

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Margaret BROWNLEE

Support person present: No.

1. My name is Margaret McFarlane Brownlee. My maiden name is Graham. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1941, and I was born in Kirkcaldy. I have a younger sister. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I am the wife of John Brownlee who was a housemaster at Dundas House, a boarding house owned by Edinburgh Academy. I am providing evidence to the Inquiry about our time at Edinburgh Academy between 1964 and 1995, including our time residing in Dundas House between 1972 and 1983. John is unable to speak to the Inquiry, so I am speaking for him as well as myself.

Background & Education

3. After leaving school, I went to Edinburgh University where I received an MA in English and Latin. I went on to Moray House where I gained a post-graduate teaching qualification chapter IV and Article 39 in English. During that year, I also attended a course at Edinburgh University and gained a DipEd. That was 1962. I thereafter returned to Kirkcaldy where I taught English in a junior secondary school. In 1964, I transferred to Kirkcaldy Technical College where I lectured in English and Liberal Studies.
4. John was born in Uphall, West Lothian on [REDACTED] 1935. He had an older brother and sister. When John was three years old, his family moved to Kirkcaldy. On leaving

school at eighteen, John carried out national service with the RAF before starting his studies at Edinburgh University.

5. Whilst at Edinburgh University, John used the gym a lot. Colonel Usher, the head of the gym, was asked by SNR [REDACTED] of Edinburgh Academy's Preparatory School, Miss ICP [REDACTED], if they could provide a student to assist taking their boys for games. John was asked and was later interviewed by IZP [REDACTED], SNR [REDACTED] of Edinburgh Academy, and was offered the job. The Prep was still based at Henderson Row and John would walk the boys along to Raeburn Place for games. This would be in 1959, some 65 years ago.
6. John completed his studies at Edinburgh University, gaining an MA in Geography and in one other subject. He went on to Moray House where he gained a post-graduate teaching qualification, Chapter IV, and Article 39 in Geography, and I think French. He also gained a DipEd at Edinburgh University that year. On finishing his studies at Edinburgh, John returned to Kirkcaldy where he taught geography at Kirkcaldy Secondary School. The school is now called Balwearie High School.
7. In 1964, completely out of the blue, John was approached to join Edinburgh Academy staff. The Prep School by that time had moved to the purpose-built campus at Arboretum Road. John was interviewed by then rector, ICH [REDACTED], and appointed to the staff of the Prep School in September that year. That was 60 years ago.
8. John and I married in the December of that year, and we moved to Edinburgh. I started teaching at South Queensferry Junior Secondary and Primary School in January 1965. I taught there for around three years, up until we had our son, Graeme in 1968. We had our second son, Neil, in 1970 and moved into Dundas House in August 1972.
9. John was initially appointed as a junior master and it was later in his career that he was appointed as deputy head of the Junior School, a role created by Edinburgh Academy to replace the archaic 'senior master' title.
10. John remained at the Prep for the rest of his teaching career, retiring in 1995.

11. During his employment, and for almost 30 years of retirement, there was no whisper of any complaint against John. Contrary to speculation, by one or more vociferous complainers, John did not hail from Leven in Fife, nor did he apply for the Academy on the basis he had a chip on his shoulder about private schools, hence John's supposed application for a post with Edinburgh Academy. John at no time applied for a job with the Academy. He was actually head-hunted by the school twice.
12. We left Dundas House in July 1983. There was a reorganisation going on with the boarding houses and Dundas House was going to be the first house to-close because it was the smallest. We were at maximum capacity at the time, as school records will show. We didn't actually own a house of our own at that time as we had sold our house when we moved into Dundas House in 1972. All other EA boarding houses closed in due course.
13. I retired in 1999 at the age of fifty-nine, John is six years older than me and had retired in 1995, four years earlier. Neither of us worked again and we enjoyed our retirement together.
14. In 2019, following several years of noticeable decline, John was formally diagnosed with Alzheimer's. He is in a nursing home now and doesn't know anything about the allegations that have been made against him.

Dundas Boarding House

15. We moved into Dundas House in August 1972. Our son Graeme was four years old and our younger son, Neil, was two. We lived there until summer 1983. Housemasters at Edinburgh Academy normally carried out the role for ten years, however we were asked to stay for an additional year, while the reorganisation of the houses was finalised.
16. Edinburgh Academy had four boarding houses, all situated on Kinnear Road. Three of the houses were purpose built, but not Dundas. Up until this point, the boys from the Prep School used one of these bigger houses along with the older boys. Dundas

House was used by teenage boys until it was decided that the Prep School boys should be in a house by themselves. This decision had nothing to do us. Previously, all the housemasters were Upper School staff. But now, the school thought they would need a housemaster from the Prep and John was offered the post. This was the third time that Edinburgh Academy had offered John a post, this time by Rector ICH and Jim Britton, headmaster of the Prep.

Housemaster and Housemaster's Wife

17. The four boarding houses all had housemasters. The housemasters' wives were all given a nominal salary to cover for the matron on her weekly day off. It was a small amount of money but technically we were employed by Edinburgh Academy. John's position was that of housemaster and I was known as the housemaster's wife. I was never spoken to by anyone from the Academy about my role in Dundas House.
18. In Edinburgh Academy's Upper School, there were masters who weren't actually registered or qualified as teachers, although that did change over time. John was a registered and qualified teacher. The other three housemasters were from the Upper School, and I don't know if any of them were interviewed or had qualifications for the housemaster's role.

Matron's accommodation

19. The matron's accommodation in Dundas House was appalling. They were given two rooms on the top floor which were not interconnecting and had to share a bathroom and toilet with the boys.
20. Our first matron moved from one of the other boarding houses because she thought looking after the younger boys would be an enjoyable change for her. She worked with us for a year but the poor accommodation and having to share a toilet with the boys really wasn't acceptable for her, so she left.

21. We employed another matron who was very helpful but due to the accommodation she only stayed for a year. We did have a lot of applicants for the job but when they saw where they were expected to live, it put them off.
22. During our third year, we advertised again and employed a young girl from Aberdeen. She became so homesick and would weep on my shoulder. The school GP, Dr Strachan, actually came in to see her and told us that she wasn't going to manage so we had to let her go. I had to take her to Waverley Station and put her on a train to Aberdeen.
23. We then employed a part-time matron who didn't live in. That was sometime in our third year there, 1974 or 1975. She remained with us for the rest of our time at Dundas. She came in weekday afternoons. That meant my matron duties were increased considerably. It never really occurred to me until recently that I did all those extra duties for the nominal fee they had originally given me.

House Tutors

24. As the matron accommodation became vacant, we had house tutors periodically residing with us. They were all young men, perhaps in their first teaching job at the Upper School. We had different house tutors for two or three years and they would help out on a rota basis during Prep in the evenings.

Layout of Dundas House

25. Dundas House was built in 1902 as a private residence. The other three boarding houses were purpose built. Dundas House had three floors, ground, first and second floor. There was no basement and no cellar area. As you entered the front door the boys' common room was on the right. Our sitting room was on the left. Next to our sitting room, there was a boot room with lots of cubby holes for the boys' shoes. There was a toilet behind there that the boys also used. Next to that was the pantry where the boys kept their tuck boxes. There was also a washing machine in there. There was

a room we called our living room and off that, we had a small kitchen. There was another room on the ground floor which was off the hallway at the back of the house. We called that the library and there was a television in there for the houseboys.

26. On the first floor, the first door you came to at the top of the stairs on the right was Graeme and Neil's bedroom. Next to that was a small room used by the matron. Our bedroom was next and then there was our bathroom and toilet. Next to that was a toilet for the boys. Then there was John's study and lastly, there was the 'big dorm.'
27. On the top floor there were two bathrooms for the boys and one toilet, the toilet the matron had to share with the boys. There were no showers in the house, only baths.
28. There was no boys' dining room because all meals were taken over in the school. That was until the school dining room burned down. After that, we had a cooker installed in the pantry and somebody would come round in the morning and cook breakfast for the boys, although she didn't always turn up. A company called 'Salvesen' based along the road at East Fettes came to the rescue of the school and took over the evening and weekend catering requirements for all four boarding houses.
29. We all used the same front door, and the boys would charge in and out. There was a side door, but the boys didn't use it. There was also a big garden up a level at the back. One of the Academy groundsmen would help keep these areas tidy at our expense.

Condition of Dundas House

30. The house itself was in a very bad state of repair and inadequately maintained. There was next to no heating in the house. Some of the boys came from far afield and were going back and forward to Africa or South America for holidays. After Christmas they were having to come back to a cold Edinburgh winter.
31. We asked the Academy if they could do anything about the house being so cold and the then bursar suggested paraffin heaters. We couldn't have those in the house, not

with eight, nine and ten-year-olds running around, along with our own young children. That wouldn't have been safe. Eventually, they did put night storage heaters in but nothing was done without a struggle.

32. In the late 1960s, the other boarding houses had been modernised, but for some reason, they didn't modernise Dundas House. There were five electrical circuits, for example. The maintenance was very ad hoc, if something went wrong, something would be done about it, eventually.
33. The house was cold in the winter. The boys seemed unaware at the time, but we knew it was cold and that it was not a suitable or ideal environment for them to be living in.
34. We moved in on a very hot day in August 1972. John opened a window in the living room at the back of the house and the window crashed down. The rope mechanism within the window had gone. This happened with other windows too.
35. The baths were very old and the enamel on one of them was cracked. We realised that some of the boys were getting marks from it as it was irritating their skin. John tried to fix it by painting the enamel but that didn't last. John asked the school for new baths.
36. John would always ask for things we required, and he would keep asking. Nowadays, with health and safety, the house wouldn't have passed the test. John did keep on at the school and we did get things done eventually and improvements were made. John did write to the rector and the bursar about improvements to the house. He took the boys' welfare very seriously.
37. John also fought to get some covering on the dormitory floor because of the splinters the boys were getting. He would ask but, as with everything, it wouldn't be done right away. He would have to ask repeatedly before eventually something would be done. John painted the library himself, as it was such a gloomy space.

38. When people say they had cold baths in Dundas House, it wasn't a punishment, there just wasn't enough hot water. The hot water would run cold very quickly due to the elderly boiler.

Running Dundas House

Domestic staff

39. All the domestic staff were part-time. Initially, the laundry went out to Edinburgh Laundries and then, for some reason, the school decided the boys' laundry should be done in the house. That's when washing machine was installed in the boys' pantry. We had to employ another helper to come in and deal with all their clothes and games kit. All their shirts had to be ironed too. The bedsheets continued to be sent out to the laundry.
40. There was also a cleaner who came in to help with the boys' dormitories and rooms. She had worked in Dundas House from before we arrived, and she stayed with us until the end.
41. It was a very busy house. Domestic staff would be there most mornings, and our matron would come in the afternoon. She was invaluable to us. Her husband worked for the city parks department. He would get us tickets for the city fireworks display at City Park, and we would take all of the house boys there to watch.

Support & visitors

42. I don't think it ever occurred to us to think about what support the school was providing. Looking back, the school did leave us to get on with running the house. They didn't ask us if we were managing or whether we needed anything. It was the 1970's and different times.

43. The house was full, and we were in great demand. There was no cause for concern and nothing for anybody to worry about. There was no set routine for visits to the house by what would now be described as senior management of the school. I just don't remember anyone ever asking us if we were all right. There were no routine visits from anybody at the school or from the school board of governors, but there would be informal visits.
44. I do think John enjoyed his role as housemaster although it was a great responsibility. We both enjoyed living in the boarding house, it was an interesting if exhausting, life.

Boarders at Dundas House

45. The number of boys boarding at Dundas House varied from sixteen up to twenty, which was the absolute maximum. There was a great demand for that age group. So much so, that the Academy had these metal framed bunkbeds installed. These weren't the bunkbeds you would think of nowadays. I think they were ex-RAF beds. I can remember John saying they were similar to beds he slept on during his national service days. The boys brought their own duvets and covers to replace the old blue blankets. These brightened up the dorms considerably and added a touch of personalisation and character.
46. The boys were aged between eight and ten, which was primary 4 to primary 6. There must have been over a hundred boys who stayed with us over the years we were there. Some were with us for two years, occasionally for three.
47. There were many visits from other "Day Boys." One of the housemaster's sons, [REDACTED], who was the same age as Neil, spent a great deal of time in Dundas House. He also came to Blair House with us. Another boy came after school for prep, an early example of After School Care. He provided a statement to the Inquiry. His name was [REDACTED]. He has alleged that I had knitted or created "a felt cloth" which was placed over the boys prior to them being hit. This is a total figment of his imagination.

Day-to-day Life

Morning & evening

48. In the morning, John would get up and knock on the door of the big dormitory and tell the boys it was time to get up. Those boys would then charge upstairs to the bathrooms and that would waken up the top floor up. There were no showers in the house so they would just have a wash in the basins upstairs before getting dressed.
49. The boys would then line up before going for breakfast. After breakfast they would come back and go upstairs to brush their teeth and get their gym kit or whatever they needed for school. They would then come back down and would line up before going to school.
50. The morning lineup crops up more than once in the Inquiry statements I have read. I would tie some of the boys' ties because they couldn't do it themselves. They were only eight or nine years' old. I could only tie their ties if I stood behind them, I couldn't tie it from the front.
51. There is mention of a metal comb in the Inquiry statements. If the boys' hair needed combed, John would comb it. He used a small metal pocket comb. This was his own comb which he would use to comb his own hair. The boys would then head off to school and wouldn't be back again until 3 or 3:30 pm depending on their age.
52. When they came back from school, they would go to their tuck boxes in the pantry. The matron would be there and would give them milk and biscuits. They also had an individual weekly delivery of fruit.
53. When the boys came in from school, we liked them to get into what they called their 'Mufti.' I think it's an army term meaning their own clothes. We had a lot of children whose parents were in the armed services.

54. They started changing out of their uniform after school, but the Rector didn't like it and said they were not to cross the road out of uniform. That meant the boys had to go for their evening meal wearing their school blazer when they really needed to be out of their school uniform, but it wasn't allowed.
55. The Prep School and Upper School were very different. They were on different campuses and there was little interaction between them.
56. John did have considerable correspondence between himself and the rector and bursar challenging the archaic requirement for boys of that age to wear their blazers in the evening, as well as the state of the house and other matters, all of which would have been to the benefit of the boys. The rector would be Mr [REDACTED] and then, later, Mr Ellis. My elder son has submitted correspondence between John and various Rectors, along with their responses, to the Inquiry.
57. Anyway, weather permitting, the boys would go over to the field to play after school. We didn't send them out in the rain, as somebody has suggested in one of the Inquiry statements. After a time, the boys would come back in for their evening meal. The timing of that meal varied over the years as it was difficult to find a time that suited the eight-year-olds and the seventeen-year-olds across all four boarding houses. They would go over the road to the prep dining hall for their evening meal and when finished, come back for prep etc.

Bathtime

58. Initially, we had two baths, although latterly they put a third bath on the top floor. There was never enough hot water, it was an ongoing significant problem. We had to have a strict rota, and the boys would generally have a bath twice a week. Our matron, Valerie, would wash their hair for them in the afternoon before they went for their evening meal. There were no showers in Dundas House.
59. Valerie would also make sure they had all the clothes they needed. She would be there until around 5:00 pm, around the time the boys were going for their evening

meal. Valerie would draw the curtains in the dormitories in the winter and leave everything ready for them. I'm still in touch with Valerie.

Health care

60. The matron's role was to provide health care and care for the boys when they were unwell, so I was responsible for that when I was covering the role. We had quite a few health issues over the years, for example, appendicitis, asthma, sporting injuries and the like
61. The school was supported by a medical practice in Leith and one of their GPs would be on duty at one of the bigger boarding houses every morning. If we had someone who needed to be seen, we would take them across. If it was someone who couldn't go across, then the GP would come to us. The GP and the boy would be left entirely alone during their consultation. One of the GPs was a former EA pupil who had two sons at the school. Two of the other GPs also had sons at the school.
62. The practice was very supportive when I had to contact them at other times when the boys were unwell. One boy had a very severe pain which turned out to be appendicitis. The GP came out in the evening, and I distinctly recall going by ambulance with the boy to the old Sick Kids Hospital in Edinburgh. Another boy was passing blood, which transpired to be longstanding but hitherto undiagnosed issue relating to his kidneys. Again, it was in the evening and ended up with me taking him to the Western General Hospital. Although I haven't mentioned it, I do know the names of all these boys.
63. [REDACTED] came to us from Hong Kong and was in primary 4. He was a very fragile little boy. He was blonde and the boys nicknamed him '[REDACTED]'. He was so delicate looking and had asthma. This is one of the things that has really upset me because there are malicious allegations that we ill-treated boys with asthma. [REDACTED] looked very unhappy from the day he arrived. John commented on the fact that his fingers were always in his mouth, and it transpired he had severe toothache. We happened to have a routine family check-up scheduled so John gave up his own

appointment for [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was a different boy after that and had a smile on his face.

64. [REDACTED]'s asthma was quite bad, and he was treated with various inhalers. He slept in the big dorm and our room was just across the landing so someone would come and knock on our bedroom door in the night if he needed me. [REDACTED] would regularly be seen by the GP whenever required.
65. [REDACTED] was also very accident prone. One of the groundsmen left a tractor trailer at the foot of the driveway into the field. [REDACTED] managed to fall into a spike on the trailer and the blood was pouring from his ear. It was another housemaster who brought him back to the house. He had wrapped a towel round [REDACTED]'s head. I took [REDACTED] to the Western General Hospital. It really was quite a bad injury, but it healed remarkably well, and he recovered from it.
66. I recall another time when [REDACTED] fell in the common room and broke his hand. Again, I had to take him to the Western General where we were told he would require an operation on his hand. [REDACTED] and I both went home but had to go back in the next day for the operation. I distinctly remember [REDACTED] being very apprehensive about the prospect of the operation. He jumped off the trolley when he was being taken to the operating theatre. John was teaching, but it must have been lunchtime because he arrived at the hospital. The staff said that one of us would have to go into the operating theatre with [REDACTED], which wasn't really my scene.
67. We got him back on the trolley and I went into the theatre with him. I stayed until he went under, then they asked me to leave, which I did.
68. In Giles Moffatt's testimony to the Inquiry, he said that we ill-treated [REDACTED], that we didn't look after him with his asthma and that we picked on him. Giles was in a bed next to [REDACTED] in the dormitory and he would often be the one who would come and knock on our bedroom door. This is one of several vicious, defamatory allegations made by Giles.

69. I expect the boys were given a health check when they started at the school.

Bed wetting

70. We had a serious bed wetter during our first year in Dundas House in 1972. We had a matron at the time. The boy was under medical care and the school GP had to keep an eye on him. I suspect there was an underlying problem as it wasn't just the occasional bed wetting. Apart from that boy, we would have the occasional wet bed, but we didn't make a big deal of it.
71. I don't think the bedwetters were made fun of by other boys, certainly not in our hearing. I have no recollection of anybody being made to feel ashamed. We had plenty clean sheets, so it wasn't a problem.
72. Bed wetting has cropped up repeatedly in the Inquiry statements and how John was cruel to boys who wet the bed. John wouldn't have known if a boy had wet his bed. He wasn't going round in the mornings looking to see if there was a wet bed, he wouldn't have had time for that.

Evening Prep

73. In the evening, the boys would have prep, and John would be around for that unless a house tutor was there. The boys did need help and supervision. The eight-year-olds wouldn't have much prep to do, but it was a quiet time in the house. The prep was in the common room on the ground floor. The boys would sit round the big table and John, or the tutor would sit at the small table next to them.

Leisure time

74. After prep, the boys could watch television or do whatever they wanted to do before bedtime. They generally stayed in the common room where they had their lockers, which was where they kept their personal belongings. There were some books in the

library, but I don't think they ever looked at them. They would have their own comics, books, sticker albums, models, and toys etc.

75. On Saturday evenings they would go up and get ready for bed earlier than usual before coming back down to watch television in their pyjamas and dressing gowns. The programmes that stick in my mind are Starsky and Hutch and The Dukes of Hazzard. There was usually something suitable for them to watch when they stayed up a bit later. We tried to make weekends different from a school day.

Gardening

76. John thought it would be good to get the boys interested in gardening. The boys would go out into the garden after school and at weekends. He tried that for a few years; all the boys would have their little bit of garden where they could plant sunflowers and some vegetables. The problem was, by the time the garden came to flourish, the boys had gone home for the summer. John was somewhat ahead of his time, as gardening is now increasingly promoted as being good for physical, emotional, and general wellbeing. In one Inquiry statement, it was claimed they were sent out in cold weather to dig potatoes whilst unsuitably clad. That is yet another total fabrication.

Pocket money

77. Pocket money was handed out on a Saturday morning. John was invariably over at the Prep School games as he was involved in the rugby/cricket. So, he was very rarely there on a Saturday morning, and I gave out the pocket money. I would likely chat to the boys about what they were going to do with their money, and what they might want to buy. There was a toy shop in Goldenacre called the Toy Centre and the Toy Tub at Stockbridge. The boys would go off in little groups and return with all sorts of things. It was entirely up to them what they did with their pocket money.

78. In one of the Inquiry statements, someone suggested that John 'grilled' him over what he was going to spend his pocket money on. This is at best a misrepresentation of what was likely a humorous exchange.

Sport & weekends

79. The boys at Dundas House were generally too young to take part in sport on a Saturday morning as it was for boys in the first and second teams. I do remember one of our boys, IWO [REDACTED], was in a cricket team with my son Neil, so he would have been involved but by and large their Saturday mornings were free.
80. On Saturday afternoons, something would be arranged. Occasionally, they would be taken to the pictures at the Ritz in Canonmills. Other times they would go swimming at Drumsheugh.
81. If they didn't go out on a Saturday afternoon, the outing would be on a Sunday, and we would have use of the school minibus. I would sometimes go on these trips. We would go to the south of Edinburgh, to the Pentland Hills or to the Forth Bridge. It was to get them out for the afternoon in their 'mufti.' They were allowed to wear their own clothes on the weekend.

Church on a Sunday

82. On Sunday mornings, the boys would go to Inverleith Church and to the Sunday school there. John carried out church duty on a rota system with the other three housemasters. All the senior boys had to sit in church, while the younger ones were at Sunday school.
83. The boys would wear a kilt if they had one. After lunch, they would change out of it before going on the Sunday outing. We have some happy photographs of these outings.

Letter writing

84. Late Sunday afternoon was letter writing time, which the boys hated. They didn't like writing home; they didn't know what to write. Every weekend they would have to come up with something to write home about. We had to give them ideas of what they had done that week. I don't think that was something the school insisted on, I think it was more the parents understandably wanted to hear from their sons. There were no mobile phones in the 1970's.
85. John would sit with them during letter writing; they would never have finished their letters otherwise. I remember helping out on occasion and asking them to think about what they had been doing that week and them saying they hadn't done anything. Some of the boys had had a disrupted schooling and writing a coherent letter was definitely a challenge for some of them. It was quite a job encouraging them, they really didn't like this ordeal every Sunday.

Birthdays

86. The boys would get a birthday cake on their birthday. We wouldn't let a birthday pass unnoticed in the house. I would go out and buy the cake. That was when I first heard boys screaming in unison as the knife went into the cake.

Graeme and Neil Brownlee

87. As our sons got older, they did become friends with some of the boys. We tried not to show that our own boys were any more special than the boarders. We tried to treat them all the same, which was tricky. It was also our family home.
88. There is a comment I saw in an Inquiry statement which suggests the best toys were taken from the boys and given to our sons. That is a total fabrication. Another one.

89. The boys and our sons sometimes actually collaborated in making things together. I don't think it was 'Lego,' which wasn't such a big thing back then, but they did other things like, 'Airfix.' They seemed to get on all right.
90. We actually took over in Dundas House from Hamish Dawson and his wife, Sheena. I do remember, as we were being shown round, Sheena Dawson saying that I should be careful not to neglect my own children. Looking back, perhaps we did. Maybe we didn't neglect them exactly, but they didn't have our full attention. Both my sons are independently submitting their own statements to the Inquiry. Conclusions can be drawn from what both my sons have to say.
91. We did have time off in the holidays and at half-term and we were quite resilient in our thirties. I remember a lot about our time in Dundas House.-Looking back, it was full-time, seven days a week, nighttime as well.

Discipline and Corporal Punishment

92. I am not denying John used corporal punishment in school back in the seventies and eighties, when it was still legal, but I do not accept that it went beyond that. The great mystique is the clacken. In a state school, it would have been the belt. When I was at state school in the 40's and 50's boys were always getting the belt. I think people have an idea that the clacken was an instrument of torture. It was actually for a game that was played at the Upper School, not the Prep. It was an EA thing, and it was simply a wooden, long handled bat, with round headed ends used for the playground ballgame of "Hailes." When boys left Upper School, I believe at least the ephors (school prefects) were each presented with their own clacken which they would get people to sign before they left. If it had been a belt that had been used, I don't think there would have been so much made of it.
93. Day boys went home to their parents every day of the school term. I don't accept that not a single day boy didn't go home and tell their parents what had happened in school that day, particularly if anything untoward had happened – to themselves or another boy. Not one. No one went home and said so and so was beaten, somebody else was

dropped on his head. Was there no day boy who went home with marks on him, merely hours later?

94. I never saw John punish a boy in the various manners alleged. There were no set rules on a wall for the boys to follow. Our idea was that it was run on as close to family lines as was possible. The boys knew fine when they were crossing the line. They just knew what would be tolerated and what wouldn't. In the big dorm at night, the boys might get unsettled and get out of their beds and start running around and carrying on. That was next to John's study, where he would be catching up on his schoolwork, such as marking and reports and preparation for the next day, and he could hear all the noise and commotion. Another dormitory was above his study so he would hear them too if they were up. John would just give them a telling off.
95. There was a clacken in the boarding house, all the masters had one, but I never saw John use it. Maybe it was a threat as much as anything, just it being there. So, discipline would be a telling off and we would deprive them of privileges, although they didn't have many privileges. We would never withhold their pocket money. I don't think any of the boys ever did anything drastic in front of me. If they were misbehaving, I would give them a row, a telling off.
96. We would never give a boy a cold bath as a punishment. I know that has been mentioned, but if anyone had a cold bath, it was because the hot water had run out. It just wouldn't be in John's nature to treat any child like that.
97. I think in school, John was probably a disciplinarian. He would certainly give someone a telling off and wouldn't stand any nonsense. I know this because boys and colleagues have spoken up in John's defence. They said he was kind but firm and fair and that you knew where you were with him. He wasn't a teacher that the pupils would be able to run riot over or run circles round, of which, like all schools, the EA had its share.
98. He was the same in the boarding house as school, kind but firm. If the boys were all out of bed in the big dorm, it would be very irritating, and he wouldn't stand for it. He

was genuinely concerned for each boy's welfare, including the quieter ones, in regard to a good night's sleep.

Schooling

99. For some of the boys it must have been very difficult at school. Many hadn't been able to settle in a school before being moved on. They were so young. If they were very young at the Academy, they would have had a female teacher. No one ever came back to us and complained about their day in school.

School & Parent Communities

100. I wasn't in John's classroom during the teaching day, but I was in there at other times. I knew many parents over the years, and I knew the setup. I saw a lot of the parents at sport functions, concerts, school plays and socially.
101. The Academy parents were quite a social lot. I attended class parties and helped with the uniform exchange. I would say the Academy parents were not slow in coming forward. If there was anything to be brought up, they would have had no hesitation in bringing it up with me or the wider network. Nobody ever did. Not once in 31 years of John teaching at school. And nobody has even now.
102. This wasn't a school tucked away in the country where nobody had access to the outer world. It was all out in the open, even the staff phone numbers were published in the roll book for a time.

Myra Pugh the lollipop Lady

103. Myra Pugh was the lollipop lady. She wanted to give her evidence to the "Examination of Facts." She was the lollipop lady for forty years. She was even the 'Lollipop Lady of the Year' at one point. At the end of the school day, the mothers would congregate and chat. Myra said she never heard anything negative about John. She couldn't

believe it when she heard the bizarre allegations being made. She contacted me and said she would do anything she could to help.

104. Myra would also speak to some of the boarders at the end of the day. They would sit on the wall next to her and chat away. It could be hard for boarders to see their classmates being collected by the mothers at the end of the day. She never heard anything negative from any of them about John.
105. Myra is very upset about it all. At no time did she hear any criticism of John. She even went out with some of the mothers on social nights out. Again, she says she never heard a negative word about John.

Homesickness & Support

Homesickness

106. The picture that has been painted of the house is horrendous. The allegations are unfounded and totally bizarre. There was absolutely no ill-treatment of any boy as described in the allegations. Not one boy left or was withdrawn from Dundas early during our time there. Homesickness was a problem. They didn't really understand what was wrong with them until it eventually dawned on them. We tried to reassure them and be as kind as we could to them. They knew they would be seeing local relatives and friends soon, but we kept them busy to divert their thoughts.
107. They weren't all homesick by any means. Some had always expected to go to a boarding school as that was a family tradition. Others came because their fathers were moving around, and they were at an age where they needed uninterrupted schooling. Maybe they hadn't expected to board. Others came because their parents were divorcing and that could be tricky. Others came due to family bereavement. It is no wonder that they do not look back to that time of their lives with any fondness.

108. I remember one boy who we weren't to allow out other than with designated people as the divorce had been so acrimonious. Others came because of a family bereavement. Some of the boys did have real issues. Within the Inquiry statements, witnesses talk about their lives before Dundas House, or at previous schools and some of them clearly had difficulties in their very early lives long before coming to EA or Dundas House. Some clearly resented being sent away from home, and we understood that.
109. Every boy who boarded at Edinburgh Academy had to have a contact close by. That was mandatory and the school wouldn't admit them otherwise. There had to be somebody nearby, in this country at least. They couldn't just bring a boy halfway round the world and leave him with us. I think that would be a ruling of the school as we had nothing to do with the admission forms. One time we had a seven-year-old boy. I told the headmaster of the Prep at the time, James Burnet, not to admit any other boy that age as it was far too young, but we accepted the boys that came to us. At no time was there a six-year-old boarding with us.
110. Our furthest away boy was from the Gilbert and Ellice Islands in the South Pacific, and it took him five days to get home, it being the 1970s. He was so homesick but did get over it and stayed with us. At home, he used to run round in his bare feet. In Edinburgh, he was required to wear a school uniform. He used to struggle to dress himself in the stiff new uniform they had to wear, and the matron and I would help with that. It was a totally alien environment, and I very much admired the way he coped with such a great and traumatic change in his lifestyle and environment.
111. I could have sat and cried with another boy who was homesick, but I didn't think that was going to do him any good. He was so unhappy, and I could see it. He too came from a warm and sunny island and to go from there to grey Edinburgh. What a shock that must have been for him.
112. I certainly don't think it was easy for these boys being sent away from home at such a young age, leaving parents and sometimes younger siblings behind. However, it

wasn't us who made that decision. Their recollections now from that time, when they were at a young age, up to half a century ago, remain confused.

113. At every school holiday, including half-terms, and every boarder would go home or to be with relatives or schoolfriends, including for weekends out. Even my own two sons were often sent to my parents in Kirkcaldy.
114. The boys in Dundas House, or any EA boarding house for that matter, were not in a permanent care set-up, confined for years at a time, as some commentators would have us believe.

Support for the boys

115. Matron's role was to look after the boys in every respect. It wasn't just the practical side of things; we needed to know how they were feeling as well. It would be obvious by their faces.
116. As I have said, much of their unhappiness was because they were away from home, and I couldn't fix that. That did pass and would usually only be for a few weeks at the most. We thought it better they did not meet any relatives etc until their third weekend in the house.
117. There were no mobile phones back then. On one occasion we allowed a boy to speak to his mother on the telephone on a long-distance line. As it turned out, the boy coped fine, but his mother was in floods of tears. We didn't allow them to speak to their parents on the phone after that. If they went out to a phone box at the weekend, that was different and there was nothing to stop them. In this day and age with mobiles, it must all be such a different scenario.
118. In one of the Inquiry statements, a boy talks about me allowing him to watch television in our sitting room as he wanted to watch something different from the other boys. I do remember that and although he is anonymous in his Inquiry statement, I know it is [REDACTED]. I remember every single one of these boys. [REDACTED] was a really nice,

helpful boy. He had such a smiling face. He had an older brother, [IBN], who joined us the year before.

119. In [IBI]'s statement, he hardly mentions his brother and says that he can't remember if he was in the house at the same time as him. They overlapped by a term. [IBI] makes some strange allegations about his time in Dundas House.
120. [IBI] comments on Dundas House being an emotionally cold place, but I remember him always having a smile on his face. He was a cheerful boy, so I don't understand his claims being made forty years later.
121. [IBN], [IBI]'s brother, didn't see his parents for a whole year when he first came to Dundas House. They did have good grandparents who kept in touch.
122. If any of the boys had concerns, we thought they would tell us. If not us, why wouldn't they tell whoever they were out with at the weekend? Some of them had devoted grandparents, an auntie, or really good friends.
123. I remember there was something going on in one of the top floor dormitories. A boy wanted away from his roommates, so John moved him to another dormitory. This was [IBI]. When we knew about a concern, we would do something about it.
124. There was no formal process for a boy to make a complaint. It was the 1970's/early 80's and there just wasn't anything like that back then.
125. The boys would talk to our matron, Valerie, she was very good with them. I wouldn't say it was pastoral support Valerie was providing as that wasn't a common expression back then. To my mind, it was just something we would do in looking after them and if something was bothering them. I would be more inclined to call it emotional support.
126. I never said anything to them about speaking to us about any problems they had. They had every opportunity to talk to us, and they did. Some would chat away non-stop, and these are still a good memory I have from these years. We were constantly accessible.

For example, one morning I was putting lipstick on at the bathroom mirror having left the door open, when a boy appeared with the day's post and said, "I thought you would be waiting for this." That was how informal it could be, with all our rooms mixed up with the boys' rooms.

Child Protection

127. To answer your question, we received no guidance in child protection. This was the 1970's.
128. The boys were surrounded with people. They were at Sunday school, out with people at the weekends, out with day boys. The house boys could stay over with the day boys if they were invited. They did go to day boys' birthday parties.
129. I never had any specific concerns about the boys' care under our roof. My sole concern was looking after them and supporting them. If they weren't well, we would look after them in the house. There was no space in Dundas for a separate sanatorium or "sick room." There was chicken pox in the house, we also had Rubella through the house, both more than once.

External Monitoring

130. There were external school inspectors but not for the house. The school Bursar visited very frequently, usually to order repairs on an *ad hoc* basis once things went wrong, such as the roof leaking. I don't know if the other houses were inspected. There would be informal visits from members of the Prep staff, other housemasters, the Headmaster and Rector, usually in passing as Dundas was on the way to and from the other houses and sports ground.

Records

131. We didn't keep any official records of the boys. There was no official medical record other than the GP's notes or hospital records. Just notes for our own use were kept. It was a small enough group for us to know each boy.
132. School reports would go to the parents, but I don't remember if John was expected to add his comments as housemaster to that in terms of how the boy was doing in the house. Parental contact would be with us by letter or phone. This was before email and mobile phones.

Voluntary Involvement in Edinburgh Academy Groups

133. John worked for and supported five heads-of the Prep over 31 years. He was also involved with the wider Edinburgh Academy community and was in almost weekly contact with academics. John was elected secretary of the Edinburgh Academical Football Club (EAFC), which was the former pupil's rugby team. He was also elected president of the Edinburgh Academicals Cricket Club (EACC). It is inconceivable that John would have been elected to these positions by former pupils if there had been any issues.
134. John had voluntary involvement with activities which regularly brought him into contact with former pupils, who were by then bigger and fitter than he was. This is hardly the behaviour of someone who had something to hide. John was also a member of the Academical Ancients, a golfing group, which he had been invited to join by Bruce Stenhouse, the then registrar of Edinburgh Academy. This group varied its membership as the years progressed, and natural events took their toll. The group consisted almost exclusively of former EA pupils, many of whose sons John had taught or was even currently teaching. The group also included some directors of Edinburgh Academy.

135. Although this group played at other golf courses, their home course was [REDACTED]. We regularly attended [REDACTED] for Sunday lunches with friends and family. There was invariably a steady stream of welcome interruptions from either former pupils or their parents coming over to speak to us. Not once did we ever witness anything but goodwill towards John. One of the largest annual events at [REDACTED] was the boxing day lunch, which we invariably attended as it's our wedding anniversary.
136. After John retired in 1995, he continued to engage with the school and regularly attended rugby and cricket matches, both at Raeburn Place and at away fixtures. John also attended by invitation school concerts and plays, school reunions and dinners and was in the company of former colleagues and Academicals well into his early eighties. Since John retired, we have remained connected to the public-school community in Edinburgh via my elder son's several decades at Heriot's and my younger son's engagement with the social side of EA Academicals. Not once have any of us heard anything negative nor any allegations against John, quite the contrary. Former pupils would ask after John, including some of his most prominent accusers, well into their own adulthood and indeed as recently as the last few years.

James Burnet

137. In the book called, '175 Accies' published in 1999, James Burnet (Headmaster of the Prep 1973 – 1987) mentions he was "supremely content" during his own 14 years there. James was himself a member of a long-established Academy family. His nephews attended from the Prep upwards as did his own two sons, who were also taught by John. On his own retirement, James sent John an effusive letter of thanks. The contents of the letter are as follows:
138. *"My Dear John, at the end of 14 years and one term, I find myself trying to think of words adequate to thank you for the help and support you have given me during that time. I have had a marvellous period of headmaster of the Prep. There have been times as you know, which I could have done without, but in all honesty, the knowledge that you were around to advise and support did much to get me through them. You*

know my personal feelings about the fact that you are not my successor; I can only add that Laurance Smith will be a lucky man if you look after him half as well as you have looked after me. With all my heart, John, thank you for what you have done. The school and I both owe you an enormous debt. With my very best wishes and warmest regards, Yours aye, James." The letter is dated 18 December 1987, some 37 years ago.

Allegations

139. I was not aware of any abusive behaviour in the house or in the school. I am aware of some of the comments made about us in some of the Inquiry statements having read them online. I am prepared to comment on any of the allegations or anything said about us. There are so many fabrications, exaggerations, distortions, and figments of imagination. That does not mean the truth cannot yet be put on record.
140. I have been read a sentence, which I'm told is from a witness statement provided to the Inquiry. The sentence is, *"Brownlee's wife was also often watching on as he punished us in the boarding house."* One suggestion is that I enjoyed their suffering and another suggesting I was John's victim. These remarks, made under the protection of ciphers and anonymity are libelous and defamatory.

IWO

141. Comments from IWO about me being cold and uncaring are very hurtful. We had IWO and his big brother, IWO, in the house and they had great parents. It was their mum we saw mostly. She was lovely, friendly, and very appreciative. It was obvious these boys missed their mother, and bitterly resented being sent away. They also had extremely caring grandparents as well.
142. IWO hardly mentions IWO in his statement. In his twenties, IWO was killed in a car crash in London. Later, IWO was in Manila with his girlfriend when there was a terrorist attack, and I understand she was killed. IWO doesn't say much about that,

only what allegedly happened to him in Dundas was worse. This is baffling to hear, forty years later.

143. I don't know what he is saying happened to him apart from alleging that I was cold and uncaring. IWO never did look happy. There is a photograph of him in the cricket team where most of the boys are smiling and giggling but IWO isn't.
144. IWO was knocked out during rugby practice and taken to the Western General Hospital. The school took him to the hospital because it happened in the school day on school grounds. I went along. He was concussed but did get home after many hours. I have a vivid memory of him lying in the A & E room still in his rugby kit.

Giles Moffatt

145. I have been asked if I would like to comment on remarks made by Giles Moffatt during his appearance at an Inquiry Hearing where he said, *"We were nine, and we had done something wrong, allegedly, and we were locked in there (referring to a garden shed). And I remember his wife a couple of times brought us bread, white bread, buttered, with a glass of water."* It's a total fabrication, one of his many.
146. There was one shed, subdivided into a Garden Shed and Bike Shed, but the boys wouldn't be in them as all the tools were kept in one (the Garden Shed), and family bikes and old furniture kept in the other section (the Bike Shed). They were categorically not locked in either shed as alleged. Giles' story varies, he has said it was during the day and another time that it was for two nights with no access to a toilet. Another time he says that they were allowed out to go to bed. It is a total fabrication as is much of his testimony. The suggestion that I would have endorsed this alleged incarceration by bringing them bread and water, with the further detail of it being on a white china plate, is utterly preposterous.
147. Giles makes another allegation about a hose pipe and says that John put the hosepipe into a six-year-old boy who Giles cannot name. This allegation is a total fabrication as well. For one thing, there was never a six-year-old boy in Dundas. In my opinion, that

and the garden shed story had considerable weight in the police deciding to press charges as both are indeed serious allegations. Both are total fabrications from Giles. As far as my family and I are concerned, these two malicious allegations cast doubt on all of his testimony.

148. I don't know why Giles has come up with these allegations. I'm only dealing with facts. Giles had come to us when he was eight. He had been living in Paris with his parents and little sister. He could do nothing for himself. I remember Giles very clearly; I don't think Giles had done anything for himself before. He was totally out of his depth behaviourally, socially, and temperamentally.
149. Giles was a character, very likable and could be very entertaining but he didn't know where to draw the line. He needed lots of support, which we gave him. If he had been in a house with senior boys, he wouldn't have lasted two minutes. They wouldn't have put up with the way he behaved. It was really a case of trying to get him used to his new life in the house and school, and how to interact with others of all age groups.
150. Giles would leave a trail behind him and could never find where anything was, he simply couldn't organise himself. I would ask him where his rugby boots were, and he would say that he didn't know. I had to help him, or he would never have got out of the house.
151. Giles would crash around at high speed. One time, he came crashing out of the Boot Room straight into John and Valerie (the Matron) who were standing in the hall, and John gave him a telling off. Off Giles went and two minutes later, he came crashing out of the Common Room door and crashed into them again. He just didn't take a telling; he was a law unto himself.
152. Giles has also alleged that John called him "gay," which was to do with an anorak he had. I think he had brought it back from Paris and it was a beautiful garment. All the other boys had serviceable anoraks in brown, navy and dark green. Giles' one was all different bright colours. "Gay" wasn't a word in John's vocabulary and never has been.

Giles finds the need to add an anachronistic and uncharacteristic term and false detail to distort a perfectly benign event from nearly 45 years ago.

153. Giles had his arm broken while he was bothering an Upper School boy. Giles would be running around, tormenting him. That was on their way back from the dining room over the road at the Prep. The much taller senior boy picked him up and Giles went over his shoulder and landed on his arm, breaking it. The older boy would have been seventeen or eighteen at the time and was very tall. Giles' account of this forty years later is that it was all hushed up because of who the older boy was. He cannot compute even now that perhaps his behaviour played a part in it and the injury was accidental, which is sadly reminiscent of how Giles was as a child.
154. We used to take the whole house to Blair House, which was the EA outdoor centre in Glendoll, Angus. We would take them up there once a year. John would drive the mini-bus, and I did the cooking. Other Prep staff would also come along.
155. John and another master, and often other adults, would take them up the mountains. They didn't always do whole Munros, but they would go up them. That's when Giles was introduced to the mountains. In his testimony he does say that Mr Brownlee was nice to him and that it was a good time in his life. He stated that was his introduction to the mountains and this culminated in his recent visit to Everest.
156. Giles had an aunt and uncle who were wonderful with him. His aunt was very caring and supportive of him. His cousin was at the Upper School. When his aunt came to pick him up at the weekend, she would always straighten him up. He was never put together right, despite our best efforts.
157. We didn't see Giles' parents very often. I did meet his mother years later when she stopped and spoke to me in George Street. John and I met Giles once in our local pub and he spoke away quite the thing. Neil, saw quite a bit of Giles when he was living close to where Giles was living, and they got on fine. Graeme also came into contact with him from time to time.

158. Giles says that he was a victim of “the setup.” He also admits that he has brain damage by his own hand and that his mission in life is to ‘out people.’
159. Giles’ story about the hose in the garden, the shed, his accusation that we hadn’t treated [REDACTED], the asthmatic boy, properly, are so damning. The police and Crown believed every untruthful, unsubstantiated word of it and brought charges against a man they knew could not respond.
160. If Giles was so miserable at Edinburgh Academy, why did he leave and then come back? He certainly wasn’t miserable with us. He sent his own children to the Academy.
161. I can picture Giles to this day; he was so entertaining and likeable back then. Giles never stopped talking. He liked to know what was going on and liked to be the centre of attention and thrived on that.
162. I really don’t know what has happened to Giles in the last few years. Giles is spokesperson of the “Edinburgh Academy Survivors Group,” hereafter EASG, and seems to have something to say about everything, whether connected to him or the EA or not.
163. To me, it’s like two different people. We couldn’t believe it when we read what he had said about us and about Dundas. There is no connection between then and now. It’s defamatory and it’s malicious. I really cannot connect the child Giles with the embittered man he has become. He has a totally different persona. He was a character, it just doesn’t add up at all. He has caused incredible damage to us nearly half a century after coming to us at the volition of his parents.

Nicholas Campbell

164. Campbell has been the instigator of the campaign against the Academy. He has very much been the ringleader. John taught Campbell in primary 6. I’ve known that since he became a media personality in the nineteen nineties after he left the Academy.

165. He or his producer actually rang John up at home. It would have been in the 1990s. Campbell was hosting a radio show at the time and wanted John to go on air in one of the programmes about a favourite teacher. He said that he had enjoyed being in John's class, that he had loved John's sense of humour and talent for mimicry. It wasn't John's scene to go on the radio, so he declined the invitation. Now, Campbell is saying that he rang John in an attempt to entrap him. I wonder what the BBC makes of that claim.
166. What John did to Campbell was use the clack on him. That was it. Suddenly, half a century later, he has made a great issue of it, despite having a public profile and platform for over thirty years. I believe he is doing this for his own publicity and has orchestrated a high-profile campaign against John. At one point, I believe he said that John, *"Beat the living daylights out of me, but it wasn't terribly sore."*
167. In his statement he says, *"I was facing the class, pulling faces, pretending it was sore and simpering and the class were covering their mouths and looking on, trying not to laugh."* That's what his big complaint about John is.
168. Campbell has been pouring vitriol into the newspapers. John has been pilloried in the press and Campbell has a lot to do with it. He makes such use of his BBC platform, which I would imagine is not in accord with BBC ethics. Without having any possible knowledge as to their truthfulness, he disseminated totally unfounded and false allegations, disregarding any sense of due process and fairness under any principles, and people believed him. He is the primary source of all the press coverage; he makes sure all the stories are in the press and in his podcast.
169. Although he was never there, he has a great deal to say about Dundas House. He talks about stories he heard whilst at the Prep and states that he was friendly with a boy who was so miserable at Dundas House. Actually, when Campbell was in the Prep School, John and I weren't in Dundas House. It wasn't the Prep boarding house at that time, yet he has made up all these tales against a factually impossible timeline which could not have included our time at Dundas.

170. Campbell has a podcast where he says we had “twenty raging kids locked up 24/7” with no access to the outside. There is not a grain of truth in what he spouts. That’s what we have had to put up with, it’s even quoted in a newspaper and people believe it.
171. Campbell’s mother was a psychiatric social worker. I didn’t know her but have a friend who worked with her. When all this blew up, this friend was very helpful. She recalls Campbell’s mother dreading going home at the end of the day as she wouldn’t know what to expect, often a house full of boys smoking.
172. Campbell had a reputation of being a bully, particularly at the senior school, but I can’t prove that. I have heard that at Henderson Row, he had a little group of friends and on a Friday, they would threaten a boy and say they would get him on the Monday following.
173. There is a book about the Academy compiled by a former EA master, the late Bill Stirling. It’s about 175 famous Accies. Campbell gets his name in it. One of his quotes in the book is, *“I was no good at drama because I could only play myself. A mad egomaniac.”* Further in the book another comment, surely attributable to or at least approved by Nicholas Campbell reads *“At last his early talent for making smart arse remarks from the back of the classroom was being recognised as the art form he always recognised it to be.”*

IKA

174. Another accuser is IKA. In his Inquiry statement he says that he took it upon himself to find out where we lived. IKA said himself that he got on fine the year John taught him. During that year, IKA described himself as happy, hardworking, industrious, and clever, so I don’t know what his problem is. We lived in the same house for around forty years after Dundas House, but we moved a few years ago. Most people knew where we lived but IKA didn’t. I believe he tried to find out where we lived through the police, which is extraordinary. He made it his

business to find out where we lived and started asking the police why more hadn't been done against John.

175. We knew IKA's parents and they were very pleasant people. IKA's mother went to a state school, as did I, and he writes so disparagingly about her, saying that she always felt inferior because of it. He describes John as being a bigwig and someone of note in the community. This is news to us and indeed would be news to John. I truly have no idea what IKA's problem with my husband is.

IOI

176. There's also a IOI, who, within his Inquiry statement, says that on day one in Dundas John beat the living daylights out of him. That was the start of all this for us when his comments were written on the front page of Newspaper a year past [2023]. His allegations are totally unfounded, and malicious. In his statement he refers to his difficulties as a very young child and to having a strong imagination and enjoying telling stories from an early age.

IKM

177. IKM says John Brownlee humiliated him because he supported Falkirk Football Team. John often told his class that he supported Raith Rovers, which is nothing to write home about and a joke at his own expense. After John told his class this, a boy produced a Raith Rover's scarf for John. That was the sort of relationship he had with his class. It was a happy classroom, and I have photographs which my son Graeme has passed onto the Inquiry. I cannot see why IKM would consider this worthy of going to this Inquiry forty-five years later and say he felt humiliated.

Steven (pseudonym)

178. I have been told that a person with the pseudonym 'Steven' appeared at an Inquiry Hearing in connection to Edinburgh Academy. I have been asked if I could comment

on part of his transcript, where, when referring to me, he said, *"She never did anything physical, but she did call on him to come and deal with ... I think she came into our dorm room one time and said, "Right, I'm going to get Mr Brownlee.""* I couldn't think of anything that happened in the dorm that I couldn't have coped with, but even if I had said this, what is the point of the allegation? This is just another fabrication. I cannot identify "Steven." It is too easy to make allegations anonymously and preface them with "I think."

Other accusers

179. By commenting to the Inquiry on a few named accusers, it does not mean that I accept those made by others or have no view on them.

Allegations Against Other Teachers

Hamish Dawson

180. I know allegations have been made against Hamish Dawson. I don't know about the allegations against him. We knew Hamish and his wife. My son, Graeme, was on two canal boat holidays with Hamish and other boys and staff and he said nothing untoward happened at all.
181. We just weren't aware of any abuse. Hamish Dawson was at Upper School, so our boarders had moved on by the time they were in his class.

Iain Wares

182. I knew Iain Wares, but I didn't know about any of the allegations against him during the time I was in Dundas House. I knew he left the Academy and went to Fettes College, but I knew nothing of the circumstances around that.

183. When Iain was getting married, we were surprised when he asked John to be his best man. I read someone's statement where they say it was terrible that John Brownlee was Iain Wares' best man. John has been a best man four or five times over his life to friends and colleagues. Later, Iain moved to Fettes College, but we knew nothing about the allegations.
184. We started at Dundas House in 1972, and Iain Wares left the school in 1973 or 74. He had no involvement with Dundas House when we were in charge of the house.

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

185. These allegations are now being made, to some extent, because of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. The Academy issued a statement-encouraging anybody who wanted to say something about their time at the Academy to come forward to the Inquiry. EA stated their accounts wouldn't be challenged. Whether the school was obliged to take this position or not, this acted is an open invitation to anyone slightly disaffected by their school years, or the school or particular teachers.
186. From my recollection of reading it, the summing up by the Inquiry's own KC is appalling, where it talks about "cruel and unnatural" treatment. John's name was not redacted in the summing up either. That made things so much worse for us. The fact that John's name was not protected in the slightest has been part of the problem. Whether the Inquiry was obliged to act in this way does not mitigate the damage done by essentially asking all EA witnesses to reveal any stories they may have about John Brownlee, whether they came to give such evidence or not, and for his name not to be redacted because it was already in the public domain thanks to Campbell. I cannot understand why he was not accorded the protection given to other members of staff.
187. In all the time John was at the Academy, there was not a single adverse report about him, nothing. As far as we are concerned, no parent ever made a complaint, complained about the Prep or about Dundas, at the time, and indeed not a single EA teacher from John's entire time at the school has even now come forward to state that

they had any concerns or had raised concerns. They would have nothing to lose by doing so, yet there is silence, which confirms there were no contemporaneous concerns or complaints about John from any quarter. Far from complaining, many parents presented us with tokens of gratitude.

Further comments

188. We are now taking these steps to ensure that the truth and our evidence is formally on record. I have come forward to the Inquiry after being treated with utter disregard, bordering on contempt, by the following:

The press

189. A free press is one thing, but that does not give licence to disseminate untrue, unsubstantiated, defamatory allegations. Articles were published by the Sunday Post, Sunday Mail, Daily Record, Times, and Telegraph. I have been telephoned at home and had notes through my letter box from their journalists who came to my front door. Our Lawyer advised us not to respond at the start, and we have refrained from doing so until now. Unfortunately, many people believe that what is printed must be true. Many people also believe that what is online or on TV/radio must be true. Most of that reporting, especially in the BBC, can be traced to one obvious source.

The Police

190. The police had a great deal of questionably close contact with the EASG. They were under pressure to be seen to be taking action from that group. The only contact we had was when they repeatedly arrived with a citation for me to appear as a witness for the prosecution against my own husband, rather than for his defence. This alone demonstrates the biased nature of this entire process. More than once, they hammered on my front door. The police officer in charge of the investigation appeared to accept all the allegations, however bizarre and fantastical.

Crown Office

191. The Crown Office did not accept proof of John's medical condition from John's own doctors, who included one of the most eminent professors and experts on Alzheimer's in Europe. I know such a verification by the Crown is standard procedure. They sent their own expert to our house. She was perfectly pleasant, but the visit caused unnecessary stress.
192. I also am told that it was normal procedure for the Crown to be in constant contact with the accusers, who were constantly exerting pressure on the Crown to take further action. The Crown then took a long time to decide that there would be an 'Examination of Facts,' although there is still absolutely no concrete evidence that any of these allegations were true and knowing full well that John could not answer for himself and would not be able to instruct a lawyer. This was a disgraceful decision by the Crown.
193. Our lawyers were not kept updated by the Crown. On at least one occasion, the first of them knowing about an update was when it appeared in the press.

Examination of Facts

194. Once more, EASG was kept well informed of the timing of the Examination of Facts,' which turned out to be a total and complete travesty. John was not able to instruct our lawyer. This rendered any cross examination of the evidence impracticable, if not impossible. The defence case was severely hampered by John's illness. I would remind the Inquiry that John was unable to respond. Nobody involved in this process has heard and will ever hear, a word from him. The allegations cannot be responded to by the person who is being accused.
195. The prosecutor spoke for two weeks, the defence, unable to take instruction from John, had a day and a half. Amongst our witnesses we had the former head of George Heriot's and the current chaplain of the Academy. John had taught them both. Their testimony of John's character and their own experiences with him counted for nothing.

196. We also had other former pupils who provided positive accounts of John in the classroom including his approach to discipline. Our defence witnesses in general felt they were not listened to. Our matron had very relevant information on Dundas but felt that her testimony was not given its due importance.
197. My own testimony was frequently cut short, the Sherrif being dismissive of me. When I tried to continue, he said, *"No, we've stopped now."* My son Graeme was due to go in after me, but I had to stay out because I was so upset. I returned later to see our witnesses being similarly disregarded for the rest of the proceedings.
198. The Sheriff accepted stories from men making assertions from their childhoods from up to fifty years ago, and whose credibility was non-existent. He ruled out any collusion between complainers who were out drinking together on the evening before, as admitted to by Giles Moffatt.
199. The sheriff behaved in a manner that my sons and I find hard to accept. Declaring in his rushed summing up - in writing, for all to see - that where there was a conflict between the accusers' evidence and that of the defence, he believed the accusers. He said that the defence witnesses could not speak to the alleged events in the charges. This is not surprising, as these events did not take place. Hence, my considered use of the word, 'travesty.' The much-vaunted Scottish legal system has been laid bare to me, at 84 years old, as an absolute sham, in my experience of it.
200. On the last day of the 'Examination of Facts,' the press was outside the court to photograph and film members of EASG. BBC News reported on it on television that evening, including a reference to their BBC colleague Nicky Campbell.
201. We had hoped that the Examination of Facts would be our opportunity to present the real facts of the matter, but this clearly did not fit with the court's preconceptions.
202. I understand that an oath is taken by all witnesses in court, as did I and our defence witnesses. I trust all complainers understand the seriousness of taking that oath and the implications – unbound by time – of breaching it.

Impact

203. If the complainers were aiming to cause John any distress, they have failed abysmally. This has had zero impact on him as he doesn't know anything about it. It does cross my mind that he may be the target as it is known he has Alzheimer's and is unable to respond by speaking to the Inquiry, the police, or the court.
204. I have said earlier that Graeme and Neil are submitting their own separate witness statements. The weight of the impact on me is a dark shadow, unbearable, immeasurable and is with me all the time. The pain can never be erased but I can only hope that it might yet be alleviated by the emergence of the truth. I have now finally and formally put the facts and our own evidence on record so that this Inquiry may acknowledge them.
205. I had a stroke in 2011. It wasn't a devastating one, but I am on medication for it and that's a worry. This has all had a very severe impact on me but I'm trying to hold things together and carry on with the support of family and friends, both old and new.

Final Comments

206. I feel devastated. The injustice is incomprehensible. That spurious allegations from up to more than fifty years ago can have reached this stage. Any boy who was unhappy at school all that time ago has had around fifty years to mention it. There remains no credible explanation as to why they are now making these allegations.
207. My family and I are strongly of the view that anyone who believes they may have been abused deserves to be heard, but it does not mean that everything they say should be believed.

Other information

208. 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.....14 May 2025.....