

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

QPH

1. My name is QPH. My date of birth is 1957. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Morrison's Academy, Crieff

2. I was forwarded an email from Morrison's Academy in Crieff regarding the Inquiry about child abuse at boarding schools in Scotland. It's been many years since I left that school but the memories are still fresh in my mind and I welcome this opportunity to have my experience heard. I can attest to rampant, institutionalised physical and emotional abuse at this school during my time there.
3. I attended Morrison's and was an overseas boarder at Dalmhor House in the early seventies.
4. My first memory was my very first night's arrival at the boarding house. It was a tradition to 'dunk' the new arrivals in a bath of cold water, fully clothed, on the first night. I was in abject terror of this happening to me as I waited my turn and, thankfully a Prefect took pity on me and had me spared this horror.
5. The punishment rules of both the school, Morrison's Academy and the various boarding houses that the school ran, was quite simple.
6. The head of the school, the Teachers and the Boarding House Masters were permitted to punish one in any way they saw fit. They could use a fearsome twenty inch long leather strap, the soles of their leather shoes, or indeed, anything else that came to hand. There was no recourse to objecting to the punishment; you simply took it and hoped that you would not cry during this event. The 'strap' was applied to the palm of

your hand and the shoes were applied to your backside. There was no limit on the number of times one could be hit.

7. At the boarding house, the House Master was an enthusiastic psychopath who took every opportunity to torture his charges with physical and emotional abuse and authorised the Prefects to inflict punishment on the lower forms but only with a gym shoe. The leather strap was his pride and joy and only himself was permitted to use this device.
8. There were no limits on what one could be punished for, nor any limits on the amount or duration of that punishment. I remember with some pride, of the one time I was given the gym shoe by the House Master when I was in third form, and I managed not to cry from the obvious pain. The beating continued, of course, if not from the Prefect but still from the House Master.
9. I must single out the House Master of Dalmhor and the [REDACTED] teacher of the school, for a special mention. He was, in my mind, singularly unsuitable for the roles of either a teacher or a House Master at Morrison's. The man had a keen loathing for children, and pretty much everyone else in Crieff. The emotional torture and punishment that he inflicted on his charges would put him in prison these days. Back then, I guess it was considered acceptable and probably encouraged. You know the old term "spare the rod and punish the child". That was probably his mantra.
10. One of the few joys of one's life there was the three sparse meals that we were fed every day. This House Master ruined every one of those meals as he would use the time to stalk the tables and identify boys who's hair did not meet with his approval. He had [REDACTED] so any child with hair that he considered too long would be given a cuff on the back neck with the cry "haircut!" following. This was every meal; breakfast, lunch and dinner and in the evenings too when we all sat in a common room to do our homework.
11. He wore heavy brogue shoes and would stalk the boarding house every evening; walking up and down the stairs and into our dormitories looking for boys to inflict

punishment on with the instructions “come to my study in the morning boy”. He never addressed us with our given names; only “Boy”.

12. One of his favourite events was giving you your weekly allowance on a Saturday morning in his study. He would take four boys at a time in this ritual. You were invited to stand at the far wall and he would then come to the front of his desk, clutching your one pound note in his hand.
13. The notes were then dropped at his feet with the instructions that if it hit the carpet, the money was his. This was money that our parents gave to the school for our pocket money and although he never actually confiscated the notes that landed on the carpet, I believe he thoroughly enjoyed the humiliation of us on all fours collecting our money at his feet. This was nearly every week for five years.
14. I still carry an injury from a house Prefect. For no reason whatsoever, he hit me on the chest with a long, heavy wooden T-Square in the study room. I have two protruding bones that stick out from my chest to this day. Cracked or broken I presume and now more visible as I age and lose body mass.
15. The only way to avoid the attention of the Head Master and the Prefects was quite simply to keep out of sight and avoid bringing attention to one's self. The regime was quite strict. Your bed was properly made, your shoes were polished, your locker was tidy and your hair neat and short, were some of the golden rules. Any deviation or failure attracted the attention of the Prefects who would either apply the gym shoe or some other form of punishment like a week's worth of 'fagging' for that Prefect.
16. Fagging was the term given to the lower forms who were selected to attend to the need of the Prefects. You basically became the Prefect's slave and have to perform any duty that they considered beneath themselves; such as cleaning their shoes and running their errands. The only upside of this duty was that other Prefects could not punish you and had to defer to them if they had any complaints about your conduct. This position you held for the entire school year and one had no choice if one was selected.

- 17. It was the House Master who chose the Prefects to 'run' the boarding house discipline on his behalf. I've no idea what principles he used but it's probably safe to say that he picked boys that matched his own personality.

- 18. I did not personally witness any sexual abuse or experience any myself during my five years there, but that's not something that would have gone on in plain sight. The set-up, such as having to 'fag' for the Prefects and being in abject terror of them and the House Master would have silenced any complaints. What I can say is that probably some boys left that school permanently scarred and that affected them mentally for the rest of their lives.

- 19. I recounted some of these experiences to a friend just a few weeks ago. He sat utterly gobsmacked at my narrative; finding it hard to believe. Have I personally been affected by my experience at Morrison's? I've really no idea, not having visited a professional to share my story. This is pretty much the first time I've fully written down my experience there.

- 20. Another boarder whom I still keep in contact with, does have some stories of sexual abuse in that school. He brought the topic up on a Morrison's Academy group on the internet some years ago and was apparently instantly banned from the group and his posts deleted. I've informed him of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry and hope that he might make contact in due course.

Further Information

- 21. I have no objection to the evidence contained in this witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..... QPH

22 April 2021

Dated.....