

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

BEU

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is [REDACTED] BEU [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1953. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. Growing up I stayed with my parents [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in our house in Hawick. I have an older brother [REDACTED] who is 66 years old, a younger brother [REDACTED], 63 and my younger sister [REDACTED] who is 60. Although my older brother was the apple of my father's eye, I had no issues with my siblings.
3. My father had a bad time in the army and was one of the first people to enter Belsen camp at the end of the war and I was told by my family that it really affected him quite badly. Not long before he died I recall seeing him crying once and it was because he was recalling some of his experiences there. He later worked as security [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Hawick and my mother was a nurse. It was not a happy household.
4. When I started going to school I was five years old. I was supposed to come right back from school at the end of the day, but I always stayed out until 7 pm or later. This really annoyed my father and I would be beaten by him. One day he went overboard and he grabbed a belt which he kept hanging over the side of a bookcase and he beat me black and blue with it.

5. My PE teacher at Wilton Primary School in Hawick was Bill McLaren, of rugby fame. When I went to school after the beating from my father he saw the bruises. I was wearing a T-shirt and my shorts and he could see the marks. He asked me to take my T-shirt off but I refused and he took me to see the headmaster. They took my top off and on seeing the bruises contacted the police. When I was asked what had happened I refused to tell them. My parents were brought to the school by the police and they made excuses for the bruising and I was sent home. That made things worse, even though I never told any of them what happened, dad never believed me. He used any excuse to beat me.
6. Sometimes I would even crawl under the table to hide with our dog. My mother tried to stop him beating me but it didn't work. He even started calling me names like Bill Sykes. I don't remember any love being shown to me by my mum or dad.
7. I was later sent to the panel by my parents as I was getting out of control. The panel came to a decision that it would be better that I was sent to boarding school with Barnardo's. Unfortunately this got to my father as he was instructed by the panel that he would need to make contributions towards the costs of this. Dad later said to me it cost him thousands. I was told for my safety I was to be taken straight from the hearing to Barnardo's.

Craigerne Residential School, Peebles

8. My parents drove me from the panel to Craigerne in Peebles. When I arrived we were spoken to by the headmaster, Peter Norris. After signing some paperwork my parents then drove off. I was about six years old then and stayed until I was twelve. My first thought when they left was that they had sold me.
9. When I arrived at Peebles it was a Friday and don't recall much over the weekend. I was initially placed into the Craigmuir building, a part of the main home. This was mainly for children, all boys, aged six to ten year olds. We were placed in this building until a vacancy became available in Craigerne. While I was in there we usually shared

the rooms with another two or three children. I think there were about four bedrooms available in total. I was only in Craigmuir for a short period before moving over to Craigerne. In Craigerne there were about five or six sharing each room, sometimes as many as twelve. Those dormitories were all different colours, red yellow and green.

10. Each of the sets of rooms were looked after by a house master. He was in charge and was separate from the masters who taught in the school. No one could interfere with how each master looked after his group of children. I had John Wright as my house master and he was a really nice guy. The only other persons allowed in, except John, was the headmaster or matron.

Routine at Craigerne, Peebles

11. The normal daily routine was we were woken about eight o'clock and down for breakfast for about eight thirty. After breakfast we moved to the classes from about nine o'clock until four in the afternoon. The school was in the grounds. After school we did our homework for about an hour before we had our evening meal about five or five thirty. When we had finished tea and cleared up we could watch television until bedtime about seven o'clock.
12. On Saturdays we would spend our day playing a variety of sports. Sundays, sometimes we would all march down to church in Peebles. Occasionally Mr [REDACTED] BLI [REDACTED] would conduct a service within the grounds at Craigerne. In the afternoon we were often taken by minibus and dropped off in the hills. We would then make our way over the hills back to Craigerne.
13. We all did some chores at the home. This would be helping out in the kitchen, not just cleaning up but also learning from the cook on how to make certain things. We made sure beds were made and put dirty linen and clothes into the washing machine. It was all basic housekeeping but it helped show us some life skills.

14. Baths were available whenever we wanted. There was nothing of concern there, the masters or matron were present, but just to teach us about personal hygiene and to make sure we would wash properly. I never had this at home. We only had an outside toilet, no bath or shower, just a big tin in my house. It meant mum carrying lots of pans of hot water.

Food

15. The food at Craigerne was fantastic. There was a lovely cooked breakfast, lunch, dinner and supper. If you did not eat a particular food you may be told to sit at the table until it was finished, but you were never forced fed. You always ate it because you wanted to get back and play with the other boys. I think the worse food I had was sago and I recall one time I was sick when I tried to eat it. I was never forced to eat it, it was just taken away.
16. Sometimes if we were having a particular meal and I asked how it was made the cook would show me how to make it. That was usually at weekends when they had more time.

Clothing/uniform

17. When I stayed at Craigerne we all wore shorts and all our clothing had labels with our names on them. I was sixteen before I wore any long trousers. It was all provided by the school.

School

18. The staff there at my time in Craigerne were BLI taught crafts and bible studies, Mr Campbell who was the maths/arithmetic teacher. During the war he was a bomber in the RAF. He would tell us his thumb had killed more people that you can ever imagine. He never did us any wrong and was a really nice guy.

19. Then there was Mr [REDACTED] BDS who taught us [REDACTED]. Mr [REDACTED] BDS was about thirty to forty years old at that time. He had a bald head and whenever he was abusing someone he always had white spittle at the side of his mouth. I believe he stayed in [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
20. There was a also a matron at the school who was really nice. They were the same three teachers throughout my time there. I was in a class of about twelve other boys.
21. Taking Mr [REDACTED] BDS out of the equation school was really good. There was no talking allowed and we just put our hands up if we wanted to ask anything.

Trips/Holidays

22. There was one winter, I think it was 1963, when I had to spend time at home. The school was so isolated and it was a particular bad winter with the snow and ice lying for months. Most of us were sent home as it was safer because the school could not get any supplies delivered because of the conditions. It was just before the Christmas when I was sent home and I did not return until around May. I remember when I went back because it was just before my birthday. Sometimes in the summer we would go to Blairgowrie and do some berry picking.

Birthdays and Christmas

23. At Christmas I remember we were taken to the Timex factory at Wishaw for a party. We would write a letter to them about what present we would like and most times that was what you got. Most of the children went home for the Christmas and holiday breaks, but I had to stay at the home. At birthday times it was usually just a card or something, but nothing special.
24. Sometimes mum and dad sent money but that was not very often. Some of the other residents were from wealthy families so they were used to receiving gifts and presents from family. One of them was a Prince from Kuwait, I think his name was [REDACTED]

Another was a [REDACTED] whose mother was a friend of [REDACTED]. He would sometimes share out what was sent, like Mickey mouse watches. The others also shared because that was what it was. We were all in the same boat.

Visits

25. Visits at Craigerne were available once a week if family wished to take the opportunity. There was thirty five miles from Craigerne to my house. In my six years there mum only visited on two occasions. Other than the time I was punished my father only visited once and that was to tell me my granny had died. I was not allowed to go to her funeral, but when I was a bit older and my grandad died I was allowed to go to his funeral. This was the only other time I was allowed home.
26. There was a time when we were out with some others from the school and were actually nearby to my parents. The house master went to visit my parents to see if it was okay for me to call and see them. He came back with the reply that my dad did not want to see me.
27. I can't remember any visits from any social workers to check up on how we were getting on. I think there were other people who came to check on the school. I think they were either from the Council or the board of education. They would stay for two or three days checking on the curriculum being taught and how the school was helping our progress. That type of check was done quite regularly.

Running away

28. There was one time I ran away, but I can't remember why I was away because it was really good there. I was with [REDACTED] when I ran away and we ended up climbing onto a boat at Leith docks. We managed to sneak aboard and hide on one of the lifeboats. When the boat moved off we could only see open sea and thought we were safe to break cover. When we came out of cover it turned out we had only gone from one side of the docks to the other. We were caught by the cook. He had to get the

captain back from the pub. The transport police were involved and [REDACTED] dad had to come and pick us up and take us back to the home.

29. When I got back I was told that I had brought the reputation of the school into disrepute and as such was to be punished. Whenever there was to be any physical punishment this was carried out by [REDACTED] B.L.I. You were made to lean over the vault horse in the basement. Your parents and one of the governors were also there. I think it was to ensure there was nothing untoward happening. Don't get me wrong I did not want it to happen and it was only used as a last resort and I knew it was coming because I had brought the school into disrepute
30. After being given several strikes of the cane there were lots of marks and welts on the back of my legs and buttocks. My father's response was that I deserved it and left the school. Matron took me from the room to my bedroom where she applied some cream to help soothe the pain. She told me I would have difficulty sitting for a couple of days and she wasn't kidding. I could talk to her about lots of things but never about Mr [REDACTED] BDS, I was too scared.

Bed Wetting

31. Although I never suffered from this problem there were probably three boys who did. He was never told off or humiliated. The staff provided a plastic sheet to assist in protecting the mattress. If any of them did wet the bed he would be helped by staff and allowed to wash and they would also help remake the bed. You could knock on the night housemasters office and he would help without any issues. I felt it was always dealt with sympathetically. If it was not the housemaster who helped then lots of times it would be matron. She stayed up lots of nights to make sure we were okay.

Abuse at Craigerne, Peebles

32. The first time I remember something being wrong at the big house was shortly after moving in there. There were a few of us children lined up in a room. There were several

adult males in the room dressed in herring bone suits. We presumed these males were doctors who were there to carry out examinations. We were all told to lie down and lower our shorts to our ankles. All the men put something into our bottoms. They told us it was to do with stopping tape worms. As they were doing this matron came into the room and went ballistic. She told everybody to get out and threatened to call the police. We were all terrified because we did not know what was going on. The men were all well to do with their expensive suits.

33. The other time I was abused was when I was reading a passage out loud in class. Mr **BDS** told me to come over to him and sit on his knee. When I did it was later obvious that because of a board in the front of his desk his activities could not be seen by anyone else. As I was sat there he placed his hand on my knee and as I read more he crept his hand up the inside of my shorts and was fondling me. I stopped reading and froze. I did not understand what was happening and did not know what I was supposed to do. I went back to my seat.
34. One of my class mates saw the state I was in and told me not to worry as he did that to all the kids. He did warn me not to go into the supply cupboard with him and always make an excuse to go to the bathroom or anything to stop him. Sometimes there were two of us on his lap. There were other times as you left the class he was standing and would hold our heads towards his groin and it was obvious again that he had an erection. Each day we were in the class there was someone being abused. The ones left at their desks were just glad it wasn't them being abused.
35. We all hated going to his class. We even tried to paint spots on ourselves to make it appear as though we had measles. We would pretend to be ill, anything to avoid being in the class.
36. It was great when we got a new teacher because it meant Mr **BDS** would not abuse us in the showers after his class. He was always coming in as we showered and offer to wash our backs. We would tell him we could manage ourselves but he wouldn't accept that answer and touch you up.

Reporting of abuse at Craigerne, Peebles

37. Although lots of the children would talk about the abuse being received all were too scared by Mr [BDS] that we never reported anything for fear of reprisal. When Mr [BDS] did that to me in the class room I told him I was going to report him to the headmaster. He said I would be wasting my time as no one would believe me. He told me there was an understanding that a master could do no wrong. He said he could do what he wanted.
38. [REDACTED] another pupil and myself did try to approach [BDS] [REDACTED] told him he was going to speak to the headmaster. He pinned [REDACTED] against the wall and threatened what would happen to us if we took it further. He said that if I or any other kids were to report him we would be punished and then expelled from the school. I was too scared because I did not want to be sent home to my parents where I would again be beaten every day. There was nothing we could do as we were under his control. We just had to shut up and get on with our lives.
39. In those days teachers were like gods. A pupil could not say or do anything about them and no one ever said anything against the masters. He was the only thing wrong with my experience there. The other teachers really helped you and taught you things you really enjoyed. Everything else about the school was great.

Leaving Craigerne, Peebles

40. When I was due to go to secondary school, this was when I had to leave Craigerne. My parents still did not want me to go home. I then went to Blackford Brae school in Edinburgh. It was Lewis and Sheila Currie that ran that school. It was a mixed boys and girls school. They used to be masters at Craigerne, before I was there. I stayed with them until I was sixteen years old. That too was a great experience. Sheila still kept in touch but Lewis died a couple of years ago. They were like a stand in mum and dad and I have not a bad word to say about them. I was asked once to go to a reunion but I could not go as I had suffered one of my strokes.

41. While I was there I was quite musical and learned to play eleven different musical instruments. I later joined a youth orchestra in Edinburgh.

Life after being in care

42. When I left Blackford Brae at sixteen I went to technical college in Galashiels. My dad always wanted me to get my qualifications but I joined the army instead. The troubles had not long started in Northern Ireland and I thought I could make a difference. Dad was not happy and made sure I was aware of it. I phoned home the night before to see if they were coming because it was also dad's old regiment. It turned out my mum and dad did come to my passing out parade but they kept themselves hidden and never spoke to me. Later when I was home my brother later told me that my dad was so proud of me when I picked up the sword. I said maybe it would have been better if he had told me that. I stayed in the army for five years.
43. I remember when I was about seventeen and dad came back from the pub one day. My brother [REDACTED] had bamboo sticks and when dad came back he broke it over [REDACTED] head. We did not like when he did this and wanted to fight him. Dad hit [REDACTED] on the head and knocked him over. He knocked the table onto me and jumped on top of it and me. He grabbed [REDACTED] and hung him by his belt on some coat hooks and was hitting him over the face. Mum came back at this point and stopped him hitting us. His answer was all is okay lads come to the pub and I will buy you a pint. There were other times he would take us salmon poaching and if we did not get any he would batter us.
44. I married for the first time when I was nineteen years old, but my wife was murdered two years later in Edinburgh. I tried to get out of the army at that stage but was not allowed to. In those days you signed on for three, five or nine years. As I had signed on for nine years they would not let me go early.

45. I was doing Queens Guard in Ballater. I remember a Lt Colonel was due to go on a royal visit and have lunch with the Queen. A mate and I painted a large happy face on his car and he found it when he pulled it out of the garage at six in the morning as he was about to get ready. Everybody saw the state of the car and even the RSM was laughing. I was later sent to the glasshouse for the weekend. He said he was going to recommend I was discharged but I never heard anything about it for some time.
46. Two years later while I was stationed in Anderson in Northern Ireland I received a letter that I was to return to barracks. When I got to the barracks I was told that they had eventually come a decision after the car incident and I was to be dismissed from the army for gross misconduct.
47. I then went to Germany and worked with my brother for a couple of years. By this time my mum had split from my dad and she later bought a house in Dawlish. When she was dying from cancer she wanted to put me in the will but I refused. I did not get anything from them when I needed it growing up I did not want anything when she died.
48. When I married [REDACTED] I was told by my doctors that I would have three years to live because the way my lifestyle had affected my health. I have had two strokes, a heart attack and four heart operations.
49. I did falconry for a couple of years. I worked seven days a week from about four in the morning until about seven at night. I had to stop after my heart attack and I am now retired.
50. I first met my current wife [REDACTED] when I was about twenty nine and she would have been about eighteen. Unfortunately a friend got between us and made sure we did not get together then. It was years later we met up again and have spent the last seventeen years together. [REDACTED] has a son [REDACTED] who is now thirty three. I got on really well with him and treat him as my own. We never refer to each other as step son or step father. I have a Commer van that I want to sell and I will give the money to him for a deposit on a house. I will do anything for him.

Impact

51. As a result of the abuse from Mr [REDACTED] BDS I have a deep hatred for all homosexuals. Although I do have friends who are. I am happy so long as their life does not involve me, then I am okay with it. I am scared that if this was not the case I might get angry and hurt them.
52. I am a very insecure person. I was never shown any love or affection from my parents and feel I was rejected by them. I have low trust issues, but [REDACTED] understands this. I need to be shown love all the time. I give love easily but never believe I am getting the same love in return, even from my wife. It was only when I married [REDACTED] that I reconnected with my brothers and sister. It turned out they had jealousy issues with me being in care and looked after. They did not see the problems I was having. On the flipside I was jealous of them because they grew up with emotional contact which I never had.
53. I had a hard time in the army dealing with the death and injuries to my friends and colleagues. There was no such thing as counselling in those days and PTSD was not recognised at that time. One doctor wrote in my medical notes that I seem to prefer to drink alcohol rather than dealing with my emotional problems. I would go away for weekends and get paralytic drunk. This changed one day when I hurt my friend in a pub. I did not remember doing it and the next day was shown the video of the incident. I went to see him to try and apologise. I even got down on my knees and kissed his feet. That made me change my ways and have cut back on the drink ever since.

Records

54. I have never sought my records as a child but after this involvement with the Inquiry I might change my mind. I have been informed of the help that may be obtained through Future Pathways. I would like to see if there are any photographs of my time in care. It would give me something tangible from my past.

Lessons to be Learned

- 55. It would be nice that if something like this happened today then a person could pick up a phone and speak to someone in confidence and they would be listened to and believed. They would also be able to report the matter without any retribution. I want it to be made public that when children are supposed to be in care that is not what they actually receive.

- 56. For years I felt that I was in the wrong for not doing something about the abuse when I was a child. I know it was not my fault but I was a child and too scared.

Other information

- 57. I was told that Craigerne was supposed to be a place for disturbed children, but that was not the case. We were just from different backgrounds and just glad to be there.

- 58. 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.

BEU
[Redacted Signature]

Signed.....

Dated..... 17/09/2018