

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Christopher WALLS

Support person present: No

1. My full name is Christopher Walls. I was born on [REDACTED] 1947. I am currently 69 years of age. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Background

2. I am the brother of David Walls [REDACTED]. David and I are former pupils of Carlekemp School, North Berwick [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] David has also provided a statement to this Inquiry. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

3. I currently suffer from emphysema and would not be well enough to travel to Edinburgh to give evidence before this Inquiry. I would however be prepared to provide evidence by telephone link or by Skype. I could not manage a plane journey.

Before being put into care

4. I had a very normal upbringing at home. My father was a Church of Scotland minister who converted to Catholicism and became a catholic priest. When my mother was killed in a car crash in 1974. My father had some sort of salary package with the organisation he was working for which meant that his children could be educated at Carlekemp and Fort Augustus which were the principal catholic boarding schools in Scotland.

Institution: Carlekemp School, North Berwick, East Lothian.

5. The school I attended was Carlekemp School situated in North Berwick, East Lothian, Scotland. It was a fee paying school boarding school. Carlekemp was the preparatory school for the main school at Fort Augustus, Inverness, Scotland. The school was run by the Benedictine Order. It was primarily for practising Catholics.
6. My first memories of the day I arrived at the school are not altogether clear. I remember being greeted by Father Aidan Duggan and shown round by him. I recall thinking that he was very friendly to both David and me. I can't remember my parents being there so I assume that they left when I was being shown round.
7. The year was 1955 and I would be 8 years old and one of the youngest pupils at the school. I was put into the "pups" dormitory which was next to Matron's room. This dormitory was for the youngest pupils at the school.
8. I settled in very quickly and made some good friends. I recall that the name of the pupil who shared the bed next to me was called [REDACTED]. I was the tallest boy in the class and so I did not suffer any of the bullying that my brother David was subjected to by the other pupils. I don't remember the other boys very well.

Routine

9. We were wakened by a buzzer which went off at 7 or 7:30 in the morning. I recall we were usually awake and were keen to get up and out of bed. You would then have to turn over your bedclothes to air them. It was then off to the washroom to clean up before Mass.
10. Mass would be said in the morning every day. Then you would go for breakfast. This was always held in the refectory. After breakfast you would return to the dormitory to make your bed.
11. First lessons would be at 09:00. You had every afternoon off for games. The games were seasonal and were rugby, hockey and cricket. We would also do athletics and I particularly enjoyed the high jump. You also had a free run of the school grounds and could play in the woods. It was an ideal place to be a young boy.
12. Every evening after games you would be showered before your evening meal. You also had a bath one day a week and the younger boys were always bathed by Matron.
13. You had to do prep at night and then it was off to bed quite early. Prep was compulsory and it was when your homework was done. It was also supervised. The whole school attended classes on a Saturday morning and then it was games in the afternoon. It was a fee paying school and parents had expectations on the degree of education they were paying for.
14. On a Sunday there were no classes and most of the day was given over to playing in the grounds along with attending mass. I recall an inspection made at the school by Father McLennan of the diocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh. We would go home at holiday times and half term.
15. The priests had informal roles that they performed. Father Duggan took us swimming in the sea. We had a lot of spare time to spend playing in the school grounds.

16. Father [REDACTED] MEW was like the school handyman and was able to fix and mend things that were broken.
17. There was a lot of bullying going on in the school amongst the pupils. I know that my brother David was subjected to this a lot. I would go to David's defence and would attack them with my fists and feet. I was never bullied by other pupils at the school.

Abuse

18. Discipline at the school was harsh. There was a formal discipline which was getting "the stick". This was administered by [REDACTED] Father [REDACTED] MEX. It was a leather strap. You were hit on the hand and I think that Father [REDACTED] MEX entered the punishment into a book. You could get two sets of three strikes on your hand. I don't think that this was probably worse than any school of its time. I would suggest that it was very painful but not excessively cruel. I was subjected to "the stick" on a number of occasions.
19. Father [REDACTED] MEW would clunk you on the top of your head with a clenched fist. We were small boys and this treatment was in my view abusive. He hit you hard enough to see stars. The first time I saw this happening was to my brother David. It was in the dining room. David was unable to eat grapefruit and when he told Father [REDACTED] MEW he started to get angry. I sat at the same table as matron and she watched as father [REDACTED] MEW in front of the whole school hit David, who was sitting next to him on the top of his head with a clenched fist. There was too much of this going on and I remember being very angry.
20. Father [REDACTED] MEW once came into our dormitory. It was in the morning and I recall it was when one of the pupils called [REDACTED] had a birthday. The rest of the dormitory had put [REDACTED] into his bed blanket and tossed him in the air to celebrate his birthday. Father [REDACTED] MEW came into the dorm and we all ran back

into bed leaving [REDACTED] on the floor in his blanket. Father [MEW] took off his belt and laid into [REDACTED] in front of us all. It was well known that he went into the older boys dormitories to cane them when they were caught talking.

21. Father [MEZ] would hit you on the back of the hand with a ruler. It could cause your hand to blister and leak fluid. He would also clunk you on the head with his open hand which was also very painful.
22. Father [MFC] went through a spell when he would hit you on your head with a ruler. In later life I asked him about this. His mother was in the same parish as my family in Edinburgh. He told me that the other monks at Carlekemp had told him that he was too soft with the pupils and he was losing control of his classroom. He had a period of about six weeks where he was hitting pupils but he stopped as he didn't believe that it was the right thing to do.
23. [MFB] was a lay teacher and my main tormentor. If you had committed a misdemeanour during the day you would have to report to him in your pyjamas. He would make you bend over and pull your pyjamas tight across your buttocks. He would then administer the cane which was a whippy piece of wood. It would often leave welts on your buttocks. He would usually give you three blows at a time.
24. The school also had a matron who lived on the premises. At one stage I sat at her dining table in the refectory. She used to call David and I charity cases and when I was at her table she would not let me get seconds. She also made me polish all my classmates' school shoes because I was a charity case and they all paid fees. I think that being at the school was part of my father's salary package. Matron did not like us to forget this and constantly reminded us in front of the other pupils.
25. Father Aidan Duggan had it in for me He was my main tormentor. He told me that I was a show off and a smart Alec. He did his best to physically knock

it out of me. The first time I experienced it was when I got an answer wrong in class. He descended on me with a stick which was a bit longer than a foot long and about an inch thick. It was like a swagger stick. He hit me all about the body in what I would describe as being a frenzied attack. He only ever used this stick when he was in the classroom.

26. When he came into the classroom he would lay out his books and the last thing he put on his desk was "the stick". I was hit by him a lot as he taught me [REDACTED] and I was in a lot of his classes. Although other pupils were also attacked I felt that I was singled out on a daily basis. I remember one day when I was not attacked and was leaving the classroom he told me not to think that I had got away with it and hit me on the head with the stick. I recall on one occasion being smacked on the backside by Father Duggan when we were having a bath.

27. It was a grown man assaulting a little boy. I would be covered in bruises all over my body and when Matron bathed you once a week she must have seen these bruises but never remarked on them. I was never hospitalised. I did not draw these injuries to anyone's attention and I don't know why.

Sexual abuse

28. I used to serve the mass given by Father Duggan. At the end of the mass Father Duggan would make you kneel in front of him. He would put his hand behind your head and force your face into his groin. At the time I thought that this was a reaction to the emotion of the sanctity of the mass. The mass was said on a one to one at a private oratory in the basement of the school. I now on reflection consider it to be a sexual assault. The main mass was attended by the rest of the school in the main chapel.

29. I would serve mass for Father Duggan for a full week every two or three weeks. He would continue to assault me during the day in his classroom but for some reason I always went to him to serve at his mass. The rota was

posted on the noticeboard. I always hoped that he might see me in a better light.

30. When you shared a dining table with Father Duggan he would run his hand up the inside of your shorts and feel your thigh. As you were sitting at the table with him you just accepted this as it was well known that he did it to everyone.
31. I used to go to confession with Father Duggan because outside the classroom he was very personable and friendly. You could choose who you went to confession with. He was very lenient. It was the middle of my last term at the school. The beatings had stopped. I arrived at the queue for confession and while I was waiting some of the boys were coming out saying that they had received a big sloppy kiss from Father Duggan. They were laughing and joking about it. I went into the confessional and Father Duggan then put his hand inside my trousers and started to feel round my backside. He moved his hand round and then put his other hand inside my trousers and underpants and felt my penis. This had not happened before and only started when he stopped beating me in the classroom.
32. The sexual abuse really started for me in the summer term of school in 1958. The physical abuse had stopped. I was now sitting at MFB table in the refectory. I was at confession and I recall that Father Duggan gave me a great big sloppy kiss on the lips. I froze and all I remember was looking at his habit which I thought was very old and shiny. At the time I recalled my mother saying that when trousers became shiny it meant that they were worn and should be replaced. Bizarrely at this moment all I could think about was how often a priest's habit was issued. I think on this occasion he might have put a finger inside my anus as I remember my anus "swallowing". On reflection it was similar to medical examinations in later life where a doctor would insert his finger inside you.
33. I never told anyone about this experience at the time. I don't think that I understood what was going on and I didn't know what words to use to describe

what was happening to me. There was no discussion after the event with other boys even though at the time of confessions we used to joke about it.

34. I was in the Howe dormitory in the senior wing all the dormitories had names. Most of the pupils in this dormitory were a year older than me as I was big for my age. My bed was in the area where the fireplace place was and adjacent to me was another bed with another pupil in it. I can't remember his name but he had thick black hair. His bed was at the window and ran at ninety degrees to mine although I was not facing it.
35. I was a poor sleeper and sometimes through the night I heard someone coming into the dormitory and going to the bed of the pupil beside me. I could hear the hushed voices and muttering and mumblings. I recall on one occasion he shone his torch and saw that I was awake. I said good evening Father Duggan and he appeared annoyed that I was awake. I assumed at the time that the pupil was getting medication through the night. I later asked the pupil what Father Duggan wanted but he evaded the question and didn't elaborate. Father Duggan was a frequent visitor to this pupil's bed.
36. I have thought about this since and suspect that Father Duggan certainly got on top of the other boy's bed and I think that there was some sort of sexual contact.
37. I saw Father Duggan beating other children when we were in class. I wanted to keep on the right side of him and it was one of the reasons I went to his confession and served at his mass. In later life I was told [REDACTED] that Father Duggan had previously been at Fort Augustus but was moved to Carlekemp because he was becoming too friendly and "fiddling" with the novice monks there. Father Duggan was the Novice Master at Fort Augustus.
38. [REDACTED] MGV [REDACTED] who lives in Worthing and was at Fort Augustus was raped by Father Duggan when he was that school. I learned this in later life [REDACTED]



Reporting of abuse

39. There was a requirement to write a letter home every week. This letter would be read by the matron and if necessary it would be censored before it was sent. I managed one day to write a letter to my father telling him what was going on. I managed to sneak out after dusk and smuggle the letter into the post box in the hall of the school. This ensured that it was not read before it was sent. In the letter I pleaded for him to take me away from the school. In later life I learned that my father responded by phoning [REDACTED] Father [REDACTED] MEX [REDACTED] MEX had told my father that I was “happy as a linty” and that he could see me playing outside as he was speaking to my father. He told my father that it was momentary home sickness and that everything was okay. My father seemed to accept that. The beatings at school did not stop.

Leaving the institution

40. My father took both David and I out of Carlekemp School in 1958. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I’m not sure why as my father would not discuss it with us. He always felt that it was his fault when things went wrong in the family.

41. I went on to St Mary’s School, York Lane, Edinburgh. I always assumed we were back staying at home because my mother who had been ill was now better. My father never really gave us a reason for leaving Carlekemp and neither David, [REDACTED] or myself wanted to worry him with what had happened as we knew he would blame himself.

Life after the institution

42. I was at a number of schools after Carlekemp. I attended St Mary's, York Lane, Edinburgh where I remained for a year. In 1959 I went up to St Mary's College in Blairs, Aberdeenshire to train to become a priest. I remained there for two terms. I then went to Holy Cross School in Edinburgh. I skipped a lot of school there so I was sent to Scotus Academy which was a day school in Edinburgh run by the Christian Brothers where I stayed till my last year of school when I went to George Heriot's School in Edinburgh. I think I only went to about 8 classes at George Heriot's and skipped the rest of school.
43. Interestingly in my time at St Mary's College in Blairs, near Aberdeen I never saw any form of abuse. There was a no touch rule amongst the boys and the teaching priests. There were no incidents there that I can recall and compared to Carlekemp it was a much more pleasant environment. There were no other incidents at any of the other schools I attended.
44. I worked at a lot of jobs after school. I joined the Police for a year and then worked as a relief ambulance man. I worked on building sites and in bars. I finally settled down for a while and got a job in child care at Donaldson's School for the deaf in Edinburgh. I was there from 1970 till 1972. I got married whilst I was there.
45. I was drinking from age 13 and became an alcoholic at age 17 as I was having to drink in the morning. I did settle down a bit after that and in 1971 took a better paid job at Redhall Children's Home in Edinburgh. I passed my Scottish Highers and was admitted to university where I obtained a good degree in economics, economic history and sociology. I completed a post graduate diploma in adult education. I did some tutoring and lecturing at the university in Edinburgh where I graduated from. I also worked for the Gas Board to help pay for my studying period.

46. I got a job as a lecturer at a college in England and I started drinking again. It all went to pieces and I became unemployable. I got divorced while I was teaching after being married for 9 years. I had two children from that marriage and at the time of the divorce got custody of them.
47. In 1995 I became sober again. And I started a business teaching people to use plant machinery. The business seemed to be good for me and I thoroughly enjoyed running it.
48. I remarried my current wife and we live now in the south of England. She also has two children.

Impact

49. As a result of the abuse I was subjected to by the priests at Carlekemp I feel that I was estranged from my parents. I blamed them for being naïve and not being able to see through what had happened at Carlekemp.
50. I have had recurring difficulties with alcohol which I directly attribute to my school days at Carlekemp. I was drinking to be oblivious as to what had happened to me. With hindsight I have now been 21 years sober and still reflect on what caused me to drink. I also struggled to remain at any school and it was only when I was out of my schooling days that I studied school exams to grant me access to university.

Records

51. I have applied for my records from Carlekemp under the Freedom of Information Act but the only thing that arrived was the application that my father filled out for us to attend the school. Despite my brother David and my best efforts we have been unable to get anything else from the Benedictine Order.

Other information

52.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] As a result of this David and I have spoken about what happened on many occasions.

53.

I was also contacted by a lady [REDACTED] She was phoning regarding her father who had been at Carlekemp and now [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Her father told her that he knew David and me. The girl phoned me but didn't want it known that she had contacted me or her father would have been upset. I tracked down [REDACTED] by phone in [REDACTED] on the pretence that I had done the research to find him and leaving his daughter out of matters. He told me about the abuse that he had suffered both at Carlekemp and Fort Augustus. I think he also reported it to the Police. I will try to get Mr [REDACTED] to contact the Inquiry.

54.

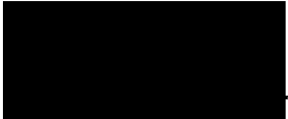
I also gave evidence to the McLellan Inquiry by Skype. I also provided a lengthy statement to the Police and to the McLellan Inquiry. There has been no action since that I am aware of.

55.

I have never sought help from any of the survivor groups associated with child abuse in care.

56.

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..... 25th February, ~~20~~ 2017

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30 JAN 2017