to be the first of many times that I was raped by Peter Harley.
46. After he raped me we went into town and he bought the supplies and we took them back to the other boys. I just couldn't believe it as it happened out of nothing. I am still impacted by this memory which I can't get out of my mind.

47. You had to do a lot of cross country running when you were at Merkland. If you were in last place Mr Harley would drive the minibus tracking you till he caught you. He would hen rape you in the back of the minibus. We all learned to run faster.
48. Mr Harley either owned or had access to a cottage in Wamphray which is a small village near Moffat. He would take me to the cottage and rape me. He also used to take other boys there. At Merkland he would come down in the night and take one of the boys up to his flat where he would abuse them. It begs the question as to what JDW was doing at this time.
49. I was also taken to his flat to be abused. I was abused in Peter Harley's office and in the minibus. I can't tell you what went on with both RFB and JDW JDW were well aware of what was happening, if not involved.
50. He would also come down during the night and take a boy up to his flat when he had visitors. One of his regular visitors was RFB from the local police force. I cannot say that RFB was involved but he was often there in the flat when Peter Harley took a boy up there.
51. I still have a scar on the back of my head where JDW hit me with a screwdriver. It was a deep cut but I was not allowed to go for medical attention and it healed itself. There was many other occasions when JDW would whack you on the body with her old fashioned slippers which had wooden soles. There was no reason for her to hit you, she just did it randomly and very often.
52. JDW would cause boys to fight with other boys as a means of punishment. I can remember this happened to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I am ashamed to say that I was part of one of the groups that attacked these boys and gave them a real good kicking. They should have been hospitalised. She instigated the attacks and if you didn't partake you would be the next victim. I don't know why she ordered these attacks. JDW was a very sadistic woman and should have been sent to jail when Peter Harley was sentenced for the rapes.

53. PLS [REDACTED] the social worker must have known what was going on. He used to come on the swimming trips to the local baths. We used to change in a large communal area. There was also a more private area behind this communal area which Harley and PLS [REDACTED] used. The odd boy used to change with PLS [REDACTED] or Peter Harley. PLS [REDACTED] was present when I told the psychologist about being raped. He had to know what was going on.
54. I received several serious hidings from Peter Harley. They were very severe beatings, and he told me that if I told anyone he would kill my father. I loved my father and he was a very small placid man. I really feared for him so I kept quiet. When Harley found out that PLS [REDACTED] had taken me to see a psychologist or a psychiatrist he seriously assaulted me. He left me with severe body and facial injuries including a damaged nose, a black eye which was closed and I had bleeding from my left ear. I felt that I needed to get medical help but Harley refused to take me.
55. Peter Harley was Welsh, and he used to take the boys on holidays to Wales where he would visit some of the schools that he had previously worked in. I was also raped by Harley on these trips. I was later interviewed by the Welsh Police about these incidents.
56. I remember on one occasion we stayed in Wales at a caravan near an airport. I was abused on this trip. JDW [REDACTED]'s mother worked as a cook nearby. I think that her surname was [REDACTED]. She later became the cook at Merkland. She was quite a nice person as was her husband [REDACTED].
57. There was also a local man called RFD [REDACTED] who taught chemistry at Moffat Academy. He was very friendly with Peter Harley and used to visit Merkland. I suspect that he was also involved in the abuse of some of the boys although I had no first-hand knowledge. He always called me by my last name. He bullied me when I was at school and he hit me with wooden instruments about my head and body. RFD [REDACTED] went on to be a SNP Councillor. I think he moved to Newton – Stewart.

58. I had a relationship with one of the girls at the school called [REDACTED]. We both lost our virginity to each other and PH-JDW [REDACTED] found out. She was badly beaten by JDW [REDACTED] and I suffered the same fate. I was warned that because of this relationship I could be sent to a List D School.
59. RFB [REDACTED] was never away from Merkland. He was also the drill instructor for the local army cadets that we had to attend. Along with RFD [REDACTED] he attended the parties in Mr Harley's flat where the boys were given alcohol.
60. I do remember a trip to London. Peter Harley made us walk about the Soho area of London which at that time was famous for its sex industry. I recall it was late at night and I was still a young boy. Why would he take young boys out in Soho at night?. On that trip we stayed at a church hall which had been arranged by PXG [REDACTED]. On the return trip I think that we took PXG [REDACTED] back to Merkland with us. If we didn't take him with us he certainly took up the post at Merkland within days..

Reporting the abuse at Merkland Children's Home

61. I remember that one night I spent three hours "spilling my guts out" to PLS [REDACTED] PLS [REDACTED]. For some reason he was in charge of the home as PH-JDW [REDACTED] were away. I told him everything that had happened and all about the abuse. The next morning I was taken to see a psychologist. It was decided that I was making it all up. Fiona Douglas was involved and was told to tell my parents that I had been telling lies about what was happening to me and not to believe a word of it. I felt badly let down by PLS [REDACTED].
62. PLS [REDACTED] spent a lot of time at the home and would hand out cigarettes, money and sweets to some of the boys. I always suspected that he was part of whatever sexual abuse was going on with some of the boys. I think now that it was some sort of paedophile ring.

63. We hardly ever spoke about the abuse amongst the other boys. We were unable to speak at school as there were other children about. At night when we went to bed PH-JDW would listen to our conversations and you would get punished. I was home most weekends and couldn't discuss it there.
64. It was only after I left Merkland and met some of the other boys that I started to discuss with them what had happened. All of the discussions had the same outcome. We couldn't believe that JDW, PLS and the other social workers were not prosecuted for their role in Merkland. All this was about the same time as the trial for Peter Harley.
65. I told my social worker Fiona Douglas about what was going on. I told her on one of her very few visits. She told me that I was evil and that I would be sent to a List D School. All the time I was described as being a "mental case" and not to be believed.
66. I remember a social work meeting with PLS, Fiona Douglas from social work, Peter Harley from Merkland, Secondary Institutions - to be published later Secondary and a psychiatrist I didn't know the name of. My parents were not present. This meeting decided that I was a "mental case" and not to be believed. It was also alleged that I was taking marihuana. I was not invited to the meeting but I heard what was said by listening at the door. I was off school that day but I don't know the reason why. I was to remain at Merkland despite the allegations I had made.

Leaving Merkland Children's Home 1977

67. I spent the whole of second year at Moffat Academy and then in the summer holidays between second year and third year my mother asked if I could come home. I was then taken home where I was to spend the next year attending Dumfries High School.

68. Then it all started over again. My mother was saying that I was ill and had mental health problems. She arranged for me to be sent to Closeburn Assessment Centre. I had two quick spells there but I have no real memories of the place. I was not there for very long.
69. I am aware that sometime during this period when I was in third year at Dumfries High School I was sent to Closeburn Assessment Centre. There was a school there in site but I was considered to be too clever so I was trusted to go to Dumfries High School.

Closeburn Assessment Centre 1979/1980

70. I was between third and fourth year at Dumfries High School when I was sent for two short spells at Closeburn Assessment Centre.

71. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



72.

73.

74.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



75.

76.

**Leaving Closeburn Assessment Centre and moving back to Merkland
Children's Home 1979/1980**

77. During this time I was also sent back to Merkland Children's Home. I fought that decision tooth and nail and even tried to tell my social worker Fiona Douglas what was happening. She still didn't believe me.
78. There were several meetings held between with the social work department and the senior social worker ^{PLS} [REDACTED]. I told them that I was being raped at Merkland by Mr Harley, but they did not believe it so they put me back to Merkland for a second spell. I don't think they ever told my mother about the specific allegations that I was making. The only thing that they told her was that I was imagining things and telling lies. I think that my mother thought it was just me being me.

Return for second spell at Merkland Children's Home 1979/1980

79. In between spells at Closeburn and being at home I was sent by the children's panel back to be resident at Merkland. I was totally against this, but had no choice as the decision was made for me and I had no input.

Abuse at Merkland during my second spell 1979/1980

80. It was slightly different for my second spell at Merkland. I was a bit older, and although he did rape me it was only to prove to me that he could and that he was bigger and stronger. He did continue to physically assault me to prove that he was boss. I was fifteen years of age. Everything was really the same but some of the staff had changed.
81. There was another incident when I was at Merkland. Mr Harley unnaturally treated me very well for a full week. He asked me what I wanted to do all the time, and I was very worried about what was happening. He caught me sobbing in my bed that night and knocked the living daylights out of me. It was mainly psychological abuse and physical abuse for the second period I was at Merkland.
82. JDW [REDACTED] continued to physically abuse me and seemed to take great pleasure in hitting me. She was a very wicked and cruel lady.

Leaving Merkland Children's Home for the last time.

83. When I left Merkland I went to stay with my mother and father who had now divorced. They were still living in the same house. . My mother managed to get a council house. My sister was staying with my mother. I didn't have any choice but to stay with my father. My sister had caused my mother and father to split up.

84. I left Merkland on the Friday [REDACTED] 1980 and started work as [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with Robison Davidson Builders . My father also worked for this company. It was the happiest years of my life, and I had lots of mates to socialise with. When [REDACTED] finished, all [REDACTED] were paid off as there was some legislation regarding future redundancy payments that they had to avoid. The panic attacks started and that's when I started drinking. It was 1984.
85. I also made some bad life decisions and met the wrong people. I was self-destructing. I couldn't get my childhood experiences out of my mind. I was very angry. I ended up in prison for fraud which was committed to support my heavy drinking habit and my partner of the time.
86. I was later told, through serving social workers that I met in the local pubs, that sometime after I left, Merkland had closed. All the social workers involved in the running of Merkland were retired by the local council. I know that Harley was trying for a new head job at a home called Lady Acre that was about to open in Dumfries. He didn't get the main job and so he left the town after filling a minor role for some time.
87. I felt that the council was trying to sweep all the bad things that happened at Merkland under the carpet. They were tying up all the loose ends and getting rid of anyone who had anything to do with Merkland.

Life as an adult after being in care.

88. I was drinking a lot and on 14 February 1984 I was sent to Glencairn Ward at Crichton Hospital where I was treated for alcoholism. I also received help from different psychologists who diagnosed that I couldn't relax. They tried to help me with this by using loud noises which softened as I started to relax.

89. I managed to get a job in Livingston. I had a panic attack and was admitted to Bangour Village Hospital in West Lothian. Whilst I was there I was admitted to the psychiatric wing. They wanted to give me some sort of electrical shock treatment which I resisted. The social worker there managed to get me legal representation and that prevented me from getting that treatment.
90. Whilst I was in Bangour I was also prescribed a drug called Mellaril. This kept me heavily sedated and I was unable to work because of the high dosage. I was also taking short courses of diazepam. I was in and out of various establishments for treatment for alcoholism and mental health issues for the next few years.
91. I was interviewed as a witness against Peter Harley, and although I made a statement and was prepared to give evidence against him I was not required by the prosecution. I was in jail when Peter Harley was also in the same jail as me, but I didn't run into him.
92. I know that JDW [REDACTED] should have stood trial with Peter Harley [REDACTED], but this never happened. RFB [REDACTED] is now dead and PLS [REDACTED] also died from cancer. I don't know about RFD [REDACTED] but I know he is still alive.
93. I know that when it all came out about Merkland and Mr Harley, my parents were astonished that I had been placed in that position. They were mortified when it was in the courts. I remember when my mum was dying she asked me if she would go to heaven or hell because she felt so bad. She wished she had never put me in care. My poor parents had to live with that. They were so good to me in later life that I miss them badly.
94. I still have problems with my sister who appears to have manipulated my parents and taken all the inheritance. I am still fighting this through the courts.
95. During the early part of my adult life I was drinking a lot. I had a partner who was using drugs and also drinking. She gave birth to my son. She was always needing

money and I got involved in fraud to help finance our dependencies on alcohol and drugs. I was inevitably caught and sent to prison.

96. I could no longer climb a scaffolding because of the panic attacks, so I learned to be a chef. After I was released from jail in 1997 I started to pick up my life. I had been in the same jail as Peter Harley and I knew he was doing a lengthy prison sentence.
97. I met a new partner called [REDACTED] who I was madly in love with. I stayed with her for twelve years until my behaviour drove us apart. I couldn't tell her what had happened to me, and sex in our relationship had a different meaning as I was afraid of it.
98. I drifted from one relationship to another and spent time in the psychiatric hospital. I was drinking heavily and still having the panic attacks.

Reporting abuse to the police

99. I was in the police cells knowing that I was about to receive a lengthy sentence for fraud when Kate Thomson who was a police officer and part of the Family Protection Unit came into the cell and took me to an interview room. She asked me if I had been at Merkland. I just burst into tears. She told me that she was investigating serious allegations. I again burst into tears and asked to be taken back to my cell.
100. A few hours later Kate Thomson came into the cell with a cup of coffee and I went back to the interview room with her. I was there for a long time and gave her my statement.
101. I then was sent to Castle Huntley prison where I did get help from a psychiatrist. I was able to tell her what had happened to me. She did start to do me some good, although most of her experience was with female abuse victims as the rape of males was not well known then. I was now able to speak about my experiences to other people.

Impact

102. I still to this day have panic attacks where I think I am having a heart attack. I have tried to report what happened at various doctors' surgeries, but they don't believe me. I think that with the number of times I called there they should have identified that I had mental health problems. All that resulted in was me being banned from seeing some of the local doctors. I get flashbacks to my time at Merkland.
103. The attacks and flashbacks come out of nowhere and I don't know what triggers them. I found that alcohol was a means of coping with the attacks so I have always drunk a lot. I was admitted to the Glencairn Ward at the Crichton Hospital for treatment for alcoholism. This would be in 1984, and they didn't recognise these attacks and I couldn't discuss what had happened to me in Merkland.
104. I was a self-harmer in my teens and early twenties although in later life I have managed to stop this. Self-harming was one of the reasons that I was admitted for psychiatric help.
105. I always have to sleep with the light on, and the television on, in the bedroom if I am on my own. I have always been told that the panic attacks are a result of drinking but I know that the attacks come first and then I start drinking.
106. I have had limited contact with a lot of the ex-residents of Merkland although I have seen some newspaper coverage of [REDACTED] and his brothers demonstrating outside the Dumfries County Council buildings about their Merkland experiences. I am not sure what happened to a lot of the other boys.
107. I am afraid of having sex because I can still remember the pain inflicted by Harley on me. I don't want to inflict pain on anyone. I find it hard to form relationships as I find it hard to get over the sexual part of a relationship.
108. I have badly under achieved in my life as a result of the abuse I suffered in care. None of the local doctors or psychiatrists in the Dumfries area will see me until I

have stopped drinking for a full year. They still attribute my panic attacks to the amount of alcohol I drink. I am certain in my own mind that this is not the case.

109. I am a hundred per cent sure that Dumfries and Galloway Council made a serious attempt to cover up what had happened at Merkland. All the things that happened after Merkland closed could amount to a conspiracy. It was an attempt to hide the abuse that went on.

Records

110. I have previously tried to source my records but have not managed to do so to date.

Other information

111. I have been receiving help from Gary of Future Pathways who has helped me set up a public house business. He has also arranged for me to see a psychiatrist who will not insist that I stop drinking before I see them. I will be starting a series of sessions in the near future.

Expectations and lessons to be learned

112. I would just like to say, "I hope that this Inquiry gives everyone who was hurt by the system some peace and tranquillity in their lives. I hope that it puts the "shits" up the folk like Dumfries and Galloway Council."

113. 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 
PLB

Dated *11/12/2017*