

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

RODERICK DONALDSON MACKAY

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is Roderick Donaldson Mackay. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1934. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

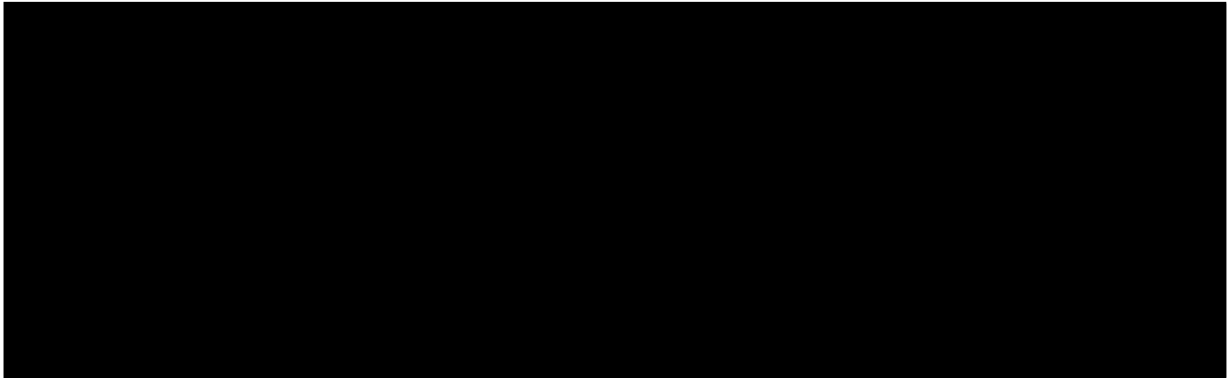
Life before care

2. My parents, Robert and Wilhimina Mackay, were divorced in 1939 when I was five years old. I have an older brother, Robert, who is four or five years older than me. Minnie, my sister, was younger than Rob and was born in 1930. My sister passed away a few years back. I later found out that I have two younger brothers. Alex was four and William was three when my parents divorced.

3. My father was awarded custody of us. I never learned why that decision was made. He had been in the army. He had been declared medically unfit and was discharged from active duty in 1940. This happened before I was sent to Canada. I don't know why the judge awarded custody to my father and not my mother. I have some letters between him and the Fairbridge Society. He signed them and I am happy to give a copy to the Inquiry. It was my father who placed us into care. Rob doesn't talk about it. I have always had the feeling that Rob feels he should have kept the family together. I have told him that I do not feel any child at his age at the time should have had to take on that responsibility. I do not know when Alex and William were sent into care.

4. I had thought that my father had put us into care because he was still in the army. I saw documents later and found out that my father had remarried when Minnie and I had been placed in Middlemore Homes. Then I was placed in a group to be

sent to Fairbridge Canada. I later found out that his second wife, Mary, did not know that he had five children from a previous marriage. Minnie was later put in a Catholic institution. This had an impact on her. She had depression and had been hospitalised for periods in her life.



6. Before I went into care, my life in Scotland is like a foggy dream. Rob recalls certain things far better than I can. It would be the ultimate thing for me to help my memory of our childhood if we visited Edinburgh together. So far I have been unable to persuade him to make the trip. I remember that my mother was from Portobello. I remember being carried on Rob's back on the beach. We were running away from where we were living at the time. I have vague memories of us being caught by the police at the beach. I did speak to Rob about it once but he got upset recalling things and he doesn't wear his emotions lightly.

7. It is almost as if life began for me at Middlemore Home in Birmingham. Before that, my sister, eldest brother and I must have been placed in a home in Fife. I'm curious as to what home that was. My younger siblings were not placed there. In my Fairbridge records, which I later recovered from the Birmingham Archives, there is a doctor's form which records my address as a home in Fife. The form says that I should be capable of being a labourer. I was only aged six at the time. How can they designate me to the life of a labourer at the age of six? The form is signed by my brother Rob and sister Minnie as if they were signatures of my parents. I have passed a copy of that document to the Inquiry. I don't recall being in the home in Fife. I only found out I had been there when I read the form.

8. I think I may have been in a Barnardo's home but only very briefly. I don't know when that was but it was before I was sent to Canada. I don't know if that home was in Scotland or England.

9. Rob disappeared and ended up being sent to Borstals. Minnie was put in the Middlemore Home with me in Birmingham. She was supposed to go to Canada but I think she was found to be medically unfit because she had an eye condition. They insisted on certain health conditions being met. The fact that Minnie did not come to Canada was crushing to me. I had already lost my big brother. I don't recollect how or when I found out that she wasn't going. Some children were asked whether they wanted to go to Canada. I don't recall being asked. I didn't know anything about Canada.

10. My father put us into care. I think I was about five or six when that happened. My father sent us to stay with Aunt Kate. She had a household of five already. We couldn't have stayed with her for long. I don't how long I spent with her, maybe it was only a matter of weeks or months.

11. When I returned from Canada to Scotland in the mid-1950s, I didn't get any information about my sister or brothers from my father. All he said was that I was to stay away from Rob and that my mother was no good. My Aunt Kate was a real jewel. She told us that she had taken us in for a short period of time.

Middlemore Home, Birmingham

12. Middlemore Home is where my recollections really begin. It was during the Second World War and I remember being given cod liver oil and a teaspoon of treacle in the morning. I remember that the matron was a very mean woman. You didn't get out of line there.

13. I also remember the bombs and sirens. Looking out the windows, I saw searchlights and the barrage balloons. I don't remember being terrorised by it. [REDACTED] known as [REDACTED] was also in Middlemore and I remember going to the basement with him. We took a blanket and would sleep there until the all clear

sounded. I remember some kids wearing the Mickey Mouse gas masks. Middlemore kids' gas masks were the standard issue black masks and we carried them in a little box. We forgot our gas masks a lot of the time.

14. I recall that Middlemore was strict. We got thrashings but they are not burned in my mind like the ones at Fairbridge are. I remember the war but I can't remember if I was frightened. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I became friends in Middlemore. We were all sent to Canada. Our friendship carried on through Fairbridge. They became my family. We were in the same cottages for the first four or five years at Fairbridge.

15. I don't recall school or doing schoolwork in Scotland or in Middlemore. From later conversations with my former school mates, I understand that we did attend school in Middlemore. Whatever schooling it was, my education must have been scant because I remember being about two grades behind the others when we arrived at Fairbridge.

16. Middlemore Home was a large building. There were boys and girls in the home and there were babies in a different building. My impression was that it was a grey, dark and foreboding building. I don't remember being given whippings by the matron but she was strict and unpleasant.

17. The dining hall had long tables but I don't remember what the food was like. We slept in dormitories. We were probably in bed by about 7 pm. I remember seeing the night skies and looking at the searchlights and the barrage balloons. I also remember going to the fields and looking for shrapnel and bombs. Birmingham was an industrial city and was being bombed regularly during the war. I have wondered why I would be sent from Edinburgh to Birmingham. I don't think there was anybody else from Edinburgh at the Middlemore Home when my sister and I were there.

18. I remember that we wore shorts and jerseys at Middlemore. We spent our leisure time playing in the fields. There were a couple of donkeys there. [REDACTED]

later reminded me that we went on a trip to a farm for a week and I remember that a big goose chased me around the yard.

19. In relation to medical care, I was given inoculations and the cod liver oil. I remember a lotion being put on my head and it stung like crazy. I don't recall having any illnesses when I was there but when we got to Canada I was kept in the school hospital at Fairbridge for three weeks longer than the others who had been on the ship. It is possible that I was malnourished.

20. Minnie was at the Middlemore Home with me and I remember her being there. I was teased about her having a squint in one eye. I couldn't understand why my big sister was not on the ship to Canada. I wished that Rob and Minnie were with me in Canada. My big brother and sister would have helped me with the cottage bullies. I was seven years of age and the bullies were teenagers. Rob does not know a lot about my Fairbridge story. It would make him angrier about being abandoned by our father. I have a feeling best not to discuss Fairbridge with Rob, as it is likely that this would only make him feel worse.

21. In relation to discipline, I remember children screaming when I was at Middlemore. It was a huge home. I was somewhat afraid that when I was sent to Fairbridge it would be just another Middlemore but I was also excited about going to Canada.

Migration to Canada

22. The records that I recovered from the Birmingham Archives show that my father consented to and encouraged Minnie and I to be sent to Canada. I later found out that he was also trying to get Alex and William sent there too. The Birmingham Archives wouldn't show me my sister's records. They informed me that only my personal records were available for my viewing. I remember that distinctly.

23. I later found out that I had been given a medical examination before I was sent to Canada. This was recorded in the form signed by my sister and older brother

which I have mentioned earlier in this statement. I don't remember being examined by the doctor.

24. I don't remember seeing Minnie before I left or any goodbyes but I recall my emotions about being separated from her. Children were not told where their siblings were or where they were sent to. It wasn't discussed.

25. I was told that my birthday was in March. I think my father may have given them the incorrect date. My birthdate is actually [REDACTED] 1934. It was only when I joined the army after Fairbridge that my birth certificate was sent through and I found out the correct date.

26. I don't recall anyone helping me pack my belongings at Middlemore. They may have been packed for me. I remember having a little suitcase and new clothing but we were not given uniforms to wear. I later saw photographs of earlier Fairbridge parties sent to Canada and the children wore uniforms and looked very smart.

27. I also remember having a small round brick-like cake to be used like a toothpaste when brushing teeth. You would wet your toothbrush and rub it onto the brick before brushing your teeth. I am not aware of being given any personal papers to carry. I was only seven and I expect I wouldn't have been given them anyway. We wore a string around our necks with a luggage tag on it. My name and destination was written on my tag.

28. We sailed from Liverpool on 20 October 1941. The ship was the SS Bayano. I later found out that it was an old banana freighter which had been converted to carry passengers. Our ship travelled as part of a convoy.

29. There were two or three adults on the ship with us who were chaperones. One was a man, Reverend Buckingham, who was a Church of England minister. He stayed on at Fairbridge. There were sixteen children in the party going to Fairbridge. They were: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and me. I

remember the children clearly. I have passed a copy of a photograph of the party of children to the Inquiry.

30. I remember running around the decks of the ship. I felt sea sick. We slept in bunks which were fun and we fought over the top bunk. I made friends with most of the children in the party. We were all from Middlemore Home in Birmingham.

31. The voyage was fun. It was an adventure. There were sailors and servicemen on the ship. I recall one holding me upside down over the ship's railing in fun. A Canadian soldier gave us money and we threw it away as we didn't recognise it. We really regretted that later because for the next five or six years we were only given two cents a week in Fairbridge; one cent for the church plate and the other as pocket money.

32. Years later, at a Fairbridge Association Alumni event, a Fairbridge teacher called Jane Fownes passed me a copy of an essay written by me in class about the voyage across. I wrote about shooting German planes out of the sky and my being the commander of the British Navy. I think the essay shows that I was not too terrified on the voyage.

33. I later found out that the convoy that our ship was travelling in was attacked by submarines, but I don't recall that directly. It makes me angry that they sent us across the Atlantic during the war. The evacuation of children across the Atlantic had supposedly been halted by the British Government the year before because it was far too dangerous with Nazi submarines patrolling the North Atlantic. During the 1940s, they were sinking Allied ships. The sea journey took the ship 15 days crossing from Liverpool to Québec.

34. We docked at the harbour of the City of Québec and stayed overnight at a hotel. [REDACTED] and I were playing in the revolving doors. The Rev. Buckingham caught us and we were sent to our room. [REDACTED] and I took an instant dislike to the good reverend for that.

35. We took a Canadian Pacific Railway train from there to Vancouver. The journey was fun. All the way across we saw snow and sleeping on the train seemed exciting. We would have been on the train for five days. During that journey I saw a black man for the first time. The men were porters and they were really nice to us. This memory stands out to me. Adults expected children to be seen and not heard, but the porters smiled and were really nice to all the children.

36. Once we got to Vancouver we were bussed to the British Columbia ferries and put on a ferry to Vancouver Island. We then took a bus from Nanaimo to the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School. I remember looking at the view from the bus. It was all beautiful and surrounded by green forest. This scene was very different to the city of Birmingham.

The Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School, Vancouver Island, Canada

37. On 8 November, we arrived at the school. We went through a set of white gates. There was a whole crowd of boys and girls who were of different ages and adults who were staff members. They cheered "hip, hip hooray!" to welcome us. I was surprised at them doing this for children. [REDACTED] CBG [REDACTED] who was the principal of the whole farm school, was there. He was white haired and looked very scholarly. The principal of the day school was also there. The day school operated under the authority of British Columbia and the teaching staff were accredited by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. There were probably about 150 children living at the school at that time.

38. I later found out that there was only one other party of child migrants who came out to Fairbridge during the war after we were sent. Maybe this was because of the submarine attack on the convoy of the SS Bayano. The next big party of children to arrive at Fairbridge was in 1947.

39. There was woman named Mrs Sinclair there in the welcome group when we arrived. She had a Scottish accent and was a cottage mother. We were told that cottage mothers were to be addressed "mum" and we were to ask for their permission to do things. We were then taken to the school hospital. The doctor

came and checked us out. They then shaved our heads and I remember the girls were really upset at that.

40. I stayed in the hospital for a while. I later found out that I was the last of our party out of the hospital. I was probably there because of malnutrition as I don't recall having any diseases. In the hospital I thought I had arrived in Paradise. There were beautiful beds each with two sheets. It had been newly built. It was bright and cheerful. Later on in my time at Fairbridge, I tried every trick in the book to do whatever I could to get back in there.

“R” Cottage

41. All of the cottages had names. These were British names including names of titled people on the board of the Fairbridge Society or successful business magnates from Canada. For example, a cottage was named after Lord and Lady Buckingham and one was named Strathcona. But we used the initial letter only when referring to the cottages, for example, “R” cottage and “S” cottage. I have passed a copy of a plan of the farm school to the Inquiry which shows its layout and cottages.

42. The other children from my party had already been put in cottages. The girls lived in separate cottages from the boys. The boys' cottages were at one end of the property. Then there was the main dining hall and staff cottages. At the other end were the cottages for the girls. After hospital, I think I was transferred into “R” cottage. The cottage mother there was very gentle and kind. She even put me in her own bed one night. She was very nurturing. But when she did that I would be called a “mummy's pet” by the older children. Bullies picked on all the younger kids.

43. On the second floor, the cottage mother would have her own suite which consisted of a bedroom, sitting room and a bathroom. We weren't allowed in her rooms unless invited. The boys slept in a dormitory on the second floor. The kitchen and dining room were also on the second floor. The cottages were semi-detached and shared a furnace room. I have provided the Inquiry with a copy of a booklet published by the Fairbridge Canada Association. The Fairbridge Association is an

alumni association I have been involved in. The booklet includes photos of the cottages, the dining hall, the chapel, the farm and the day school at Fairbridge.

“S” Cottage and abuse

44. After that I was transferred to “S” cottage. It was run by Mrs CBB who was the cottage mother. She was a widow. She had lost her husband in World War I. There were also bullies in that cottage. Each cottage had 12 to 15 boys living in it. There were four or five seniors in the cottage and the rest were boys from Middlemore. The Middlemore boys were all about the same age. and the from my party were there too. It was a nightmare for us.

45. Behind her back we called Mrs CBB CBB. She gave us many beatings and punishments. She could go into a rage. She should never have been near children. As an adult I later saw a welfare report in relation to Fairbridge farm school. The positive comments about Mrs CBB were far off the mark. Dignitaries visited the farm school occasionally and her cottage would always be picked by CBG to be visited in order to impress them. This was because the boys were all well behaved but that was because we were beaten if we weren't.

46. There were four senior boys in the cottage. Two of them were tough hard bullies. They were about 15 or 16 years old. Their names were and . I was terrified of them as were many of the other boys in the cottage who were aged seven to nine years old. The bullies used to make us fight each other.

47. There was a staircase outside at the back of the cottage which went up to the upper floor and the bullies hung me from the roof gutters and told me to grab the gutter on the edge of the building. I held on for as long as I could. They caught me as I began to fall. I was scared. It crossed my mind to let go before they could catch me, with the hope I would break my leg and be hospitalized. At least there I would be safe both from them and CBB

48. Each Sunday morning we would be lined up and Mrs [CBB] would inspect us, for example, check that our nails were clean. She would slap or hit us if we had a shirt un-tucked or our socks had slipped down. One Sunday as we were waiting to be inspected, one of the bullies ordered me to run to Mount Baldy, a mountain we could see from the cottage. I was too scared not to follow his order. I did it but I knew I would get whipped either way. I was 50 to 100 yards away from the cottage and was running scared. One of the other boys came after me to bring me back. I didn't get back in time to avoid being caught. Mrs [CBB] asked me what I was doing. I said nothing. She said to report to her after we returned from church. If I had told her about the bullies being involved then I would have been whipped by them and her. She whipped me for it. She would whip me on my bare back or my butt. Frequently she used a leather belt to whip us with. Other times she used her hand to slap us on the head. This was one example of many times that I was hit by her. I can't remember all the reasons why we were hit. [redacted] later told me that she was belting him once and he took the belt from her and he threw it away. I saw the others from my party being beaten up by her. This treatment went on for at least four years. There was no one to report it to. I do not recall any of us taking the risk to report her to [CBG]

49. In the bottom part of the cottage there was a playroom and we each had a locker where we would keep our own stuff. We must have had some personal possessions. I remember there were fights over things and our possessions would have been limited. We were never given any candy. I remember there was a little store on the way to the town of Duncan. Sometimes we would be allowed in the store and we would steal candy. We shouldn't have done that but the temptation was too strong to quell our desire for a piece of candy.

50. We polished our own boots. The bullies forced me and other younger kids to polish their boots for them. We had different chores to do like scrubbing and polishing the floors and doors. Mrs [CBB] was worse than a drill sergeant. If you missed anything she would make you redo whatever you were scrubbing or polishing all over again. We had a bumper which was a heavy metal plate with a handle and a cloth on the bottom of it. We would use that to polish the floors. We cleaned the steps on our hands and knees. Each cottage had its own garden. I didn't mind doing

the gardening around the cottage. We would have contests to grow the best melons and things like that. One of the boys was a terrific gardener.

51. We were not paid for the work we did. We got pocket money which was two cents per week. At about the age of 12 I think this was raised to a nickel. I thought I was a rich man.

52. All the boys in the cottage had nicknames. I was known as "blockhead" or "square head". I once asked one of the bullies why it was called "S" cottage. He said "it is because you are a little shite head". I later found out at a Fairbridge Association meeting that the two bullies in "S" cottage both ended up in jail. One died in jail. The guy who told me this was a former Fairbridgian who was a prison guard when both bullies were serving time in the jail.

53. I remember that Mrs CBB would sometimes announce at the supper table that there was a boy who had committed a "crime" and she wanted to know who it was before anyone left the table. After a brief pause she would dismiss the older boys leaving three to four of the youngest to remain. She would keep us there until one of us confessed. She called us "filthy little gutter snipes". She used that term often. Once she said somebody had taken a can of sardines from the pantry. She wanted to know who had stolen it. We would take turns in taking the blame. On that occasion I took the blame but I would never have stolen sardines. Most kids that age wouldn't want to eat something like that. It was about 7 or 8 pm and dark outside. She asked me what I had done with the empty can. My confession was a lie so I made it up that I had thrown it in the field. She told me to go and find it and she didn't care that it was night-time. I was outside for about an hour in the freezing cold looking for a can that wasn't there. She then called me in, whipped me and sent me to bed.

54. Our party of boys and girls from Middlemore had been given "godfathers". Sometimes the children would go away for a week at Christmas to see their godfathers. Mr Edwards was my godfather and he was the owner of a lumber mill. One Christmas he gave me a pair of long trousers. I felt I was becoming a man when I got those pants. Mrs CBB told me that I could not wear long pants and

she then proceeded to cut the legs off of them. I had to wear them to church every Sunday and was teased to no end by the bullies. I was so angry and embarrassed.

55. I think that the godfather scheme began in 1941. These men donated to a general fund per child. It would have been [REDACTED] CBG [REDACTED] or others who solicited potential godfathers to pick up some of the expense of the child. Some, but not all, godfathers gave Christmas presents to their children.

56. The day Mrs [REDACTED] CBB [REDACTED] left Fairbridge was the happiest day of my life. I can't remember exactly what day it was but I do remember celebrating the occasion with all my close school mates.

57. Even at the age of seven, we weren't allowed to get out of bed at night to go to the toilet. [REDACTED] used to wet the bed. Shortly after Mrs [REDACTED] CBB [REDACTED] left, he stopped wetting the bed. Sometimes she would make [REDACTED] hang his wet sheet out on the line. The sheet wasn't washed and he would have to put it back on his bed. It was very embarrassing and humiliating for him in the cottage and outside. Everybody saw the sheet. I know this happened to children in other cottages too. Another cottage mother used to make a boy I knew stand on the table with his wet sheet around him. She would make him shout: "I wet my bed. I wet my bed. I wet my bed".

58. I couldn't speak to anybody about my worries or concerns. After I left Fairbridge and was in the army, I visited Vancouver Island in the 1960s and saw Mrs Bullcock who had been my last cottage mother at Fairbridge. She and her husband were still living at the farm in the hospital. She said that the severe punishments we received weren't right. She said that she had eventually reported it but had stopped making reports as no one was doing anything about it. I didn't blame her as she and her husband could have lost their jobs. They were gruff when they gave you a telling off but they were good people and didn't hit the children.

59. One of the bullies in "S" cottage, [REDACTED] tried to sexually abuse me once. He tried to make me do something, but another senior boy came into the room and stopped it so it didn't happen. It was common knowledge that the bullies did this

kind of thing to younger boys and we were scared of it happening to us. That side of sexual abuse happening at Fairbridge was buried.

60. I didn't report my treatment by Mrs [CBB] or by the bullies to anyone. There was probably an informal "code" not to tell on others and mostly fear would stop you anyway.

"J" Cottage

61. Shortly after Mrs [CBB] left, we were transferred to Miss [CBF] cottage. This was in 1945. It was the "J" cottage. She had been in the Royal Canadian Navy and had a mannish haircut. She was a heavy smoker and her lips were stained from the tobacco. She also had a dog. She wasn't physical towards us, but if anything went wrong, she sent us to the duties master to be disciplined. I was in that cottage until about 1948 or 1949.

62. By 1947, things were not so bad at Fairbridge as we were older then and we didn't have to deal with the bully situation. We were on more of an equal footing with the older lads. Other children came in 1947 and most of them had a good experience at Fairbridge. By 1947 discipline was far more lax than it had been compared to the early 1940s. There has always been a difference in the perception held by many former Fairbridgians.

63. I remember the basement in Miss [CBF] cottage which had a furnace room. This was our territory. The walls were covered with graffiti. The graffiti was still there when we visited the farm school in the 1970s.

64. I remember once [REDACTED] and I were wrestling. Suddenly I was hit from behind. I assumed that it was another boy but it was Miss [CBF]. In anger I swung around and unknowingly hit her on the chest. She sent me to the duties master who gave me a whipping with his belt. I would never have done that if I had known it was her.

65. The last cottage I was in at Fairbridge was Mrs Bullcock's cottage. Her husband drove the school car and truck.

Mornings

66. In relation to the daily routine there was a huge brass bell, like the bells you see on a railroad. It commanded our lives. One boy would be assigned to bell duty. It never rang for happy things; it would ring for us to go to school or to work. But if it was your turn to ring the bell, you rang it with great gusto.

67. In the morning, the bell would ring at 6.30 am. We got up, dressed and made the bed. Mrs **CBB** would inspect the beds. If she didn't approve, she would rip it apart and make you do it again.

68. You would then do the duties you were assigned to. Two of us would clean and polish the dorm floor and others would be assigned to kitchen duties. Others would have to clean and polish the stairs. These duties weren't carried out in every cottage. We would also have to restock the wood for the cottage mother's fireplace and the kitchen where there was a wood-burning stove. The dining room, hallways and dorm would have to be cleaned. I can't recall if we had to clean the cottage mother's suite. She possibly dealt with that herself.

69. After that, the bell would ring for breakfast. We would proceed to the main dining hall and each cottage had its own assigned table. One of the staff, often headmaster **CBG**, would stand up and lead us in saying the Fairbridge Grace. One boy would be assigned to bring the breakfast to the table which was always porridge. Sometimes there were maggots in it and when the cottage mother wasn't looking the seniors would use their spoons to flick the maggots at the younger boys. Breakfast also consisted of a piece of bread and jam and some milk. The cottage mother sat at the head of the table. She would have eggs, bacon, toast and tea. She would have a normal breakfast while we sat there smelling her delicious food with great envy.

Washing

70. In relation to washing, there was a bathtub at the cottage. Two of us smaller boys would have a bath at the same time. There might have been a shower too. There was also a long steel trough with spouts which six of us could use at a time. We washed with cold water all year round. Mrs [CBB] would inspect our neck and ears. We washed and brushed our teeth in the morning. Mrs [CBB] would supervise the younger ones.

Education

71. I remember I was behind at school. I had turned seven years of age at Middlemore. I would have had two and a half years of education but I can't recall anything about it. At Fairbridge, [CBL] was the [REDACTED]. He was a good teacher academically and the [REDACTED]. He had his favourites. He regarded many of us as stupid boys. If you misbehaved, he would grab your ear and march you to the office where you got the strap. He would also slap us on our ears. Mr [CBL] could fly into a temper. He was a Jekyll and Hyde character. The boys who weren't punished by him physically thought he was a good man.

72. The sex education was non-existent but there was a copy of Lady Chatterley's Lover circulating around the school and was in the boys cottage. I was a teenager and it was my turn to have the book. I had an assignment to do in history class but instead I was reading Lady Chatterley's Lover which was shielded by my history text book. I had lost track of where the teacher was in the class. Mr [CBL] came up behind and hit me hard on the ear and hauled me by my ear to his office for a strapping.

73. I remember one day that [REDACTED] arrived at school with bleeding hands. Mrs Gray, the teacher, asked what happened. I think he had been hit either by the cottage mother or by the duties master. Mr [CBL] only response was that he had probably deserved it and he was sent back to the classroom. That response from Mr [CBL] doesn't surprise me.

74. We were given homework and completed it during a study period in school. We did not do homework at the cottage. I do not recall a teacher giving us any help with homework.

75. The school at Fairbridge went as high as grade ten but when boys reached 15 years of age, unless they were very academic, they were sent to work on farms. I received schooling when I was at Fairbridge but the day school closed in 1949. There were about eight of us left so we went to Duncan High instead.

76. There were school reports and the cottage mother also submitted reports about us. Mrs CBB wrote a report about me which stated that I lied too much. CBG comment at the bottom of the reports often said things like I was a "nice little chap". I remember school reports by CBL who said I was doing ok but that I had a "pugnacious attitude".

Meals

77. Boys would be assigned to kitchen duties in the cottage. We cooked and ate every evening meal in the cottages. Breakfast and the midday meal, which was the biggest meal, were taken in the main dining hall.

78. As well as learning very basic methods of how to cook, we could also mend shirts and darn socks. We would use a light bulb when darning the socks. When I was in the army, I earned pocket money using my mending skills and by pressing uniforms.

79. The evening meal was a lighter meal. We would have dessert like blancmange, rice pudding, bread pudding or tapioca. We hated tapioca. I remember once [REDACTED] and I were in the kitchen. Mrs CBB watched us and waited to criticise us. [REDACTED] had difficulties with reading and was trying to read out the recipe. If he made a mistake reading it out she would hit him. We teased him about that.

80. I can't recall the main courses we ate at the cottage. There wasn't a lot of meat. That was the paradox of it given that we were on a farm. We got beans. I remember, though, that the milk was in abundance. I remember we got apples at Halloween and there were some pear trees. At Christmas we got a tangerine or an orange. There was a walnut tree, but the walnuts stained your hands so the staff knew that we had been eating them and we would get into trouble. I recall that there was Indian corn near the river which grew very high but I don't remember being given corn on the cob. The war was on and there was food rationing.

81. Each cottage had a table. The cottage mother sat at the head of the table. Two boys would bring in the dishes, set the table and bring the metal pans of food. The cottage mother would dish out the food and we would pass the plates down the table. Mrs CBB had the younger boys sit closest to her. We were terrified. If you did something wrong it meant she could reach you and hit you.

82. The food we were given was edible and healthy. There was no sauce or seasoning on the food. I remember I hated parsnips. I would put toilet paper in my pockets and stuff the parsnips in my pockets. We ate off of tin plates and the staff ate off of china plates. We were made to sit at the table until we finished our food. We always had to finish our food. We used to sing songs about bad food. They were clever boys in there who made up the songs. I would bellow these out when stacking wood.

83. I can't recall what the food at lunchtime was like but it was the main meal of the day so would have been something like stew. Thursday was a meatless day, for example, we would have macaroni cheese, and we would have fish on a Friday. The food that the cottage mothers and all the staff had was always different from what the children were given.

Clothing and laundry

84. The boys wore shorts and khaki shirts. We also had a uniform which was a grey jacket and shorts, a white shirt and a gold and brown striped tie. We washed our own clothes in the laundry shed.

85. In relation to other laundry, once a week we would take the bottom sheet off of our beds to be sent to the laundry. The top sheet then was put on the bottom of the bed and a clean sheet put on top. We had one blanket and no pillow. I think the girls who were assigned to the main laundry room washed the sheets. Girls were seen as domestics when I was there.

Bedtime

86. The younger boys were expected to be in bed for about between 6 and 7 pm and the older ones went to bed about 9 pm. In the dorm all the beds were in one room. There were army style iron beds which had a very uncomfortable mattress. At first there were no pillows but at the end in Mrs Bullcock's cottage we had a pillow.

Work and the farm at Fairbridge

87. Before you became a farm trainee, you would have to do chores around the grounds of Fairbridge. For example, we would mow lawns and repair holes or maybe do housework for the principal. There was a truck which was used to do work on the school grounds. Mr Bullcock would drive it and it was fitted with benches like an army truck. This truck was also used to take us to sports games.

88. When we were about 12 years old, over the summer we would spend time working on farm jobs. We did things like stoking hay, pulling weeds and tending crops. It was hot in the summer and we were not paid for this work.

89. Unless you were a bright academic, once the boys turned 15 they became a farm trainee and worked full time on the farm. The boys worked for minimum wages but they often left once they had a bit of money.

90. It was a huge farm. This didn't make my life miserable but there were some assignments like working in the hay fields that I hated. When I was in my teens I was assigned to looking after the Ayrshire cattle. I raised a calf and I cried my heart out when it was sold. There were 40 milking head to take care of. This work was not

paid. I think the pocket money by then would have been about 25 cents per week. The herd of cattle at Fairbridge and all the farm equipment was later sold off. By then the regime was looser as the school was closing so I managed to do some work on other farms. By working for these other farmers, I earned enough money to take the Greyhound bus and go to local dances.

91. There was a piggery but I was not assigned to it. There were hundreds of chickens. There were orchards and gardens. We were busy with work but that is not my complaint. It is the other things that I have told you about which never should have happened.

92. Mr Brown was the farm manager. We grew crops and grew all our own food. A certain amount of the good stuff was sold off, like the apples. We sometimes did night raids in the orchards to get apples. We tiptoed out.

93. We had Clydesdale horses which hauled the wagons. I loved them and even try to ride one once. There were two teamsters. One was a Scot and one was English. They were nice old guys. There were herdsman too. I worked under two Scots who were nice. The farm had a team of about six horses.

Healthcare

94. The school hospital had a nurse. There were no doctors. The nurse had no one to cover the hospital if she had to go out so when she was away we would have a carry on, doing things like sliding with our blankets on the floors instead of resting. The hospital was a nice place to be.

95. If the children got sick, we would maybe stay in the cottage or just go to school. If we were worse, we would go to the school hospital. I did everything I could to get into the hospital. I would stand under draining gutters hoping I'd get pneumonia.

96. I had my tonsils removed and got the surgery done at Duncan hospital. I had a bad case of appendicitis and had to go to the hospital in Duncan for that too. One

time I stepped on a rusty nail but I didn't report it to the house mother because I would have been in big trouble. It got infected and my glands were swollen and I passed out in church. I was sent to the hospital in Duncan. It was great being in hospital.

97. I developed a hearing problem when I was about 13. I was sent to Victoria and the doctor found that I had slight hearing loss. I think probably between the bullies and the staff, I was given many blows to the head, including on the side of my head. I can't prove it, but I think my loss of hearing was caused by these blows. I have had hearing problems for the last 50 years and have to wear hearing aids.

98. I don't recall getting health checks, seeing a dentist or getting eye checks. You had to be sick to get any medical attention.

Leisure time

99. I remember we occasionally saw a movie. Duncan was the nearest town to the school. It was about four or five miles away. On Dominion Day, we were allowed to go to Duncan to see the parade. The staff would have been there to supervise us.

100. There was a school band. I was the drum major. I joined when I was about 13 or 14 years old. Mr Ritchie ran the band. There were also the school cadets, the Boy Scouts and a lot of organised sports. I enjoyed sports and if you made it into the school team, you could travel to tournaments in Duncan or Victoria. That was good. We had fun at sports. I took up boxing. I was terrified of it but I pushed myself in order to be able to protect myself. I did well at it. There were boys like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were "all Canadian" boys. They were good at sports and were also academic. They were favoured by the staff. I remember being inspired by Charles Atlas, who was a famous body builder. I tried to make my own lead weights to build up my muscles but instead I injured my finger.

101. We also swam in the Fairbridge River. We went skinny-dipping in the spring too. It was really cold. We would dam the river up and swing on ropes. The river was deep. You got thrown in by the big boys and that's how you learned to swim at

Fairbridge. If you were struggling they would come in to get you. They wouldn't let us drown. On the other side of the river there was a watermelon field, but it was not Fairbridge property. We sometimes took a watermelon.

102. We also built shacks in the forest like Tom Sawyer. We weren't supposed to do this. We would have bits of food stolen from the cottages or the dining hall. The seniors used to call us "turds". We created a town for the shacks and voted in a "mayor" and "Lord Provost". We called it "turdy town".

103. There were books at Fairbridge in the day school library. I didn't like school but I really liked reading books. Each cottage had a radio. The radio was in the cottage mother's sitting room and she would sometimes let us in to listen to it. That was a real privilege. During the war years, I remember listening to a speech by Winston Churchill and a few by King George.

104. We didn't have many toys or games, but we had conkers and marbles which we called "miggies".

105. We had some day trips. When I was in the Boy Scouts, I remember we stayed overnight at Cherry Point. We travelled greater distances when we were in the sports teams. Sometimes we went on day hikes or went picking blackberries. We would gorge ourselves on the blackberries and then throw them at each other.

Christmas, Easter and birthdays

106. I remember Christmas at Fairbridge. It was a good time. We made cards and our own decorations. Most Christmases we had snow. The scenery was beautiful and we made snowmen. We had football fields and they were covered in snow. You could see deer at the forest edge. We would pick out beautiful Christmas trees. The main industry on Vancouver Island was forestry. The older boys would pick a big tree for the dining hall. On Christmas Eve we would go to church and put the sock we were wearing at the bottom of the bed. On Christmas Day we would check the sock. It would have an orange or tangerine in it, four or five walnuts and a little gift like a pocket comb. There were maybe three or four items in it. It was great. We

bartered items with each other. We were given a special meal at Christmas and even Mrs [REDACTED] CBB seemed to smile.

107. Three weeks or a month before Christmas, each cottage received a Woodwards or Sears catalogue. We were allowed to choose a one dollar item in it. We would then write a letter to Santa Claus and that was the present that would be under the tree for us.

108. If it was your birthday, they would make little a cake for you in the cottage and put a candle on it. I recall once they put a nickel in the cake. The boys would sing happy birthday. I don't recall ever getting a present on my birthday.

109. I remember that we boiled eggs and coloured them at Easter.

Religion

110. I felt I had been force fed religion. We were expected to attend the Fairbridge Chapel which was Church of England. The [REDACTED] who were in my party found out later that they were [REDACTED] but had been made to attend the Chapel at Fairbridge. The Catholic children were sent to a Catholic church in Duncan. The school truck which was used for hauling heavy items and road work during the week was used to take the Catholic children to Duncan on a Sunday.

111. We went to church every Sunday, to Sunday school and to Evensong. I liked the music. Doubts about religion crept in then and have never really left me. I would hear about merciful God and Jesus and my feelings would be in turmoil thinking about the bullies and Mrs [REDACTED] CBB. It didn't match what religion talked about. I would wonder what kind of God I was praying to. I'd pray that He'd take them away but they would still be there. I wasn't beaten in church but once out of church it was a daily routine. The only comfort that you had was your friends. I made true friendships at Fairbridge. I was taught the value of friends and I would credit Fairbridge with that.

112. There were three Church of England ministers during my time at Fairbridge. The sermons were way above our heads. I remember the Rev Thomas Hipp there. He had children and was a very nice man. It seemed that those who had their own children had compassion. He would smile at us. I have good memories of him.

Staff

113. The staff at Fairbridge were a mixture of decent people and unfortunately some people who should never have been hired to work with children. The day school was a separate building on the property. The teachers could live on or off the site. Mrs Gray was my first teacher and she was good.

114. As far as I know there is one member of staff still alive who is about 95 years old now. Her name is Mimi and she was a day school teacher. She was hired by [REDACTED] CBG [REDACTED]. She was young and pretty and loved by all the boys. She loved the boys too. She would have been in her very early 20s then. I visit her when I'm on Vancouver Island. She is loyal to [REDACTED] CBG [REDACTED] and Fairbridge. She has a different perspective. She has told me that when she first started, the school was well funded. She said that the staff were more capable in the early years but during World War II Major Plows, the principal of the day school, and several other good staff members left to join the armed forces. I think there was also reduced funding for the school during the war and Fairbridge ended up hiring some staff who didn't have the skills to deal with children.

115. As well as the cottage mothers, there were duties masters. The duties masters would administer punishment to the boys at the cottage. They would also drive the staff car and sometimes taught sports. One was called Mr Burns. He liked me and encouraged me to take up boxing. There was also a duties master called Mr Ritchie who was okay. There was a school nurse and also a seamstress. Mrs Hyman was the seamstress and she was also the school organist. There was a professional gardener assigned to the farm too.

116. In the office of the farm school there was a secretary who did all the book work. The headmaster, [REDACTED] CBG [REDACTED], was principal of the whole farm school. He

was accountable to Fairbridge Offices in London. There were assistant headmasters and sometimes the duties masters had that role.

117. We had heard about a duties master sexually abusing some of the boys. His name was [CBH]. This happened before I had arrived at Fairbridge. I heard that a boy named [redacted] who had come across in the first party when he was five years old, had been sent to [CBH]. He was told to bend over and drop his pants. He was waiting for the strap but turned round and saw [CBH] masturbating. The boy ran away and was found crying in the stables. He told staff what had happened and [CBH] was arrested and went to jail. We heard that [CBG] had rehired [CBH] thinking he was reformed but then he was arrested again. I also later found out that there was a duties master called [CBC] who was said to have had sexually abused girls. I think [CBH] and [CBC] details will be in the staff records of Fairbridge.

Discipline

118. Discipline was generally dealt with by the cottage mothers or if the behaviour happened on school grounds then we would be sent to the duties master. The cottage mother could refer us to the duties master too. Mrs [CBB] didn't often send us to the duties master. She used a belt and carried out her own punishment. Sometimes she would have us strip our shirts off and use a strap or cane on our legs, the bare butt or on our backs. At the dinner table she sometimes hit us with a serving spoon. Sometimes she would belt two of us at a time. When she used the belt, it seemed to me like an eternity. It broke you down. We would be hit at least six times. It was the same with the school principal; he used a leather sharpening strap on our hands. We didn't want the other boys to see us crying when we went back to class as you would be labelled a "sissy". That was hard.

119. Mrs [CBB] used the belt frequently. It wasn't on a daily basis but the punishment was severe. Others in the cottage experienced the same type of discipline. I can't recall the older boys in the cottage being disciplined. I think they would have been sent to the duties master.

120. Miss [REDACTED] CBF would occasionally give as a slap. Otherwise she sent us straight to the duties master. In the early years, the duties master used to mete out punishment in the cottage in the morning using a leather strap on the boy's bare bottom and everyone could see it.

121. I don't recall being hit so hard that I bled but I do recall getting many beatings that resulted in bad bruising. We would show each other our bruises like it was some kind of badge of courage.

122. I don't remember seeing a punishment or discipline book. I can't imagine there are such records because what was sent to London would have been a reflection of how successful the school was and how it was being run. I think it would have been unlikely that they would have sent in reports citing their abusive actions on the children.

Visitors

123. I don't recall any inspectors visiting Fairbridge. I remember the National Film Board of Canada visiting once. They took some photos including one of us in the band.

124. We sometimes had VIPs visiting. That was probably to raise funds for the farm school. Mrs [REDACTED] CBB's cottage was displayed as a "model" cottage. I know that we told the VIPs that we loved Fairbridge. Mrs [REDACTED] CBB was there at the time when we met the VIPs and we couldn't have said anything else.

125. I am not aware of any reviews that took place in relation to my continued care in Fairbridge. This possibly happened for later groups of child migrants as it was known by then that Fairbridge was closing, so some children were put in foster homes and didn't spend much time at the farm. By 1947, I think the funding for Fairbridge had dropped off. I think that reports by the British Columbia Child Welfare Department citing problems at Fairbridge may have also factored into the closing of Fairbridge.

Contact with family when in care

126. My father wrote to me when I was at Fairbridge and I wrote to him. He received reports about me. He would say that he was disappointed with my reports. I never received any parcels from him and I never heard from my mother. I thought my mother was dead. Once I sent my father a parcel. I sent food over to him when we were taking part in a scheme which I think was called "Parcels for Britain". I never wrote to or heard from any Scottish institutions that I was at or Middlemore Home. I received one letter from my brother and sister. My brother's handwriting was so terrible that I wasn't sure he had been to school.

Leaving Fairbridge

127. Farming was taught to us to prepare us for life after Fairbridge. Once you were 15 and got a job, you were given \$10 and a ticket to take the boat to the mainland. I heard that one boy, [REDACTED] didn't know where to go or who to contact when he arrived. He didn't even know how to use a phone. I have heard that that was common.

128. Girls were sent straight to Victoria to be maids. There was no follow-up by Fairbridge to find out how we were getting on. The boys and girls also had to send half of their pay cheque to Fairbridge and they never saw the money again. I was later told that the Fairbridge Canada Association had received a cheque from the Fairbridge Society in London. There were no instructions with it and they didn't know what it was for so they created a bursary for children's education. I think that was the money Fairbridge held which had been sent by the children when they were working.

129. Towards the end of Fairbridge, which closed in 1951, the intention was to leave the remaining children there until a foster home was found. Of my party of children, some were sent to foster homes and helped to finish high school and then went on to university.

130. I left Fairbridge when I was 17. I never reported the abusive treatment I had undergone at Fairbridge to anyone after I left. Fairbridge became a thing of the past. I vowed not to return. By then it was closing down and there were less than a dozen of us left. Fairbridge was connected to the cadet corps and we would go to the army cadet camps on the mainland in the summer. Over the last three or four years I had been going to the camps. We would spend six weeks there and it was Paradise. We had proper food like bacon and eggs. I remember going to the military style mess hall and seeing all the bacon and eggs. The Fairbridge kids mixed with the other children there. These other kids were usually good to us. I had been following the band from the Scottish regiment in Victoria around and they sort of took me in and found a kilt and complete uniform for me. We dated girls when we were there. They were the best summers of my young life. It was such a difference and I saw what life could be like outside of Fairbridge.

131. I had been doing well in the cadets and was a lieutenant. I left to join the army at 17. Major Plows signed the papers for me to get into the army. I just wanted to get out of Fairbridge as soon as possible. Major Plows, who was a former war time officer of the Canadian Scottish Regiment, knew that if I went to the army I couldn't go anywhere else. I had no intentions of going AWOL. The army was good and I was used to harsh discipline so it was easy for me.

Contact with family after Fairbridge

132. I think the Fairbridge Society in London must have given me some assistance to find my father in 1955 when I wanted to return to Scotland. However, they never gave me any help with my records and I am still angry about that. If they had told me of the existence of the records, I could have traced my family including my brothers, sister, aunts and uncles much earlier.

133. When I returned in 1955, I saw my father and also visited my Aunt Kate. She lived in Saughton Mains Loan in Edinburgh. It didn't work out with my father so I returned to Canada. My father had remarried and didn't want to engage with the five children of his first marriage.

134. I had difficulties getting work in Vancouver as there was a lot of unemployment there in the mid-1950s. I lost track of my family. In the 1960s after moving to San Francisco I got married and had children. I also got involved with pipe bands and my Scottish roots surfaced again. I felt I needed to find my family again.

135. In 1971 I made contact with my older brother. I was working in a small town and I heard that somebody from the town was going to an agricultural conference in Edinburgh. I didn't know him but I looked him up and said that I was trying to find my family. I had an address for Aunt Kate in Edinburgh. The man agreed to help me and visited the address. He was told that my Aunt Kate had moved into the city and he got her new address. I wrote to Aunt Kate and she told me about my older brother and that he had been missing me. He had asked about me. Through Aunt Kate I found him and my sister Minnie. That year, my brother Rob came to see me and when I met him at the airport I found out that I had two younger brothers. He asked if Alex and William had gone to Fairbridge. I asked, "Who are Alex and William?". He told me that they were my brothers but I thought that he was the only one I had.

136. In the 1980s, I found out that the Fairbridge Society in London didn't hold much information about my family. I didn't know that there were care records which existed; otherwise I would have demanded them.

137. I moved to the United States and I very was active with the Scottish Society of Monterey. Alex Salmond, who later became the First Minister of Scotland, was doing a tour of Scottish clubs all over the United States. We got word of it and I invited him to a special dinner. I typed up a 1½ page document about the search for my two younger brothers. Mr Salmond was flying out the next day and I didn't want to take up his time but I asked if he would read my note on the plane. I asked if he would help me and whether there were any sources I could use to trace my brothers. He said he would help but I never heard back from him. That one stung a bit but it didn't surprise me.

138. In the late 1980s, the wife of a man who had been in Fairbridge told me that my personal records would be held in Birmingham. At that point I was still looking for my two brothers. I had checked the British Columbia archives but they only had three papers which didn't mean much. My friend made an appointment for me at the Birmingham Archives and I travelled to the UK. My records contained documents mentioning my two younger brothers and this information helped the Child Migrants Trust find them.

139. We found out that Billy was in the Royal Navy and Alex, known as Sandy, was in the Merchant Navy. In 2001 with great assistance from the Child Migrants Trust I was reunited with Sandy. The whole family then had a reunion later that year. The family restoration fund set up by the British Government funded my return to the UK for the reunion. Sandy helped Billy with the fare from South Africa, where he lives. My extended UK family came to the reunion.

140. I've had brief visits with Sandy. We have probably spent less than a month of our lives with each other. I've only seen Billy for about a week in total. I told the Fairbridge Association guys about the British Family Restoration Fund. Unfortunately it was too late for many but some of them have used it. I really feel for those who have never met their family.

Impact of experiences at Fairbridge

141. I bottled up my Fairbridge experiences. I didn't really talk about it to friends in the army. Then when I was serving in the army in Korea, a traumatic incident happened to me and I broke down afterwards. I was suicidal. I was transferred out of Korea and was under psychiatric care. The doctor went over things with me and I told him only a little bit about Fairbridge. I recovered and went back to active duty in Japan.

142. After I left the army, I had some rough years in Vancouver and got depression. This was to do with things that were happening in my life at the time and also my past childhood. I felt very lonely and couldn't find work. It was just too much. Also, when I found my father, it didn't feel that he was a true father. I had

feelings of worthlessness. I was lucky. I had two friends who helped me not go over the edge.

143. I had to really restrain myself in relation to hitting my children as a form of discipline. I managed to restrain myself but it was hard. I think that's what you go through when you are brought up only knowing the type of discipline that I experienced. I am grateful that I didn't slip over the edge.

144. I think my experience at Fairbridge affected my first marriage. I also think that some people who attended Fairbridge who were not bullied but saw it happen ended up with a bullying attitude in life. While there have been some successful Fairbridgians, there were some that hit the streets of Vancouver and ruined their lives. That stuff is swept right under the carpet. People only want to hear the success stories.

145. For many years I never raised the issue of how I had been treated with the Fairbridge Society. I have never visited their offices in London. I once heard Lady Dodds-Parker of the Fairbridge Society talking at a Fairbridge School event. She said how proud and happy she was that the former Fairbridge children had done so well. I didn't recognise that and it put me off. Where was I when all this happiness was being passed out? I also asked the lady if she could possibly help me locate my family. I never received any word or assistance with that request. I almost stopped going to these events but realised later that some people did have good experiences. There is probably a greater number of them compared to the number of those who had been ill-treated. That doesn't make it OK if you were a child who was ill-treated. Some people used to tell me I was better off for being at Fairbridge but how would they know I wouldn't have been better off in Scotland? Even though I have achieved things in life, that doesn't make my experiences at Fairbridge right. I wrote my memoirs and tried to piece it all together.

146. I know that some Fairbridge boys had problems proving their nationality. For example, ██████████ found out in his 70s that he wasn't a Canadian citizen. I was okay and this was probably due to my having joined the Canadian army at an early age. I have had no issues with getting a passport or with accessing benefits.

147. I did receive counselling which was helpful because I am alive today. My wife Betty has been very supportive in my reuniting with my UK family. I think as the years roll by I have made my peace with the demons. I only want recognition and acknowledgement from the Canadian and provincial governments for all child migrants so that something like this never happens again.

Action taken and acknowledgement

148. I have not sought any compensation in relation to my experiences at Fairbridge. I haven't been able to get access to the Canadian government to raise the issues about Fairbridge.

149. I became spokesman for those who had been abused at Fairbridge. I had been in touch with the Child Migrants Trust as I knew about the work they were doing in relation to Fairbridge in Australia. I was blunt with Margaret Humphreys of the Child Migrants Trust about the fact that she had not come to Canada. I invited her over. She explained that she had tried to raise the issues about child migrants with the Canadian government but with no success. Consequently most of her efforts have been directed at dealing with the Australian child migrants.

150. Then about two years ago, Margaret was speaking at an engagement in Burbank, California. I went to meet her there. She said they were now ready to conduct interviews with Canadian child migrants of Fairbridge and I was to be the contact person.

151. Margaret and also Ian Thwaites of the Child Migrants Trust interviewed me. I gave them an account of my experiences and the reasons why I thought the Canadian government should take action. I wanted Canada to do the same as the British and Australian governments and apologise. The Child Migrants Trust wanted to interview other Fairbridgians, so I lined up about six to eight people willing to be interviewed. I gave their contact details to Margaret and Ian. Margaret was of the view that rather than consider the descendants of Canadian home children, it was better to focus on Fairbridge. I had to ask about when the interviews would begin

happening. I was getting impatient. I would leave messages for Margaret and the Child Migrants Trust. They finally emailed me and said that they just couldn't fit in the Fairbridge Canada interviews and were working on a far bigger project. I was assured this project would include child migrants sent to Canada. That news shattered me. It felt as if we had been put on that list again that goes nowhere. I can't get angry with Margaret, though. She is always busy and I will always be grateful to her for the help that the Trust gave me in finding my younger brothers.

152. I feel that no-one in our Canadian government is concerned about child migrants sent to Canada but a lot has been done in relation to child migrants sent to Australia. There were 120,000 children sent over to Canada compared to 30,000 children sent to Australia. We feel left behind and completely out of the picture. If something doesn't happen soon, there won't be anybody left to speak on the subject of child abuse that happened in Fairbridge Canada. I can remember two or three other Scots but they were not in my party. [REDACTED] was one of them. As far as I know, I am the only surviving Scot from Fairbridge.

153. There is a distinction between "home children" who were children sent into family homes and farms in Canada and child migrants who were sent to Canada and looked after in institutions like Fairbridge. We were all child migrants of the UK. They need to recognise that in both cases there were good and bad stories. But I am fighting that battle still.

154. In 2010 when Gordon Brown was UK Prime Minister, he gave an apology to British child migrants. Gordon Brown's apology was very sincere. I was vice-president of the Fairbridge Association at the time and attended the apology event in London with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was sent to Fairbridge Farm School in 1937 and [REDACTED] is her daughter. When I was in London we were invited to the Canadian consulate. The Canadian High Commissioner had tea with us but it seemed to be a token gesture. He said that he had never heard of child migration. It was clear he hadn't been briefed regarding Fairbridge or home children.

155. There have been no inquiries or commissions in Canada about child migrants. A motion was adopted by the Canadian Parliament in February 2017 in

relation to making an apology to former British Home Children but I have heard nothing further since then. There have been no apologies from Canada despite it being a nation that apologises readily for other things. It's surprising that they can't say sorry to 120,000 children that they took in. No one took responsibility for it.

156. The Canadian government has given some recognition to home children by issuing a postage stamp. I think at one time about 10% of the Canadian population was descended from home children. The Canadian government should apologise like Australia and Great Britain has done. I hope that Prime Minister Trudeau will make an apology.

157. I would also like to speak to representatives of British Columbia. It was the provincial government which allowed the child migration. They should make an apology. I'm not on the money chase. I just want them to recognise and apologise for the fact that 329 children were migrated abroad to Fairbridge Farm School and it is on record that some of those children were abused.

158. If the Fairbridge Society is still functioning, I would want to know about the records they might hold in relation to the money they were sent by Fairbridge Farm School from the children's wages. There was a policy that when a Fairbridgian left Fairbridge each of them would send a portion of their wages back to the Fairbridge Farm School in Canada. That money was supposed to be set aside and placed in a savings account for each one of those participating in the programme. At school reunions organised by the Fairbridge Association I heard several complaints from some older Fairbridgians that they had never received any of the money they had sent into the school office. This didn't affect me as that system had ended by then.

159. I joined the Fairbridge Canada Association in 1983 to see friends. In a sense they were my "brothers". Some of them had a good time at Fairbridge. I would try to put my experiences aside but I was able to discuss these experiences with the boys who had been in my cottage. There are about four or five left from my party that went over in 1941. Two of them don't attend the Association events. I spoke once at an event saying that while some had a good experience at Fairbridge, it should be recognised that some didn't have a good time there. Many people do not attend the

Association events because of their experiences. I later served on the board of the Fairbridge Association. I was vice-president and later became President.

Records

160. I had contact with the Fairbridge Society in London when looking for information on my family. They gave me some limited information and I contacted my father in 1951. In the late 1970s and 80s I had also asked for help to trace my younger brothers. They had no information.

161. In the late 1980s, it was my friend who told me where my care records were held. Fairbridge never told us where the records were. They should have passed them to us. I hate to think that thousands of child migrants died not having seen their records. I must emphasise that the least institutions can do is turn over records to people to allow them to be reunited with their families.

162. In my file from the Birmingham Archive, there were documents and correspondence between my father and Fairbridge. There were documents mentioning my two youngest brothers. There were also payments made by my father and receipts. There were school reports which the principal had signed off. There were some medical records about my ears and some early cottage mother's reports. I think there is one cottage mother's report which mentions my seeking attention. We must have been very vulnerable. We were sent away from home. We wouldn't have even needed beatings to feel terrified. I'm happy to share these records with the Inquiry.

Final comments

163. I hope that the evidence that I have given to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry allows governments to understand child migration. I hope they will care enough to ensure that people and children never have to go through an experience like this again. Governments must protect children today. I think the Child Migrants Trust is right that it is still happening today elsewhere in the world, for example, children are being sold. Vulnerable children need protection. If parents can't do that then

someone else needs to. Putting them in a big institution is not the way to do it. I don't disagree with the view that Kingsley Fairbridge was an idealistic young man. I think he intended that Fairbridge children would be cared for but in reality some cottage mothers and several staff members never fitted with Kingsley Fairbridge's aims.

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

Signed...



Dated 12/01/17.....

