

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CRV

Support person present: No

1. My name is CRV. My date of birth is 1956. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. My mother and father are and . They are still alive and in their eighties now. I'm named after my father. I have two sisters. I was five years old when my first younger sister came along, so I was in effect an only child until I was five. My other sister came along about a year later.
3. My father was a soldier in a Scottish regiment and as such we moved regularly. My early memories are from Germany and Cyprus and a Scottish highland town. I did actually have a year in primary school in the south of Scotland. I then went to Royal Army Education Corps schools in the Far East.
4. I had a very happy childhood. There was a lot of moving around but when you're that age you don't think it's that unusual. I missed Scotland. I remember the year in the primary in the south of Scotland as lovely. We were kind of settled and all the relatives were around. It was nice. That was part of the reason that I thought it would be good to go back to Scotland to boarding school when the offer came.
5. A colleague of my father had a son who was already at Queen Victoria School. I think he had been there for about two or three years, and that's how my father got to know about it. It was discussed with me and at the time I thought it was a good idea.

It was sold to me pretty well. I didn't have any problems the first couple of years at the school, unlike some boys who had terrible homesickness, but I was fairly immune to that.

6. I had to do a test to get in. I'm not quite sure how it worked, I don't know what the criteria of it was. This was all done when I was in the Far East.

### **Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Perthshire**

7. They divided the school before I arrived into junior school and a senior school. There were a few changes over my six years at the school. They had already decided they would have a junior school. Wavell House was the junior school. First and second years, which was primary six and seven, were in Wavell House. We were just separated for the dormitories. Everybody dined together, went to church together, saw movies together. Some of the things we did were separate. Everybody did a trade, which was pipes, drums or dancing. So it was just a division as to where you were sleeping.
8. Primary six and seven classes were at the end of the teaching block. Wavell House was quite modern. It couldn't have been that old when I arrived, compared to the old secondary school building, which looked a bit like Colditz. Wavell house was on three floors. On the ground floor there were two dormitories, Lyndoch one and two. On the first floor was Abercrombie one and two and on the top floor was Moore one and two. So there were six large rooms, I guess about twenty boys in each room. There were beds with lockers beside them. At the centre was a large table. In the middle of the dormitory was this red light, we called it the 'red eye'. Bed time in the junior school was 8:30 pm or 9:00 pm.

## **Routine at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Perthshire**

### *First day*

9. I didn't have a pre-visit to the school. I had travel problems and missed a connecting flight from Singapore to London and the next one was twenty-four hours later. I travelled on this occasion with another pupil but it was not unusual for me to travel on my own. It meant I arrived at the school very late in the evening and everybody was in their beds sleeping. The boys had actually been there a full day. When I reflected on that I realised that I'd probably missed a good deal of information that would have been quite useful. I'm sure there must have been some kind of information session where people were told what was going to happen and what the school was all about. Nobody took the time to tell me what happened that first day. So I still don't know to this day what I missed.
  
10. I arrived at the school around the [REDACTED] 1966, I was ten years old. I know that because I have a passport with the transit stamp in it. I was delayed a day. I have no idea when the school started and I have no idea what day of the week it was. A boy who was in the upper school travelled with me. I hadn't met him before that. On the bus he told me some of the details of what would be correct behaviour at the school. He asked what I'd do if I was bullied and I said I would cunningly get a teacher to hear about it. He said I shouldn't do that or I would be branded a 'sneak' and life would be intolerable. I took that message to heart.
  
11. I honestly don't know why that school was chosen for me. Later I found my father had no ambition for me to join the forces, but that could be because of the change in his attitude. He served in Northern Ireland. He did his twenty-two years in the army and came out. I think he was disillusioned with the army then and even said he would disown me if I joined up. Maybe at the time I went he had ambition that I would because it ran through the family. His brother was in the military too. His father wasn't but his grandfather was killed in the First World War at quite a young age. So there was a long history of military service in the family.

12. I think my parents only had to pay for pocket money and things like that. I think the fees were paid by the Ministry of Defence, that's my understanding. I remember my parents bought me football boots. Perhaps travel was only partly paid by them. I sometimes stayed with relatives in Scotland when I was on holiday when my family were abroad. My parents obviously got some sort of list of what I needed, like a cricket jersey, football boots and a few other odds and ends, and they were all packed away. I didn't have a uniform then but when I did we travelled in uniform.
13. I think we arrived about 9:00 pm because all the junior school were in bed sleeping. I think the lights were still on up at the senior school and I think they went to bed between 9:00 pm and 10:00 pm I walked up the driveway and I was met by a Mr [redacted] QTQ. I recall he seemed nice at the time. He showed me to my bed. There was a red light in the middle of the dormitory. I was in Abercrombie one. He pointed to one of the lads and said he would take care of me the next day. That was basically my introduction. I think Mr [redacted] QTQ was just one of the teachers at the time. He went on to become my housemaster later on. I can't recall if he introduced himself as Mr [redacted] QTQ at the time.
14. I didn't have many personal possessions. I was travelling such a long way, I didn't really bring very much. The following day I was sent to the quartermaster to get kitted out. I got my uniforms. I was never given a tour or introduced to the staff or told who was who. Maybe I missed it.

*Mornings and bedtime*

15. We woke up to the sound of a fire bell at 7:00 am, which was like the hammers of hell. You would then have about twenty-five minutes to get to the dining hall, unless you were on duty, when it would be twenty minutes. A bugler would blow his bugle at 7:20 am telling you that you had five minutes to go. If you were on duty you had to get over to the dining hall and lay the knives and forks, collect the tea and do various other things. The rest of us had to be there at 7:25 am. If you were late there were penalties to pay. The bugler had to play a G note at 7:25 am. You had to be in the

dining hall before he ended the G note otherwise it was a misdemeanour of sorts. You had a wash before breakfast.

16. We had porridge, cereal, toast, scrambled eggs and beans for breakfast. They were substantial. Probably more than I was used to. We had mess orderlies who cleaned up. It was your job to lay the table and bring out the big pots of tea. You did this every five weeks or so. I think you just put your own plates on a trolley. There was staff there. There was a high table where the head boy and the prefects sat, the house captains and people like that. They didn't do any supervising as such.

*Mealtimes / Food*

17. We sat at mess tables. There were eight to ten boys at each table. We sat on benches opposite each other. We would queue up to get our food. We were very well fed. There was no shortage of food, no complaints whatsoever about the food. We were short of butter. We all got one little piece of butter each. It was used like currency. So if you wanted someone to do something for you, you could trade your butter for them to clean your shoes, something like that.
18. One of the masters was on duty. There was one master who was very strict and made you eat all your food or you wouldn't get a pudding. There were housemasters that would periodically go round and check the length of your hair. If your hair was a little bit long you were sent for a haircut. That happened in the dining hall, usually at tea time, that's when you were checked.
19. There was an oppressive kind of feel around the place. There was bullying between the boys. There was a lot of fighting for your pecking order. It wasn't a forgiving place. Quite a few boys didn't manage and they left the school, maybe after their first year or so. It's fair to say that you had this slight feeling of insecurity all the time.
20. You went back and cleaned your dormitory after breakfast, made your bed and stood next to it for inspection. You then went to chapel about 9:00 am and it was before that, so I don't know how long breakfast took. You brushed the floor and made sure

there was no dust. There was a points system and if something wasn't clean you would lose points. Occasionally I lost points for the dormitory. My dorm leader let me know that it shouldn't happen again. I would get a clip round the ear from him for letting the dorm down more than once. I wasn't a tidy boy.

21. It would have been one of the teachers who inspected the dorm. It wasn't always the same person. The head of Wavell House was Mr <sup>CRC</sup> [REDACTED] sometime inspected the dormitory. One of the teachers, Mr <sup>OTO</sup> [REDACTED] regularly inspected the dorms. One time he dragged me out from watching a film because my cupboard was in disarray.
22. After this we went to the chapel. I'm trying to remember if that was a daily thing or a weekly thing. I can't remember. We certainly went at least once a week, but it might have been more. After that we would go to our classes until lunch time then back to classes depending on the day. On Thursday afternoon it was sports.
23. We had our tea about 5:00 pm then went to our trades, where you learned highland dancing, piping or drumming until 7:00 pm. We then went to prep. The junior school had prep from 7:00 pm until 8:00 pm, the upper school from 7:00 pm until 8:30 pm. In junior school you were doing homework supposedly. We then went to the dining hall and had supper, which was juice and a biscuit.
24. On a Saturday we had school until lunch time and then we had free time in the afternoon. If the weather was nice we were thrown outside and we would try to find things to do. Sunday we had chapel again. Some boys were Catholic and I think they went to a different service. There were very few Catholics. I wasn't anything but I went with the Church of Scotland. Once a month we would have a parade after the Sunday service. This was a full dress parade with the pipe band. Monday mornings were not so good. You had Monday morning beds, when you stripped them ready to be washed. They kept us all busy, there were a lot of things to do. That was the basic week.
25. There were some inspections that went on occasionally, once a month or so, these were out with the normal dormitory ones.

*Washing / bathing*

- 26.** Each dormitory shared one bathroom area with a number of sinks. There were baths and showers but you didn't use them in the morning. Baths were on a rota. You would use the showers after sports. There was adequate hot water, except when you had to have a cold shower but that's another story. It's probably my biggest concerns about the school at the time. We were very much left to our own devices. The baths and showers weren't supervised.
- 27.** There was one guy who was in charge of the dormitory and they could be quite fierce. They were given the responsibility for the smooth running of the dorm. Perhaps you didn't see enough staff supervising. This was an older boy. The boy who ran my dormitory in the first year had a brother in the senior school and his father had been at the school. He was a couple of years older than me. Some people were kept back a year. Both my friends were in the same class as me but they were second years. They were held back.

*Clothing / uniform*

- 28.** There was the day to day corduroy jacket and shorts, a scarlet jacket and kilt for parades on Sundays, shoes, socks and underpants. It was all taken care of, we were well kitted out with clothing.

*School*

- 29.** My academic level was very poor when I got to the school compared to other boys in the class. My reading and writing skills were very poor, but in other areas I was very good.
- 30.** When I first went to the school a vast majority of the teachers were Royal Army Education Corps, (RAEC). They were changing over from this to civilian teachers. All the time I was there the headmaster was always RAEC. Lieutenant Colonel Harrison was the one I remember. He wasn't the first head, that was Mr Clark but I think he

left during the first year I was there. You didn't often see these guys. The rare times you saw them was when you were getting punished. I saw him to get punished for bad behaviour on a school trip.

31. The first head master was Lieutenant Colonel Clark. He left in my first year. The second head master was Mr Harrison. I knew him a bit more as I went to the shooting range on a Saturday with another boy and he was there. The last head was Mr Evans, but mostly we didn't see the head master.
32. Then you had the house masters. Mr <sup>CRC</sup> was the master for Wavell House. They all had nicknames. His name was <sup>CRC</sup>, I have no idea why. Under the house masters, I suppose there were two sides of it. There was the academic side of it and the day to day, living side of it. Then there was the Brigadier, who was the figure head of the school. His name was Hope-Thompson. I only ever spoke to him once. He was an extremely nice old gentleman. Then there were the humble form masters.
33. I got on very quickly and moved up very quickly at school. They had small classes and good equipment. The teachers were mostly competent. There was one or two that didn't have a clue. I don't doubt that without the school I wouldn't have done so well academically as I did. It depended on the teacher and the subject whether I was taught through fear or inspired.
34. The one real problem I had was with the <sup>QRV</sup> teacher, Mr <sup>QRV</sup>. He was a strange character. My understanding now is that he was perhaps damaged psychologically in the war. I think he was a <sup>QRV</sup> and he was captured by the Russians. All of this I found out later. At the time I lived in fear of him. He had a strange teaching technique where you would be belted if you didn't do well in his class, which horrifies me now. Surely it was illegal, even back then, to belt children because they didn't do well in their <sup>QRV</sup> exercise. I don't know how that was allowed to continue. Someone should have known. Someone should have stopped it. I think it must have been fairly obvious. On one occasion he drew his tawse on the blackboard with blood in red chalk dripping from it. He gave it a name, <sup>QRV</sup>



██████████. Apparently he had drawn blood from someone when he belted them. I was pretty horrified by it. It's difficult to be objective about how often he belted boys but my recollection is that it was a common occurrence. He was a small man but extremely good at giving the belt. He should have been reprimanded at some point, I'd like to think so, but it didn't stop him belting me when he judged my ██████████ exercises substandard and I don't recall him stopping belting boys at any time.

35. He was given a ██████████ and at the time this was a rare thing as they cost a lot of money, and he didn't know how to use it. He would have you memorise your ██████████ essay, then we would all rote repeat the essay. You would see the lights on in the ██████████ late into the night with QRV ██████████ marking the papers in each individual booth. I would often get a D and he would belt me. I remember one day in the ██████████ I said, "Oh my God" into the microphone as my memory again failed due to stress". The next day I walked into the class and he said, "Boy, God won't help you" before belting me. That was his sense of humour. At least when others belted you it seemed more justified, whereas QRV ██████████ used it as a teaching aid.
36. The art teacher was good. I remember being inspired by him. English was pretty good. I remember when we had a change to more civilian teachers they were much more imaginative and more inspiring.
37. We were studying for Scottish 'O' Levels, then I did my Highers at a secondary school in the south of Scotland after I had left Queen Victoria School. I passed all my "O" levels except French. I don't know how much damage was done changing classes and schools between 'O' Levels and Highers, although I did well in my Highers and went on to university.
38. Each dormitory had a dorm leader. I don't know if they were supposed to hand out punishments, but they did. The school didn't seem to keep an eye on that, so I suppose they were okay with it. Then there were second years. When I arrived I was a rookie and my second year showed me the ropes. I count myself lucky that my second year was very nice to me and likewise I was nice to my rookie.

- 39.** In senior school there were monitors who would monitor what went on in the dormitories. Trenchard, Cunningham and Haig were the dorms in senior school and they were split into sections. There were two monitors for each dorm. They had their own little cubicles to live in. But you hardly ever saw them. I think I was in my third or fourth year when they changed things and all the fourth, fifth and sixth years were put into Haig House. They divided the younger boys into the two remaining houses. I suppose they were trying to stop bullying. I guess this is why the rearrangements took place.
- 40.** I don't know how monitors were chosen. The Wavell House dorm leader may have been chosen if they had an older brother or a father that had went to the school. I think a lot of it was to do with sport. I think all those that were monitors were first fifteen and had done something on the sports field to merit their choice but to be honest I'm not sure how they were chosen. A lot of them were exemplary in some area.
- 41.** I guess the ethos of the school was to build self-reliance, maybe. We had the combined cadet force, (CCF). We did a lot of personal survival certificates. Some people took part in the Duke of Edinburgh award schemes. So I guess the ethos was that you had to learn to look after yourself.
- 42.** It was an all-boys school. There were no female teachers. There was the lady who ran the hospital and one matron per house. They sort of looked after sewing socks and finding buttons. In the morning we had a sick call. If you felt sick you could go to the hospital. Even the kitchen was male dominated. There were ladies who helped out serving food.
- 43.** There was nobody in charge of, or there was no real avenue, to communicate that there were problems. There was no connection, no discussion. There was us and there was them. If there were problems we had to sort them out. If a boy hit me, perhaps another boy would hit him, to keep him in place. That was the kind of way it went. You did not go to the other side and report these things. I don't know how that culture developed, because it's an extremely bad culture, but it was certainly there.

- 44.** I was referred to by staff by my surname. I didn't know many Christian names. There were nicknames. The head master was known as the pod, I have no idea why. We only used surnames or nicknames for the other boys. I think there were some kind of grouping with children's father's regiments. It wasn't apparent but there were army children, RAF children and navy children. When you wore your sporran, you used your father's regimental badge on it. If someone picked on me they were putting themselves in some danger that someone from my regiment would hit him.

*Leisure Time*

- 45.** The grounds of the school were fairly extensive. It was a small school, there were about two hundred and fifty boys in all. The junior school had about sixty plus boys. There was a wooded area called Wavell Wood, where the small boys would go. Presumably the senior boys weren't allowed to go there. In my second year they actually built a climbing frame there. There was a burn that ran around the perimeter of the wood. We spent quite a bit of time in there. This was unsupervised.
- 46.** There were curfews and things, around when you weren't allowed out of the dormitories. People broke the curfew, I broke the curfew. People were caught and caned for breaking the curfew. You weren't allowed on the playing fields after 7:00 pm or 8:00 pm. People broke these curfews.
- 47.** I used to watch the rugby and cricket games at the weekend. The rugby was on a Sunday. You didn't have to watch the home games but I did.

*Trips / Holidays*

- 48.** They had a Combined Cadet Force, (CCF), trip in the summer. I think I went on two of those to Kingussie, near Aviemore. We would wander through the hills. I think they were for a week or maybe less. The CCF was made up of army and RAF, there was no navy. I was in the army section. Maybe the branch you went into reflected your fathers background.

49. I went on one school trip to Belgium as a kind of holiday. We were offered various destinations and the cheapest was Belgium. That was what we chose. Mr Scott and Major Athey took us. I didn't behave particularly well. I ended up on punishment when I got back to the school for drinking and gambling, that sort of thing. So I deserved all I got on that one. Actually, my roommate didn't deserve anything but he got the punishment as well. This was at the end of the summer term.
50. It was at the start of the next term we went in front of the head and asked what we had to say for ourselves. We weren't beaten for that. We got 'jankers', which is a military thing. You wore your dress uniform and had to report to the porter's office at certain times of the day, breaking up your day. If you missed one you got an extra day. I think I was fourteen when this happened.

My parents had to pay for the trip to Belgium as it was extra-curricular.

51. I went to my grandparents on a number of breaks. When my father was stationed in the UK, I'd go to my parents. Once they were in Germany and I spent my summer holiday there and my Christmas holiday with my grandparents. In my first year we weren't allowed to leave the school for the first six weeks, then we had a short break and I went to my grandparents. To my surprise, my mother and sisters were there.

#### *Work/chores*

52. We didn't have to cook, do the laundry or anything like that. As I said we had to tidy our dormitory in the morning and every five weeks or so we were on the dining hall rota. We did trades but I didn't count that as working. I was in the highland dancing team. That's a sticking point for me. My father was a piper so I started piping. My two best friends were drummers and they convinced me to try the drums. I didn't like it and wanted to go back to the pipes but wasn't allowed, so I had to do dancing.
53. There was no system where younger boys had to do work for more senior boys. It certainly didn't happen in my time.

*Religious instruction*

54. We went to chapel in our dress scarlet tunic and kilt. I think we went to chapel most days before school. There were no prayers before mealtimes and bedtime. The chapel was in the school grounds. The minister stayed in the grounds and taught religious education. I think the Latin teacher looked after the Catholic boys. I think they went to Dunblane for their service, but I'm not sure.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

55. My birthday was out with the school year. I was pleased because you would get the lumps from the other boys. One poor boy got his head bashed off the ceiling. They put you in a blanket and tossed you in the air in Wavell House. You didn't get a cake with candles, let's put it that way.

*Visits / Inspections*

56. There were regular visitors who had a military connection. Parents didn't usually visit during term time. On the Grand Day my parents came once. On the final Grand Day my grandfather came and picked me up. There were always visiting commissioners and people from the CCF. I never met any of these guys. I won the class prize a couple of years and you were presented with a book, that's the closest I came to the commissioners. The Queen came in my second year. I remember being disappointed I wasn't part of the parade.
57. I had contact with my parents through letters. The housemaster would encourage you to write, especially when you returned from visiting them on holiday. You were to write thanking them for looking after you. Downstairs there was a board that told you what was for lunch and who had mail. These were the sort of highlights of the day. It was always nice to get a letter. The letters we received were unopened. I don't think the letters I wrote were read before they were sent.

58. I got a phone call from my auntie once. It was when the school did Songs of Praise from Dunblane Cathedral and I was in the choir. She called to say she had seen me in the choir, so that was a highlight.
59. I cannot recall any formal inspections. I assumed it would happen but we were never told. Nobody spoke to me. Hopefully that's one area where things have improved.

#### *Healthcare*

60. There was a small hospital. I can't remember the name of the lady who ran it. There was a tragic occurrence when one young boy died. His name was [REDACTED]. He died in 1971. He was in the year below me. He complained about headaches and the woman who ran the hospital didn't recognize the severity of his condition. It was a strange type of misty part of my time there. He died at the school. It seems unreal. I might have just blocked it out but I believe it was a brain haemorrhage he died from. It was a tragedy that I feel was not properly explained to us. I'm not sure how it affected the lady in the hospital, because there was another person took over the hospital. I don't feel it was handled well. I don't know what they did or didn't do.
61. I was sick a few times and in the hospital on a couple of occasions. It was quite nice there. You were sick but could sit and play 'Risk' and things. I remember I had a sore throat and temperature. Everybody went on holiday and I had to stay for a day or so. On that occasion Mr <sup>QTO</sup>[REDACTED] was very nice to me, which wasn't always the case. He was kind of supportive. He might have even ran me down to the railway station.
62. We got check-ups every now and again. I remember getting one in the senior school. I imagine I got inoculations but I can't remember specifically because I'd had so many through travelling a lot. There was a visiting dentist but dental inspections were irregular.

#### *Running away*

63. Some boys ran away occasionally and were returned to the school by the police. I remember one friend of mine made it all the way home. Some quit the school. I did, I got to fourth year and then I went to a comprehensive school.

#### **Discipline & abuse at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Perthshire**

64. The basic forms of corporal punishment was the tawse, we called it the 'driv', as well as the very badly named soft-shoe. This was actually a running shoe and it was far from soft. It was a rubber running shoe, which was administered on your behind. I knew the tawse and the soft-shoe reasonably well. I was never caned but some boys were, but that was in private and you never saw it.
65. I remember being soft-shoed in my first year in Cunningham House and it was very humiliating. It still hurts to this day, the emotional side of it. Sometimes I was hit when it wasn't appropriate. I remember my first punishment was when I was doing drill. I would have been ten years old. Mr <sup>CEE</sup>, the [REDACTED], came up behind me and struck me on the back of the head. I don't know why to this day. I was very small then, so I sailed through the air.
66. There were other punishments that the non-teaching staff used to give to maintain discipline. I mean by "non-teaching" that they didn't teach academic classes but taught us "trades". The trades were piping, drumming and highland dancing. In the trades I remember getting 'Charlie' once. This was when a hand was placed across the face then the middle finger pulled back and smacked you on the nose. There was that kind of rough and ready side of it. It didn't happen very often. I got 'Charlied' once and I saw it happen to other people.
67. The first time I was soft-shoed was in Wavell House. We were in prep. Some people were talking, there was some misbehaviour and a Mr <sup>OSD</sup>, the [REDACTED] teacher, was on duty. He asked who was talking. Nobody owned up so he soft-shoed all of us in our pyjamas later that evening. This was in the stair well and there were sixteen or seventeen of us. Normally you would hold the bottom rail of a bed.

68. There were other punishments like lines and detention. I mentioned <sup>QRV</sup> and there is still bitterness towards that. The most humiliating time I was punished was in Cunningham House. I think Mr <sup>QTQ</sup> lost his temper and behaved badly in my opinion. Someone threw a hairbrush at me and it hit me on the knee. It was pretty sore. I threw it back and it skidded across the floor just as Mr <sup>QTQ</sup> came in. He asked who threw the brush and I stupidly owned up to it. When I reflect now I should have shut my mouth. He asked me to pick up the brush. Like a gunfighter I slowly walked back with the brush. He said, "Is that as quick as you can do it boy?" I think my reply was along the lines of, "You didn't ask me to do it as quickly as I could". I assumed the position. He laid in pretty hard with the soft shoe, done it twice and I started walking away. As I moved away towards my locker he told me I wasn't finished and to assume the position. He hit me again and that kind of broke me. I fell to the ground in a heap and he walked away. I'm still bitter about it to this day, and it really wasn't justified. Usually you were in your pyjamas and it was over the clothing.
69. I would like to know if the punishments were ever recorded. I'd be surprised if they were. The soft-shoe was generally one stroke, sometimes two. The belt was also one stroke, sometimes two. Punishments were generally done in the presence of the class or the dormitory.
70. Caning was done behind closed doors. It was the housemaster who would do this but I don't know the details. One time another boy and I cheated in a cross country run. We decided we would cut out a little bit of the course. Mr <sup>QTQ</sup> saw this and made us run round to the lower end of the burn, back again, then back down and I slipped at the burn. My friend was going to help me but Mr <sup>QTQ</sup> shouted, "Leave that boy alone".
71. On one occasion they had a boxing competition. Two boys were put into the ring, whether you'd ever been in a ring or not or had a boxing lesson. You had no choice, everybody had to take part in the boxing. Your weight was taken and you were matched up with someone to fight for three minutes. That was part of the school. It wasn't good. This was a one off when I was in the junior school.



- 72.** One of the areas I am upset about was the lack of supervision. Things went on amongst the boys that on reflection they must have known about. But maybe the ethos of the school was that's what we want. I remember some harrowing things that I observed. I remember a number of boys holding me down on the bed. I was eleven years old. One of them had a woollen glove on I remember, and they told a little story on your chest, "There was a river", and they're trying to draw blood with this rough woollen glove, "and the elephants went stomping off", and they'd thump you on the chest.
- 73.** It gives me a shivers what they did to other boys. It seemed this behaviour was allowed to flourish, as if boys will be boys. We would have fights with wet towels, we called 'rats' tails'. This was just day to day behaviour.
- 74.** On one occasion I came across two or three boys who had tied one boy to a chair and put a kit bag over his head. I have no idea who the boy was. They told him they were going to throw him down a lift shaft. In the senior school there were lift shafts, these were locked and not used any more. The rumour was that someone had died in these lift shafts. They actually lifted him on to the end of a bed and let him fall, for others to catch him. I have no idea why they chose this particular boy or for what reason they were doing this.
- 75.** I heard tales of hanging people out of the window in kit bags. I never witnessed that. There was too much of that going on. Pecking order was important. When I first went up to the senior school one of the bigger boys was chasing me, telling me he was going to batter me. I hid in the toilets in the teaching building. It was quite frightening. I remember telling my father about this and he said, "Just stick one on him".
- 76.** I think the pecking order was down to age and how big you were. Monitors and prefects had us take cold showers. I don't know if they were allowed or if they just did it. I don't recall cold showers being a common occurrence in my house and I can only recall two occasions being made to take a cold shower. They also made you hold your arms out and you had to make small circles for a period of time. Just misdemeanour punishments. It was apparent who to keep away from and who to

fear. There was a feeling that the staff just didn't care. It surprised me there wasn't more intervention when bullying was taking place. I guess the boys thought it was a free for all. I can't remember anyone ever being pulled up for bullying.

77. I was one of the few pupils of the school who never made a standard. This was a kind of midway mark for swimming, cricket, athletics. You got points, which went to your house total. I was in what was often refereed to as 'The spastics'. When everybody was playing in the first fifteen or the first eleven, "the spastics" would do cross country running. That's what Mr. [REDACTED] called us, 'The spastics'. I think he thought it was funny. It was not a termed widely used by the boys.
78. I ended up going to hospital after fighting with another boy and he did too. I was getting ready to go up to the town on a Saturday I guess and he started throwing me about. There was lots of wrestling and struggling and I got upset with this whole business. I grabbed his finger and ended up dislocating it. As we walked away we shouted at each other and he swung and hit me really hard and I flew through the dormitory door. We both ended up in the hospital and that was it. I had some cock and bull story about being hit by doors, I don't know what the other boy said. This happened a year after the boy had died.
79. I must have been going around the school with a big shiner of a black eye. The nurse would have asked me what was wrong. I think it was seen as part and parcel of everyday life at the school. I was pretty much under stress most of the time. I looked forward to going to see a movie on a Sunday evening. That was a kind of escapism. I felt afraid and a few others would have as well. I am very glad I asked to leave the school.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Perthshire**

80. It never occurred to me to complain about [REDACTED] QRV's behaviour. That was the culture of the school and there was no-one I would go to, to tell. There was no-one I would have trusted enough to tell. I supposed it didn't seem like abnormal behaviour.

I didn't tell anyone of anything. I always thought my father had enough problems of his own as a serving soldier.

### **Leaving Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Perthshire**

- 81.** I met Mr Evans and my housemaster, Mr Hughes maybe, when I was leaving. It would have been in June 1972 when I left. I did primary six and seven then years one to four in high school years. I went at Easter with my mum and saw the headmaster. I wanted to leave then but he talked me into staying as I was about to sit my 'O' Levels.
- 82.** I had spoken to my mum in the Easter holidays. My father wasn't there. The main thing that happened was that my parents bought a house in my home town and my sisters were settled at school there and my father was almost done with his twenty-two years. I put it to my mum in the terms that now that we have a house in our home town, I'd like to go to school there. So the head persuaded me to carry on until June, the end of term and I agreed and left at the end of my fourth year of secondary school. Nobody knew the reasons why I wanted to leave Queen Victoria School. It's very difficult in hindsight to know if the decision to wait until the end of the academic year was appropriate but the argument was that my "O" level results might suffer as a result of the disruption of leaving at Easter and I accepted that argument at the time.
- 83.** The change of school didn't go smoothly. When I started they didn't know I was going to be there. They did accommodate me and sorted me out. They put me into classes. I don't know what happened, but there was some confusion. It was a comprehensive school and I really enjoyed it. Just coming home was great. I made friends there. I'm not aware of any records from Queen Victoria being transferred to my new school. The two years there were positive.

### **Life after being at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Perthshire**

- 84.** I have always been rootless and haven't really settled anywhere, but that could just be my own personality. I've suffered from depression and have been on medication for years. That could have nothing to do with Queen Victoria, or it could have everything to do with it. How do you know? My mental health hasn't been great. I've been diagnosed as bi-polar. I haven't had any counselling or support. I went to a psychiatrist once. It was my choice. I thought I'd try it and see how it goes. It didn't seem to help and was quite expensive.
- 85.** .I completed a three year bachelor's degree. I did a diploma in TEFL. I passed the practical but I failed the theory. I did this at Moray House. I've been working as an English teacher for most of my working life.
- 86.** I met my wife in Switzerland. I spent a bit of time playing music on the street in France and Switzerland. I couldn't get a job in Scotland, so I went to Scandinavia where I could get work. I have stayed here for a number of years now.
- 87.** I went to a Grand Day reunion a couple of years after I left school and I've taken my wife and daughter to the school. That was quite a few years ago. I'm a member of the Facebook Old Victorian's Association page.

### **Impact**

- 88.** In some ways there was the positive aspects of Queen Victoria. My education was helped by going to the boarding school. Emotionally it wasn't good for me. They could have done better for me in that respect. I think they could have fulfilled their potential more, so there are regrets.
- 89.** The boys at the school were generally fine. There was a lot of camaraderie there. There is a bond there. There's a bit of sadness because I haven't really met them after the school days. I haven't really met many of them after I left. So the only contact I've had is through Facebook and that was many years later.

90. I think it did have an impact on my relationship with my family. I'm fairly distant from my parents and my siblings, so there's probably a negative impact there. There hopefully hasn't been a great impact with my wife and daughter, of course there's going to be some effect but it's hard to quantify what that is.
91. I think I do restrain myself at times, but I think everybody does at certain times. But how much is that to do with my experiences at Queen Victoria and other experiences. I think I did drink too much, but is that not a Scottish thing? I've been through various stages over the years.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

92. I have never reported any of the abuse that occurred at Queen Victoria to anyone.

### **Records**

93. I haven't tried to obtain my records from Queen Victoria but maybe I should. I have quite a few of my report cards from over the years, which make quite interesting reading. Maybe I should look into it and see what legal responsibilities they had back then. Did they have an obligation to keep a record of punishments? I don't know. It was a long time ago. I think almost all of those masters are no longer with us.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

94. I think there should be more communication between the children and the people caring for them. Somehow you have got to get those parties closer together and trusting each other. This trust of telling them what was happening, to point out a bully, that would be a big thing. Hopefully that's already happening. Making sure if someone has a grievance they have someone to talk to about it and they don't have any misgivings about coming forward. That for me was the big failure. There wasn't enough trust to bring things forward.

95. I still don't understand why a teacher like <sup>QRV</sup> [redacted] could behave the way he did. He was obviously toiling, from my point of view anyway. He probably had his positive sides but unfortunately they were eclipsed by his misplaced faith in corporal punishment as a way to promote the learning of [redacted]. He should have been spotted for what he was. His approach may well have worked for the many but it was at a high cost for the few who he sacrificed in place of finding truly motivational strategies. I put it down to ignorance.. People make mistakes, like Mr <sup>QTQ</sup> [redacted]. For the most part his intentions were positive if perhaps debatable. On occasion he let emotion cloud his judgment and in such situations it is important that checks are in place to stop regrettable behaviour. I feel that opportunities were missed.

**Other information**

- 96. The story of the boy tied to the chair with the kit bag over his head, if someone comes forward and tells you that then I can corroborate it. That's one of the reasons I have come forward.
- 97. 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..... <sup>CRV</sup> [redacted] .....

24 August 2020

Dated.....