

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CBU

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is CBU My date of birth is 1948. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I qualified with a degree in at Oxford University then carried on at Oxford and did a Certificate in Education. Fettes College was my first job where I worked for sixteen years. I then moved to work in Switzerland for four years then an international school in Netherlands. This only lasted a year as the backers withdrew finance and it went bankrupt. I then moved to Norfolk where I continued teaching At the age of 60 I took the option to go part-time and at 65 I retired.

Employment with Fettes College

3. When I was doing my certificate in education Oxford university set me up to do one term at a school in north London. One of the chaps working at the school came from Edinburgh and I became quite friendly with him. I learned about the job at Fettes College so applied because I knew they would pay my travelling expenses so I could use it as an excuse to come and visit him. I had one interview with SNR and a few days later I was offered the job. I just sort of drifted into it. I quoted one referee who was the teacher in the education department at Oxford. I have no idea if anyone ever contacted him.

4. I started at Fettes college in 1970 as an ordinary [REDACTED] teacher. I was 22 and I was straight out of university. I remained in that post for sixteen years, until I left in 1986. The chap who became the department head, David Kennedy, was around a year older than me and he spent his entire career at Fettes so there was little chance for me to progress in the department. There was no probationary period when I started. When I arrived I was just given a piece of paper with a list of topics to teach and got on with it.

Training

5. I don't recall ever getting any staff training at Fettes in relation to my position as a teacher. I had to hit the road running as they say. No one sat in any of my classes to appraise me or to give me any guidance or support. Teachers rarely went into other teacher's classrooms.

Policy

6. I had no involvement at all in policy in relation to the care of the children at the school. The housemasters used to have a meeting but I can't say if the headmaster was present. I assume at these meetings decisions were made but whatever was discussed never made its way down to me. Part of my job was wandering around getting to know the boys in the house but I was never allowed to tell them what they could and couldn't do.

Strategic Planning

7. I had absolutely no involvement in the strategic planning at Fettes.

Recruitment of staff

8. I was never in charge of or responsible for the recruitment of other staff. I think this was part of the role of the headmaster. As far as I am aware it had nothing to do with

the board of governors. I wouldn't even have known what the recruitment policy was at the time when I was there. Sometimes if prospective teachers were coming to the school for an interview and stayed overnight I would meet them in the staffroom and chat with them. I would never be asked to give my opinion of them. In all my time at Fettes no new [REDACTED] teachers were appointed. There were four [REDACTED] teachers altogether and they were in position when I arrived and remained there the whole time I was there.

Training of staff

9. I was never involved in the training of any staff and I don't remember ever receiving any training when I was there. I never asked any of the other teachers if they ever received any training but I don't think they would have. I went to Fettes when I was very young and I never questioned what training the existing teachers had or how they learned what to do. I just assumed that they knew what they were doing.

Supervision/staff appraisal/staff evaluation

10. I was not responsible for any staff so I was never involved in the appraisal or evaluation of other staff. I have no knowledge of what the policy was on supervision or staff appraisal. I didn't really have any formal chats with the head of the [REDACTED] department. I would see him regularly in the department and we had frequent chats but in my sixteen years at Fettes I never received any formal appraisal or got any feedback about my performance. I am not aware of anyone getting an appraisal.
11. There were three different headmasters during my time at Fettes. I am not aware of the appraisal system changing in any way after the arrival of the different headmasters. There was never a declaration from the headmaster saying who he was and that he wanted things to be done differently.

Living arrangements

12. There were seven houses at Fettes where the boys lived. Each house had a housemaster and a live-in tutor. The boys were age thirteen up to eighteen although there were some pupils there up to nineteen who stayed on to prepare for the entrance exams to Oxford and Cambridge universities.

13. When I started at Fettes all the pupils were boys and all were boarders. After my first year girls were admitted. That year one brave girl came to the school as a day pupil. The year after that there were twelve girls but they didn't board. They lived off campus, locally. Girls tended just to come for the sixth year but that did change at some point and it became fully co-educational. I think they started to take girls because the school had financial problems and there weren't enough boys. I was the [REDACTED] for the girls. This meant they came round, usually four at a time for a coffee and a chat with me after lunch. The feedback I got later was that they hated it. In retrospect, "hated" is a bit strong: what I was trying to convey was that they did not seem to think that my coffee meetings were interesting. I think they attended out of duty, rather than for pleasure. The meetings were not my initiative anyway – the housemaster had asked me to undertake them. They never gave me any concerns or disclosed any issues to me.

14. I lived in Carrington House as a tutor the entire time I was at Fettes. I had a bedroom, sitting room and bathroom and it was on the top floor of three. I was directly above the housemaster and his family. His house was on two floors. There was a door connecting my quarters with the rest of the house where the boys lived. The boys had direct access to my quarters. There was a door between the dormitory region and a passageway, with doors directly to my sitting room, bedroom and bathroom. None of these doors was lockable, apart from the usual facility to lock the bathroom door when it was occupied. The boys had their own front door to enter and leave the house.

15. The housemaster when I arrived was Mike Leslie, and I can't remember how long he was there for but he was replaced by Bob Philp. Both taught the classics, Latin and Greek. I would say I had a cordial relationship with these housemasters. Carrington

House had about sixty boys living there. All the other houses would have had similar numbers. It was very rare for any other members of staff to go into someone else's house. I think there was an unwritten rule for this. If they did they would usually go through the housemaster. Even if it was to speak to a particular boy they would always seek the housemaster's permission.

16. Once a week I was in charge of putting the children to bed to give the housemaster a night off. There was a matron on duty in the house and, usually, the housemaster and his wife would be in their part of the house. If another member of staff was on duty, I would often be in my room too, but, nearly always, only one member of staff would actually see the boys to bed. One day a week I also gave out pocket money to the boys which they had to sign for.

Culture within Fettes College

17. Like nearly all the teachers I became involved in sports. Sport was a very big thing at Fettes. Rugby was the main sport in the winter and cricket in the summer. They also had squash clubs and fencing. I was responsible for a [REDACTED] and also for a while [REDACTED] I took pupils on skiing trips, whenever I could, to Glenshee [REDACTED] and went to the Trossachs almost every second week. These were day trips and not overnights. We travelled early on Sunday morning and came back that evening. Sometimes I used to open up the swimming pool in the morning so the boys could have a swim before breakfast. I would remain and supervise them. I think the idea behind having so much sport available was to keep the boys busy. I always found the children to be pleasant, polite and friendly.
18. The junior boys would be given the task of cleaning the common room, sweep the corridor and do other menial chores. We referred to this as 'fagging'. I am not aware of what I believe to be was the traditional independent school 'fagging' where the senior boys had junior boys doing certain tasks for him. This didn't go on at Fettes. It may have gone on before I arrived but I never saw it.

Discipline and Punishment

19. I am not aware of there being any formal written policy on discipline and punishment. If boys committed any serious offence or misdemeanour the cane was used. I was not given any guidance on using the cane or any other punishment. I did ask the headmaster and he said that what I did was in order. For more trivial offences 'lines' or 'gating' or maybe just a telling off may be administered. 'Gating' basically meant the boys were grounded and weren't allowed to go past the gates taking them out of the grounds of the school. I think the term 'gating' comes from Oxford or Cambridge colleges. I don't think 'gating' was ever supervised and it would be assumed that the boy would adhere to his punishment and not go out as instructed. I don't think there was a detention punishment. There was nothing to indicate what offence warranted a particular level of punishment. It was left to the individual member of staff to decide.

20. The prefects were allowed to hand out lines to boys. In the event of a serious offence they would refer it to the housemaster or tutor to punish them. I am aware of this happening a couple of times when I was at Fettes but it was very rare.

Day to day running of Fettes College

21. I had nothing to do with the running of the school outside my circle. I got up, had my breakfast, went to teach, [REDACTED] and occasionally was on duty in the house. I didn't have anything to do with the day to day running of the school.

Concerns about the school

22. I never witnessed any abuse when I was at Fettes. I can't imagine it happening. The children I dealt with were thirteen and upwards so if anything happened to any of them I am sure they would have spoken up and told someone.

23. I never heard anything to make me think there were any concerns about the school and I am not aware of the school being the subject of concern by any external body or agency in relation to the treatment of children.
24. I had very little interaction with parents of any of the schoolboys. I think there were parents meetings probably twice a year. It started with a service in the chapel and then throng into the dining room where I discussed with the parents the teaching and the progress of their child. There was never any notification of whose parents were attending. There were other social evenings organised and I remember chatting to a couple who came to every event. I started talking to them about their son and their response was that they weren't really interested and were only there for a drink. There was contact with parents but it was very informal.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

25. I am not aware of there being an actual process for the children or anyone else to report a concern or make a complaint. I would imagine that any such concern would be reported to a member of staff and it would be taken from there. I never received any complaints or reports of concern like this and I am not aware of anyone else receiving such a report. I am not aware where any paperwork relative to such a complaint or issue would be recorded or stored.
26. I was never aware at any time of senior boys bullying the junior boys. I always felt it was a well ordered and pleasant society.

Trusted adult/confidante

27. I am not aware of there ever being anyone that a child could speak to if they had any worries. There wasn't a recognised counsellor or anyone like that within any of the houses.

Abuse

28. I don't think Fettes had a definition of abuse. If there was one it was never communicated to me. This didn't change all the way through in my time at Fettes.

Child protection arrangements

29. I never received any training or instruction in respect of how children in their care should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour towards them. Similarly I wasn't given any guidance or instruction on how to deal with any reports of abuse or ill-treatment. There was nothing formal set up to reduce the likelihood of abuse by staff or other adults towards children at school. I think it was just assumed that it wouldn't happen. If it did happen it would probably just be reported through the housemaster or tutor.

External monitoring

30. I recall at least one inspection when I was at Fettes. We must have known about it as it was the sort of thing where you would put the top pupils near the door and the not so good ones in the corner in the hope that the inspector didn't notice. I have a feeling that independent schools had to actually request an inspection rather there being an unannounced visit.
31. On that one inspection that I do recall I cannot remember if the inspectors spoke to any of the children. I can't really remember anything about it at all.

Record Keeping

32. Every three weeks or so we were required to add up the marks for the work of around six children allocated to us and give each pupil a ranking. I then had to give an opinion

as to how much effort they had put in. This was all recorded and these records were put in a cabinet in the staff office in the main building. I don't know who was responsible for these records and I have no idea what happened with these records at the end of term. There was no secretarial back up. I never had occasion to try and look back at anyone's records so I am not sure how much was kept or what happened to them.

33. I never kept any records in relation to boys that I disciplined and I am not aware if anyone did or if there was anything stored anywhere. I was never told that I should keep any discipline records.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

34. I was never involved in any investigation, on behalf of the school, into allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of children in the school or into inappropriate behaviour by staff or others towards children.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

35. I was never involved in the handling of any reports to or civil claims made against the school by former pupils.

Police Investigations/criminal proceedings

36. I was never made aware of any police investigations at the school. I have never made a statement to the police about any abuse at the school or given evidence at any sort of trial.

Specific alleged abusers

37. Mr Chenevix-Trench took over as headmaster [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I would have been there about a year or two when Mr Chenevix-Trench arrived. He must have been the headmaster for around ten years and died in post. He was replaced by Cameron Cochrane. I have no idea how old Mr Chenevix-Trench was but he was considerably older than me. I occasionally chatted with him and he regularly invited staff into his house for social evenings. He was very easy to talk to. He taught Latin and Greek and was apparently quite brilliant at it although sometimes he was a bit forgetful. On occasion he forgot to turn up for lessons. I would never class him as my friend. He was just the boss. I didn't see him interacting or disciplining children probably because caning was never carried out in public. I never saw or heard of him abusing children.
38. I know of one situation when the headmaster, Mr Chenevix-Trench told us in the staff room about a member of staff who was being 'too close' to children and he had been dismissed. I think this teacher was ^{DXM} [REDACTED]. I am not sure when this was but Chenevix-Trench was the headmaster. I never heard what 'too close' meant.
39. I remember ^{DXM} [REDACTED] as he was a [REDACTED] teacher and he was around my age. I don't really know anything else about him as I didn't socialise with him. I never saw him interacting with children and I never saw him disciplining or abusing anyone. I didn't know him very well at all.
40. I have been asked if I am aware of a staff member called Ian Wares. This name rings a bell but I cannot recall anything about him or who he was. This indicates that I didn't really know him.
41. I have also been asked of my knowledge of another staff member, William Stein. This name does not mean anything to me. I have no knowledge of this person.

Helping the Inquiry

42. To give any suggestion as to how children in boarding schools can be protected now and in the future, this is very dependent on the age of the children. Because I was dealing with children aged thirteen and above who would howl if anything happened to them, they would make sure people heard about it. There is no doubt in my mind that they would tell somebody about it. There were younger children in the junior section but they were kept separate. They were in a separate house and had separate lessons.

Specific Allegations

43. I have been read a section of the statement of [CBQ] who was a pupil at Fettes College when I was there. In his statement he claims that I caned him on two occasions after putting him over my knee after he had performed poorly in lessons. I recall [CBQ] who was a tall dangly sort of bloke. At this time it was perfectly legal to give the cane.
44. Because he was over my knee I couldn't have hit him hard because of the mechanics, it just isn't possible. If I had done it I would have intentionally had him on my knee so that I couldn't hit him too hard. I would have given him the cane to try and dissuade him from idling. In my view I did not consider what I did to [CBQ] as abuse. I think that the passage of time may have affected my recollection of what is alleged as it was 45 years ago. I am not saying that these incidents didn't happen but I do not recall caning him as he said. In any case getting caned on my knee was a better, less painful option than bending over a chair.
45. I think at that time I had a policy of punishing boys who didn't work. If boys did work I bribed them. They would be given more opportunities to go into town more often. Bribing was a potent force in that respect and the boys reacted well to this.
46. I was contacted ten to fifteen years ago by [CBQ] who has made the allegations against me. He has obviously been harbouring a grudge against me for quite some

time. I can't really remember the content of his email as it was now more than ten years ago and I didn't keep it. I did reply, explaining why I had caned him.

Leaving Fettes College

- 47. Cameron Cochrane, who was the headmaster at Fettes, had become the governor [REDACTED] in Switzerland. He got me a one year secondment because their [REDACTED] teacher had taken a year out. This college was in a ski resort and during the winter their main sport was skiing and I was a keen skier. I waved goodbye to Fettes and worked for four years in Switzerland. As far as I know Fettes never gave me any references for the job in Switzerland. It was supposed to only be for a year and by the end of the year they knew me anyway.
- 48. During my four years in Switzerland Cameron Cochrane became the headmaster of a boarding school in the Netherlands and he offered me a job as the head of [REDACTED] I ended up in the Netherlands and became quite good friends with Cameron Cochrane.

Other information

- 49. 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.....
 04 November 2020

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 CBU
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