

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

QYF

Support person present: No.

1. My name is QYF. My date of birth is 1980. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before boarding school

2. My dad is and my mother is. I have two brothers, , who is two years older, and who is four years younger.
3. Dad served with the Royal Highland Fusiliers (RHF), which are now called 2 Scots, and had a thirty-four year career in the British Army. When I was born they were in Germany and we moved about every couple of years. After Germany we went to Northern Ireland, then Edinburgh, back to Germany and then back to Edinburgh again, where was born.
4. In Edinburgh, 1988, my older brother was sent to Queen Victoria School in Dunblane (QV). Two years later, in 1990 I joined him there after we moved to Cambridge and four years after that came as well.
5. My parents sent us to boarding school for the stability, because obviously by that time I had been to four or five different primary schools. As far as I can remember, from when I was about six years old, my parents started to bring brochures for QV into the house, to try and convince to go. They probably assumed that if he went and I would want to go as well.

6. We knew some other kids who had gone. One was called [REDACTED], who was a couple of years older than [REDACTED] and had been at QV when we were in Germany. I think his parents had been talking to mine and my parents liked the idea.
7. [REDACTED] started at QV in 1988 and he loved it. Every time he came home for school holidays, he would tell me what he had been up to. He told me about all the different out-of-hours activities he'd been able to get involved in and about the school curriculum. He was always keen to go back, see his friends and get back into the activities. It sounded brilliant and I was eager to go too.
8. I don't remember having to pass a test or anything like that before I went, I just remember having to go to the school for an interview with the Headmaster in early 1990, when I was nine. I think that if there were no behavioural issues and I passed the interview I would get in.
9. The Headmaster at my interview was Mr Hankinson. One of my parents was able to come in, but just had to sit in the corner. Mr Hankinson asked me questions like what my favourite subject at school was and what I watched on TV. I remember getting told not to say 'Neighbours', not because I did watch it but because somebody before me had said that and didn't get in. I just said something like 'Wildlife on One'. I was also asked what I enjoyed doing and why I wanted to go to the school.
10. I answered all his questions and told him about the number of schools I'd been to and the fact that I'd be moving with my parents again. I also said that I wanted to be with my brother [REDACTED].
11. My parents and I were given a tour of the place as part of the interview. Ours wasn't very long because we'd already been up there a few times to see [REDACTED]. When he first went to QV we were living in Edinburgh and we had been up there quite a lot.
12. I knew before the end of that school year that I had been successful, and I had got a place. I was sent a huge kit list of all the things I would need for the various activities

I would be doing, which included things like hiking boots, waterproofs, trainers and other things like a dressing gown, boot polish and toiletries. I didn't have to get my own uniform, everything like that was issued at the school.

## **Queen Victoria School, Dunblane**

### *General*

13. QV was for the sons of Scottish servicemen who had served with a Scottish regiment and was funded by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
14. The school was for boys between the ages of ten and eighteen, from primary six to sixth year. I don't remember the ins-and-outs, but I think my parents had to pay around £500 a term for me to go, the rest was hugely subsidised by the MoD. Boys were therefore getting a good boarding school education for a price that was affordable for soldiers.
15. The building itself was quite spectacular and looked like 'Hogwarts' castle in its own grounds with a grand driveway leading up to it. There were always loads of people about, it was a busy place.
16. The grounds were huge and set on a hillside. It was maybe about two and a half kilometres from the front entrance gate to the back of the rear sports field. As you entered the front gates you first came to all the grand buildings, where the classrooms are and where the accommodation is. Past all those buildings the grounds slope down to a massive area of sports fields and to the right there was a swimming pool, a tarmac square and Wavell Woods, where a burn went through the trees and which went around toward the staff quarters.
17. When boys first started at QV, they went into Wavell House, which was in a completely different part of the school, separate from the senior years. After Wavell there were Cunningham, Trenchard and Haig Houses for the older boys.

18. Wavell House was a rectangular building, two stories high, that adjoined the primary school classrooms. You could go through the fire exits from the living quarters into the classroom. There was a staircase going all the way up the middle of the building that was about two metres wide. On either side of this staircase on the bottom and the top floors were dorms and on the middle floor there was a dorm to the left and a library to the right. Each dorm had between sixteen and eighteen boys in them. On each floor, behind the staircase, there were ablutions, where there were showers and baths, sinks and toilets.
19. When you left primary seven they split the year in half and you got to choose whether you went to Cunningham House or Trenchard House. Both were in the grand main building and were for first year, second year and third year boys.
20. Cunningham House was on the second floor of the main building and Trenchard was on the third floor. I chose to go to Trenchard. Boys weren't allowed to mix between the houses, they were kept separate, so in the evenings you weren't allowed to go and hang out in the rooms of boys in Cunningham who were in your class. That was just the way it was.
21. Cunningham and Trenchard were basically two huge corridors in a u-shape that had fifty kids in them and which had just been refurbished before I went into first year. There were no doors off those corridors, just doorways, two-man bunks, although there were also a couple of three-man bunks. The bunks had big cabin-beds in them, which had a desk, drawers and cupboards underneath and down the other side of the u-shape were ablutions and the offices. Each house also had two flats in it, one for the Housemaster and one for the Matron and a common room connected off to the side.
22. When I went into first year, apart from a couple of prefects, it was all boys in my year along one corridor. In the other corridor it was second and third year boys. In my first year I was in a three man bunk and then for second and third years I was in a two-man bunk.

23. After third year all the boys would move to Haig House, which was for all the fourth, fifth and sixth year boys. Haig was on the first floor of the main building and was a similar format to Cunningham and Trenchard, except that it had annexes, nooks and crannies everywhere. It also had two long corridors with bunks on either side, but they were all single bunks and it was laid out slightly differently to the other houses, with ablutions, offices and a couple of pay phones down another corridor.
24. On the front desk of the main building there was a porter, who visitors were supposed to report to.
25. Other than the Housemasters and the Matrons, who each had flats in the houses they were attached to, some of the other staff lived with their families on the grounds and some would travel in. There were about fifteen to twenty houses within the grounds, on an estate called Victoria Green and which were round to the right of the main building, past the hospital.

### *Structure*

26. There were generally two hundred and eighty boys at QV and all were boarders, there were no day pupils. Amongst them there were about sixteen prefects, who were fifth and sixth year boys and three monitors in overall charge, who were sixth year boys.
27. Of the staff, the Headmaster when I arrived at QV was Mr Hankinson who was there until the end of my second year. After him, Mr Raine took over. Ben Paterson was the Deputy Head for Mr Hankinson and then there was Miss Hainey, although I don't think she was a teacher.
28. Miss Hainey went from Deputy Head to Assistant and another man came in as deputy called Mr Clarke, There was something dodgy about that move. Miss Hainey was renowned as a bit of a drinker and used to smell of booze, but I think that the school couldn't prove it and didn't want to actually sack her. When Mr Raine took over as Headmaster they moved her to Assistant Head and got a new Deputy in.

29. She was the only teacher I was aware was drinking, although I never saw her or any of the teachers drinking. I didn't actually see her drunk myself, but I did hear stories and she used to smell of alcohol quite a lot.
30. As far as I was aware the Headmaster was in charge of the whole school and then there were different Heads of the various departments on the academic side. The Housemasters were in charge of everything outside education.
31. There was also a **SNR** and who was a conduit between the school and the MoD. He was a retired **SNR** **CDP**. He also worked in the school, but he didn't get involved in the teaching or with the kids really, other than on the ceremonial side. He would sometimes come and check our uniforms, but that was about all his involvement.
32. I would hazard a guess at there being twenty to twenty-five academic staff and there were also House staff, military staff, medical staff, maintenance people, tailoresses, electricians, carpenters, cleaners and kitchen staff. There were probably forty to fifty staff in total.
33. There was also a Chaplain, Johnny Silcox, who took religious studies and conducted the school assembly every morning when we would sing a couple of hymns. He was sound. Everybody loved him and nobody had a bad word to say about him. He also ran the shooting team so you had to stay on the right side of him if you wanted to go to the shooting range.
34. All the Housemasters were teachers as well. In Wavell the Housemaster was Mr **OLB** and the deputy was Mr **QYL**, who were both the **OLB**. The Housemaster in Trenchard, Bill Webster, was the modern studies teacher and Mr Borking, who taught maths, was the Cunningham Housemaster.
35. Mr **OLB** and Mr **QYL** both lived in Wavell with their families. Mr Webster stayed in the flat in Trenchard when he was on duty and he also had a house in Dunblane,

where he stayed with his wife. Mr Borking lived in the Housemaster's flat in Cunningham with his wife, daughter and son.

36. We had no interaction with any of the Housemasters' families at all. We would see them occasionally, but that was all, however I don't think there were any rules preventing us from speaking to them.
37. In addition to the Housemasters, there were Assistant Housemasters. The Assistant Housemaster changed while I was in Trenchard, initially it was Mr **QUH** who was the **█** teacher, and then I think Mr Kirk, an English teacher, took over.
38. I think they rotated the role of Assistant Housemaster around to give different teachers the experience. I think the school wanted to keep their options open in case one of the Housemasters left and it was also a bit of a commitment for the assistants. The Housemasters got their own accommodation, but the assistants didn't and yet they were expected to give up their free time. I suppose rotating it every twelve months kept it fair.
39. My understanding of the Housemasters' role was that they were the people we could go to if we were troubled or upset about something, or if we weren't happy with our hobbies and wanted to do something else. I suppose you could go to most of the teachers if you had a problem, it would just depend who you had a good relationship with.
40. Every house also had a Matron. The name of the Matron in Wavell was Mrs **BXL**, who was nicknamed **BXL**. Mrs Wyllie, who was a widow, was the Matron in Trenchard and Miss McIlroy was her assistant.
41. I would say the Housemaster and the Matron were the two most important people in the school. If you didn't speak to the Housemaster directly, you could speak to the Matron who would then speak with the Housemaster. They were there to keep an eye on us and our social behaviour and they made sure that everything was tidy in our bunks and we were in bed on time.

42. If a teacher wasn't a Housemaster or Assistant Housemaster they had other duties overnight, which rotated round. Every night there would be a different teacher covering in each of the various houses.

### **Routine at Queen Victoria School**

#### *First day*

43. I started at QV in August 1990, when I was ten years old.
44. When any boy first arrived at the school, they were allocated a primary seven boy to look after them. They were that boy's rookie and they called him their 'second year'. I was a bit confused when I arrived because [REDACTED] had told me he had sorted out a boy called [REDACTED] for me. I knew [REDACTED] because his dad was in RHF and he had been at the same school as me in Cambridge. Instead a random stranger, a boy called [REDACTED], came up to me and said he was my second year.
45. [REDACTED] showed me around, took me to the tailors to get all my kit, carried my bags up the stairs and took me to my bed space. It was really welcoming and comforting to have somebody who had gone through the same feelings you had the year before. That was a nice touch and that second year became your buddy for the next twelve months.
46. Each second-year boy would tell us what the routine and the curriculum was and would keep us right on where we needed to be, which sports hall we would need to be in, what P.E. class we had to go to and he would shepherd us around.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

47. When I started at QV every boy's second year slept beside them as well. Every dorm had sixteen beds in them, which alternated between a P6 and a P7 boy. That meant that on either side of you there was a primary seven boy to keep you right.



48. For some reason they changed it when I went into primary seven and they kept us apart from the new boys in primary six. All the primary sevens were then on the bottom floor and the primary six boys were further up in Wavell House. They put black tape across the landing and no primary seven boys were allowed to cross it. I don't know the reason why.
49. The first thing the Housemaster would do in the morning was wake us up at seven o'clock. They would come in, turn all the lights on, wake us all and make sure everybody got up and got a shower. After showering we'd all get ourselves dressed, go for breakfast and then come back and tidy the room, making sure it was swept and we would make our beds. Everything had to be immaculate and squared away. The Assistant Matron would mop the dorm floor and then we would all go to assembly in the church, where there were seats for all two hundred and eighty boys. After assembly we would go to school.
50. After school we had evening meal and in primary six and primary seven we could just do what we wanted. We would play games like football in the grounds in the nicer weather and in the winter, we did what were called hobbies.
51. After we had finished our hobby and had a shower and got changed, we had prep, basically our homework, which we went back to the classroom for. In Wavell we would get into our pyjamas and our housecoats, open the fire exits and go straight into our classrooms. I think prep lasted for forty-five minutes and then we would go back into Wavell, have some supper and go into our dorm. We'd usually just sit around and talk or play games before bedtime at eight o'clock.
52. Bedtime changed as we got older and when it was bedtime the lights would go out and whoever the Assistant Housemaster on duty was would patrol the dorms. If a particular dorm was noisy, they'd open the door and tell us to be quiet and then pretend to stand there for ages. A lot of mucking about went on after lights were out, it was brilliant. Often there would be dorm raids, when a few of us would run into another dorm and pull someone's duvet off them and get a chase.

### *Washing and bathing*

53. Six days a week we had to have a shower and once a week we had to get a bath. In Wavell, after we'd had a bath we'd all have to line up in a queue of about fifteen boys, in our sports shorts and flip-flops while the Matron, Mrs **BXL**, checked our fingernails and toenails were clean and cut. If our nails weren't clean we'd be sent to do them again and then join the back of the queue. If that happened the other boys would call you a 'Grot'.
54. The showers and baths in Wavell House were open and we all washed in front of each other. There was no supervision, no teacher ever came in other than once to tell some boys to stop mucking around. It changed when we were older, and it was all individual cubicles with curtains over them and we all showered with our pants on. It wasn't a rule that we wore our pants, I think it was a pupil thing. Even though we were all the same age group, boys were developing at different rates and I think it was more of the done thing from there having been teasing historically.
55. I suppose we could have showered whenever we wanted, but there was never a lot of time to get undressed and do so.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

56. We all ate in a dining hall that was in the cookhouse and at mealtimes, before we went in, we all gathered in the central hall where there were brass plaques with the names of boys who had been the senior monitor at the school over the years. We'd line up in our years until someone played a bugle to tell everybody to be quiet. If there were any announcements to be made that day a teacher would make them and then we'd all say a prayer. An order would then be given as to what year was getting to go into the dining hall first.
57. There were three sittings so boys from Wavell House would eat first and then when they were finished, the older boys would eat. After Wavell, the first, second and third

years would go in and then boys from Haig House would go last. The order changed every day so that it wasn't always the first years getting the fresh food.

58. We all sat at three rows of long varnished oak tables with benches at the side of them. One side of the two outer rows was for P6 and the other side was for P7. Each boy always sat in the same seat for the whole year. We never changed tables, once you went up a year you moved to the next table, found a new seat and that would be your seat for the rest of the year.
59. The three monitors sat at a table on a stage at the top of the dining hall and there were another three tables of fifth year prefects and sixth year prefects.
60. Staff ate with us sometimes as well although mealtimes went unsupervised quite a lot. They would get a plastic chair and sit at the end of a table and chat to us as they ate. I liked that, it was quite informal, and they would always make sure we knew how to hold a knife and fork properly and would tell us to sit up straight.
61. As far as I remember the food was good. There was a full fry-up every morning if you wanted it or cereal. Lunchtime was always stuff like pie and chips, lasagne, pasta and there would be a salad option.
62. It was allowed to take food out of the cookhouse, like fruit or anything that you might have wanted to eat later.
63. As well as the three meals a day, we would have supper as well. In Wavell we would go and get milk and biscuits before bed and when we were older we would get toast or sandwiches and juice.
64. Each Housemaster also had his own tuck shop, which they opened every night, and you could buy cans of juice, chocolate and crisps. That was the only thing you could go to a different house for, because whatever profit the housemaster made would be spent on their house.

### *Clothing/uniform*

65. When I arrived at QV I had to go to the tailor who covered me in a measuring tape and I was issued with my uniform. It was like a sausage factory, getting sent through and given shirts, shorts, a waistcoat, a kilt, socks, shoes and even pants.
66. There were three uniforms, which included a day uniform that, for primary six and seven, was blue cord shorts, a white shirt and a blue woollen jumper with elbow pads and epaulettes, black socks and black shoes. If you were going down to the shops in Dunblane or if your family were coming, you had to wear black brogues, black socks with yellow and red stripes, a kilt, sporran, shirt, school tie and a blazer.
67. When we got into first year we stopped wearing the shorts and wore plain green trousers. Prefects wore different trousers to the other boys and were all given a pair of tartan trews to make them stand out.
68. For ceremonial occasions, such as parades for Remembrance Day or for 'Grand Day', which is an hour long parade on the last day of the year when dignitaries such as members of the Royal Family would come to inspect the school, we would wear a kilt, sporran, black socks, brogues and a red tunic and a Glengarry.
69. All that uniform and kit was paid for by the MoD and kept in the school. When we grew out of it we would hand it back in and get issued with more.

### *Schooling*

70. In primary six and seven we had one teacher who taught us the usual subjects like maths, English and the sciences. When we moved into first year the subjects were split and there were different teachers for all the subjects, which included craft and design, geography, physics, biology, chemistry, maths and English. When we got to second year we got to choose what subjects we each wanted to do for our standard grades, following the Scottish education curriculum.

71. I think it was exactly the same as every other school except that we did more sports and had Band and highland dancing practice. That meant that we had to go to school on a Saturday morning for four periods, finishing at twelve o'clock. Pipes and drums were also hobbies that we did for two evenings a week. I played the drums and the bugle.
72. In my first year at QV, pretty much all we did was run around the sports field for [REDACTED] Mr [REDACTED] QUH would take us down and have his stopwatch out, line us all up and shout "Go!" He'd then shout out our time, which we had to remember and try and beat the next week. In primary seven we were given athletics and taught javelin, shot putt and that sort of thing.
73. I don't remember a teacher sitting with us as we did prep in the evening. Whichever teacher was on duty would float between the different classrooms. If you needed help with anything you could ask the teacher when he came round, but most of the time we were supervised by a prefect.
74. It's difficult for me to say, because I have nothing to compare against, but I thought the quality of the education was pretty good. The teachers were engaging and nice. The facilities were very good, and I did pretty well in my Standard grades.

*Sporting/other activities*

75. In the summer there was athletics and in the winter rugby was the main sport. From the moment I arrived in primary six we were given a rugby ball, which we had to throw in the air and catch, multiple times. We would be shown how to tackle somebody, told what the rules were and the training was constant, twice a week.
76. Through the winter there were often rugby games and we'd either be playing at the school or they would put coaches on and we would go and play other schools in Perth, Edinburgh or Glasgow. On those days our Saturdays were pretty much written off.

77. Most kids liked and preferred football, but it never got introduced into the school sports curriculum, it was always rugby. If we wanted to play football we had to do so in our own time, although some teachers did give up their own time to do a bit of coaching and organise some games.
78. It was also mandatory to do either piping and drumming or Highland dancing. There was a Drum Major and a Pipe Major and also a Highland dancing instructor, who were all members of the teaching staff. They would get us all ready, making sure we were immaculate before any parade and they would tune the pipes.
79. It was the goal of everyone that chose piping and drumming to get into the pipe band, but that wasn't possible until you had been practising for at least three years. Getting into the pipe band and being at the front of all the parades with the entire school marching behind you was the pinnacle. The pipe band was one of the biggest selling points of the school and pipe band practice was one of the best parts of the week.
80. Drill, which we learned to do in the sports hall during the school day in primary 6, was actually part of the curriculum. The school had a Sergeant-Major who was in charge of drill, bearing and turn out. He was actually alright, but he could issue the best barracking you've ever heard. In our first six weeks we would march around in circles and learn how to salute. At the end of those six weeks there was a passing out parade and once you had done that you were considered a fully-fledged member of the school.
81. Although the first six weeks before that passing out parade were almost considered a probationary period, it wasn't my understanding that you might not make it through. I just understood that after you had completed the passing out parade you could then claim to be a 'Victorian'.
82. In the evenings there were lots of different hobbies for us to do for an hour. We could choose what we wanted and each hobby was taken by one of the teachers. There was arts and crafts and shooting, or we might build an Airfix model or go swimming. There were all sorts of things, even stamp collecting.

### *Leisure time*

83. In our free time, as well as the hobbies, there was the library in Wavell that we could sign books out of and a table-tennis table on the second and third floors. The swimming pool would also open on a Saturday. If you were in the pipe band you could go down to the band hut and play the drums or the bagpipes. With the school being on such a big estate, we often would just muck about in the grounds.
84. On a Saturday we had school in the morning until twelve o'clock when we'd get our lunch. For the first six weeks of primary six you weren't allowed out of the school and after that you were allowed to go down to Dunblane and wonder around. After lunch we'd go back to our dorms, get our shirt, tie, kilt and blazer on, what was called 'walking out dress', and there would be a massive queue to get our £1 pocket money from one of the teachers.
85. There would be a nominal roll and we'd all have to sign out. The nominal roll was a folder that we had to put our names in, the time and where we were each going, just so they knew where we were. In Wavell you had to sign out with the teacher there as you were collecting your pocket money. On a Sunday the duty Housemaster would be in the library and you had to sign out there. In secondary it was just a folder that sat on a desk and we signed ourselves out.
86. We'd head into town and spend the afternoon in Dunblane and come back for the evening meal and sign back in. After the evening meal they'd usually put a movie on in the TV room and I think lights out was at nine o'clock at the weekend.
87. After church on a Sunday we'd have lunch and then we'd have free time again. We could head into Dunblane if we wanted as long as we signed out, or we could stay at the school, play football in the grounds or just hang about with our friends in the boarding house and watch TV.
88. Looking back, I think that primary six and primary seven boys were adequately supervised in our free time. As we got a bit older there was a bit more freedom, but

then a thirteen or fourteen year old doesn't want an adult looking over their shoulder all the time. The school curriculum was quite tight and there were a lot of adults around most of the time so it was nice to have that freedom at the weekend and get everybody out of your space. I think they got that right.

### *Religious Instruction*

89. The Protestant boys, who were the majority, went to church in the school. I was a Catholic and had to go church on the other side of Dunblane.
90. On a Sunday, along with the other Catholic boys, I had to get up at the crack of dawn, get breakfast, get my walking out dress on and run two miles down to the Catholic Church. The Protestant boys were alright, they just rolled out of bed and went to the church in the school grounds. Eventually, when I was in third year, they got us a minibus.
91. We learned about all the various world faiths at Religious Studies in school and for me, as a Catholic, the local priest would come up for forty minutes once a week and talk about the bible. The local chaplain, who was also the school chaplain, Religious Studies and the History teacher would do the same for the other religions.
92. It wasn't an option to say you didn't want to be a Catholic, or go to church on a Sunday, you still had to go to the classes, just as we had to go to church on a Sunday. That annoyed me because I had made my choices not to believe by the time I was twelve or thirteen and yet I still had to go.

### *Trips and holidays*

93. In the first two years there were skiing trips once a year. I don't know where they went because my mother had read an article in the newspaper about some kids who had fallen off a cliff while skiing with their school and she didn't want me to go. I was one of only two kids in my year that weren't allowed to go.



94. When I was between thirteen and fifteen, most of the trips were in a coach to Edinburgh or Glasgow at the weekend. We would be driven to the city centre and put out at lunchtime and allowed to do what we wanted until five o'clock when the coach would leave. That happened about once a month and we wore normal, civilian clothing. It might have caused us problems with the local youngsters if we'd been wearing our kilts.
95. We could do what we wanted on those trips, go to McDonalds or the shops or the cinema, or if we were in Edinburgh we went to the castle and Princes Street Gardens. We could just enjoy a bit of freedom in the town. They were good trips.
96. If you were in the pipe band you went to Murrayfield for every home international and played 'Flower of Scotland' on the pitch before the game. That was cool. We got VIP tickets and an amazing meal and we got to watch the game afterwards.
97. I also played in the Edinburgh Tattoo with the pipe band and I went to Canada to play in a Tattoo there. After I left, my younger brother [REDACTED] went on a trip to Australia with the pipe band.
98. I believe these trips were subsidised, but my parents had to contribute as well. As I remember my parents had to pay for the flights to Canada and then all the accommodation and meals were subsidised by the MoD and the organisers of the Tattoo.
99. We were in Canada for two weeks and stayed in a University halls of residence, which was brilliant. Everybody got their own room, which for me was the first time. We had a week to rehearse with the other international bands before the Tattoo and we were down practising at seven o'clock, only stopping for a bite to eat at lunchtime. When the Tattoo started we were rehearsing in the afternoon, then having a dress rehearsal and then playing to a crowd every night. It was really intense.
100. Quite a number of staff from the school came with us in addition to the Drum Major and the Pipe Major and I never felt unsafe. Some of the Matrons and some of the

academic staff also went and we all knew what the routine was, where we were to be and at what times.

101. That sort of thing stays with you your whole life. It was brilliant going to Canada and something I'm really proud of. I still talk about it. Not many people get an opportunity to have that sort of experience in their childhood.

### *Healthcare*

102. There was a hospital building on the school grounds that was staffed by a couple of nurses and had full wards, including isolation wards where you could lie and watch TV all day.
103. If you didn't feel well you could report to the school hospital in the morning. The nursing sister would see you in between breakfast and the start of school. She would ask you what was wrong and either give you a plaster or, as was usual, a lozenge and a salt gargle.
104. The nurses were really good though and they were there all weekend too. I suffered really badly from tonsillitis until I was twenty-two and I spent three or four days in the hospital twice a year. It was just like being in a normal hospital.
105. When we first arrived in the school we got a health check, but I don't remember them being regular after that. A doctor came up from Dunblane and checked us over and just like at every other school we got our various inoculations.
106. The doctor from Dunblane also came to the school twice a week, however if it was necessary outside those times you would be taken to him or if you were really ill you would be taken to the local hospital. One of my friends was hit in the face accidentally by a cricket bat and he was taken straight to Accident and Emergency in Stirling.
107. There was also a dental surgery within the hospital and we saw the dentist for regular checks and a local orthodontist came for anyone that might have needed to see one.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

108. On our birthdays, when we were younger, everybody would sing 'Happy Birthday' in the cookhouse in the evening. That stopped when we got a bit older, it wasn't cool.
109. I had an aunt and uncle who lived in Cumbernauld who broke the rules every year and came with a cake and lots of sweets whenever it was my birthday. The teachers would be all flustered, telling them they weren't allowed to do that, but they insisted on coming in. They would hand me my cake and I was allowed to talk to them for five or ten minutes before they had to go and I could eat the cake with my friends. I was quite spoiled in that sense.
110. At Christmas there was a meal before we all headed home. A big Christmas dinner was served to us by the teachers and decorations put up. When we got a bit older we went carol singing as a group round the staff houses, which were normally out of bounds. The teachers would give us mince pies and it was pretty good.

### *Personal possessions and Pocket money*

111. We all had our own lockers next to our beds. In Wavell, each bed was separated by a locker and in the other boarding houses we had cabinets in the cabin beds that we could lock. There wasn't a lot of room because most of the space was taken up by our clothes, but we did get parcels from our families so generally, if you had any space in your locker, it was full of sweets and things like that.
112. You could have photos up if you wanted, but you'd probably get the mick taken out of you if you had a photo of your mum up.
113. One of the few things I did have was a Nintendo 'Gameboy' when they first came out. Other boys had them too and some boys had small portable TVs. In second year we were allowed to have toastie machines. If whatever it was was small enough and it was practical the staff weren't too bothered about it.

114. In Wavell, every Saturday the housemaster would give us £1 pocket money, which had been given to the school by our parents at the start of term. We could spend that on whatever we wanted, which was mainly sweets that we bought at the first shop out of the school gates or in Dunblane. As we got older we got more cash and could take out as much as we liked but you had a set amount for the term.

#### *External Inspections*

115. I don't remember there being any inspections at the school while I was there. I was certainly never asked by anyone what I thought of QV or about anything else.

#### *Family contact*

116. We weren't allowed to phone home for the first two years, we were only allowed to write, and we actually had a letter writing period in primary six and seven. I think they saw it that if we were allowed to phone it would just exacerbate homesickness. It was only when we went into first year that we could phone.
117. I think that of all the boys in my year I received the least mail. My parents just sent me off to boarding school and that was that. It got to the extent that I actually wrote them a letter when I was in primary seven, swearing at them. Their only response had been to laugh because I had spelt the word wrong.
118. We all went home for most school holidays, which were two weeks in October, three weeks at Christmas, two weeks over Easter and then a long summer holiday of eight or nine weeks. I always wanted to get back to school by the end of the summer. My family and Glasgow (Aunt or Uncle) would take us to Glasgow Airport and we'd fly to Stanstead or to Germany, where my parents moved back to after Cambridge.
119. There was also an extended weekend between Christmas and Easter, where you left school on the Thursday and came back on the Monday, but I didn't go home then.

Instead I would spend the weekend with one of my friends who lived closer, or I would go to my extended family in Glasgow.

120. If I'd wanted, I could have gone to any of my relatives on any weekend after school on a Saturday, as long as I was back for Sunday evening. That sort of contact was limited in primary six and seven, but it was possible when I was older and it was known as a 'pass'. The only problem with that was rugby commitments and the pipe band. For the first two years you could only go out on a pass once a month, but later on you could go every weekend if you wanted.
121. The only time there was a lot of people at the school was when there were parades and the pipe band were playing, such as at the end of the year for Grand Day. On Grand Day the pipe band marches the whole school down to the sports fields, watched by their families, and either a high ranking officer or a member of the royal family speak to everyone. There is also Highland dancing and various displays before the kids all go home for the summer.

*Sibling contact*

122. I'd see my brothers at morning assembly in the church, but I didn't really like my older brother [REDACTED] so I never saw much of him. He would speak to me when he passed if he felt like it and we would see each other occasionally, but generally he wasn't a very good big brother. He was a prefect and two years older than me and he was therefore part of the chain of command. He thought he was too important to speak to me most of the time.
123. I was in second year when my younger brother [REDACTED] started at QV and he and I were really close. I really looked out for him and all his little friends. I used to arrange to meet him and would see him all the time, I suppose I was trying to do the opposite of what [REDACTED] did to me. We're still really close.
124. There was nothing organised by the school for siblings to see each other, there were no set times, but there was nothing to prevent us making time for each other.

### *Support*

125. The Matrons were people we could go to and say whatever we wanted to. They had the ear of the Housemaster and in an informal way they were quite influential. If any of us had an issue they would flag it up to the Housemaster and they were definitely the closest adults to all the boys.
126. The Matron in Wavell, who was known as BXL [REDACTED], wasn't like that, her role seemed to be more about cleaning all the time, but I think that was more her personality. I don't really know why she was in the job. The Matrons in the other houses were much better. They were definitely people I felt I could go to and who I knew would listen to any problems I might have had and who would help me if I needed it.

### *Work*

127. Other than tidying our dorms and making sure they were clean, there wasn't much in the way of work. We all had to sort out our own uniforms and make sure we were smart and that included bulling our brogues. Some boys would help out other boys with their uniforms for money, if they were really good. Some were renowned for making their brogues like glass and they would charge a premium to do other boys', however we were never forced to sort somebody else's uniform out.

### *Bullying*

128. I'm not aware of there being an anti-bullying policy at the school and it wasn't part of the curriculum, however everybody was quite protective of the school's reputation. I never witnessed any physical bullying. There was quite a lot of fighting, particularly in the younger years when a pecking order was established, but I wouldn't say there was any bullying.

129. We were all very robust, independent boys, who liked a lot of banter and there was typical teasing. I suppose the situation we were in, where we were all living together and going to school together, meant that there was perhaps more teasing than in a non-boarding school, but for me it was just banter.
130. I'm aware there had been allegations in the media that were made by a teacher at QV of a culture of bullying at QV, but I certainly didn't witness any and I wasn't aware of any. I was in Wavell when those allegations came out and perhaps the accusations were the reason they split up primary six and primary seven, however when the articles came out the general feeling of the pupils was confusion about where the allegations had come from and that they just weren't true.

### *Discipline*

131. Life at QV was pretty strict. We would learn the rules pretty much immediately from the primary seven boys in our dorms. They would tell us where to be, how to act and how to behave, what was allowed and what was not allowed. I don't recall being given anything with the rules written down.
132. Punishments that the staff could issue included detention and lines, they could 'gate' you and they could put you on a 'fifteen-minute report'. Detention was a sickener and was really the worst one. It was on a Saturday after you'd already been in class and you'd have to go to the library and do lines for an hour or more.
133. In primary six and primary seven there was a points system that would accrue over a week and went between one and ten. At the end of the week your points would go back to zero. If you had done something minor, like being late for class, you would be given a point-three by the teacher and that would be recorded. A point-three might mean you would have to clean the ablutions. If before the week was up you were given a point-four, that would be a total of a point-seven and that meant you were on two hours detention on a Saturday.

134. If we were caught by the Housemaster or Assistant Housemaster after a dorm raid and stealing someone's duvet you would be on an instant point-six, which was an hour detention on a Saturday. However, it was worth it.
135. If you were gated you weren't allowed to go beyond the school gates for anything, even to the first shop for sweets or down into Dunblane. You would also be told you weren't getting your pocket money that weekend. Even if your family were coming to visit and you had plans to go out with them, you weren't allowed. I'm not sure how successful that was though if boys had robust parents who insisted on taking their son out.
136. If you were on a fifteen-minute report, you had to sign a folder that was kept in the porter's lodge at the main gates every fifteen minutes. That meant that not only were you gated, but you could never be more than fifteen minutes away from that folder. Sometimes you could be on a fifteen-minute report all day Saturday or all day Sunday. Whichever teacher was on duty would check it every so often and make sure it was your writing.
137. I think that some of the punishments issued by staff were fair, but I think that giving a ten year old detention on a Saturday is not, regardless of what they had done. The points systems had the potential to escalate really quickly. You could commit two minor point-three offences and be on detention for an hour on a Saturday.
138. Some teachers completely abused the detention system. Mr Hannah, the science teacher, used to dish out detentions like they were sweets. One time I was on detention when he was supervising and there had to be silence. I asked the boy next to me, [REDACTED], if he could pass a rubber over and he gave us both extra detention. He told us that I got it for talking and that my friend got it for listening. [REDACTED] phoned his parents about that and he ended up not having to do the detention, but Mr Hannah thought he could do that sort of thing. He thought that was acceptable behaviour.



139. I think smoking and alcohol consumption were probably the same as at any other school with kids experimenting and I smoked from when I was twelve years old. The good thing about being at such a grand school with lots of grounds was you could walk off and have a cigarette in the woods.
140. There wasn't so much punishment if you were caught smoking, you would just be made to pick up all the cigarette butts and given a stern talking to. The only time I was ever caught with cigarettes was by my older brother [REDACTED]. He hated smoking and if he ever saw me he would pat me down and search me for cigarettes. If he did find any he would snap them all in front of me and then phone our parents and tell them.
141. Although it did happen, it was pretty rare for boys to get drunk in the school. Perhaps once a term from second year onwards somebody would go into Dunblane and ask an adult there to get him some alcohol. If you were caught drunk, you would either be taken back to your room and monitored by a prefect or taken to the school hospital where the nurse could keep an eye on you until you sobered up.
142. The parents of anyone caught drunk would be phoned and they would probably get a letter to take home, or they might even get suspended. That was probably one of the most serious and shameful things that could happen and was the main involvement the Headmaster had in discipline. He would deal with suspensions or expulsions and he would send letters home.
143. I was suspended once in the summer term of my third year, when I was fourteen. I was down at the bottom of the sports field with some friends, lounging around on the crash mats that were there for pole vaulting. Lots of cars were going past on the other side of the wall and somebody decided it would be a good idea to 'moon' them. We jumped on the wall, pulled our trousers down and exposed our backsides to the drivers as they went past.
144. Unfortunately I was wearing a pair of particularly bright, distinctive trousers and one of the passing motorists reported us to the porter, describing my trousers. The porter

came and got me and eventually I was taken to the Headmaster, Mr Hankinson, who by that time had taken a statement from the driver.

145. Mr Hankinson phoned my parents and told them I was being suspended, however at that time they were in Germany and they questioned him who was being punished. It would have cost several hundred pounds to ship me back to Germany. He was insistent that I had to be suspended to set an example and send a message to the other boys as the school had a reputation to uphold. He asked if there was another family member I could go to, but there wasn't. If I'd been sent to my grandparents I would just have been spoilt for a week and that would have been no punishment.
146. Instead I was put in the isolation ward of the school hospital and was basically jailed for a week. The nurse had to look after me and I wasn't allowed to watch the television or leave, although loads of my pals would sneak around when it was dark and give me sweets and cigarettes, which I had out of the window. It was boring, but I suppose it was alright.
147. They tried to expel me after that, partly because of that and partly because I smoked. At the end of that year Mr Hankinson sent my parents a letter telling them that I wasn't welcome back. It came completely out of the blue, none of the staff had said anything about it before. As a result, my parents wrote to the GOC (General Officer Commanding), pointing out that there was no record that warranted my being expelled and that it was unjustifiable.
148. Expelling me like that had been the last act of Mr Hankinson before he handed over the Headship to Mr Raine. By the time Mr Raine took over he reversed the decision and I was allowed back for the start of the next term.

#### *Prefects/senior pupils*

149. My biggest hatred of the school was that the prefects and the monitors, who were just boys as well, were given far too much power from a very young age. I reflect on it regularly with people I'm still in touch with. The power that they had and the

punishments that some prefects issued was absolutely ridiculous and I don't remember a prefect ever being questioned for giving out punishments. They thought they ran the place and they weren't even scared to challenge teachers.

150. The Housemaster of Haig and the Headmaster decided who were to be prefects, but I don't really know how they were chosen. I think they were probably boys who had been the best behaved and who had done things to show the school in a good light.
151. If you did something that annoyed a prefect, he could put you on a 'Day'. That would mean you would be on a list and you would have to get up at six o'clock in the morning and run around the rugby fields. It was never ratified by an adult and a prefect could put you on as many days as he wanted. He could put you on seven days in a row, even on a weekend, if he wanted. It wasn't just me, other boys suffered the same sort of stuff.
152. Those punishments were often given for the most stupid things, such as having a little dirt on your shoes when they had been scuffed walking from class to class, or having a shoelace untied. Sometimes a prefect would stand at the door of the church on a Sunday morning, inspecting everyone's shoes as they walked in and if any boy's shoelace was untied the prefect would put him on a day.
153. As a first year, on a rotational basis for the full year, everybody had to spend four days cleaning the prefects' and the monitors' tables. Everybody else just did their own. After their meal, they would then leave everything on the table and just walk out leaving the first years to clear their plates and wipe down their tables.
154. I was quite outspoken by the time I got into first year and I thought that sort of behaviour was full-on old school and should never have been happening in the nineties. I had a good relationship with Bill Webster, the housemaster, so I spoke to him about it. He told me it was just one of the privileges of being a prefect, but I told him I thought it was ridiculous and he did actually stop it.

155. Once I skipped going to church on a Sunday, however the prefect that was in charge of the Catholics, [REDACTED], realised I wasn't there. He made me get dressed into the uniform I was supposed to wear to church, took me down to the cookhouse at breakfast and told everyone to leave their plates where they were because I was going to clean the whole cookhouse for missing church.
156. He humiliated me in front of the whole school and I was crying my eyes out when one of the teachers, Mr Kelly, came up to speak to me. He asked me what had happened and walked off, leaving me to it. As he walked away I stood up to get a drink and heard the prefect roar "What's going on?"
157. [REDACTED] had clearly misunderstood what had happened and thought that Mr Kelly had told me to leave the cleaning and had thought nothing of challenging him. That was the level of dissent there was amongst the prefects.
158. The prefects enforced strict rules, but I didn't witness and wasn't aware of there being any physical, bullying behaviour from them. They knew that if they took things to that level they could end up losing their trows and their status.

### **Abuse at Queen Victoria School**

159. The only abuse I suffered or was aware of at QV happened in primary six and was committed by one teacher, Ben Phillip, whose nickname was 'Bender'. At that time, he was probably late forties, with dark hair that was swept back and going grey, a moustache, red cheeks and a round face. He often wore a shirt with the arms too long so he always had silver bands on his upper arm to keep them at the right length.
160. When we arrived for the start of primary six, they split up all the boys and twenty went into Mr Beattie's class and twenty went into Ben Phillip's. They wouldn't say why, but the primary seven boys giggled and teased us about going into Ben Phillip's class. I found out I had been put in Ben Phillip's class and they just told me not to worry and it was kind of brushed off.

161. Phillip was also the Housemaster for Haig House and when we first started in his class he made sure we knew that. He told us that as Housemaster for the senior boys he decided who could stay in the school and who would leave. On top of that he used to say that he was the one who would write out the report that we would take to university and the first reference we would need to get a job. He would say "I'm the one that receives you when you start at QV and I'm the one that sees you out".
162. I remember him drawing a big empty box on his blackboard with an arrow pointing to it. He told us that this was what he had put in a reference for someone before and that he had nothing to say about that individual. As a result, he told us, that boy didn't get into university.
163. Phillip had been a teacher at QV when they used to belt the kids and he still had his belt from those times. As he spoke to us, he would whack his belt on his desk and try to intimidate us.
164. He spent a good six weeks behaving like that. Intimidating us and essentially brainwashing us into thinking that we would do whatever he wanted and be quiet in his class. I know now that he was grooming us.
165. After those six weeks, when we came back from the October break, he had moved the classroom around so that his desk was facing the door so that if anybody came in he would see them straight away.
166. He would tell boys, myself included, to come up to his desk because he wanted to show us something. He would stand boys to his right hand side, blocking the view from the door and then, in front of the whole class, he would unbutton boys' shirts, put his hand inside and rub their chests and their nipples. He tried to make what he was doing into a joke and tried tickling your armpit. He would also lift your shirt up at the back and put his hand down the back of your shorts, under your pants, and grope your backside.

167. I saw him do this a lot to a number of boys in the class, pretty much on a daily basis. I was up there all the time, probably more than everybody else.
168. At the time it was just kind of perceived as banter. If you had your backside felt by him everybody would giggle, but it makes me wonder now that if he was willing to do what he did in front of a whole class, what on earth was he doing creeping about the dorms in Haig House at night.

### **Reporting of abuse at Queen Victoria School**

169. The reason Phillip got away with what he did and the reason nobody reported it was because we had all been brainwashed by him into believing he had the power over our future because it was him who wrote our references for leaving.
170. As a result, we just stood there and let him do what he did and nobody spoke about it. It was embarrassing at first, but then I just used to think of him with contempt and as an absolute creep. I have never spoken to anybody about what he did, not even my brothers or my wife.
171. I did find it a bit odd that Ben Phillip wasn't allowed anywhere near the younger boys' dorms. I never saw him in Wavell once and I wonder whether he had been told to stay out. He was the Housemaster for the senior boys in Haig House and yet he was a teacher for the primary years. All the other Housemaster taught the boys they looked after.
172. Ben Phillip died when I was in second year after he fell off a ladder in the theatre in the main school building. Every couple of months or so, girls from different schools would be coached to QV and there would be a school disco. Apparently he fell off as he was putting posters up advertising the disco and hit his head on the floor. I suppose that's another reason why nothing was ever said about it, there was no point in even bringing it up once he was dead.

173. I was in Edinburgh on a trip with the school when it happened and so we were the last to know what had happened. We got off the bus at the school and the Headmaster, Mr Hankinson, brought us all into his office and explained what had happened. I don't remember if there was any sort of investigation or memorial service afterwards.

### **Leaving Queen Victoria School**

174. One thing that does grate with me is the circumstances of how I left QV. From the day you start at QV, you don't know whether the school will take you back after 4<sup>th</sup> year. It was their decision, made behind closed doors, whether you were allowed to come back and you had no say in it. Essentially, it was always at the back of your mind from a young age that you were being placed in an order of merit and the bottom 15% would be booted out at 16 years old to either go to another school or enrol in college.

175. Knowing that the school had that power was always in the back of your head and it was spoken about a lot amongst the boys. We knew that if we didn't toe the line they wouldn't keep us.

176. There were six smokers in my year including me and every one of us was booted out at the end of fourth year. The only reason they gave was that they apparently didn't have enough spaces in the fifth year. I had already spoken to a number of my friends and found out that I had done much better in a lot of my exams and yet I wasn't allowed back when they were. My father was absolutely furious when I told him, but he was just told the decision had been made.

177. The only options I had as a sixteen year old was to either go to college or go to another school for fifth and sixth year, so I enrolled at Clydebank College to do my Highers because I didn't know what else to do. I got no assistance in that decision from the school or from my parents.

178. I went to the college a few times but spent most of my time smoking hash and drinking heavily. I was the only sixteen year old there, everybody else was in their twenties and thirties and a lot of them knew each other from school or where locals, whereas

I knew nobody. I can't really remember that year very much. I showed up for my exams, but I ended up with three D-grades.

### **Life after Queen Victoria School**

179. I left Clydebank College after I'd been there for a year and although I was supposed to go back for another year, I got a job in a mail room in Glasgow. I started taking heavier drugs and drinking really heavily for the next eighteen months.
180. My parents moved back to Germany and I stayed in Glasgow and everything just got out of hand. I went to visit them at Christmas, by which time I'd lost about three stone and my mother insisted I come and live with them. I returned to Glasgow to pick my stuff up and never went back.
181. In Germany I got a job in a department store at the barracks and although I stopped taking heavier drugs, I still drank and smoked cannabis and I did so every day for a year or so. My dad told me I had to do something with my life and as I had been speaking to guys in the army and saw the jobs that they did, I decided to apply to join myself as an armoured vehicle mechanic.
182. I got in and that should have been the kick up the backside that I needed, but, although I suppose I did okay, I still drank heavily for the next four or five years. I was in front of my commanding officer a number of times and fined for drinking and for fighting. I was promoted to Lance-Corporal and then busted back down for an alcohol related incident. I was a private soldier for seven years and that is unheard of apart from absolute wasters.
183. A couple of years later, when I was twenty-six or twenty-seven, I met my wife and she basically made me see sense. She grew up in Dunblane and I have known her since I went to QV. I used to meet her when I went into the town and we had grown up as friends. After we met again I stopped drinking, got more into my fitness and I started doing a lot better at work. After that I started to get promoted extremely fast and I am



now in the highest rank you can get as a soldier and have been selected to be a commissioned officer.

184. My wife and I now have two sons and I have just received my commission and will be promoted to Captain shortly. I think I found solace in the camaraderie I found in the army and, although it took a long time, I eventually found the right path myself. I think I'm in the right place now, with a good family and the right career.

### **Impact**

185. I don't think it's fair for any child to go to a school and not know if they will be back with their friends that they have lived every part of their life with after 4<sup>th</sup> year. I think teachers holding that power is disproportionate and can have a massive impact on children. I totally disagreed with it and I reflect on it regularly. It is not right and it was that power that Ben Phillip used to intimidate us and to groom us.
186. I think the decision that I had to leave at the end of fourth year had the greatest impact on me of my whole life. My life was an absolute train wreck when I left, and it took a long time for me to get my life in order. I didn't know what to do after being at a boarding school for six years in Dunblane and ending up in Glasgow as a sixteen year old in a college full of adults. I went from a sheltered life in a military environment with friends I had lived and went to school with and was projected into an environment that was completely alien to me, with no friends and which I knew very little about.
187. The school gave me absolutely no preparation for the decision they made, and my abuse of drugs and alcohol continued because I didn't know what I wanted to do with myself. All I did know was that I didn't want to be at college, and I didn't want to go to another school. I spent a lot of years being angry and confused. I wasn't armed with any tools to deal with my emotions, I just wanted to escape them through drugs and alcohol. Those years were wasted, and I can't get those years back.
188. I had spent every year living and going to school with the same people since I had been ten years old. That had been my life. Even the times I was going home to my

parents in the holidays I just wanted to go back to the school. When the axe came down on me at sixteen years old and I was told that part of my life was over forever, I was devastated.

189. To be singled out as I was, was terrible. It is difficult to explain my feelings, but I felt rejected. My older brother [REDACTED] left at the same time as me, but he did so as a sixth year prefect covered in glory and that brought even more shame on me.
190. I think that I had a certain disregard for authority and disrespect for adults, which stemmed from what Ben Phillip did. I never had any problems at school before I went to QV; I was a well-rounded ten year old and I was wanting to go there, but from primary six onwards I was an absolute tearaway, who had little respect for the teachers.
191. I rebelled against them because I felt that if a teacher was prepared to do what Phillip did, why should I trust any of them and why should I do what any of them told me. I think the chain reaction from that betrayal of trust led to me being put out of the school early.
192. I haven't spoken to my parents for four years, although I've never really seen eye-to-eye with them anyway. I don't think my parents supported me the way they could have and should have. If my son ended up leaving school at sixteen, I would do something to support him, but my dad just gave me my bus fare to college and minimal money for my lunch. Even when I decided not to go back to college their attitude was that I should just do what I wanted – work in a mailroom.
193. I am the exact opposite. All I want is to be with my kids. I want to be the best dad that I can and I understand that even when they're in their twenties, they are still going to need a parent. That support mechanism was never there for me, but I will make sure it is there for my boys.
194. My parents attitude was that they would go wherever my dad was posted and my brothers and I could go with them or we could go into boarding school. That is not my

attitude. I want my children to go to the same school and be able to make and keep friends. Even if it affects my career, I will make sure that happens. They will have the continuity and the stability I didn't have, and I won't be sending them to boarding school.

195. There were, however, a lot of positives for me going to QV. It taught me to be independent and, once I turned my life around, it gave me the drive to get on. I have done seven operational tours in the army and the mental resilience that I have comes from my time at QV. I have a good sense of camaraderie and I am able to relate well with other soldiers and I attribute most of my success in my professional life to the positives of being at QV.

### **Reunions**

196. I've not maintained much of a connection with the school, although I do still keep in touch with quite a lot of people from my year; loads are in the military. I have returned a couple of times in the holidays, but only to show my sons where I grew up.
197. In March there is 'Old Victorians' Day', when all the old boys come back and have a parade and a bit of a reunion, but I've never been. I went to Grand Day in 2014 because I was living in Dunblane at the time. I just wanted to see the parade, so I got a couple of tickets, but I never saw anyone and I never spoke to any teachers. I also went to a reunion in 2018, but there were only about eight of us there out of forty.
198. There is a 'Facebook' page for Old Victorians, although I'm not on social media at the moment. About five or six years ago I had been when somebody shared another news article repeating the allegations the teacher had made about bullying in the school years before.
199. Everybody kicked off saying that the allegations were a load of rubbish and weren't true and there were also several posts singing Ben Phillip's praises and saying what a great teacher he was. The minute anyone tried to criticise him, all these people who

hadn't been in his class and who hadn't witnessed what he had done, were fiercely defending him and fiercely defending the reputation of the school.

200. They claimed what Phillip had done didn't go on, but it did – I was there, it happened to me and many others in my class frequently. What he did wasn't acceptable behaviour and that is why I have gone out of my way to approach the Inquiry.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

201. There should be independent surveys of boarding schools and establishments that care for children and those surveys should be conducted out with the organisation. There should be a mechanism for a child to initiate independent analysis of their care.
202. I don't know how you could encourage a child to speak up against a teacher or an adult looking after them, it would have to be a very brave child to do so. Perhaps an external review might provide that opportunity, particularly if the time was taken to speak to the child on several occasions and ask them how they were feeling. If that engagement was made early on, before the child had been in that situation for too long, changes in their behaviour might be picked up and monitored.
203. I don't think children should be able to punish other children. It is ridiculous that that was still going on in the nineties, it should have been banned. The only thing a child should be able to do is report another child to an adult and the adult should be the one to issue any discipline. The actions of the adult should be monitored by an independent adjudicator as well. Nobody should be able to get carried away with issuing discipline and that discipline spiralling out of control. Questions should be asked about how many times a child is put on detention or punished in a particular way. If it's a lot, a decision should be made that the punishment is not working and something else needs to be tried.
204. I think the process QV has of reviewing which boys can come back for the following year should be scrapped. It's not fair to tell a boy that they can come to the school but

that their place isn't guaranteed after 4<sup>th</sup> year. The primary reason parents put their children to QV is so that they can have a continuity of education through to A level.

- 205. To remove that continuity at a crucial age, which for me was when I'd just got my standard grades, was wrong. It was a decision made by the Headmaster and the Haig Housemaster and I and my parents had no say in it. I'd be interested to see what trouble I had got into in fourth year other than smoking. They shouldn't have had that power and yet I know from my friends that they still do have it and they can still decide if a pupil is not coming back.
- 206. It's hard to prepare a child for leaving school when the school are trying to teach a curriculum. It is the severing of camaraderie and the boarding side of things that is the hardest. I think that is probably easier for an eighteen-year-old, but for a child who is fifteen going on sixteen it is worse. They are still very vulnerable. If every child was able to stay until they were eighteen and ready to leave, the need for any preparation would be negated. Those two years are crucial.

**Other information**

- 207. On the whole I had a brilliant experience at QV and I have many amazing memories that will stay with me forever. I approached the Inquiry because I wanted to make sure what Ben Phillip did is not forgotten. I don't know, but I suppose there is a possibility he might have done other stuff and my evidence might provide a bit more background as to his behaviour and what he was like. I wanted to come forward in case somebody is out there and finding life difficult and my evidence can help.
- 208. 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.

QYF  


Signed.....

25 November 2020

Dated.....