

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FZL

1. My name is FZL My date of birth is 1942.
My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going to boarding school

2. I was born in Kilmacolm in Renfrewshire where I lived with my mother, father and my then two siblings – thereafter a further brother and sister followed. On the death of my mother and my father's subsequent remarriage I also acquired a further couple of step brothers.
3. My father trained as an accountant and once qualified was rewarded with a holiday on a cruise ship to far flung shores. Shortly thereafter his father (my grandfather) died so my father then took over the family firm of yarn and cotton merchants. I think my father did very well financially before during and immediately after the war.
4. I don't have many memories of life at home in Kilmacolm because we moved after the war to a far larger house in a nearby village. My main memory of Kilmacolm was going for long Sunday walks on the meadows behind the house with my father and two siblings. Ever since then I find it hard to get really enthusiastic about long country walks.
5. I don't really have many memories of life in the next house. I do, however, recall that we had a long dining room table with my father sitting at one end and mother at the other end. The children sat down the two sides. A short prayer was intoned prior to the meal – my father being an elder at the local Kirk. We all had silver napkin rings and my father also had a large silver ladle next to him at the dinner table.

Punishment was administered by father either throwing his napkin ring at our heads or cracking the ladle down on the back of our hands. Misdemeanours included a poor standard of general behaviour, a lack of courtesy, elbows on the table or not sitting up straight – pretty endless in reality.

6. My father once punched the living daylights out of me chasing me around my bedroom punching me for all he was worth. My mother was quite small and slight and my father was over six foot and heavily built. My mother heard the resultant screams and shouts and ran upstairs to the rescue splitting the two of us up before I was seriously injured. This was as a result of a daft argument over a shared wardrobe door – I should add that my father possessed a very short temper indeed.
7. My parents at one point decided to have a tennis court built within the garden grounds – I suspect to keep up with my Uncle (father's brother) who had previously built one at his house in the south of England. Whilst I don't recall them using it to any great extent we children used it even less. The three eldest children thereafter getting the blame for not using it often enough to justify the not inconsiderable expense. I actually rather enjoyed tennis and I was almost okay at it but never quite good enough for my parents – incidentally my brother was even worse!

Croftinloan Preparatory School, Pitlochry

8. I was sent to Croftinloan Preparatory School when I was seven and stayed there until I was maybe about twelve. It was located just outside Pitlochry and run by Mr Brown, the headmaster. My brother had gone there before me. I was never consulted as to which school I should to attend.
9. Croftinloan being a fairly substantial Victorian Country House was made up of a mixture of both small and large rooms. At the start of term you would be allocated a specific dormitory which could sleep anywhere between four to ten pupils – there never any choice in the matter and the occupants were all of a similar age group. There wasn't anybody specifically put in charge of supervising the dormitories at night that I can recall but I certainly remember that any indiscretions after lights out

would be punishable by an ensuing beating administered by one of the masters. I'm guessing that in total there may have been anywhere between forty to sixty pupils - all of whom were boarders.

10. Matron lived in Croftinloan and was of a very caring disposition. She would supervise bath time and see to it that all the boys were suitably scrubbed with teeth duly brushed etc. Most of the boys had a crush on matron (par for the course in these establishments) but I rather took a fancy to a youngish Irish lady who came to work at the school – lovely green eyes and long red hair. I remember vividly one night we collectively were caught by the headmaster peering round the dorm curtains to try to take a peek into this young lady's room – and I remember to this day that we were referred to as 'utter guttersnipes' a somewhat pejorative term but, on reflection, quite accurate.

Routine at Croftinloan Preparatory School

11. I have no recollection of arriving for my first term at Croftinloan. It rapidly proved to be a somewhat rocky start due to the fact that I was academically as thick as two short planks. Now in life everything tends to work in a natural kind of balanced equilibrium so that should you be maybe academically challenged you might possibly make up for it by being quite adept at some other discipline. This is where, I'm afraid, I drew the short straw – not only was I academically challenged but I was hopelessly inept at sports, the whole concept of ball, hand and eye coordination was totally lost on me. As if to reinforce these deficiencies I had undoubtedly turned into a horrible little brat so from the very get go it was never going to be an easy ride.
12. 'The horrible little brat' nomenclature originated from a one sided conversation, held fairly early on in my scholarly career, with the headmaster Mr Brown. I had to report to his study as a result of some misdemeanour or other and was duly lectured to the effect that my father was a delightful man (news to me), my mother was lovely and charming (true) and my brother was also a really nice well behaved guy (fairly accurate) but that I was an absolute bloody horror. I was already of the opinion that I

didn't really have very much going for me as a child and that, of course, just reinforced the notion.

13. Croftinloan was an autocracy and run on strict disciplinarian lines with beatings being commonplace. I would perhaps single out one master, who may have been called CSL who would take a particularly delight in inflicting as much pain as possible – a role he appeared to relish.
14. I recall that there was a 'board of shame' in the entrance hall which had all the names of the pupils in descending order - this board being visible for all to see. During the course of any given term the various teachers would award pupils either a red or blue stripe according to their behaviour (good or bad as the case may be) – this would then be duly recorded on said board. If truth be told I can't actually recall which was which but my 'bad behaviour' stripes usually went off the board.
15. I did have a couple of friends at Croftinloan whom I would sometimes visit during the summer holidays both of whom lived in the Dundee area and another pal came from Glasgow. I think it is fair to say that I don't have many happy memories of Croftinloan although I seem to remember some crisp winter days spent sledging in the snow which, by way of relief, was a pleasing distraction.

Mealtimes / Food

16. Morning porridge oats were the order of the day but as for lunches and dinners I have absolutely no recollection whatsoever. The one exception being locally shot rabbit which I personally found pretty nauseous given that, at that particular time, a highly contagious viral disease (myxomatosis) had affected the local rabbit population. Rabbit apart, I can't recall any specific menu so I can only imagine that the food was considered to be acceptable. I do, however, recall that there was always one stipulation – it was mandatory that your plate had to be cleared. No left overs were permitted under any circumstances and that included the pesky rabbit!

17. In this respect my parents were just as bad making all of us children clear our plates before being permitted to leave the table. This particular ritual permeated our early lives to the extent that it became ingrained in our psyche and this, unfortunately, stayed with all of us for the rest of our lives. You are required to eat all that is arbitrarily put in front of you because it has been indoctrinated into you from such an early age – if this nonsense still persists to this day it is small wonder that the UK population at large (no pun intended) is either fat or clinically obese.

Religion

18. Sundays at Croftinloan were punctuated by a visit to nearby Moulin Kirk (Church of Scotland) which was just outside Pitlochry – non-attendance not being an option. I do also believe that letter writing was also part of the Sunday ritual but I can't remember whether or not our ramblings were subject to censorship. Return letters would come from my mother rather than my father.

Punishments

19. I suspect that all teachers at Croftinloan had the authority to mete out physical punishment (beatings) as they saw fit. Since, as previously mentioned, I was a very badly behaved child it comes as no great surprise to learn that I was physically chastised on a very regular basis. I would also hazard a guess that I probably set some sort of school record in this regard as I can't remember any other child being beaten more often than I.
20. I don't imagine the school kept any record of punishments meted out being that it was so endemic – why keep a record and thereby evidence of their own brutality? I have to say that one became somewhat blasé about the beatings and that is a telling indictment of both those particular individuals involved and the times in which we then lived. In addition to the beatings I'm pretty certain there was detention and indeed probably lines – although my memory is somewhat hazy in that regard.

Sport and activities

21. I did my best to take part variously in cricket, rugby, hockey and boxing – the results being somewhat predictable.

Trips / Holidays

22. Several exeat weekends during term time relieved the ordeal. Parents would come and stay overnight at a local hotel and take you out for the day although I am at a loss to even remember what on earth we did on those occasions. You were duly returned to the school at the end of the day.
23. I think there were generally three terms during the course of any given year – winter, summer and autumn if I recall correctly. I am at a loss to remember how many weeks' holiday you had from school or, in turn, how many weeks you spent at school. At end of term you would be ferried to Pitlochry railway station in order to catch the Glasgow train home. I assume my brother accompanied me on these occasions but again no firm memory as such.

Birthdays and Christmas

24. I don't recall my birthday being celebrated in any particular way or indeed acknowledged although I imagine that I probably received birthday cards from my mother and father.

Healthcare

25. Matron generally looked after our wellbeing – certainly no one else did – quite the reverse in fact.

Running away

26. More recollections – at one stage some of us decided to rebel against the hierarchy and an escape committee was formed. A mass exodus was planned and over time food, drinks and sweets for future sustenance were duly squirreled away. In the dead of night about six of us (many bottled out at the last minute) stole away from the dreaded place that was Croftinloan whilst still dressed in pyjamas. I'm sure, on reflection, that we must have had overcoats over the pyjamas.

27. We headed off down the main road to the next village and every time a car approached we would all dive into the nearest ditch and hide. At some point it began to rain and eventually we became rather bedraggled and dispirited and the penny began to drop that this was perhaps not the soundest of plans and we reluctantly decided to abandon the escape. We, therefore, all trudged back to the school and thence to bed. We must have been in a hell of a mess and covered in mud from the ditches but no one ever found out as far as I'm aware – certainly it was never spoken about thereafter.

Abuse at Croftinloan

28. I was very regularly beaten at Croftinloan – as previously mentioned. My backside is like leather to this day. Masters generally fell into two separate camps – one camp would get the beating over and done with as quickly as possible and the other camp took a delight in inflicting as much pain as possible - their brutality being exemplary. I really can't remember for what sort of things you were beaten – anything and everything I imagine.

29. A classic example of the headmaster's cut and thrust in the classroom was the following exchange – "What are you doing boy?" – "Nothing, sir" being the natural response whilst quaking in your boots – "Exactly. You are supposed to be working." I'm sure it was a well-practiced routine by the head - we were all petrified of these people.

30. A further little snippet of life at Croftinloan. A boxing match was set up and there were various pairings and the whole school attended. Boxing gloves were obviously worn for the occasion. There was in attendance a competitor named [REDACTED] who was a tremendous sportsman and a very good boxer – any guesses who he was paired with? Since I was quite bereft of any form of coordination and of no sporting ability whatsoever the result was a forgone conclusion – I was absolutely leathered.
31. On reflection I suspect that the pairing was deliberate – why else pair the best boxer in the school with the most inept? Yet another example of an act to humiliate me in front of the whole school. Matron came to the rescue at the end of the last round by which time I was a bloodied mess - she had to patch me up for the next day. As for as I am aware my parents weren't notified that I had been hurt and I suspect they wouldn't have been unduly concerned anyway.
32. ^{CSN} [REDACTED] sexually abused me whilst at Croftinloan. I recall that he was very artistic but I can't remember I'm afraid what he taught - [REDACTED] maybe? He was single but most of the teachers were. I'm guessing he was in his forties or fifties. I remember that he drove a lovely old vintage fabric bodied Alvis – quite beautiful. Anecdotally it's interesting to recall that he had two lights outside his study one red and other green. If the red light was on nobody was permitted to enter if, however, the green was on you were free to go in. In conclusion I shall leave it for others to judge as to the real significance of these lights.
33. He happened to be the scout leader. It was almost stereotypical. There were some previous abuse episodes which I can't really remember but it culminated in going to scout camp one summer where he tried to sodomise me. I think he was in sole charge of the camp - I certainly can't remember any other master being present. I would have been maybe eight or nine at the time. My head couldn't get around what he was actually try to do to me – but it certainly hurt me badly. He eventually stopped and I returned to my tent.

34. All the boys shared tents with maybe four or six to a tent but my memory is very rusty on that point. I also can't remember why I had been summoned to **CSN** **CSN** tent that day but, irrespective, that is where the attempted rape took place.
35. I wasn't able to tell anybody about these events - these things were never talked about. I was also quite unaware of it happening to other boys but would seriously doubt that I was the only one. I suspect that he was a serial abuser of boys and the scout camp gave him an ideal platform to indulge in his proclivities. It would have been a habit with him but I have no actual proof as such. The only person I could have told would have been matron and that would have been a very difficult conversation for a seven or eight year old boy to have with a thirty or forty year old woman.

Leaving Croftinloan

36. I was extremely glad to leave **Croftinloan**

Blanerne School, Duns

37. On leaving prep school you took what was historically known as the Common Entrance Exam which was your entry exam to your public school of choice. It will come as no surprise that whilst at Croftinloan I failed this exam. I was subsequently sent to my next school (Blanerne) twice, once to tutor me in readiness for my second attempt at the Common Entrance Exam for entry to Loretto and again later on to take my O' levels. The first proved successful, the latter not so. It was basically a specialised crammer / exam factory where students are trained to achieve particular goals or more commonly to pass entrance exams to either High School, Public School or University.

38. There were boys of all ages at Blanerne ranging from prep school age right up to sixteen and seventeen year olds. It was governed along very weird lines by a certain CSQ [REDACTED] who was the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I think there were maybe twenty to thirty boys there and I think it was almost totally divorced from reality. I don't even think that a Board of Governors existed and as a consequence CSQ [REDACTED] answered to nobody. It was, in most respects, out with the norms of the recognised education system.
39. I assume, at some point in his life, CSQ [REDACTED] the country house, which was located just outside the village of Duns in the Scottish borders, with a view to [REDACTED] a boarding school of sorts. My understanding is that he came from a military family, his father having been a well decorated high ranking army officer. I remember rows of medals contained within glass cases hanging on the walls of CSQ [REDACTED] study. CSQ [REDACTED] was physically diminutive, sported a moustache and spoke somewhat briskly – he also indulged in his own fantasy by interfering / molesting his charges. To my knowledge he never married – which appears to be a common thread running through this whole issue.
40. The school was residential. Parents working abroad for maybe multinational companies or maybe members of the Armed Forces would place their children in CSQ [REDACTED] charge whilst they were absent - these children sometimes spending their holiday periods at the school as well. I think there were maybe some girls during the holiday times but not, as I recall, during term time. Like Croftinloan there were both small and large rooms so the numbers in the respective dormitories varied. Sometimes you would be in a room for four or sometimes a room for twelve. You pretty much shared with boys your own age.
41. I believe CSQ [REDACTED] went to Eton. He was a very charismatic figure but his word was Law. He was also a clever and knowledgeable man and a good tutor. I think he taught everything and anything. There were indeed other teachers at Blanerne but not very many.

42. CSQ was a strange character. I seem to remember rumours were rife that he had suffered some form of injury during the war – but details were scant I'm afraid. What's for sure was that he wasn't a terribly well man. He was not physically abusive that I can recall and I certainly don't think that he was in any way evil - I think he was probably a very lonely man and, underneath it all, a kindly man. His soft spot was boys. The school was almost like his pet project which allowed him, unchallenged, to pursue and interfere with young boys.
43. I think generally Blanerne was quite a happy place - I look back and seem to remember teenagers playing on the lawns, sunny days, happy days and after term days - it wasn't all bad.
44. Amplifying on my previous comments - I recall CSQ bought the boys an old Land Rover with which we could create havoc within the fairly extensive grounds. We had pretty much free rein to go wherever we wished within reason of course. I dare say with today's present over emphasis on Health and Safety this sort of thing would never get off the ground. There certainly was a very different prevailing ethos / culture at Blanerne and a very pleasant change, I have to say, from the perfectly odious Croftinloan.

Abuse at Blanerne School

45. CSQ exerted total control at Blanerne and apart from the sexual abuse there was a side to him that I surmise was about both control and humiliation. For example I recall one day in class, probably as a result of some misdemeanour or other, CSQ instructed me to go outside and make a daisy chain and return to class once I had done so. I, therefore, was required to go out, pick daisies, make a chain and bring it back into the classroom as instructed. The whole object of the exercise being, I assume, one of control, punishment and humiliation – so much for the kindly CSQ

46. CSQ would 'play' with you. You would be asked to report to his room on some pretext and he would maybe be in his bed. He would pat the side of his bed and ask you to sit on the bed beside him. His hand would then wander into your trousers and he would play with you. That's as far as it went. CSQ was an abuser but not a rapist.
47. I think CSQ invited me into his bedroom fairly frequently but I'm not aware if he invited other boys to do likewise. These things were never talked about either to me or by me.
48. At some stage there was a teacher at Blanerne by the name of CSR I believe he attended Merchiston Castle School in his youth where he excelled at sports. He subsequently became a well-respected for the in Edinburgh. Although apparently well-respected by his peers in I saw another side to him - a darker side which was somewhat less than attractive.
49. For example CSQ had purchased a very primitive piece of cricket practice equipment whereby someone (CSR in this case) from one end would throw a cricket ball into this contraption and it would come out randomly at the other end in any given direction – at not inconsiderable velocity. The wretched pupil sited at the other end of this fearsome machine was naturally supposed to catch this high velocity projectile.
50. CSR quite deliberately, delighted in abusing his innate superior power by picking on some of the weaker boys who stood transfixed at the other end not knowing whether to try and shield themselves or try and catch the damned thing – it was a form of unseemly brutality. In order to put this particular example into perspective I would ask you to bear in mind that here was a man in his prime (excelling at many sports at international level) versus very young and vulnerable children. I saw the side of a deeply cruel and vengeful man with very few redeeming features – if indeed any.

Reporting of abuse at Blanerne

51. These episodes continued apace and eventually on behalf of both myself and some of the other boys I approached [CSQ] and alerting him as to what, in my opinion, was a form of abuse. [CSR] subsequently took me aside and took me to task for having the temerity to go behind his back and complain to [CSQ]. In fairness to [CSQ], he obviously relayed my grievances to the odious [CSR]

Loretto School, Musselburgh

52. After passing my Common Entrance Exam at the second attempt I was duly despatched to Loretto in Musselburgh. I had, in fact, been given a choice by my father - Glenalmond, Merchiston or Loretto. My father and my uncle having been to Loretto and my elder brother already there, I elected to follow family tradition at the age of maybe twelve or thirteen. It proved to be an error of judgment.
53. I was reminded of the fact that I had to retake my Common Entrance exam by the then headmaster (Forbes Mackintosh I believe) on arrival at Loretto and was told, in no uncertain terms, that I was one of the very few children that had to take the exam twice – not an auspicious start for sure. I was also informed at the same interview that he hoped that I would not follow my brother's example and talk too much – little did he realise that was the to be the very least of his problems.
54. I was somewhat lucky in being billeted in Pinkie House which happened to be away from the main concourse - 'Originally built in the 14th Century, Pinkie was extended in the 17th Century to become Scotland's finest renaissance villa'. Arguably one of the greatest historical aspects of Pinkie was a very famous full length painted gallery ceiling - 'the painted ceiling in the gallery on the first floor, executed in the early 17th century for Alexander Seton. Executed in tempera, the painting embellishes a vaulted ceiling lined with boards and extends some 85 m by 6m showing a range of fictive architectural motifs within which are set images illustrative of proverbs, literary

and religious themes'. I happened to be billeted in the painted gallery and shared it with maybe fifteen other boys all mostly about the same age. There was a head of dorm in charge as I recall.

55. Another fascinating feature of this dorm was an original hidden doorway built into one of the walls which gave access and egress to and from the housemaster's quarters. I can't remember the housemaster's name unfortunately. At some point I was relocated to another dormitory in Pinkie House which was a far smaller one with maybe only four of us in it. The head of that dormitory being maybe only a couple of years senior to me as I recall.
56. I didn't fit in at Loretto (no surprises there) which is probably the oldest established boarding school in Scotland – founded in 1827. I wasn't academic as previously alluded to and, worse than that, I wasn't good at sport (both gross understatements). If you didn't play rugby for the 1st XV or cricket for the 1st. X1 you were of little consequence since there was an overemphasis on sporting prowess. They also had a rather ferocious game called Fives, as I recall, where you had to hit a small hard ball against court walls just using your hands – I think they have a similar type of game at Eton – not my idea of fun at any rate.
57. In this context I do recall my father berating both my brother and I with regard to our sporting ineptitude – I imagine he thought we were letting him down. That having been said – if you care to research Loretto's sporting history I'll bet it highly unlikely that you will find my father's name attached to any great sporting achievements whilst he was there – just a typical example of everyday hypocrisy. You either survived at Loretto or you went under and I barely survived – of which more to follow.

Abuse at Loretto School, Mussleburgh

58. There was a roll call after dinner in the big dining hall which was, in reality, a roll call of dishonour. The prefect of the day would stand up and announce before the whole school that 'the following boys (miscreants) should report to the Big Tub Room after

dinner' - the prefect in question would run through the list of names and after dinner said miscreants would duly report to The Big Tub Room where they were told to bend over one of the many tubs (baths) whereupon a prefect would knock seven bells out of them with a cane. The prefect's unfettered power base being derived from a historic bullying culture prevalent at the school. This will make a man of you boy!

59. I can't truly remember whether there were teachers present in the dining hall during roll call but I suspect not. I think it was an all-boys thing - prefects and pupils. It was almost run along military lines. The masters delegated all powers of control to the prefects and if they were going to get you – make no mistake they would in no uncertain manner.
60. Each pupil was assigned a Grub Locker where one kept a supply of small goodies for example biscuits and cakes etcetera. These grub lockers were located in the main school in a smallish room close to the dining hall - the individual lockers being made up of tall thin steel lined cabinets.
61. The prefects, on occasion, would carry out periodic grub locker inspections. Subsequent to one particular inspection and for the cardinal sin of having crumbs in my Grub Locker I, of course, had to take it in turn to report with the other miserable miscreants to the Big Tub Room for suitable chastisement. My beatings became so regular that they eventually became the norm for life at the school.
62. There were a quite a few baths in the Big Tub Room – hence the name. The modus operandi being for the pupil to bend over one of the baths in the traditional manner before receiving his predetermined punishment. A cane was the standard instrument of torture.
63. I have no idea where these instruments of torture were kept – I would hazard a guess that they were kept somewhere convenient where the prefects could actually practice and hone their skills - practice makes perfect and some of them were very skilled indeed at their chosen craft.

64. Even today I find it strange that prefects who were only senior to you by three or four years had the unchallenged authority to give you a severe beating if they so felt like it. Just a reflection on the way these places were run - all about power and control. I felt that nobody really had your interests at heart.
65. Beatings at Loretto were endemic and just part of the prevailing culture in those dim and distant days. For a minor misdemeanour you got three of the best in your blue shorts. If it was slightly more serious it was six of the best in your blue shorts. If it was more serious than that it was three of the best or six of the best in your white cricket shorts. If it was even more serious than that you wore no shorts at all and you got three of the best or six of the best - naked. When you went into the showers you would see boys with their bottoms bleeding, bruised and battered – not an unusual occurrence it has to be said – never a good look!
66. The ultimate sanction was to be beaten by the headmaster and that was very rare. I was beaten by the headmaster so that tells you something. The beatings were always done in the tub room except if you were beaten by the headmaster in which case you were beaten in his study.
67. If my memory serves me you were beaten by both masters and prefects at Loretto. The prefects who were aged maybe sixteen, seventeen and eighteen sometimes also played in the first XV and they knew how to hit you and some of them relished the task – a duck to water one might say. However in fairness it has to be said that occasionally a prefect would show a certain leniency and would just tap you on the bum and get it over with as quickly as possible.
68. I only ever remember getting beaten by the prefects and also, of course, by the headmaster but not by regular masters. It was all very Dickensian. It was impossible for the beatings to go on without the teachers' knowledge because they were carried out in the big tub room within the main building of the school - which if memory serves was on the first floor above the dining Hall.

69. Another part of the prevailing regime at Loretto was The Morning Cold Tub routine. Every single morning, without fail, you get out of bed and dive into an ice cold bath – the logic of this sequence of events totally escapes me to this day. My father until his dying day, apparently, had a cold bath every morning in life as a legacy from his Loretto days - he subsequently died aged 73 – so it didn't really do him that much good did it?
70. Anecdotally I've subsequently learned that about thirty years ago Professor Vijay Kakkar a director of the Thrombosis Research Institute, London, instigated a trial to investigate Hippocrates' saying that "cold bathing is beneficial for those accustomed to it". Apparently there are quite a few beneficial side effects – the immune system springs into action and your T-cell lymphocytes, which fight infection, increase by 15% after 5 minutes immersion! The blood supply to the brain also increases due to the widening of the carotid arteries in the neck. Other benefits include the lifting of depression and possible future protection from dementia! Apparently a feeling of relaxation or even elation are not unknown. I think that, on reflection, I may have to revise my attitude to cold baths.

Leaving Loretto School, Musselburgh

71. I wasn't at Loretto for long (no surprises there) and I strongly suspect that I was eventually expelled. Whether my father had sufficient empathy to avoid telling me that or not I don't really know. Being academically challenged obviously worked against me when it came to taking my O' levels, let alone my A' levels. I think I left Loretto when I was about sixteen so I was probably only there for two or three years.
72. The net result being that I was taken away from Loretto before I sat my O' levels because my father said I was never going to pass them as long as I stayed there – a fairly reasonable assumption I would say. I subsequently returned to Blanterne School where I surpassed all expectations by passing one single O' level in English Literature! This O' level hardly prepares you for the cut and thrust of life thereafter – so to all intents and purposes it was pretty useless.

Life after Boarding School

73. After school the final rejection was being ejected from the family home (again hardly surprising). My father delivering a letter under my bedroom door at dead of night to inform me that he was going away on holiday and I was not to be present on his subsequent return to the family home. In reality he was going to visit his young girl friend who had a summer job as a waitress in a highland hotel.
74. This was the start of a very rocky road which took me from the working cotton mills of Lancashire to the highlands of Scotland and all points between - not only once working in Woolworth' storeroom but also working as part of a road gang laying underground pipes in Leeds. I subsequently attended night school and day release at various Further Education Colleges but academia and I were never the easiest of bedfellows.
75. To cut a very long, boring story short I eventually ended up joining a civil engineering company as a chain boy – the lowest of the low. Chain (as in the old measurement system) boys assist the engineers in their setting out duties - be they earthworks, roads, bridges, sewers – whatever. I started working in the peat bogs in the north of Scotland and then I gradually, over time, became a setting out engineer in my own right. Thereafter I joined a major multinational Civil Engineering company as a site engineer and worked throughout central Scotland on a variety of civil engineering projects. I was subsequently seconded to the Plant Division to form a new division.
76. Most of my career came about by accident and it just happened that way – there was never an overarching plan. After much reflection my wife and I eventually decided to move from the central belt of Scotland further north where she managed to find work with a local firm of architects and I worked for a local firm of estate agents - we also both undertook private work – me as an engineer and my wife as an architect. I eventually bought the estate agency business and also expanded into renting out holiday homes.

77. My wife left the architect's practice and started a local Design and Build business and I joined a large firm of Estate Agents in Glasgow - thereafter I decided to set up a building business in Glasgow. My wife and I latterly joined forces and set up our own design and build company - she would design them and I would build them. It worked very well – until that is - the divorce.
78. The last twenty years have been a long hard slog. Twenty years ago I was penniless and homeless - down and out. I was, however, very fortunate in that a very old friend of mine who lived in Glasgow, and had stayed in touch, offered me her spare room. She and her boyfriend, a Glasgow GP, provided me with a roof over my head and a steadying hand over the next two years, whilst I travelled the country as a self-employed building surveyor. They both saved my life.
79. Sometimes in this life you fall (self-inflicted or not as the case may be) and if you are very fortunate there will be some kindly soul to pick up the pieces. I was incredibly lucky – others are not so and end up on the streets or worse. This life of ours can be a very real roller coaster with both good times and bad. It is a salutary lesson that, when necessary, friends or family can genuinely make a difference by coming to the rescue during the bad times. A helping hand is a genuine act of kindness – it demonstrates a simple act of basic humanity.
80. Through a very tortuous route I eventually ended up in 2007 being employed, once again, as a building surveyor working for a multinational company on the west coast of Scotland – where I have remained, gainfully employed, ever since despite now being two years off my eightieth birthday.

Impact

81. I had a very privileged upbringing but when you are young you don't know any differently. People say that your school days are the happiest days of your life but mine were absolutely ghastly - I loathed pretty much every single day. Maybe that's

just one of the reasons why I now can't remember names and dates or indeed any form of chronology in my life. I was beaten incredibly regularly from the age of seven to sixteen – but, in fairness, I was a pretty naughty child and not a very nice one either so undoubtedly just deserts.

82. These were strange times. Those in authority abused you mentally and they abused you physically not only by the wilful act of beating but by actually sexually interfering with you. Retrospectively it's interesting, and indeed telling, that the sexual abusers in my case were both unmarried – is there a message there for the present day? It was also very much a generational thing and they were very different times. It's also interesting to reflect that, in reality, you remember the abusers and are quite incapable of remembering the good guys. That said the red haired Irish lady seems to be indelibly printed on my brain – now I wonder why that is?
83. To be fair there had to have been good times but the memory just seems to block them and picks out the bad. I find it strange that parents wilfully put you through this abusive system when they, in turn, had been subjected to it. My father specifically must have known what went on in these places and yet he sent his children there – now why would someone do that?
84. My parents were wont to ask me what I was going to do with my life and then castigate me for being unable to come up with an answer. How on earth does your average sixteen year old know what he or she wants in life – particularly one that had shown no particular aptitude for anything of note. No one took the time to take me through career options – there being no such thing as school career advisers in those days.
85. The only constructive idea ever to come from my parents was an apparent offer from some obscure 'aunt' to work on some vast remote sheep farm in Australia – which retrospectively bears an uncanny similarity to the child migrant programme that ran from the early 1920s to the late 1970s where 130,000 children were shipped to the colonies where they faced servitude, hard labour and, of course, in some cases

physical and sexual abuse. Should have felt just like home then - out of the frying pan into the fire springs to mind!

86. "In 2010, the then prime minister, Gordon Brown, issued an official apology, expressing regret for the "misguided" programme, and telling the Commons: "To all those former child migrants and their families ... we are truly sorry. They were let down. "We are sorry they were allowed to be sent away at the time when they were most vulnerable. We are sorry that instead of caring for them, this country turned its back". He announced a £6m fund to reunite families that had been torn apart.
87. The last children sailed in 1967. But it is only recently, as their stories have been told, that details of the abuse, and the official sanction which made it possible, has become public. The Australian government issued an apology in 2009 for the cruelty shown to child migrants. There were two aims to the child migrant programme: to ease the burden on UK orphanages; and to boost the populations of the colonies". In retrospect I now strongly believe that, in fact, there was no obscure 'aunt' she was a concoction to sweeten the bitter pill.
88. There appears to be a fairly common thread running here – any ideas? How about 'what do we do with child or rather how do we get rid of him?'
89. There is no doubt that Loretto has a fine reputation - regrettably it was me who wasn't fine and certainly not fine for that school. I had, in the past, shown some degree of artistic aptitude (it ran in my mother's family) and I wish somebody had seen that in me and made an effort to nurture it. There is good and bad in everybody but it is up to our seniors to appreciate the good things and nurture them. Everybody is good at something, you just have to take the time to tweeze it out of them in order to find out what that something is – it requires patience, skill and not a little love.
90. People at large should realise that no embryonic child in the womb, given the option, choses to be born academically challenged and sportingly inept. These particular handicaps can prove pretty challenging at school, if not, for the rest of their lives. Given that I look back at my schooldays as the unhappiest ones, I think that really

says it all. None of my schooling was in any way constructive, in fact quite the reverse, it was positively destructive. I didn't fit the standard mould – a square peg in a round hole – undoubtedly.

91. I consciously never think about my schooldays - why concentrate on my unhappiest times? You reach an age where you try to self-analyse and I now find myself, at this stage, looking back at my life and times. Whilst I am filled with very many regrets I have to make it clear that what occurred during my school days has not, in my opinion, really impacted on my later life to any great degree. Most of my regrets and associated guilt relate to events after school – particularly the divorce from my wife who deserved better.
92. A by-product of all this malarkey is that my memory is now pretty ropey - I can't, for instance, remember when I got married or when I divorced. There are a great many blank periods in my life. It must be more than thirty years since the divorce and an awful lot of the intervening period has been blanked out. I have great difficulty remembering dates and yet I hold down a fairly responsible position in my career – how does that work? I have led a somewhat strange life - it's not been without its challenges and at times it's been a bit of a roller coaster (as previously alluded to) – but, that said, it has never been dull or remotely mundane.
93. In essence these last twenty years have been about first of all survival, followed by a fair degree of atonement and finally some form of redemption. I am now relatively happy and contented with my life - it's been a rocky road at times but everybody goes through difficult times. I was one of many children who were subject to abuse and it is disturbing to think that this abuse will still be going on today in both public and prep schools – and indeed elsewhere. Hopefully I think it may be greatly tempered by now and this inquiry certainly represents a leap in the right direction.
94. Fundamentally I don't believe that the abuse I suffered from scarred me for life – that is far too glib. It was an experience I went through and, lest it be forgotten, I am merely one of many of both genders who suffered. It was just part and parcel of life

and any subsequent failings and failures in my life were not, in my opinion, down to abuse – but more likely down to some pretty poor decision making.

95. I have never found the need for any counselling or support – why would I - it's all water under the bridge. Would I send a son of mine to Loretto – has it changed its ways? Can a leopard change its spots? Are beatings, cold baths and other forms of attrition still de rigueur?
96. As an aside and in order to end these rambling memories I would relate that on my brother's death his widow subsequently told us that whenever she, or anyone else, made a sudden movement he would automatically flinch – it would appear that I wasn't the only one who was physically abused in that household. We never talked about our schooldays or much else come to that. We were very different people – I was a wild loose cannon whereas my brother steered a much steadier and more measured course – much good did it do him in the end poor sod.

Reporting of Abuse

97. I have never told anyone about the abuse I suffered, not even my wife and I was married for 25 years.

Lessons to be Learned

98. From a personal point of view I think people should be made aware of what happened historically in the fifties and sixties in these establishments. There will be no revenge or recrimination in my case because the individuals concerned are dead and the respective institutions long since gone - so there is no mileage to be gained by going down that particular road. There will also obviously be no prosecutions nor police involvement for the same reasons. I do believe, however, that it should be on record what happened to some young boys who were sent away to these boarding schools.

- 99. The abusers were put in a position of trust by parents and the boys were mere playthings with which to amuse themselves – cynical maybe but true in certain instances.

- 100. I just want it on record that abuse occurred and I'm guessing it to have been endemic throughout the private education system. I don't know whether it went on within local authority schools - but I suspect it probably did but maybe less so – given the opportunities were probably somewhat restrictive. As far as the Inquiry goes I do believe that the names of my abusers may crop up again and again and, should that be the case, a resultant pattern, and identity characteristic will, hopefully, emerge.

Other information

- 101. 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..........
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Dated..... 26 November 2020