

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Case study: English Benedictine Congregation

Witness statement of [REDACTED] MPB

Introduction

1. My name is [REDACTED] MPB I was born in 1947. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I attended Carlekemp Priory School from 1954 to 1961 (ages 6 ½ to 14) and Fort Augustus Abbey School from 1961 to 1966 (ages 14 to 19). These dates and ages are approximate as I cannot remember exactly when I attended. My father, uncles, my two brothers (also at Carlekemp) and many of my nephews also attended Fort Augustus.
3. I currently live in Jersey.

General

4. I would describe my time at the schools as fairly happy. I did witness at least one incident of sexual abuse but I was never abused myself.

Carlekemp

5. I was a boarder at Carlekemp. The usual daily routine was to get up at about 7:00 a.m. and attend mass. If you weren't there you would be slapped over the wrist. Then we had breakfast, followed by classes until lunch time. Then we would go outside for sports. We played rugby or hockey in the winter and cricket in the summer. Around 8:00 p.m. it was bedtime.
6. The school was a grand former residence on about four acres of woodland. There were golf courses next door and you could walk through a golf course to get to the beach. Inside the most gracious room was the study hall which was two stories high and had woodwork and a fireplace. There was a grand staircase that led up to a balcony as well as the dormitories. The students slept in what would have been the family bedrooms when it was a family residence. There were 7 or 8 bedrooms with about 12 students each. The monks slept in in the old staff quarters. Under the old staff quarters were the showers and baths on the ground floor. The classrooms were on the ground floor and the chapel was in one of the rooms off the study hall.
7. The school staff were mostly monks with a few lay teachers. I remember the [REDACTED] master Mr [REDACTED] MFB Miss O'Donnell was the matron and she was a good matron. She ended up coming to Fort Augustus after the school at Carlekemp closed. She was a fully trained, qualified nurse. I remember one time I had a very bad flu and she nursed me back to health. My first teacher at Carlekemp was Miss Gilhooly, who was excellent.
8. With respect to the monks at the school, Fr [REDACTED] MFF was there for part of my time at Carlekemp and I remember him from Fort Augustus as well. I remember Fr [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] MRQ who had a short fuse but I do not think he was abusive. Fr Andrew McKillop was a [REDACTED]

kind and gentle man who had gone to school with my father. He was a family friend. There was also Abbot Andrew Joseph MacDonald who was a distant relative of my father's and went on to become Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh.

9. The school year was divided into three terms and the students went home for the holidays in between the terms. At half term the parents used to come to North Berwick and stay in a hotel and we would have a luxury weekend. Parents could visit at other times as long as it wasn't disruptive. Each student's parents got a report card once a term.
10. I think there was a government inspector who came once a term to observe classes. We were always told to behave when they were coming. My understanding is that they were checking on the academic standards and I believe the school was well regarded academically. Carlekemp acted as a feeder for Fort Augustus Abbey School, as well as some of the other English Benedictine Congregation Abbey Schools.
11. There was unsupervised access by adults to students. For example there were cleaners who came in and you would get to know them and you might have a chat with them.
12. Corporal punishment was used at Carlekemp but less so than at Fort Augustus. Fr MFF used corporal punishment a lot, even more so at Fort Augustus. Psychological abuse was part of the physical discipline culture and you were berated as you got the strap. Aidan Duggan was bad for that.
13. I did witness sexual abuse while I was at Carlekemp. I was about 7 years old and I slept in the first dormitory on the left as you came up the stairs. Fr Aidan Duggan would come into the room and read us bedtime stories. He would hold the book with one hand and have the other hand under the sheets and blankets fondling a student's penis. This is something I saw happen more than once. I saw this happen to a student named [REDACTED] who is now dead. He was one year below me at school.
14. There were a lot of sports activities at Carlekemp. The main hotel in North Berwick in those days was the Marine Hotel. Every second year the English Rugby team would come and stay in that hotel and practice rugby on the playing fields at the school. There was a lot of good that went on at Carlekemp.
15. I left the school to go to Fort Augustus Abbey School and went straight into second form at Fort Augustus.

For Augustus

16. The schedule at Fort Augustus was similar to Carlekemp but a bit stricter because we were older. There was less supervision at the weekend.
17. The original buildings at Fort Augustus dated to the eighteenth century. It was originally a Hanoverian Fort. There were other buildings added on over time. The church was renovated in the 1960s. There was a celebrated cricket pitch at the front of the school. There were dormitories on the first and second floor. They were very large rooms that

might have held about 40 students, divided into sections. There were prefects (senior students) who supervised the dormitories. The monks slept in the monastery wing which was quite separate and students weren't allowed in there.

18. In terms of monks, I remember Fr [MFF] who was [SNR] Fr [MKT] [MKT] was [SNR] at the end of my time there. Fr [MFE] was the Lovat housemaster. He was also [] master and was fairly strict. Fr [MFG] [MFG] was the Vaughan housemaster. I was in Vaughan House. Fr [MFG] taught me to sail on Loch Ness, which became an important life-long hobby for me. Fr [MEW] taught [] He was a strict and excellent teacher. Fr [MEZ] [MEZ] was [] He taught me [] He would slam the [] down on your fingers if you []
19. There were lay staff teachers as well. There was quite a lot of turnover among the lay staff. I remember [MIH] who lived in Fort Augustus. Mr Fowles taught history. Keith Anderson was a great teacher. The matron when I first arrived was Mrs [] who had [] All the matrons were well qualified.
20. Each student's parents got a report card each term with a mark and comment from each teacher and housemaster report.
21. I wasn't as aware of the inspections at Fort Augustus as at Carlekemp, but I believe they happened in a similar way to Carlekemp.
22. There was a prize day at Fort Augustus at the end of the school year. There was one at Carlekemp too. It was a big event where the school's choir would sing. I was a tenor soloist in the choir. Fr [MFG] was in charge of the choir. Students would do a highland dancing performance at Carlekemp. Many of the parents attended.
23. Discipline was kept by the housemasters. They would punish you with the strap. If you misbehaved you got sent to your housemaster for punishment, which would be a certain number of hits on each hand. I think the maximum was six on each hand. Fr [MFF] [MFF] [SNR] used corporal punishment freely. You could get sent to get the birch from [SNR] and I heard that some students got hit on the bare backside which was demeaning even for the time. Fr [MRQ] had a short fuse but was not abusive in my mind. He might chuck a piece of chalk at you in class if you got an answer wrong.
24. I did receive corporal punishment from Fr [MFF] at least once a term. It was worse for my brother. My brother got a lot of canings from Fr [MFF] for his academic failings. There were some boys who came back bleeding.
25. I wasn't aware of any sexual abuse happening when I was at Fort Augustus. Fr Aidan Duggan did come up to Fort Augustus but I never heard about him abusing anyone. I think by that age the boys would have been embarrassed to talk about it if it was happening.

26. I do remember one incident happening in the school dark room. I was [redacted] the photography club at Fort Augustus and a teacher named [redacted] MQH [redacted] was the staff member in charge of the club. I was about 15 or 16 years old and a younger boy reported to me that when he was in the darkroom with [redacted] MQH [redacted] [redacted] MQH [redacted] massaged his rear end. I reported this to Fr [redacted] MFG [redacted] and [redacted] MQH [redacted] left the school shortly afterwards. I believe he was made to leave because of what I had reported.

27. I left Fort Augustus Abbey School because I finished school.

Conclusion

28. The first time I heard about the allegations of abuse at Fort Augustus was when the BBC program aired. I never told anyone about the abuse I witnessed at Carlekemp until after I saw the BBC program. It never occurred to me to tell anyone at the time. It's possible that I talked about it with other students but I don't remember that. It's possible that my family's connections with the monks were protective of me and that's why I never experienced any abuse.

29. 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 [redacted] MPB _____

Dated 20th May 2019 _____