

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GHL

Support person present: No.

1. My full name is ^{GHL} [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1953. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Dundee. My dad's name was [REDACTED] and he died in 2009. I've never known who my mother was and never ever met her. I have two sisters, [REDACTED] who is a year older than me and [REDACTED] who is a year younger than me. As far as I know we all had the same mother and father. I also have a step-brother, who has died and three step-sisters.
3. I went into care at the age of two, at the same time as my two sisters. I have no idea why we went into care but we all went to Quarrier's in Bridge of Weir.

Quarrier's Village, Bridge of Weir

Quarrier's Village (Cottage 4)

4. My first memory of Quarrier's is Cottage 4 because that's where I grew up. I went in when I was two, so that would have been 1955. The house parents were Mr and Mrs Greig and we had an auntie called ^{QDA} [REDACTED], but everybody called her ^{QDA} [REDACTED]. One thing I remember from Cottage 4 was sitting on Mr and Mrs Greig's knee, I used to do

that a lot, because they were always good to me. I don't really have any other memories from that cottage but I do know it was a happy time for me.

5. I do know I was in Cottage 4 when I moved from nursery school to primary school and I have a memory of that. What I can't remember is whether or not I was in Cottage 4 with my two sisters, I just can't remember that.
6. The Greig's were older and I remember Mr Greig died, and then Mrs Greig couldn't cope so we were all moved to Cottage 20. I was about six or seven when that happened so it would have been around 1960.

Quarrier's Village (Cottage 20)

General

7. The house parent for Cottage 20 was Miss **QAQ** **QAQ** was her name and I remember her birthday was either the **QAQ**. I remember that because we always used to have a party on that day.
8. Miss **QAQ** had aunties to help her I remember one was American, because she was crying when President Kennedy died. I asked her what was wrong and she told me the president had been assassinated but I didn't know what she was talking about. She was really upset about that.
9. I remember another was Dutch, I think her name was Dita and she was nice, I liked her. Dita would take me into a room and clap her hands pretending to Mrs **QAQ** that I was getting smacked. Others I remember are **GHM** and **GHN**. **QDA** was very small, that's why she was called **QDA** she was like a doll and was really small, she hated being called that. She used to have to jump up to give you the belt. I feel **QDA** was in Cottage 4 and Cottage 20, but I can't remember which one she was in the most.

10. I don't remember if I went to Cottage 20 with my sisters but I do remember them being there with me at some stage.
11. There were about fifteen boys and girls in Cottage 20 and they ranged in age from me, at about six to an older boy and girl, ^{GHQ} [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], they were about fourteen or fifteen.
12. I think I was in a room with about five or six other children, I'm not sure. [REDACTED] was in the bed next to me all the time, so it was boys and girls in the rooms.

Mornings and bedtime

13. We used to get up early, 6:00 or 6:30 am, get washed, have breakfast and do our chores, then we went off to school. I remember we always seemed to be standing outside the school for about half an hour. That was all the time and it was horrible in winter, we used to freeze to death in the winter.
14. I think we went back to the cottage for lunch, but I'm not sure. We finished school about 3:30 pm and we then went back to the cottage and played until we had our tea. We had our tea about 5:30 or 6:00 pm. We would just play after that until bedtime. The older people got to stay up a bit later, bedtime was to do with your age. The younger ones, like myself to start with went to bed the back of 6:00 pm. We didn't have any supper.
15. I didn't sleep when we were sent to bed that early, we would have a pillow fight or something. I remember when I couldn't sleep at night Miss ^{QAQ} [REDACTED] used to take me into her bed with her.

Mealtimes/Food

16. We had porridge for breakfast every day. We had mince for dinner and just normal dinner food but it was always horrible. I went on to become a chef after being in

Quarrier's and that was because I thought the only way I would get decent food was if I made it myself. We used to get so hungry we used to steal food from the larder.

17. You had to eat the food, there was no option. On a Sunday we would get roast beef with all the grizzle on it and you just had to eat it, and when you'd finished eating it you got a treat like a Crunchie, a Mars Bar or a Bounty Bar. That was your only treat for the week but if you didn't eat the beef you didn't get the treat. I never got a treat.
18. I just could not eat the grizzle, you couldn't eat it, and I was so young. I would get sent to my bed early for that or be told to stand in the corner. Sometimes I could be standing in the corner for four or five hours. I think they forgot about us sometimes because I remember Miss QAQ came in one day and asked why I was standing there. I told her she had told me to stand there that morning and she said I could go away. I had been standing there for about eight hours. Sometimes you would be bursting for a wee, and you just had to keep it in.

Washing/bathing

19. We had a wash every morning when we got up and we had a bath once a week. We all went into the one bath, one at a time, in out, in out and they never changed the water. If you were first it in the water was clean and hot but if you were last it was filthy and freezing cold. It was either the housemother or one of the aunts that would wash us.
20. We also had to brush our teeth before we went to bed and I remember it was a stupid toothpaste. It was called 'Gibbs' and it came in a wee round tin, it was brick hard and you had to wet your brush and rub it on the toothpaste. It was horrible and it didn't even clean your teeth.

Clothing/uniform

21. The clothing was just there and you got it. You would get your shoes repaired and there was a place to get all your clothes. We were basically all dressed the same.

22. We wore short trousers, a grey shirt and a grey jersey. We had Sunday clothes as well, but they were much the same just better. It wasn't a uniform for school or anything like that, we just all wore what we were given.

Leisure time

23. At weekends we sometimes went up to the big hall at Quarrier's where we would watch a film, or they would have something on.
24. We didn't get to listen to music or watch television, that was for the older people. I do remember later on, we used to sneak to the top of the stairs and watch programmes that were on, like Doctor Who and stuff like that.
25. I can't really remember what we did when we were out playing, but I remember playing outside in the woods, 'Cowboys and Indians' things like that. There was a game called 'Queen of Sheba' that we played, we all lined up, someone put something in someone's hand and you had to guess which hand it was in. It was a stupid game.
26. We didn't really play with children in the other cottages, we would just see them at church or at school. I was never bothered about the other cottages until I was older.

Trips and holidays

27. We used to go on brilliant trips during the summer holidays. We went to Troon, Dunoon and Lands of Turnberry. Those trips were the best ever. It was just our cottage, or any one cottage that would go at any time, and we went every summer. It was a Mr Niall Hodge that had Lands of Turnberry and the Turnberry Hotel, until Donald Trump took it over. Niall Hodge used to take us for rides in his big Rolls Royce. I have no idea who paid for those trips.
28. We did have pocket money on the trips as well, which we could spend at the shops. The house mother or aunties would come with us on those trips.

29. I also joined the Boys Brigade when I was at Quarrier's and we went away to Aberdeen on trips. We stayed in the disabled school called the Anna Ritchie School. That was great I loved that.

Schooling

30. We had to be at the school half an hour before they opened the doors. I don't know why, but I think it was the housemother just wanting us all out the cottage. Everyone was there, and sometimes it could be an hour before school started. In the summer it was okay but in the winter it was freezing.
31. I learnt how to read and write at the school and I liked history. My teacher was Mr ^{QAI} [REDACTED] and he was the worst teacher in the world. He was the [REDACTED] at Quarrier's School and if you couldn't draw you were in trouble. He had [REDACTED] I think it was from polio, and he was a vicious person.
32. The punishment in the school was the belt and I must have got it hundreds of times, once a week anyway. Mr ^{QAI} [REDACTED] would belt you for anything, he belted me, for not being able to draw a tree, or a face or anything. If you could draw you were his best friend but if you couldn't you were in trouble.
33. Mr ^{QAI} [REDACTED] just took us for [REDACTED] other teachers came in for other subjects. There was a Mr Gilchrist who taught English and he was good. He helped me and I can't remember him ever giving anyone the belt. I remember when he first came to the school he held a belt up in the air and said "What's this for?" I said it was a belt and it was for punishment and he said we wouldn't be needing it and flung it in the bin. He could still be alive as he was younger than a lot of the other teachers.
34. I would say the school was okay but I didn't know how to compare it, as I hadn't been to any other school.

Healthcare

35. I had to get my sugar lump and an injection when I was there. It was for Polio or something like that, and we all got it. I just remember the injection was horrible and I think I flung the sugar lump, loads of the kids did that.
36. I think a dentist also came in to see people but I don't ever remember seeing the dentist. I did clean my teeth all the time though.
37. I do remember a barber coming in every three weeks. He didn't have scissors he just had this electric thing that he used. He cut all the boys hair, we all had the same crew cuts. It was just to keep our hair short, I don't think it was anything to do with lice. I can't remember lice ever being a problem.

Religion

38. I feel we went to church on a Sunday morning and a Sunday night, and then we went again every Wednesday evening. I don't know what we did as I never listened, but we did sing songs and the minister, Mr QAW would talk for about an hour and a half. I remember I would fall asleep when we were at church.
39. The only thing I liked about the church was Mr Peterson who was a wee guy and was very funny, although I'm not sure he meant to be. He played the organ and was the worst organ player in the world. Sometimes we thought he was drunk, he was that bad, but he was a very nice man. He will be dead now. There was a choir at the church as well and my sister was in that.
40. The house mother couldn't have been religious, not the way she was, smacking people. That's not kindness or love. There were never any prayers or anything like that in the cottage.

Chores

41. Everybody had chores to do and we did them every day. It could be sweeping the yard, bringing in coal, peeling potatoes, all sorts of cleaning, there were lots of chores and we all had to do them, even the youngest ones.
42. I also did some of the gardening at the cottage. I cut the grass, sometimes with a lawn mower. That was from about the age of ten or eleven, and it wasn't hard to do.

Birthdays and Christmas

43. I do remember Christmas was great, but the reason is different from many other people. My sister [REDACTED] so she used to get [REDACTED] present and was that's how I remembered her birthday.
44. We did get a present at Christmas and I remember Christmas Pudding but I don't remember much else being very different.
45. I didn't know when my birthday was until my dad told me after I had left Quarrier's. I never celebrated my birthday, no one did, other than my sister. I didn't know mine was on [REDACTED] until I was much older.
46. My sister [REDACTED] is disabled and only has [REDACTED] fingers on each hand so she got away with a lot. She was the only one who had her birthday celebrated and I think that was because of her being disabled. She was a favourite and got that kind of treatment because she couldn't do a lot of the things other people could do. She was very popular with the staff, she was lovely and got away with a lot.

Bed Wetting

47. I didn't have a problem with bedwetting but my sisters did. They had a rubber sheet put on the bed and they got smacked a few times for it by the house mother, Miss [REDACTED] I remember them crying and I would hide out the road. They would have to wash their sheets as well, I remember that.

48. Miss ^{QAQ} would tell everybody about anyone who wet the bed. She would walk round the beds and if anyone had wet their bed she would shout out that they were bedwetters and tell them to go and stand in the corner. They were ridiculed pretty badly and I remember just thinking that I was so glad it wasn't happening to me and that someone else was being picked on for a change.

Visitors

49. I had one visit in eleven years at Quarrier's. That was from our dad and it was about one week before we all left. I remember he was wearing his army uniform. We had no contact with our dad at all in the ten years before that. He was in the army and was away fighting so there was a reason for that. No one else came to visit us at all.
50. I did get taken out for the weekend once, it was crazy and I never did it again after that one time. I was told by the house mother I was going away for the weekend and I was staying with an Auntie . I was about six or seven and it was a nightmare. I had never been anywhere outside Quarrier's on my own and I got lost. I was out with Auntie and her son and I stopped to look at toys in a shop window. I turned round after a few minutes and they had gone and I was lost. It was somewhere in Glasgow and I eventually stopped a policeman told him. I was taken back to Quarrier's and that was me, I had only been out for an hour and a half and I never saw Auntie ever again.
51. We also had an open day once and this couple, Mr & Mrs asked me if I would like to go and stay with them in . I was all dressed up in my kilt, they made us dress like that on Sundays, and I asked where was, as I'd never heard of it. I thought they were going to take me away for good and I said yes I would like to go with them. I went with them for about two weeks and then they wanted to adopt me. I don't know what happened then but somewhere along the line they weren't allowed to do it. Perhaps my dad was involved, but I don't know what happened. I do remember that was around the time I discovered I had two sisters and I did ask what would happen with them. So perhaps it was something to do with that as well, I don't know. I do know they were very nice people and I loved their farm, it was lovely, but nothing ever came of that. I did go back and see them years after when I was a trainee chef

at the [REDACTED]. It was great to see them and was a very emotional time, they were crying a lot. They moved to Canada about six months after that.

52. We did get some kind of official visitors as well. I remember being told to say to people that everything was fine and not to be a trouble maker. I was spoken to once or twice by those people and they asked how I was getting on. I just told them I was fine and I loved it at Quarrier's. What else was I going to say, we'd been told and then they would go away and we'd be on our own. We did all get extra toys that day and then after the visitors went away they took all the toys off us.

53. I do remember a wee fat guy called [REDACTED] who spoke up once. He got a right doing for that. He ended up with a fractured arm and he had bruises all over his body. Two grown men took him onto a room and I think they were kicking and punching him. I don't know who they were. That was in cottage 23 when I was staying with Mr [REDACTED] GHO

Family Contact

54. I remember the house mother used to call us the three [REDACTED] GHJ and it wasn't until then that it started to dawn on me that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were my sisters. I would have been about six or seven when that happened.

55. We didn't manage to get to know one another though, because I kept on getting moved about. I was moved from cottage 20 to cottage 23 and they were moved as well.

Abuse at Cottage 20

56. I think the house mother in Cottage 20, [REDACTED] QAA used discipline, in her eyes anyway, but other people would perhaps say it was abuse. I didn't think then and don't think now that [REDACTED] QAA was really that brutal. She could be loving but she was angry a lot as well, and did shout at the kids. I suppose she had good days and bad days like everyone does.

57. I remember she once hit me on the back of the head with her walking stick. I'd been cheeky and called her 'hop along' or something like that and she just lost it and hit me with her stick. I remember it was bleeding and I had to go to hospital and I got stitches. I've still got the scar on the back of my neck from that.
58. She did make us stand in the corner of a room for as much as four hours. That might be seen as abuse but I used to love it. After a while I got used to it, and I was away from everybody that used to annoy me, so I hummed songs to myself and used to imagine I was a DJ. It seems nuts now but I didn't find it that bad. I would sometimes go out the back and play when she had me doing that, as she would forget she'd told me to do it. I'd come back in and stand for a while and then she would tell me to go away. She was going doolally and just forgot what she was doing.
59. Miss ^{QAQ} did smack my sister, for wetting the bed, but she gave a lot of that to the aunties to do as well. The aunties could be pretty hands on and Miss ^{QAQ} just wanted to be loved. We had a few aunties that would hit us, I've mentioned some already and all of them, ^{GHM} ^{GHN} and ^{QDA} hit us or slapped us at some point.
60. The aunties would slap us or hit us with belts or straps or a paddle and it could be for cheek, or for getting back late, a whole lot of things, but it was really for next to nothing most of the time. I remember there were two people, ^{GHQ} and , having sex, in the next bed to me. I didn't know what they were doing, I thought they were wrestling, it wasn't until later that I learnt what sex actually was. They were about fourteen and they both stayed on Cottage 20. I remember they were crying after as they had been punished for that. I think they had been belted, but I'm not sure.
61. Some of the kids did get picked on, and blamed for things, even if they hadn't done it. I remember a girl, , she actually died in Quarrier's. She was only about eleven or twelve and she got picked on for absolutely everything that happened. She had special needs and was different. I'd say now, as I have worked with disabled children, that she probably had Global Developmental Delay, and that's why she was picked on. She was always crying and was picked on all the time, by teachers' and by

some of the kids as well. None of the teachers liked her either. Children would pull her hair, pull her seat away from her, mess with her dinner, call her names, just everything, children can be so cruel.

62. I liked her and used to speak to her, she once told me she didn't know if she could take any more of it. I told her to bear with it and that she would get out when she was fifteen. Next thing she was dead but I don't know what happened or how she came to die, I don't remember ever being told what happened we were just told she had died.
63. I was moved from Cottage 20 to Cottage 23, after our house mother, QAQ needed a hip operation and went into hospital. I ran away when she went in to the hospital, because I wanted to see her. I was so used to her and I didn't like the lady that replaced her. I only got as far as Kilmacolm before I was caught. When they brought me back I was moved to Cottage 23.
64. I was in Cottage 23 for about eight or nine months then I went back to Cottage 20. When I went back my sisters were both there and it wasn't that long before my dad came and took us all away.

Quarrier's Village (Cottage 23)

General

65. I don't remember that much from Cottage 23 but it was a lot more strict than Cottage 20. It was like a punishment if you went to Cottage 23, the people that were in there, were in there for punishment and that's why I was put in there. It was all boys in the cottage and there was about fifteen of us there.
66. Mr and Mrs GHO-GHP ran Cottage 23, some things were different form Cottage 20 and some were much the same. He was a military guy and reminded me of an old sergeant major type, that's exactly what he was like.

67. We weren't allowed warm water when we were washing for example, we were only allowed cold water by the GHO-GHP. It was always cold, in the morning when we washed before breakfast. I don't remember ever having a bath there, but it would have been cold water.
68. We had to go a run every morning before we went for breakfast, Mr GHO said it was to get the cobwebs out our brains. He was very fit and was trying to get all the boys fit as well.
69. I don't remember anyone wetting the bed in Cottage 23, we were older then, but everyone would have been too scared to wet the bed.

Running away

70. I ran away from Cottage 23, nearly every week, certainly on a regular basis. There was a whole lot of us would do it together, sometimes the whole cottage would run away. Mr GHO was so vicious and was punching and smacking and kicking us all, so that's why we ran away so much. It would have been about ten or twelve times anyway. We got as far as Haddington once and I got to the Borders and Glasgow as well.
71. I remember one guy who ran away didn't come back for about six months. He did have family in the area, and I knew no one so I was never away that long. I always got caught, the boys were always getting caught and brought back. We would split up into groups and then get caught shoplifting or getting into some kind of trouble. I didn't shoplift, but when they did it was just to get food, a sandwich or something.
72. When the police caught us they would take us to this house and we would stay with the old woman who lived there for a couple of days. She was lovely and that was great. I don't remember where that was or who she was. After that we were taken back to Cottage 23 by Bill Dunbar, from Quarrier's, and we would get a do-in from Mr GHO. By do-in I mean punishment and it wasn't always the GHO-GHP it was sometimes Mr QAI who was very high up at Quarrier's. He hit me or other kids with

a belt or a paddle, the GHO-GHP did just the same, they would just hit you with whatever was at hand.

73. The police did ask us why we were running away and we told them. I don't remember them doing anything about that, they probably didn't believe us as we were just kids.

Discipline

74. It was very disciplined in Cottage 23, and Mr GHO was very strict. He would give us things to do like press-ups or running.

Abuse at Cottage 23

75. As I've said Mr GHO was really bad, he was a vicious, evil man and he treated all the boys so badly. Mrs GHP was just as bad, in fact she could be worse. When we were taken back to the cottage after running away we would always get a do-in. Mr and Mrs GHO-GHP would punch, kick and slap us then put us to bed without any dinner. That happened every time we ran away, it was always the same.
76. There was physical abuse in that cottage every day. I got a bucket of water over me one day when I was lying in my bed. I think I was ill with chicken pox when he did that, I remember the nurse came in and said I had to go to hospital. Mr GHO was pure evil and that's why we were always running away. I didn't want to run away because it meant I wouldn't see my sisters. I wanted to see them and the only time I got to see them was when I was at school.
77. There were so many boys got injured, Mr GHO was responsible for broken arms, noses and legs, I don't remember who those boys were but I remember he flung through a window. told him to 'F-off' and Mr GHO hit him then flung him through the window. He broke his leg. It will all be on the medical records from Quarrier's.

78. I was injured as well, I was punched and kicked by him and had cuts and bruises but he would never ever touch the boys on their faces. He knew an injury on your face would be seen at school I suppose. If you needed to get medical treatment Mr GHO and his wife would tell you to say to the doctors and nurses that you'd fallen over. He would say you were to tell people you'd fallen off the swing or out a tree. Everyone just did what Mr GHO said, as we were all too scared, and we knew it might be us next time.
79. There was sexual abuse at Cottage 23 as well. It happened all over, in the cottage and outside in the woods as well. It went on in Cottage 20 as well. There were a lot of ex-Quarrier's boys and girls that would come back and work or visit and some of them were involved in that. I remember GHQ who was in Cottage 20 with me, was into all that stuff. He left Quarrier's then came back when he was about eighteen or nineteen and he did sexual things with some of the younger guys in there. He liked to be with the younger boys, touching them and that, but I don't know what they were doing. I told you that I saw him having sex with in Cottage 20, before we left that Cottage.
80. Sometime after Bill Dunbar had spoken to Mr GHO and the abuse had stopped, Mr Dunbar asked me if things were better. I told him they were, but that I still didn't want to stay in cottage 23. He told me Miss QAQ was coming back to Quarrier's the following week and I could go back to Cottage 20, so I went back to Cottage 20.
81. It was great to get back to Cottage 20 after being in Cottage 23. I couldn't believe I was back. Looking back I do wish I'd done more about what went on at Cottage 23, I feel guilty that I didn't speak up more and say something to people.

Reporting of abuse at Quarrier's Village

82. I remember that because boys were running away so often from Cottage 23, we had this meeting with Dr Davidson, who was the top man at Quarrier's, a Mr Mortimer and Bill Dunbar. Bill Dunbar told us we had to stop running away because if we didn't we

would end up in borstal. I told him, at that meeting, that I would stop running away if Mr ^{GHO} stopped beating the shit out of us all the time.

83. When we went back to Cottage 23 after that, Bill Dunbar went into the cottage first and when we went in we didn't get any punishment. Mr ^{GHO} told us we were all on our last chance and there was to be no more running away. Things were quite good after that, with no punching or kicking, so Bill Dunbar must have said something to Mr ^{GHO}

84. I didn't see a police officer at Quarrier's until I ran away, so I wouldn't think anything was ever reported. I think they kept it all quiet, particularly the sexual abuse involving ^{GHO} I think there was a lot covered up.

Leaving Quarrier's Village

85. There was a lot of checking up had to be done before we were allowed to go home with our dad. We also had to spend a weekend with him at his house in Dundee. My dad had re-married and all these checks were done.

86. I remember my last day at Quarrier's, I was about thirteen, my dad turned up to take us home and it was a sad day. We had a cake with Miss ^{QAQ} to say cheerio and I got to say cheerio to all my friends. I had made a lot of friends, there was about 500 kids in there and I knew most of them.

87. I left Cottage 20 at Quarrier's with both my sisters on that last day and my dad took us all back to his home in Dundee.

88. I lived in Dundee with my two sisters, my dad, my step-mother and her two children, and who were only about two or three years old. My step-mother, was also pregnant at that time. I did like my step-mother at first but I went on to hate the woman.

89. I stayed with them in Dundee for about a year but I didn't want to be there, I wanted to be back at Quarrier's with Miss ^{QAQ} [REDACTED]. I even started running away from my family home to try and get back to Quarrier's, which sounds crazy when you think about it. It was my comfort though and I missed Miss ^{QAQ} [REDACTED].
90. I just couldn't live at home, I was running away and sleeping rough and then I got myself in a bit of trouble. I was breaking into houses and stealing money and eventually I was caught and put into an approved school. That was when I was about thirteen or fourteen.
91. I didn't go to any court or children's panel or see any judge or anything like that. I just remember seeing a social worker at a police station in Dundee and the next thing I was in Oakbank School in Aberdeen. The social worker who took me to Oakbank was a Mr Stirling, he was dead old, and is definitely not alive anymore. I actually thought I was being taken home.

Oakbank Residential School, Aberdeen

General

92. I stayed at Oakbank for about two years and I didn't see my dad or my sisters in all that time. I wasn't meant to be there that long.
93. It was a big building and the grounds were open, there wasn't a fence or anything like that. It was all boys and there must have been about three hundred boys staying there. I was one of the younger ones at thirteen and they went up to about fifteen or sixteen.
94. The boys were from different backgrounds, a lot of them were first time offenders, things like shoplifting, and some couldn't live with their parents, things like that. There were quite a few from Quarrier's, so I knew some of them and that was great, it meant I had friends. [REDACTED] was one, I remember he was there, and I knew him well

from Quarrier's, and we knew each other well. He joined the army and ended up getting killed in Northern Ireland.

Routine at Oakbank

First day

95. I remember we were told at the very start that if we ran away we would go to borstal. Just like we had been told at Quarrier's, so nobody ran away from Oakbank, everyone was too afraid of being sent to borstal.

Mornings and bedtime

96. We were in these massive big dorms with about twenty or thirty boys in each dorm. We got up at 6:30 am, got washed and dressed and went to breakfast. Breakfast was okay, in fact all the food was fine at Oakbank. Then we all went to these education workshops, which were like a school and an education but it was more to do with learning skills. I was in the cobblers for the morning then after dinner I would maybe go to the painters or a class for education.
97. I thought it was great and we did learn a lot. After our tea we could just do whatever we wanted and bedtime was about 8:30 -9:00 pm.

Washing/bathing

98. We could shower or bath whenever we wanted to. It was all guys and there wasn't any problem with privacy or anything like that.

Leisure time / clubs / groups

99. We had groups that we were put in, they were called, 'Sputnik', 'Rocket' and some other names, and we would play football, darts, table tennis or whatever sports in those groups.
100. We had a TV room, we could play table tennis or whatever we wanted. There was plenty for us to do. On a Saturday we got to do what we wanted and could go out to the pictures or something like that. We were given pocket money and we got better clothes, which we kept as best clothes to wear for going out into the town at weekends, just so we were half decently dressed. We could go shopping or go to the cinema and that was great. We had to be back for 7:00 pm.
101. We were allowed to smoke at Oakbank but you had to have a letter from your parents saying you were allowed to and you had to smoke in the places where it was allowed. The school supplied the tobacco and the roll-ups as well. I think they thought that if they allowed boys to smoke it might keep them out of trouble.
102. We didn't have organised sports or activities but we had sports days. I remember football games as well, with about twenty on each side, it was just crazy stuff. We did running and races and things, but there was nothing that you could say was organised.

Schooling

103. The schooling was all in education workshops, not so much in classes like a proper school. I had done English and Maths at Quarrier's, and there was nothing like that at Oakbank. I don't think I left Oakbank with any qualifications.

Healthcare

104. There was a nurse and we all had to go and see her, especially in the winter. She gave us this spoon of gooey syrup stuff and it kept the cold away from us. We had to stand in front of her and swallow it all down and she would check we had, before moving on to the next boy.

105. I remember I started to get a lot of pains in my side and I went to see the nurse. She told me it was probably indigestion, and then when I told her it was sore to touch she said I probably hurt it playing football. I told her I hadn't been playing football, so she got a doctor to come and see me and the next thing he called an ambulance and I was rushed to hospital with a burst appendix. I was in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary for about a week after that.
106. They started to do check-ups on the boys all the time after that as I was touch and go for a short time. I remember some top man from Oakbank, came in to see me when I was in the hospital and had me sign some papers to say I'd been well looked after. It was some insurance thing and all I did was mark it with an 'X', I didn't want to sign my name. It was a pure fluke that the nurse got the doctor in, as he was only coming in to see someone else at Oakbank and just saw me at the same time.
107. I was only about fourteen and I was signing these forms to say I was being well looked after. My dad didn't even know I'd been taken off to the hospital. He saw my appendix scar and asked what had happened and I told him. He said he did not remember me ever having that operation. Nobody in my family knew I'd been rushed into hospital and had my appendix removed.

Religious instruction

108. There were some religious people at Oakbank and you could go to church or whatever if you wanted. There was a chapel there, where people could go, and boys would sometimes be called to go there if they were ever getting bad news. I never went there but I know a guy, [REDACTED] who did have to go and I remember wondering what had happened. It had been because his mother had died. Everyone was always terrified of being called to go to the chapel.

Birthdays and Christmas

109. We did have a Christmas dinner, I remember that, but I can't remember what we had or how good it was. We also watched a film, 'It's a Wonderful Life', which was good, I liked that and I still do.
110. I knew when my birthday was but it wasn't celebrated and I didn't bother saying anything to anyone about it.

Family contact

111. I didn't get one visit from any of my family in the whole time I was at Oakbank and I didn't go home to see them either. I think some of the boys did get visits from their families and they went into the town with them, but I don't know how that all worked as I didn't get any visits.

Social work visits

112. I wasn't seen by a social worker in the entire time I was at Oakbank. Nobody that worked there ever sat down and spoke to me either. I was never ever told why I was there, or how I was getting on or when I might be going home, there was nothing like that at all.
113. The first thing would have been when the new guy asked all the boys who had been at Oakbank for more than a year. The reason for all that is because nobody knew I was there. It hadn't been done through the courts so I didn't have a date to get out or anything like that. That's the way it was and I'm sure I wasn't the only one.

Discipline

114. There were boys who went to borstal from Oakbank and we were always told we would go there if we didn't behave. All the boys knew how bad borstal was and we were all terrified of being sent there so we weren't cheeky to anybody, we all tended to behave.

115. There was a problem with the discipline at Oakbank. The discipline was very strict but if someone was stepping out of line it wasn't the staff that would touch you. They had this special discipline where the staff would tell other guys, pupils in the place, and they would then sort you out.
116. That could happen if you were cheeky, if you had any drugs or if you were smoking where you weren't supposed to smoke. The staff would then get older boys from the school to have a word with you. About six or seven of them would threaten you or hit you and basically sort you out. I was once threatened with being cut with a razor blade because I wasn't saying 'yes sir' and 'no sir' to the teachers. I told the lads that threatened me that I would cut them back if they cut me, and they left me alone. I did have people like [REDACTED] who was at Quarrier's with me, speaking up for me and he did tell some of the older boys to leave me alone. He was a lot older than me and was quite a big guy.
117. If those older boys ever got out of hand, they would be the ones who were punished by the teachers. That was the only boys the teachers disciplined. There was a table in the teachers' boardroom and those boys would be held down and hit with a belt by the teachers.

Abuse at Oakbank

118. I was threatened by the older boys but never by the teachers and I was never belted or hit by any of the teachers at Oakbank. Other boys were though, and there was a lot of homosexuality there as well. There was a lot of crying at nights in Oakbank.
119. The homosexuality was by older boys on the younger boys. It didn't happen to me but a guy called [REDACTED] did try once. He came near me with a few other boys and I told him if he put his penis anywhere near me I would bite it off. He was wanting me to perform oral sex on him. Another guy tried as well, I don't remember his name. I told them both the same, that I would cut it off or bite it off and they never came near me again.

120. I had been through Quarrier's and that made me tough and angry, for the real world. I think those guys realised that, they saw I was nuts and that I would have done what I said, so they left me alone.
121. I was threatened with a razor blade by other boys and there was a lot of that went on. There were boys threatened and cut with razors and there were a few stabbings as well. I can't remember the names of any of the boys involved in that now.

Leaving Oakbank

122. There was a board of people who were in charge at Oakbank, I remember one was called Nash. The board of people didn't even know how long some of the kids had been there, they didn't know how long I'd been there.
123. I remember one of them, who was a new guy, I don't know his name, asked all the children, when we were gathered together one day, if anyone had been there for longer than a year. I put my hand up and told him I'd been there for two years. He didn't know any kids had been there that long.
124. After I told him I'd been there for two years, I was taken aside and spoken to by that man, he was high up at Oakbank, he was quite a funny guy, and I liked him, I'm sure his name was ^{GZG} [REDACTED]. He asked me when I came into Oakbank and why but all I could say was that I didn't know.
125. He told me he would contact my father, which he did, and my dad told him that I was welcome to go back home, as my father didn't know where I had been. It's mad, my own dad didn't have a clue where I was.
126. I went home to my dad about only a week after that conversation with Mr ^{GZG} [REDACTED], if that was his name. They even got me a taxi home, all the way from Aberdeen to Dundee. I was fifteen when that happened and that was me out of the care system.

Life after being in care

127. I went back to live with my dad and step-mum and went to school but I left school when I was fifteen. I didn't have any qualifications but I went on to college to do catering because I wanted to be a head chef.
128. It took me seven years to become a head chef and I did that for the rest of my life. I've worked everywhere, but always in the UK. I've won about ten awards as a head chef for different things and I was one of the [REDACTED] chefs in Scotland. I worked at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
129. I met my wife, [REDACTED], when I was working and got married, thirty years ago. I had two sons, one had cerebral palsy and died at the age of six, my other son, [REDACTED] who is twenty six, and lives with us.
130. I stopped working when my wife got scoliosis of the spine as she needed full time care, so I had to stop work and give her that care. We did have a help and support network for a time, and I was working when my wife was disabled, but it was around 2008 that I had to stop and become her full time carer, because her grandparents died. I've been doing that ever since.
131. I do find it very hard, it's a lot of work, and my wife is virtually totally bed ridden now. My son does help out as well.

Impact

132. Being in care has made me feel very angry for everything that happened to me and I don't trust people anymore. I stopped trusting people after Quarrier's and started to keep myself to myself. I don't have many friends, only about five in the whole world and that's about it really.

133. I wanted to be a chef so that I wouldn't ever be hungry again. How weird is that. I went hungry so often and the food at Quarrier's was so bad, that I decided to do something because of that. I never went hungry again after I became a chef.
134. What is strange is that places I went to when I was in Quarrier's, I went back to as an adult. I felt I had to go back and I ended up working at [REDACTED] where we had been on trips when I was at Quarrier's. Although I never went back to Quarrier's.
135. I knew my wife for two years before we were married and she got pregnant when we were engaged. I married her then as I didn't want our child to have to go through the process that I had to go through. I did love her and we were going to be married but that was how I was thinking then.
136. I didn't have an education, but when I spent seven years training to be a chef. I was always so eager to learn, I even worked shifts without getting paid for them because I wanted to learn and I wanted to be the best I could be. I wanted to achieve something in my life.
137. I do get sad a lot and I give a lot of money to Great Ormond Street Hospital. I don't know if's that's to do with me losing my son or if it's because I want to help other children, but I just do it. I don't have a lot of money, I don't have my own house, I rent a property and I'm on a pension. I don't get sick, I don't even get the cold, but that's because I don't eat junk, I just eat healthy stuff and cook it all myself.

Treatment/support

138. After I ran away for the third time from Cottage 23 at Quarrier's we were all sent to see someone for some kind of counselling. The man was a friend of Mr ^{GHO} [REDACTED] they were all buddies and shaking hands when we went in, so that wasn't any use. I don't remember his name or what we talked about.

Reporting of Abuse

139. I've never reported anything to anyone. I was scared and was just glad to get away from my time in care. Who would have believed me anyway, back then, nobody would have believed me.

Records

140. I didn't know I could try and get copies of my records from my time in care. It would be very interesting to know what there is about my time at Oakbank, I'd love to know why it was I was put in there in the first place

Lessons to be Learned

141. I would hope that what happened to me wouldn't happen now, things are too civilised now. I do wonder what would have happened to me had there been no places like Quarrier's.
142. I wanted to go back to Quarrier's after I had left, but that was because I didn't know anything else. There were some good times at Quarrier's as well, it wasn't all bad. If you don't know anything else you go for what you know, don't you.
143. I don't want any revenge, I actually look at myself as one of the lucky ones. In the sense that I'm here. A lot of people have died without telling their story. People are more caring nowadays.
144. I thought it was wrong that the authorities could get away with putting me in Oakbank the way they did. I just had to get on with it, but it was so wrong. I don't know how they could get away with doing that.

Hopes for the Inquiry

- 145. I didn't know about the Inquiry until I got a letter from Future Pathways. My sister, who has spoken to by the Inquiry, must have given them my address.
- 146. I would love to know if GHO was still alive. Not for any particular reason, but it's probably better I don't know.
- 147. I do think this Inquiry is being done too late and that it should have been done about fifty years ago. I think that the only way you better your future is to learn from your past, so I'm hoping some time in the future this will never happen again.
- 148. I can't see things like what happened to me ever happening again though, because of Inquiries like this. I'm just shocked that this Inquiry took so long to come about, but I suppose it's better late than never.

Other information

- 149. 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... GHL

Dated... *HTH 10-2021*