

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

IXM

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is IXM. My date of birth is the 1961. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before boarding school

2. I was adopted at the age of about six weeks but for all intents and purposes my parents are and . My birth name was IXM. I have no siblings from my adopted parents.
3. My mum and dad told me about the adoption when they thought it was appropriate, when I would understand, which I think was when I was around the age of six or seven.
4. I never made any attempt to trace my birth family until both and had passed away. It just never occurred to me when they were alive. About two years after my mum died, I did, I got in contact with the Registry Office in Edinburgh. I discovered my birth mother had died in her fifties and that I had a half-sister, , a half-brother, , and a few other relations on my mother's side. I've never met my birth father, I don't even know his name.
5. I put all that to bed for a couple of years and then one day I got a letter from Barnardo's telling me they had someone looking for me, as in IXM. I thought it would be my half-sister, so I contacted the liaison officer, talked to them a few times and then agreed to have write to me. We exchanged letters and photographs and

eventually in 2018, we met up. My half-brother, [REDACTED], completely disassociated himself from the family years and years ago. I've never met him.

6. My father was a farmer and I was born and brought up on the farm which was near a small village called [REDACTED] just south of Dunbar. I still live there.
7. I went to the local primary school at [REDACTED] until I was eight or nine. Mum and dad didn't feel the primary school was great and the high school I would have been going to was Eyemouth, which didn't have a great reputation. They therefore thought it would be best if I went to a different school.
8. My father had gone to Melville College so I sat the entrance exam for Melville but I failed that. However, my father and mother knew a man who lived locally, Jim Britton, who was the prep school headmaster at Edinburgh Academy at that time. I don't know what conversations took place, as I was only young at the time, but I assume that Jim Britton told my mum and dad to try Edinburgh Academy.
9. I then went up to Edinburgh Academy and sat and passed their entrance exam, so I got in there. I have no idea if there was any pushing and shoving done because my parents knew Jim Britton, but I got in and that was it.
10. I wasn't consulted over any part of that process. I was a wee boy and my parents were doing what was best for me. I suppose there was a bit of excitement to begin with. I was going to this big school, with a nice uniform, and this that and everything.
11. There was also quite a build-up to going, I had to go to Edinburgh to Aitken and Niven in George Street to get all my uniform. Mum had a big list of all I had to take with me. Mum then sat for hours and hours sewing tags on all my clothes. You had to have name tags on all your clothes, even your socks. I got a big trunk, from a cousin who'd been at Fettes, for all my clothes and we had to go through all of that preparation.

Edinburgh Academy

General

12. I started at Edinburgh Academy in the September of 1971 when I was nine. I started at the Junior School in Arboretum Road and I was there for two years. I stayed in McKenzie boarding house in Kinnear Road for those two years.
13. All the boarding houses were in Kinnear Road, there was Dundas House for the really young ones, McKenzie House for ages nine to about eleven or twelve, then Scott House and Jeffrey House, which were the two senior boarding houses.
14. After my first two years I moved to the Senior School in Henderson Row. I then moved from McKenzie House to Scott House where I remained as a boarder until I left the Academy.
15. It was all boys when I started at the Academy and McKenzie House had about forty boys living there. Scott House and Jeffrey House would have had similar numbers whereas Dundas wasn't as big so there would have been less there.
16. Downstairs in all the boarding houses there was a prep room, a TV room, a boot room, the assistant housemaster's study and the matron's room. There was also a hallway that led through to the housemaster's private quarters.
17. In McKenzie House you went down a set of stairs that took you to the changing rooms and showers for the rugby and whatever else. I can't remember if the showers were downstairs or all on the one level in Scott House.
18. Upstairs in McKenzie House it was dormitories on the first and second levels and the sick bay was right up on the top level. That was pretty much replicated in Scott House, but Scott House also had the senior pupils' study bedrooms. You were given one of them for your final year at school.

19. The dormitories were about eight to a room and had old-style hospital beds with metal spars down the back at the head end. There was a chest of drawers to put your clothes in, we all had an assigned drawer, and that was about it, it was pretty basic.
20. There was a trunk room where all the boys put their trunks and other cases. The trunks were just emptied after you arrived and then taken away you got them out when you needed them.
21. I'd say about a quarter of the school were boarders, there was certainly a much bigger proportion of day pupils than boarders. Perhaps about 160 boarders in total, so something like 600 boys at the school.

Staffing

22. Each house had a housemaster, an assistant housemaster and a matron, all of whom lived in the house. The housemasters would live in the boarding house with their families whereas the assistants and the matrons tended to be single. We would see and speak with the housemasters' wives but they didn't have any role to play within the school.
23. When I started at the Academy, the housemaster at McKenzie House was a chap called ICG [REDACTED], his assistant housemaster was Norman Jack and the matron was IQP [REDACTED].
24. In my second year the housemaster was Hamish Dawson, but I can't remember who his assistant was, possibly a chap called Turvey or something like that. I think the matron was a lady called Anne Kellas. They were the only three adult staff. They would have nights off but no one else stood in for someone who was off, it was always those three same adults who looked after us.
25. The matrons were basically there to look after the boys. If you needed a 'Disprin' or something they would be the ones to dish that out to you. In each boarding house they have a sick bay right at the top of the house. There were three or four beds there so if you had the flu or a bad cold you would be shunted up there on your own to recover

and not infect everybody else. The matrons would look after the boys who were up there as well. I have no idea if any of the matrons were actually medically trained.

26. I would never have described the matrons as any kind of mother figure, nothing like it. If you were feeling bad, you could never knock on their door. I was homesick a lot, many of us were, but you couldn't speak to them, they were very unsympathetic. They were there to make sure you were alright physically, not mentally, and that was it. Mental wellbeing didn't come into it, at least not as far as I can remember. They weren't cruel, that would be going too far, but they were very clinical. They did their job and that was it.
27. In Scott House, when I first moved in, the housemaster was James Fowlie and then it was IDT after that. I can't remember the names of the assistant housemasters or the matron at Scott House.
28. The rector when I first started was ICH and then, I think in my last year or the year before, he left and it became Mr Ellis. The rector's house was just across the road from the boarding houses and yet, despite that, I can never remember either Mr ICH or Mr Ellis coming into the boarding houses at all. Furthermore I cannot remember there being any school inspection of any of the boarding houses by any of the staff.

Routine at Edinburgh Academy

First day

29. I don't remember my first day at Edinburgh Academy and McKenzie House, not in any great detail. Both mum and dad took me up and we got there around mid-afternoon. They stayed for a little while and helped me unpack and only left when they thought I had settled in as much as I was likely to. I recall having a meal after they left, around 5:00 pm, but I don't recall what else might have happened that first day.

30. My earliest recollection of the school that's still quite clear in my mind is the very first day that mum and dad came to take me out on a Sunday, to go home for a visit. That was after three weeks but I don't remember anything whatsoever about the place from those first three weeks.

Daily routine

31. In McKenzie House we were woken in the morning by somebody running around the corridors with a bell. That was always another pupil, we had bell duty to do and it rotated among all the younger ones. That was only in McKenzie House, once you moved on to the senior houses it wasn't someone running about with a bell it was an actual electric bell that sounded.
32. We were up about 7:00 - 7:15 am, then we got washed and dressed and all the boarders would go across to the prep school dining hall for breakfast. After breakfast we went back to the boarding houses to get books and everything ready for classes and then it was off to school.
33. When I was in Junior School, I was just going back across the road from Kinnear Road to Arboretum, but when I was in Senior School, we had to walk all the way down to Henderson Row.
34. The school day went on until about 3:30 pm on the days that you had sports, so you'd be back and changed to play rugby or cricket or whatever you were doing. If we didn't have sports there was about an extra half hour in school.
35. After school or sports, it was back to the boarding houses then back to the prep school dining room for our evening meal. After the evening meal it was back to the boarding houses where we would do homework in the prep room. We would get a little time for TV and then it was bed. That was about 8:00 pm or 8:30 pm when I was a junior but it did get later as you got older. Your days were pretty much taken care of Monday to Friday.

36. At weekends, you could be playing rugby on a Saturday morning, then in the afternoon the boarders would have to go and watch the first fifteen play rugby. That could be a home game or we could all be bussed to an away game at Watsonians or Merchiston or wherever.
37. Saturday night was fairly free, if you had extra work to do you could do that but we could also watch TV and so on. It was all fairly well regimented and there wasn't a lot of free time.
38. The housemaster, his assistant or the matron were always milling around so you couldn't disappear off and hide, you had to be in your dormitory at the end of the day and that was it.
39. On a Sunday morning we all had to go to church. It was the Church of Scotland at Goldenacre. Sunday was probably the one day we weren't being pushed into doing anything, there was very rarely any sporting activities so we would basically spend the whole day in and around the boarding house.
40. When I was around thirteen or fourteen, one Sunday afternoon every month, or so, I went to a scripture union that was connected to Charlotte Baptist Chapel, which my mum had been a member of. [REDACTED], my housemaster at that time, was also a member and perhaps my attending was facilitated by that fact. Another boy, [REDACTED], who was in my year, and two other boys also went and afterwards we used to go to his parents' house for tea. I wasn't particularly motivated by the religious aspect, it was more the fact that it was an opportunity to have some time out of school.
41. The routine we had at Edinburgh Academy never really changed, that was it and you just got used to it. Nothing changed particularly until the last year in the school when you got a bit more freedom.

Mealtimes/Food

42. The food in the boarding houses wasn't too bad. The food in the school, so the lunches and evening meals, they weren't great. When we were in the senior school, we were always trying to nick out to the sandwich shop along the road to get some extra food.

Washing/bathing

43. We showered after sports. That was downstairs in the boarding houses. Next to the dormitories there was a room with maybe four baths in it. You weren't told when to take a bath you just went and had one. There was no privacy as such, you just got on with it.
44. There would be the housemaster, his assistant or the matron around. Hamish Dawson was really the only one that would come in and stand in the shower area or come into the bathroom when you were having a bath. The others, if they were looking for you for something, would shout something or stick their heads around the door but they wouldn't stay, whereas Hamish Dawson tended to come in and stand over you and whatever else.

Leisure time

45. We had a TV room in the boarding house and you could read books if you were a reader. I think there was a small library or you could bring your own books from home. There might have been a couple of newspapers in the senior house. There was also a games room with a pool table and table tennis, so there were things that we could do. There were also a couple of music rooms where you could practice, if you played.
46. In the summertime, with the lighter nights, you would be allowed out after your homework was completed. We would organise to play football and that sort of thing. That could get you outside for an hour or so if it was a nice night.
47. When I was about sixteen and in my last year at the Academy, there was a move made, not specifically by me, to try and get the boarding house rules relaxed at

weekends. It was to try and allow us not to have to wear the school uniform at weekends so we had a bit more freedom. If we weren't doing a specific school activity, sports or whatever, then we could go up town in Edinburgh and not have to wear the uniform. We would just have to be back by a certain time.

48. Again, if we weren't involved in anything associated with the school, on certain occasions we could go home. That meant I could get on the bus and go home, and I did that a couple of times. We did have a bit more freedom and on Saturdays, in the senior school, we did start to see a bit more of the day pupils and, dare I say it, the girls at St. George's for parties and all the rest of it. We were allowed out, but we did have to be back by 10:30 pm or something like that. Life was a bit easier then but it was my last year at the school.

Trips and holidays

49. We did have some organised trips to places at the weekends. The school had a house called Blair House, which I actually never went to, I don't know why, but it was up north somewhere. Boys would go on trips there from Friday to Sunday. We also went on day trips and I did a couple of Munro's on hillwalking trips.

Schooling

50. I don't think the education was particularly good at Edinburgh Academy, it certainly didn't do me any favours. If you excelled at sport or were very clever then you would sail through a school like that but if you were middle of the road or the bottom side of that, you weren't given a lot of time because they weren't interested in you and didn't have the patience for you.
51. There was a teacher, Mr Harris I think it was, who taught history and he offered to give me and somebody else some extra tuition outside of school hours. We used to go up to his house in Marchmont once a week. That was the exception rather than the rule. We got special permission from the housemaster to do that and it was genuine, there was nothing suspicious about it at all, he wanted to help us with our education and he was a really nice chap.

52. I don't think I received any better an education at Edinburgh Academy than I would have done if I had gone to the local secondary school at Eyemouth or Dunbar.
53. I did manage to get some exams, some 'O' grades and some 'O' Levels. You could sit either or and it was the same with Highers and 'A' Levels. I eventually got to agricultural college, but I even struggled with that. There was no way I was going to be a lawyer.

Sporting activities

54. We had sports twice a week during the week and then we would play against other schools on a Saturday. We played rugby in the winter and cricket in the summer but once you got older, in the summer you were given the options of tennis, golf and athletics. Cross country running was something I remember doing. I did enjoy that, sport was one of the better sides to the school. They were heavily into their sports and everybody had to do something.
55. Combined Cadet Force (CCF) was mandatory, there were three sections, the RAF, the army and the navy. I can't remember how we were divided up for that but I was in the army section. I was also a drummer in the pipe band, which I chose to do, as I quite fancied it.
56. I did go on one camp with the CCF which was in Cultybraggan in Perthshire. I don't have any bad memories about that at all. I do remember we got to shoot live ammunition at a rifle range which was built-in within the school grounds.

Religious instruction

57. We all went to church on Sunday. We were pretty much all bundled into the one church and that was it. I don't think any of the boys were particularly great churchgoers so we used to take books in with us and read during the sermon. The service was about an hour so we would just get through it as best as we could and that was that.

Bed Wetting

58. I can't remember anyone ever having any issues with bedwetting.

Visitors

59. I didn't have any actual visits at the school from my parents. They would probably only have come to the end of year assembly, at the end of the senior school and the carol service every Christmas, which was at St. Mary's Cathedral.
60. They did come to the school but that would have been if I'd phoned them to say I needed such and such. Dad was in Edinburgh at the market once a week anyway, so mum would come as well and they would drop things off for me. So I would see them, but only for ten minutes or so, and that was fine if you needed something. They wouldn't have just turned up.
61. My mum and dad had very good friends that lived in Edinburgh and their son was at school with me. I knew him well. I would go and visit them quite a bit and I had an aunt and uncle and cousins in Edinburgh so when I had a bit more freedom, as I got older, I would visit them.

External Inspections

62. I don't remember there ever being any school inspections and I don't know if there were meant to be any.

Family contact

63. Your parents could come and pick you up on a Sunday morning after breakfast, about 9:00 am, and take you home for the day. You had to be back on the Sunday night about 6:00 pm. In my first year that could happen one Sunday each side of half term. So that would be about a five-week gap before you would see your parents, then half term, which was maybe Thursday through to Monday, then another five weeks before

you saw them again, then the school holidays. I don't remember seeing that much of my parents.

64. There were a lot of boys at Edinburgh Academy who had parents that lived abroad. Some of them would never see their parents for months on end. There was a boy who started after me whose parents lived in the Solomon Islands. He only saw his parents once a year.
65. I don't think there was any contact from the school with my parents, or any parents, unless there was a specific reason. I suppose if you were on the verge of being expelled that would be fair enough, but there was certainly no contact from the school with my parents that I am aware of.
66. We did write letters home. I remember I never used to write about the school in those letters. The school did insist we wrote home to our parents, I think they thought it was the right thing to do, and there's obviously nothing wrong with that. We did that on a Sunday morning before church. The housemasters would post them but I don't know if they read them or not.
67. I remember when I was about ten or eleven, I wrote in a letter that I'd been tripped up by a housemaster and kicked when I was playing sport. I had a big bruise. I went to see the matron and I told her it had been deliberate, that I'd been tripped up and kicked on purpose. I don't remember who it was that did that but nothing ever came of it.

Running Away

68. I did try to run away. It was just because I was so miserable. I planned it with another guy but we didn't even get to the front door.
69. There was a lad who started with me who only lasted about two or three weeks at the Academy. He kept disappearing in the middle of the night, he was running away because he was so homesick. The police would get him and bring him back and to begin with the staff put him back in his dormitory. He just kept running away so they eventually pretty much locked him up in the sick bay. He was only let out during the

day when he had to go to school. That boy was so miserable and eventually his parents did come and take him away.

Ephors

70. Prefects were actually known as 'ephors' at Edinburgh Academy. If you were good at sport or excelled academically you would be selected. It was the higher or better doers in the school and I think a lot of it would also be to do with who your parents were as well. If your dad was an eminent lawyer or whatever then it would have given you a better chance of being an ephor, or head ephor.
71. I can't remember how they were selected but I imagine it would have been the rector and the senior master who did so. It may have been that the masters put forward or nominated boys, but I don't know.
72. The year I started at Edinburgh Academy was the very last year that fagging was in place. So when I first started, I was a fag for one of the senior pupils. It was there to a certain extent, but perhaps not as much as the years before. I can remember cleaning somebody's shoes and taking meals to them, that sort of thing. I think I was assigned to a particular senior.
73. At the time it didn't seem too bad, but I do look back now and think it was pretty archaic. I don't remember it ever going badly wrong, as in me forgetting to do something and getting the hell beaten out of me, it never got to that sort of stage. It was pretty much stopped after my first year.
74. I've heard stories that ephors were given carte blanche to discipline younger boys, if it was thought necessary, but that never happened to me. I heard those stories later in life, not at the time. I was never attacked or beaten by an ephor. I was shouted at a few times, but that was pretty much it. There was no physical violence as far as I was concerned.
75. I think in anyone's eyes it is wrong for a pupil to beat another pupil, but if it happened at the Academy then you would have just turned your back on it. They were ephors, it

happened and nobody would have questioned it. I know now, having heard the stories many years later, that it happened, although I never witnessed an ephor physically attack another pupil when I was at the Academy.

Discipline

76. Discipline at the school would depend on the level of the act. If you were persistently bad in class, disruptive or whatever, then you would get taken outside and they used a clacken to punish you. They would also use a cricket bat, golf club, slipper, all sorts. That was the discipline if you'd done something wrong.
77. With all of them you were beaten on the backside. It was always on top of your clothing, I never saw or heard of anyone being stripped down for a beating. It could be outside or inside the classroom in front of the other pupils.
78. I may have been clackened once or twice but never to any great degree. I never witnessed anyone getting beaten badly. I saw people beaten with a slipper but that's very different to being beaten with a wooden bat, which is exactly what a clacken is. I heard people being beaten in other classrooms, you sometimes heard the thumping and the "ahh" sound, but I didn't witness that.
79. I did hear stories at the time. I heard one master, John Brownlee, would bend boys under a table and whack them on the backside. Their automatic reaction was to spring up and so they would get a double whammy, getting a whack on the backside and then hitting their heads of the underside of the table. That was pretty nasty, and was more than needed to be done, but it happened and it was never questioned. That didn't happen to me and I didn't ever see him do that. I was never taught by John Brownlee.
80. They did use the punishment of writing lines, I remember I had lines to do for ICG my first housemaster. He was really strict but very fair. I wouldn't say anything wrong about him though.
81. I remember one occasion, at night, we had a dormitory raid between two dormitories and there were pillows flying and everything and ICG came through in this

absolute rage, shouting at us all. We scuttled off back to our beds but he knew who had been involved. The next day we were all lined up at his study door then taken in one by one and given the choice of fifty or a hundred lines, whatever it was, or six-of-the-best with a slipper.

82. All but one of us took the lines. This one guy went in and all we heard were these whacks and when the boy came out the study, he was looking pretty sorry for himself. A few years later, while I was still at the school, a group of us were talking about that particular night, and the guy who had taken six-of-the-best was there. He told us that ICG [REDACTED] never touched him that night. ICG [REDACTED] had been so impressed with him taking the quick option and getting it over and done with, whereas the rest of us had to sit for ages writing out lines, that he thought "good on you son" and just let him go. For effect, ICG [REDACTED] just whacked the slipper off a table and told the boy to pretend he'd been punished.

Abuse at Edinburgh Academy

83. Hamish Dawson, my second-year housemaster, wasn't a nice person under any circumstances, he was a horrible man. He came across as being very jovial but deep down he was a monster. To a lot of people he was like that.
84. The only time he actually taught me was in my second last year at the Academy, that was for history.
85. It's no secret that Hamish Dawson was an abuser. He would come down to the showers and stand and watch us all showering. He was fully clothed whenever I saw him. With me he only ever walked in and stood there watching us. It was just him looking. I didn't ever see him doing anything with his hands or making any gestures. The pretence was that he was making sure we were clean but there was another side to it as well. I did hear stories that he sometimes stripped off and got into the showers with boys but I didn't ever see that.

86. In the afternoons, after school and before prep in the boarding house we would have a mug of tea and a biscuit, something like that. We would all be in the hall in the boarding house and the matron and deputy housemaster would usually be there. Hamish Dawson would invariably come in with this big grin on his face. My recollection is that what would usually start it all off was someone doing something wrong, but nothing too bad, just something silly. Dawson would shuffle up to whoever it was, he wouldn't step he shuffled his feet. He would go right up to them, look at them, smile and say, "*I hear you forgot a book*", or whatever it was you'd done, and then he would say "*remind me*" and that would be it. He did that with me, I think once it was because I'd forgotten rugby kit or something like that.
87. You would get the rest of your day done and you'd then be upstairs in bed in the dormitory that night and he would come into the dormitory. That was your cue to '*remind him*'. At nine or ten years old it all felt like a bit of a joke and the boys he'd spoken to would say to him they had to remind him. He knew dam well so that didn't really matter.
88. He would shuffle across to you with this horrible grin on his face and while you were lying in your bed, he would take your school tie and tie your hands above your head to the bed. If you held your hands up for him, he didn't always tie them to the bed. He would then pull down your bed covers so you would be pretty much completely exposed and he start to tickle and play with you. He would start quite high up on your body but he moved further and further down. If your hands were tied you couldn't go anywhere.
89. He found it all hilarious and the other boys would all witness it. That happened to me more than once, I'm not sure how many times, and I saw it happen to many other boys. His hands never went under my pyjamas and he didn't actually touch my genitals but it was just horrible. He was certainly in that area and round the back of my pyjamas but he didn't place his hands under the pyjamas.
90. I don't know what goes through these people's minds when they're like this but they are very clever and very manipulative and I remember he made it all feel like it was part of a joke, a bit of fun, so that in my eyes he's not doing anything wrong and it

didn't register in my mind as being anything wrong, not at the time. Funnily enough it never registered in my mind as being wrong until years after I left school.

91. I can't remember talking about anything like that with other boys. I imagine we would have but it would never have been in a bad way, like he's done something terrible, that was just part of our school life. Luckily, I only had one year of it then I was out of that house.
92. There was another instance I remember. Down in the basement of the boarding house there was a model room, where we could make model aeroplanes and things and I think it was Hamish Dawson that came in on this occasion when I was in there with another lad. There was a waste pipe that ran along the length of the ceiling and the ceiling was painted with this Artex prickly paint you got in those days. He tied the other boy to the pipe, I think it was with two school ties, and he started to tickle the boy. The boy was hanging in the air and his wrists were rubbing on the prickly paint. Dawson kept tickling the boy until his wrists bled. I do have great trouble remembering if that was actually Hamish Dawson or someone else but I do think it was him. The boy was just hanging there, no clothing was removed.
93. Another instance with Hamish Dawson was when I was about fifteen. He used to keep bags of jellybeans in a drawer in his desk in class. If you got a question right, he would sometimes chuck some jellybeans at you. He was late into class one day so some of us went into his desk drawer and helped ourselves to some jellybeans. We found a brown envelope in the drawer with a magazine sticking out the top and being nosey kids we had a look at the magazine. It was an adult magazine with lots of small pictures of men and women with names and numbers and things circled and underlined. We had a look and then put it back in the drawer when we saw him coming.
94. That was early in the week and towards the end of the week I was getting my books ready to go back to the boarding house one afternoon when the senior master, Mr McIlwain, came into our classroom and told me the rector, Mr ICH, wanted to see me. He told me to be at his office at a certain time on the Monday. That meant I had the whole weekend to worry about it, but I did kind of guess what it was about.

95. I turned up at the rector's office on the Monday and Mr McIlwain and Mr ICH were both there. It was about the magazine, although I didn't know how they had found out, perhaps they had overheard playground chat, I'm not sure.
96. They questioned me about it and I did try to wriggle my way out of it but they were too clever for me. I was told by Mr ICH that they knew I was there, and that I wasn't in any trouble but I needed to tell them what I saw. They said that whatever I told them would stay between me and them and I could walk out the door and nobody would ever question me about it again. They had me anyway so I told them what I've just told you and true to their word I never heard another thing about it ever again.
97. It was tradition at Edinburgh Academy that when you came to leave the school you went round all the master's that had ever taught you. You would thank them and they would have a wee chat with you and wish you all the best. When it came to my time to leave I did all that but Hamish Dawson never came near me at all.
98. As I've said nothing more was ever said to me about that magazine and Hamish Dawson continued to teach at that school for many years after that. The other masters knew what he was like, they certainly knew about the magazine, so why would they hide something like that. I'm also sure he was doing some of the things he did to us in front of the matron, I'm sure she would have seen him tying boys to beds and tickling them.
99. Anne Kellas, the matron, was there with us all at bedtime, she made sure we were all in the dormitory and in bed and so on. My feeling is that she must have been in a position to see or have an awareness as to what Hamish Dawson was doing. She wasn't standing at the end of the bed watching it so I can't categorically say that she witnessed it but I just can't believe she didn't have some knowledge of what he was doing. It seems crazy that he was doing those things with other adults kicking around.
100. John Brownlee was known as a disciplinarian, a lot of the teachers were, but I don't think Dawson had that kind of reputation. He did everything underhand whereas Brownlee was more open. A lot of the masters were quite open about physical discipline and would do it in full view of other pupils.

101. You could be walking along a corridor and some masters would swing a kick at you for no reason whatsoever. They didn't seem bothered about doing things like that in full view whereas Dawson was very much underhand. Having said that I have heard that Dawson did put boys over his knee and smack them in full view of his class, but I never witnessed that. I only ever saw Dawson within the confines of the boarding house and I only ever saw him do what I've described to you. I know he gave lines and gave the slipper but I never experienced that or witnessed that.
102. There's a lot that went on at Edinburgh Academy that I have only learnt about in the last six or eight months, some of which I had absolutely no idea was going on. There are things in the Edinburgh Academy survivors' group that have appalled me because I was at the school at the time that some of these instances took place but I was completely unaware of what had happened. It's weird hearing about it all these years later.
103. Edinburgh Academy was not a part of my life that I remember with any great memories. I've never been back, I've never set foot back inside the school. There was no nurturing, and in my mind now I would say it was pretty brutal. At the time I'm not sure, yes it was brutal, but it was also normal for that time. I've no fond memories and it was a very cold and heartless place. I dare say there were people that came out of there with great results but there would have been hundreds that didn't.
104. There were some teachers that were that bit more sympathetic towards you and might have thought beating the hell out of you wasn't the correct way to do it but for a lot of them that was just what they did. I don't have names other than the people I have spoken to you about and although I have heard names mentioned of master's that particularly liked to beat kids up I'm not here to accuse anybody of doing something that I actually don't remember. In my own school life I only saw a limited amount of that. I don't know why that was, I just know my experience was Hamish Dawson.

Reporting of abuse at Edinburgh Academy

105. I didn't speak to anyone, not my mum or dad or any family, they don't even know now. The first time I ever brought it up was when I spoke to my wife about it. I can't even recall why that came about but it must have been after something I read somewhere.

Leaving Edinburgh Academy

106. I left Edinburgh Academy at the end of sixth year. I didn't receive any careers advice or anything like that but then I wasn't a high attaining pupil and I had already decided what I wanted to do. It got to July of my last year so I pretty much packed my trunk and left.
107. I had spoken to my class master and one or two others about what I wanted to do so the school did know I wanted to go into agriculture. There was no direct advice, as such, but they wished me all the best.
108. I was actually given a week's work experience with another boy at Marshall's Chunky Chickens, which was horrendous. I'll never know how they came up with that but it did mean I could stay in Fife with the other boy and not have to stay at the boarding house.
109. It felt great to be leaving Edinburgh Academy. It was fantastic to get out of there and have my freedom. I could do what I wanted and wasn't tied by any structure. It didn't cause me to go daft, I didn't go away and do anything stupid, but it was a great feeling.

Life after boarding school

110. I worked at the farm at home to start with then I did some practical work on a different farm. I then went to Oatridge College for a year's course before coming home and working the farm with my dad.

111. I met my wife and got married in 1986, and we have two children and two grandchildren. I have lived a fairly settled life as a tenant farmer and I'd say I've had no issues mentally over what happened to me at school. Edinburgh Academy never came into my head for years after leaving, it wasn't something I ever thought about. Subsequently, until very recently, I've just blocked everything out of my mind altogether.
112. In 2014 I got the chance to buy the farm but neither of my children were interested in taking it on so I offered to stay on as a tenant. The owner's needed to sell the farm so they then bought me out of my tenancy and we moved from the farmhouse to a house about half a mile down the road. It's actually where my parents used to live and that's where we are now.
113. I did a bit of contracting for about three years and then I set up a [REDACTED] business with my wife, daughter and son-in-law. That's what we do now.

Impact

114. I was terribly homesick at Edinburgh Academy. I was actually alright for the first two or three weeks, with the new experience, etcetera, but then after I saw my mum and dad for the first time, that just broke me. That lasted for months and months, I'd say even a couple of years.
115. There was no one anyone could go to, no one was interested at all. They got your money, you were there for a purpose, to learn, and that was it really. If you learnt something that was good, and if you didn't, tough, that was pretty much it. There was no compassion in the school whatsoever, not as far as I was concerned. It just wasn't there.
116. There was an occasion when I was at home during half term, when I was between ten and eleven years old, that I was so unhappy. Mum was due to take me back to school and my father was away somewhere. I was sitting in my school uniform in my room

and I really did not want to go back. It was like hell on earth and I felt I had to devise a way to get out of it.

117. I got a [REDACTED] and thought that if I only do myself a certain amount of damage, that's not going to kill me, and I could get off for a week or something and wouldn't have to go back that day. I had the [REDACTED] in my hand but I couldn't actually do it. It must have been winter as it was dark, perhaps around five at night, and I then ran outside and round the back of the farm buildings where I threw myself in a puddle. I rolled around in it to get my uniform all wet then went inside and told a blatant lie to my mother saying there had been some boys roaming around the steading who had jumped me when they saw me in my posh uniform. That got me an extra night at home.
118. I was so upset about having to go back to the school. My mum would have seen that I was upset, she and dad weren't the type to push me into the car and tell me I had to go back, they would talk to me but I just couldn't get across how unhappy I was. That was around the end of my time in the Junior House.
119. [REDACTED] was the foreman at the farm and his wife [REDACTED] played a huge part in my life. She helped mum in the house and I would stay with them whenever mum and dad went on holiday. Out of everybody I can remember, family and friends, [REDACTED] was the only one who cried and cried when I went back to school. It broke her heart. She hated it when she saw me going away in the car. Every time I came back from school the first thing I would do was run down to their little cottage and see [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I think that helped me to the extent that I knew I always had something to look forward to when I was coming home.
120. [REDACTED] actually died when I was in school and I remember that was about the only time I ever saw any sympathy or compassion from anyone at the Academy. The class master I had at the time, Howard Hazlett, saw that I was upset the day after I had been told [REDACTED] had died and he took me aside and asked what was wrong. I told him and he was sympathetic and understanding and he did help a little bit.

121. Since I've been part of the EA survivors' group there have been certain things that have come back to me but nothing of any great significance in relation to child abuse, mostly names that I hadn't heard since I'd left school.
122. I think I put a barrier up and that was pretty much it. I blocked everything away, compartmentalised it. It happened, I was there, but it didn't do me any great favours. If I bring it out again into my life it's still not going to do me any favours, so it just stays locked away.
123. I have had trouble sleeping over the years, particularly when I was a little boy. I was so unhappy then but what I used to do was just switch off. I have this ability to literally switch off and my mind switches down. I just think of happy things nothing else. Any other worries that might have cropped up during the day or anything that may have happened with Dawson or whatever I could put to one side. I have quite an active imagination and I can make things up and just close everything else down. That helps me and brings me down to ease, it helps me settle down and sleep. I didn't have trouble sleeping at school because of that, I just thought about the farm, [REDACTED] his son and the jobs we would all do.
124. I don't think there had been any serious impact for me. I've never had a breakdown and I haven't had to go and see a therapist or anything like that, however I do suffer from anxiety, especially when I have to leave home. Even just going away for a few days, certainly going abroad, I get very anxious. It's never got to the stage that it's stopped me going anywhere or made me feel I need to speak to a therapist or take medication, but it's definitely got worse as I've got older. I actually get anxious when my grandkids go away too and, although I'm not sure, I feel that may well be linked to my having to go to school all those years ago.
125. I do think I would have done better had I gone to another school. The Academy was very focussed on people who were good at sport or showed great promise academically. Those people really were pushed whereas anyone who was middle of the road or below was basically just left to get on with it. If I'd gone somewhere with people who were maybe a bit more my equal in academical terms I do think I would have done better. So the school didn't do me any favours in that respect.

126. I don't think I had trust issues with people in positions of authority. With the Hamish Dawson incidents and so on, my life just sort of hit a plane and I kept my head down. I never got into trouble, I thought the easiest way to get through it was to just do what was required of me and hopefully come out at the other end. That was it.
127. I never questioned authority so I was never a bad pupil, I was never disruptive or anything like that. The masters were there for a reason, to teach us and to look after us. They didn't look after us but they tried to teach us. I'm not confrontational so I kept away from that, I didn't go out my way to confront teachers at all. I'm not a nasty person so authority has never been something that's affected me greatly.
128. I don't think I was mentally scarred from my experiences at Edinburgh Academy. Some people might say I had it bad but it could have been a hell of a lot worse. I've had good people round about me, I have a good family and my wife's been very supportive all the way through my life, even before knowing what happened at the school.
129. I would never have considered sending my kids to Edinburgh Academy or any school as boarders. I think, going to a boarding school at the age I went, is cruel, it's a bad age, I was too young. You still need an adult to look after you, you're incapable of looking after yourself. You need the love of somebody and the academy didn't give you that.
130. If my parents were alive now and I told them what I've just told you, they would have been absolutely horrified. I think there will be lots of families like that. I just don't think I could have put my parents through that. Looking back now, as a little boy would I even have been believed.

Reporting of Abuse

131. I did get a phone call from the police, within the last two or three years, asking about a Mr Bain who taught me chemistry or physics. He's in prison at the moment. I think the police had checked records to see who had been in contact with him at Edinburgh

Academy. I did remember him, he was a games master and a very good rugby player. He was the assistant housemaster in Scott House and was in his first year at the school when I was in my last year. He did teach me chemistry or physics but that was it and I had no other contact with him. I know he went on to do some not very nice stuff but I don't know any of the detail. I told the police all that.

132. I've had no other contact from the police and I've not reported anything to the police.

Records

133. I haven't got any records from Edinburgh Academy and I've never applied for any. I do have my old school reports and a few photographs, nothing else.

Lessons to be Learned

134. Edinburgh Academy was very uncaring and unsympathetic, they never demonstrated a duty of care. They had a duty of care but it was never carried out.
135. I think a vetting process for teachers is therefore needed. One teacher in particular, Hamish Dawson, got away with it time and time again for years and years.
136. Schools, boards of directors and whoever else have to be more aware of what's going on around about them. Any reports that come into any schools, as far as teachers are concerned, that have the slightest little thing, have to be looked at. The teachers have to be vetted and checked out before they are successful with an application and let into a school. The basis I would work on is the teachers, as the pupils look after themselves, they're only young.
137. I do think specific guidelines need to be set down as well. I know teachers can't hit pupils now, a lot has changed since my day at school but guidelines surrounding the care of children, certainly the younger ones, need to be put forward quite forcefully by the Inquiry. It's all about the welfare of pupils.

Hopes for the Inquiry

138. I know the current rector at Edinburgh Academy has given evidence to the Inquiry and apologised on behalf of the school. I don't see what more he can do in his position right now. He doesn't have the authority to dish out compensation. I know a lot of guys have been to the police and are now taking legal action against the school. That's not something that's even entering my head right now.
139. I do think the recognition by the school now does mean something to me. What happens from here on in is a different matter as there are other people involved, people who are alive that have had allegations made against them.
140. I think the Inquiry needs to achieve a better system within schools, that would be a big step forward. If that was to happen courtesy of the Inquiry that would be something.
141. What we're all talking about was a long time ago and a lot of these teachers are dead. I'm not going to get a lot out of this as I can't confront Hamish Dawson, and there are many other pupils who are the same. The teachers that are alive are very old so I'm not sure how you proceed with that.
142. I think the work that needs to come out of the Inquiry is to change the culture. You can't disregard what happened in the past, but there needs to be a recognition of what we all went through. That's got to be at the forefront. People have got to realise that this actually happened. People that have children at the school have to realise that, because some of them don't know what others went through. There's an attitude that it was in the past so 'who cares' and if anything happened, it was just a little bit and it didn't really matter.
143. The Inquiry has a lot of functions and the final report has got to say what actually happened and record that all these boys have been affected to one degree or another. It's had a devastating effect on some boys so it's got to be believed and people have got to understand that this is what happened.

144. The other side of it is that guidelines have to be set down for the future, to make schools safer places. Going forward this can never happen again, it can never be allowed to happen again.
145. The authorities have to set it all out in black and white and they've got to carry these processes out, it's got to be done properly. That's what I would like to see come out of this Inquiry.

Other information

146. I don't think I would have come forward to speak to the Inquiry had it not been for seeing Hamish Dawsons' picture on a BBC news website and then subsequently hearing Nicky Campbell's podcast with Jenny Dawson, Hamish Dawson's daughter.
147. Seeing Hamish Dawson gave me a bit of a fright. I then made contact with Nicky Campbell and I was gobsmacked to hear his story, as I never knew. He then told me about the WhatsApp group which I joined. I'm still on that but I don't contribute much. It was fine at the beginning because it was all new but I was hearing all these terrible stories and as time has gone on it's become quite overwhelming.
148. There has been a lot of stuff recently on the chat about lawsuits and compensation and that's not something that's ever entered my head. Hamish Dawson is dead and I know you could go after the school as they had a duty of care towards the pupils. I've gone through fifty odd years of my life and I've buried this.
149. I had no idea there was an Inquiry until I joined that group and then, after a while, I thought I should say something. I just felt, after speaking to a lot of those guys and then hearing about Fettes and Loretto and so on, that although worse happened to a lot of those guys, I had a story to tell. Hamish Dawson was an abuser to me and many others and it's only right that it's on record.

150. 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.

IXM

Signed, _____

Dated... 31ST JANUARY 2024 _____