

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 45

Witness Name: HIA 45

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 45

I, HIA 45 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] I was placed in care from August 1950 until January 1953. During this period I was placed in Rubane House, Kircubbin.
2. I was born in [REDACTED] in County Tyrone. I have three brothers and four sisters. I lived with my aunt for a period of time and my sister [REDACTED] stayed with our grandmother. My mother died from TB and our grandmother was left with eight of us but was not able to cope so we were taken in to care. Unfortunately, the family was not kept together.

Armagh Workhouse (1950)

3. I was the second oldest in the family and I was taken in to care with my brother DL 376 when I was eleven years old. DL 376 is a year younger than me. We were sent to Armagh and we were the only young children there. It was a workhouse. We weren't there long, maybe two or three months. I was eleven at the time and DL 376 was ten years old. We weren't too badly treated at that place.

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4. We were taken from there and put into Milltown Reformatory School which was on the Falls Road in Belfast. Milltown was for boys that had not gone to school or had been in trouble. My brother **DL 376** and I were put in there and we weren't very streetwise. They weren't too bad to us there. Brother **BR 60** was in charge and he took us in and said we had done nothing wrong and were there simply because they were waiting for a home to open in Kircubbin and as soon as it was opened and ready we would be transferred there and we were kept there for about three or four months.
5. I would have been about twelve at this time and **DL 376** was about eleven. A few weeks before I left to go to Kircubbin one of the brothers told me that **DL 376** had gone. No-one told me he had gone to London and it was years before I heard about **DL 376** again. He had in fact gone to London to live with his father. I was told to mind my own business when I asked where **DL 376** had gone.

Rubane House, Kircubbin (17/1/1951 – 31/1/1953)

6. I entered Rubane with sixteen others. I was thirteen years old. We were the first boys to enter Rubane House. There were four Brothers standing at the door waiting for us.
7. It wasn't long until some of the Brothers, particularly **BR 23** were interfering with me even when I was having a shower. The showers were not like modern showers but a more primitive long pole from wall to wall with holes in it at regular intervals rather than separate shower heads. **BR 23** was in amongst us when we showered and he interfered with me in the showers. He would grab me by my private parts and try to make it look like horseplay but he was crafty when he did this and it made me feel extremely uncomfortable as I was naked and he was touching me. This behaviour started the day after I arrived at Rubane House. Brother **BR 56** would also catch you by the private parts and interfere with you.

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8. The Brother in charge was **BR 12** – he is also referred to at times as **BR 12**. He was six foot four and did not treat us well. When we went to bed at night one boy was in charge of the dormitory and every so often they would change and there was one that always sat on his own by the door. They were asked to keep a lookout over the dormitory in case any boy tried to run away and to watch who was coming in and out of the dormitory. If anybody went out to the toilet or anything during the night he was supposed to watch what was going on or to report anything unusual.

9. If you were in that bed you were sure to be interfered with by one of a number of brothers. It was **BR 23** who abused me. He would put his hand on my private parts under the blankets of my bed. He would masturbate me but he would also want me to put my hand on his penis and masturbate him. He never went further than masturbation with me. There was only one Brother in there that had no connection with the abuse and that was **BR 57**. The others, including **BR 12** were involved.

10. There were two dormitories, one for the bigger boys and a dormitory for the smaller boys and I heard children during the night crying out. I have no doubt that the same thing was happening to other boys in the home.

11. No family or visitors came to see me at the home. I did not have anyone outside the home to take any interest in my welfare. There were boys in the home who were there for brief stays or who had regular visitors and they were always treated better than the boys who never had any visitors.

12. Colonel Jones was in charge of the welfare service in Omagh and he was responsible for some boys placed in the home. **DL 372** was the Welfare Officer in charge. She was supposed to come every so often and talk to us and see how we were getting on. I noticed that she had been on several occasions but never came to see me or indeed anybody else. She was met at the door by the Brothers, given lunch and a big welcome but she never came to speak to me.

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13. I was sometimes sent to light the fire in an old house down near the farm that had been converted into two schoolrooms. On one occasion as I was going to light the fire I saw **BR 12**. He was in charge of the farm and there were sections where they kept different animals. I looked through this thing and I saw **BR 12** committing bestiality with a pig. He was down on his knees behind the pig holding on to it. He was kneeling in a trough. I was physically sick not because of what I had seen but with the fear of whether or not **BR 12** had seen me. I was so frightened as I had seen his bad temper and knew what he was capable of doing. On one occasion I saw him kick a small five year old child across the floor in the parlour. A few children of Irish travellers had come in to the home for a brief stay and I remember **BR 12** kicked that little boy so hard that he sent him flying across the floor and he didn't stop until he hit the wall. The child's brother went over to pick him up as he was crying and **BR 12** grabbed him by the neck and pulled him back violently. I had this thing in my mind for days after that. If he had seen me he would kill me but of course he must not have seen me because I didn't hear anything about it.

14. On another occasion in the classroom the boy behind me had passed wind and **BR 56** blamed me. I told him I did not do it but he gave me three slaps with a cane on each hand. I walked away determined not to cry and he said "we have a hard man here". Then he made me turn my hands over and he slapped me again with the cane taking the nail of my middle finger on my right hand off. I could see on his face that he enjoyed what he had just done to me.

15. I had a scab on my ear and on one occasion **BR 56** got hold of me by the ear and lifted me up and tore the bottom of my ear and it bled on my white shirt. He threatened me saying if I put my hand up once more to my ear he would break my arm. He could see the shadow of another brother approach through the glass so he grabbed me by the scruff of the neck and put me in a chalk cupboard to hide me. He didn't want the other Brother to see the state I was in. He then said to me, put your coat on make sure that

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you cover that blood and get up and get yourself another shirt from the house and come straight back down again.

16. I had a carbuncle on the back of my neck and an outside doctor came up behind me and he just lanced it. It was extremely painful.

17. On one occasion I was sent to get a film for the home and lost the money I was given for the film. I was too afraid to return so I just stayed out on my bike until I was picked up by the police. They looked after me well at the station until the brothers came to get me. They were friendly to me in front of the police but when they got me in to the car they beat me all the way back to Rubane and I then had my hair clipped off, was made to take a cold shower, was beaten on the backside with a belt strap and sent to bed. Having your hair cut off in those days was an outward sign that you had been bold and had been punished or it could mean that you had lice. This punishment was designed to humiliate me. **BR 56** and **BR 23** did this to me.

18. One boy in the home with me, **HIA 97** had a brother **DL 373** who was so badly abused at the home both physically and sexually that he could not get over it and he eventually committed suicide.

19. **HIA 59** is my half brother and he came to Kircubbin a number of years after me. He would have been thirteen or fourteen at the time. I did not even know he was in Kircubbin as I had been in England for about thirty years. **HIA 59** described **BR 23** as a "bad brute" but I think there were two brothers called **BR 23 / BR 17**

20. On a typical day you got up around 6.30-7.00am, made your bed and went to prayers and mass. Breakfast was served at 9.00am, then there were prayers before class and prayers before lunch. You returned to class after lunch until 3.30pm and then we could play until 4.30-5.00pm. An evening meal was served at 5.30pm then prayers, showers and bedtime was 9.00pm.

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21. There was porridge for breakfast every morning with bread and margarine and lunch was usually potatoes with cabbage and bacon for example. I do not recall feeling hungry in the home but the food was poor with little variety.
22. We always had clothes to wear. I think a lot of stuff was given to the brothers for us and I was never in rags.
23. The dormitory was freezing. I can recall writing on the windows with the frost on the inside.
24. The beds had a blanket and sheets but were not comfortable. You were woken up by a brother who messed with you at Kircubbin - that was Brother **BR 23**. A lot of boys were treated worse sexually than me and then there were others who would not have known what was going on. These were usually the boys with regular visitors.
25. No-one ever came to inspect the home. The only person I can recall who came was **BR 60** who was in charge of Milltown. I do not know exactly what his role was in relation to Rubane inspections but he came every so often. We did not know when he was coming but the brothers knew and we would be delighted to see him. He was a good man. He would always ask you how you were and make a point of speaking to you but you were still frightened of what would happen if you told him.
26. Boys were allowed out to stay with families but they were often used to help on farms, gather potatoes and do manual chores. I was taken out to a place in **██████████** to do general farm work. I stayed there for about three or four weeks but it was like slave labour so I ran away. I was picked up by the welfare authorities and taken to Coneywarren but I didn't stay there very long either as I didn't like it. I ran away again and eventually they placed me back in Kircubbin. I was there from 1950-1953.

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27. DL 372 arrived at Kircubbin on my sixteenth birthday to take me away. She had got me a job and I was going to live with a Mr and Mrs DL 374. He worked for [REDACTED], a company that made [REDACTED]. They were very good people. DL 378 told me about two little girls that lived locally in [REDACTED] and they came across every day and I met them one day and realised they were my two sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. We were delighted to meet each other. However, after I met them the lady who looked after them made a complaint that my encounter with them had upset the girls and a man called DL 375 from Strabane came the next day to warn me not to bother them again. He might have been from the welfare authorities that were looking after my sisters.
28. DL 372 had ordered a bike for me and left it with DL 378. That was the first time I had any means of transport. I was unhappy at work and in general and could not stick it any longer so I told DL 378 that I might not come back and asked her to give me a day or two and not to report me. I was only sixteen at the time and the welfare authorities had responsibility for me until I was eighteen. I went to Birmingham.

Life after care

29. I got married to my first wife in 1957 and we had five children. I was never able to tell my wife or my children that I loved them. They said it to me but I couldn't say it back and needless to say after about eighteen years my wife and I parted. I looked after the children. I was a painter and decorator all my life.
30. I remarried and returned to [REDACTED]. My wife came with me and I was married to her for almost twenty years. Her mother came from England to live with us temporarily. When she returned to England my wife went with her.
31. My son requested information from the De La Salle Brothers regarding my time in care and he was advised that any relevant records would be found in

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Glenmona Resource Centre, formerly St Patrick's Training School on the Glen Road, Belfast to which they were transferred when Rubane House closed in 1986. They also suggested that we contact the archivist of the Irish province Brother Oliver Rogers.

32. I was with the first sixteen boys who entered Kircubbin. They just never left you alone. It was hell on earth. I am sure there are parts in there that I have shut out myself. I wasn't going to tell anybody about this. I had full intentions of not ever mentioning this but then things changed and I was asked and then it came all flooding back just as if it was yesterday and I think that mentally I have come out of it all not too bad considering what happened.

33. In 2010 I received a settlement from Napier & Sons Solicitors on behalf of the De La Salle Order for £10,000 for the abuse I suffered at the hands of Brother

BR 23

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed **HIA 45** _____

Dated 26/2/2014 _____

TYRONE COUNTY WELFARE COMMITTEE

Dist. No. 3

CASE REPORT

Reg. No. _____

Name HIA 59/HIA 45

Address _____

Date 16th February, 1950.



~~Old Person.
Blind.
B. O. Child.
1908 Act Child.
Handicapped.
Burials.
Mental H. Act.~~

Other base

Called with Mrs _____ this afternoon, and explained arrangements County Welfare Officer was making for the transfer of _____ to the care of his father in London, and she was very pleased to learn we would allow _____ to spend a night in _____ prior to transfer.

I have arranged to bring _____ the youngest _____ boy to Coneywarren on 17th inst. Mrs _____ begged to be allowed to retain _____ a little longer until she could make other arrangements for someone to keep her company. To this I agreed and told Mrs _____ I would talk with her daughter Mrs _____ who resides at _____ on the subject.

Mrs _____ read attached letters from Family Allowances Branch, and she requested that I show them to the County Welfare Officer.

Subsequently I called with Mrs _____ at _____ and talked with her and her husband. Mrs _____ is quite agreeable to take her mother home for a little while, to see how she would like it. I explained _____ would be removed very shortly, and suggested if she could persuade her mother to come to _____, I would collect both Mrs _____ and _____ and have leave the former at _____ Mrs _____ and her husband will talk with Mrs _____ and let us know the position.

I informed Mrs _____ we were removing _____ to Coneywarren on 17th inst. She was also told of the arrangements made for _____

Both Mrs _____ and Mrs _____ were informed we could not agree to _____ returning home, 17th FEBRUARY.

Acting on advice of C.W.O. I persuaded Mrs _____ to allow me to bring _____ and _____ to Coneywarren this morning. Both children were in need of cleansing, and hair trimming.

SIGNED _____

DL 372

M 108

57

COUNTY TYRONE.

From (COUNTY WELFARE OFFICER.
~~DAVIDSON COUNTY WELFARE OFFICER~~

Date 21/2/1950.

TO Mrs. [REDACTED]

Telegram:

EXPECT ARRIVAL WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

(SIGNED) JONES.

Placed 22/2/50.

fm107

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

13th March, 1950.

Secretary's Office, Accounts Dept.,

Please note with Mrs. [redacted] HIA 45 [redacted] born [redacted] was Boarded Out on 22nd February, 1950.

COUNTY WELFARE OFFICER

/EMCM

PM102

HIA 45

8th September, 1950.

This boy is the illegitimate son of [redacted] who died several years ago. [redacted] subsequently married a man named [redacted] by whom she had one legitimate child and because of her moral delinquency, i.e. having children by other men, [redacted] divorced her.

HIA 45 was left in the care of his grandmother, a Registered Blind Pensioner, as were the other children making six in all dependant upon the grandmother. **HIA 45** and his half-brother, [redacted] were great friends and up to all the boyish mischief possible. They lacked discipline and supervision and ultimately their scrapes brought them before the Court. See newspaper clipping attached. In addition their school attendance was not regular and they were brought before the Court on this matter. Further to this, on one escapade they stayed away from home and slept out with a man who was ultimately charged with indecent assault against the boys. The man was found not guilty and ultimately the Court released the children to our care.

[redacted] was returned to his father and is doing very well. **HIA 45** we placed in foster care with respectable farmers in the Castlederg district. However, the discipline demands plus the normal chores associated with farm life required of **HIA 45** were dis-tasteful to him and periodically he drifted back to his grandmother. Lately, there has been evidence of petty pilfering but nothing very serious.

Schooling: He has attended [redacted] Primary School at [redacted] but could not be called a scholar. His attendance has been regular but due to early training, his aptitude for learning is not encouraging.

Health: This boy is in a very sound condition of health, see Medical Certificate attached.

pm085
County Welfare Officer

/EMCM

PHONE:
BELFAST 22888

Rec. T. J. & R. J.
R.P. 14/9/50.

St. Patrick's Boys' School,

MILLTOWN,
FALLS ROAD,
BELFAST.

11th Sept. 19 50.

Dear Sir,

I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 7th instant with reference to the boy **HIA 45** who was admitted to this School on the 8th inst. It is my intention to keep him under observation for the next few weeks in order to decide if he would be a suitable case for our new Voluntary Home, at Kircubbim, Co. Down.

The maintenance charge for boys in this School for the year ending on the 31st March, 1951, is 60/- per week. A new rate will be fixed at the beginning of the next financial year and it may vary one way or the other, but it will be subject to the approval of the Ministry of Home Affairs. This fee includes, food, clothing, education and industrial training.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,

B. Kelly
Manager.

Mr V. Jones., B.Sc.,
Co. Welfare Officer.,
Tyrone Co. Welfare Committee,
Omagh,
Co. Tyrone.

Pm074

Phone: Kircubbin 261



De La Salle Boys' Home,
Kubane House,
Kircubbin,
Co. Down.

DEC. 10th. '51

PROGRESS REPORT

HIA 45

HEALTH: **HIA 45** is in excellent health—
sleeping and eating well. His
teeth need to be strapped but we
are awaiting word from the Dental
Hospital.

SCHOOL: Weak, though has aptitude and inclin-
ation for drawing or Art.

CONDUCT: Well-mannered and well-behaved.
A good worker and popular with
his companions.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT.: VERY GOOD.

PM059

TYRONE COUNTY WELFARE COMMITTEE

Dist. No. **CASE REPORT** ... Reg. No. 57 ✓

Name: [REDACTED]

Address ... De. La. Salle Boys Home, Kircubbin.

Date ... 1st January, 1952.

C. & Y. P.
 Part I. ...
 2. ...
 3. ...
 ++ 4.+++ ...
 Adoptions ...
 Unmarried Mothers ...
 Probation ...

Mrs. [REDACTED] Grandmother of **HIA 45** was delighted when authority was granted to allow the boy, who is now over 14 years, spend the Christmas holidays at her home in [REDACTED]

Arrangements were made to-day to call for **HIA 45** at 3.45. p.m on 2nd instant, and put him on the 5 p.m. train, at Omagh. He will be met on arrival at Belfast by Brother **BR 12**

HIA 45 still remains thin, he did not look particularly happy, was sitting with his navy burbery on, hands in the pockets. Although he assured me he enjoyed the holiday, perhaps it is that he is not anxious to return to Kircubbin. His sister [REDACTED] is still with the Grandmother, but has not as yet found employment. It is a great pity [REDACTED] allowed this girl to return to [REDACTED] left long enough in this environment will not help [REDACTED] who is rather weak.

[REDACTED] The [REDACTED]



pmosy

SIGNED... **DL 372**

FORM NO. W.35

TYRONE COUNTY WELFARE COMMITTEE.

Dist. No. 3

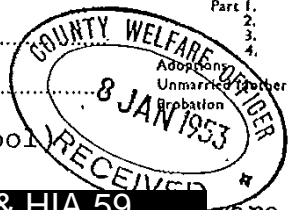
Reg. No. 57

CASE REPORT

Name **HIA 45**

Address c/o Mrs **[REDACTED]**

(Kirkcubbin School)



HIA 45 & HIA 59 were

conveyed by me to Omagh Station and were seen on to the 5 p.m. train for Belfast.

HIA 45 seems to have more confidence in himself than **HIA 59** and is a more sophisticated type of boy. He informed me that he was quite happy at the school, but that he would be glad to leave it. He stated that he would be ready to leave in February 1953 and that he is anxious to find a trade. He would like to work for a builder or a painter. His present work at the school is mainly gardening. He does other odd jobs but they are mostly connected with the garden in some form or other.

The boys at Kirkcubbin School seem to be well treated and I feel that the Brothers at this school are doing a very good job with their charges. I have never heard a complaint about the teachers at the school from either of these boys, and their surroundings appear happy and healthy.

PM029

30/12/52.

SIGNED *Michael Anderson*

TYRONE COUNTY WELFARE COMMITTEE

Dist. No. 3

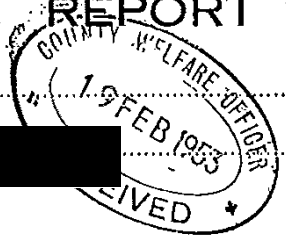
CASE REPORT

Reg. No. 57

Name HIA 45

Address [REDACTED]

Date 31st January, 1953



C. & Y. P.
 Part 1. ...
 2. ...
 3. ...
 4. ...
 Adoptions ...
 Unmarried Mothers ...
 Probation ...

Arrangements have been made for this boy, who had been in Kircubbin Voluntary Home for some time, to commence employment as an apprentice painter ~~at~~ Mr. [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]

The boy travelled to Omagh today and was met at the station by me. I conveyed him to Mr. [REDACTED] who had an interview with him and seemed to think that he was quite a suitable type to serve an apprenticeship. His wages will be 10/- weekly with his cards stamped. I then conveyed the boy to Mrs. **DL 378** at [REDACTED] who had agreed to accommodate the boy. His board and lodgings being paid by the Welfare Authorities.

Mrs. **DL 378** and the boy appeared to get on very well together and I feel that he will be quite happy here. I then called at Mr. Watterson's, Draper, Omagh and bought him 2 set of white overalls at 35/- each and later conveyed him to the grandmother Mrs. [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]

I ~~had~~ previously talked with Father Shields regarding this boy and arranged with him that he be enrolled as a member of the Boys Club which meet every Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights. It is thought that this will be a good start off for **HIA 45** and that he will make many friends there.

P.MORS

msj

SIGNED *R.W. Vance*

TYRONE COUNTY WELFARE COMMITTEE

Dist. No. 3

CASE REPORT

Reg. No. 57

Name HIA 45

C. & Y. P.

- Part 1. ...
- 2. ...
- 3. ...
- 4. ...

Address C/o Mrs DL 378

- Adoptions ...
- Unmarried Mothers ...
- Probation ...

Date 16: 9: 1953.

Mr. [redacted] HIA 45 employer informed me at the week-end that he was working on the housing site at Beleek and that HIA 45 was stopping there from Monday to Friday each week. He also mentioned that HIA 45 did not seem happy with Mrs DL 378 and mentioned to him that he would prefer travelling home. Mr. [redacted] also told me that he had increased HIA 45 wages to 15/-s and that he was doing much better at his work.

That evening Mrs DL 378 husband DL 374 called at my house and was very annoyed that HIA 45 was stopping away. He insisted that his wife would have to be paid for each week while he stayed at Beleek to compensate them for the use of the room which they could otherwise have let.

I called with HIA 45 grandmother in [redacted] and asked her if she would be prepared to have the boy stay with her. She told me that she had two bedrooms and that there was only herself and grand-daughter. At the minute the room which HIA 45 occupies at the week-end was vacant and she was quite willing to have him when he returned from Beleek.

I called with Mrs DL 378 at [redacted] and she was very sore about HIA 45. I gathered that she was interested in the money which she received by way of board and lodging. She complained about HIA 45 behaviour in the home and stated that he did not come in until almost midnight on several occasions and on one occasion when she locked him out he made his entrance through the pantry window. I asked her to have HIA 45 call with me the following Saturday morning.

When HIA 45 called at my office he told me that he did not like stopping with Mrs DL 378 and that she had far too many rules and regulations within the home. He told me that the job in Beleek would last at least three months and that he would prefer

/2

SIGNED.....

pm008

TYRONE COUNTY WELFARE COMMITTEE

Dist. No. 3

CASE REPORT

Reg. No.

Name (continued)

C. & Y. P.

- Part 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Address

- Adoptions
- Unmarried Mothers
- Probation

Date

-2-

travelling home to his grandmother than staying with Mrs **DL 378**
 I told him that in future he could do this and that when the
 job in Beleek is finished we would make arrangements for him
 to return to his grandmother permanently. The fare between
 [redacted] and Omagh is 22/0s monthly and **HIA 45** feels that he would
 have no trouble in meeting this. The first train arrives in
 Omagh at 8.15 and his work will not commence until nine during
 the winter months. He will have plenty of time to make his
 way to Mr. [redacted] yard. I have since spoken to Mr. [redacted]
 He told me that **HIA 45** is improving rapidly at his work and since
 he was allowed to return home to his grandmother he appears to
 be much happier.

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SIGNED..... *P. W. [Signature]*

TYRONE COUNTY WELFARE COMMITTEE

Dist. No. CASE REPORT

Reg. No. 511

Name HIA 45

C. & Y. P. Part 1. ... 2. ... 3. ... 4. ...

Address

Adoptions ... Unmarried Mothers ... Probation ...

Date

This Boarded Out Child will be 18 years old in February, and will therefore be discharged from our care. Mrs DL 372 asked me to visit with a view to making a final report. The last we heard of him was that he was employed by Mr. County Welfare Officer, Co. Fermanagh, doing odd painting jobs.

HIA 45 called with his Grandmother on 11th inst and was informed that has been employed in a factory in Birmingham since Christmas. He writes regularly but has only sent home two pounds since he left home. He appears to like his employment well and has comfortable digs at 50/- weekly.

I informed Mrs. that we should have been informed of HIA 45 intentions as he was still under the care of Tyrone Welfare Authorities until he was 18 years old.

Remove from Register, now 18 years old. b.o. 26/2/55

C. W. O. Date Received 16 FEB 1955 D. O. 1. D. O. 2. D. O. 3. C. O. S. C.

PM 001

SIGNED R. W. Sance

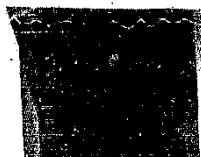
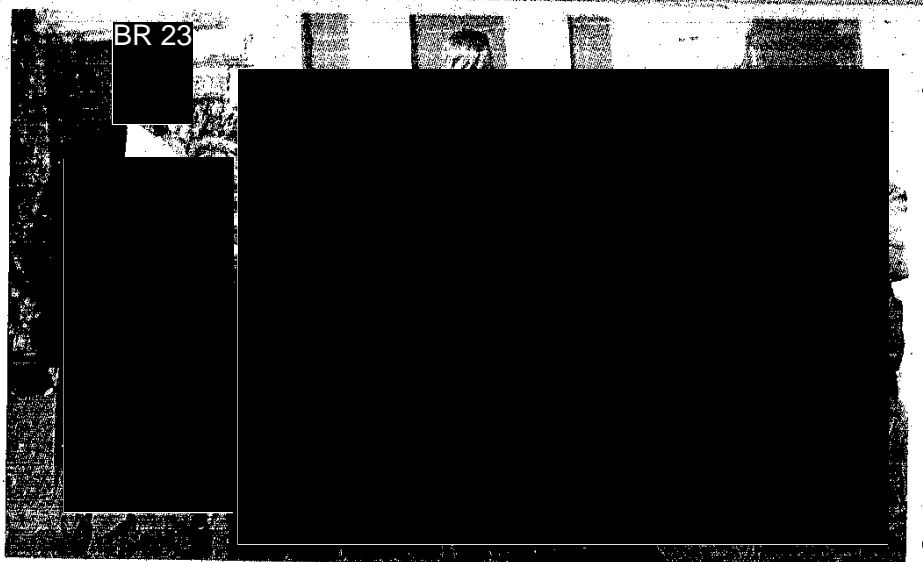


BR 23

BR 23

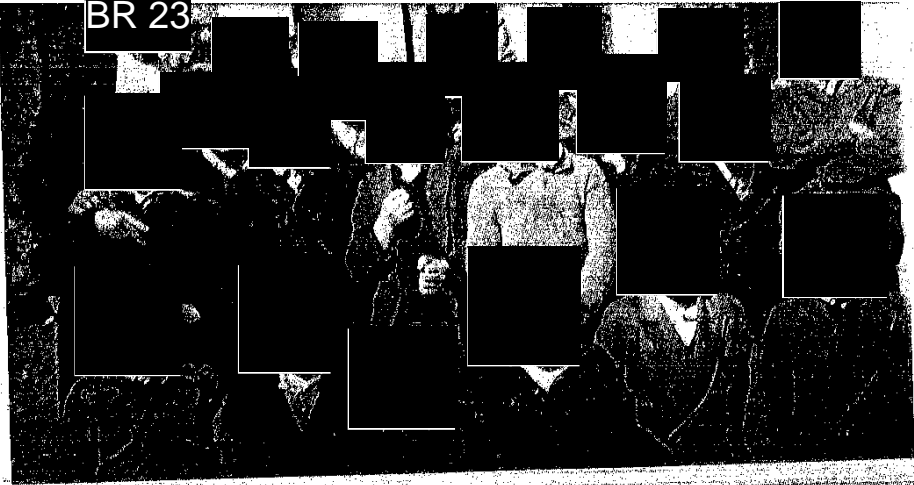
(Prefect)

Spring
1951



BR 23

(Prefect)



Spring
1951

BR 12

(Inst. Dtr.)



BR 12

BR 23

BR 56

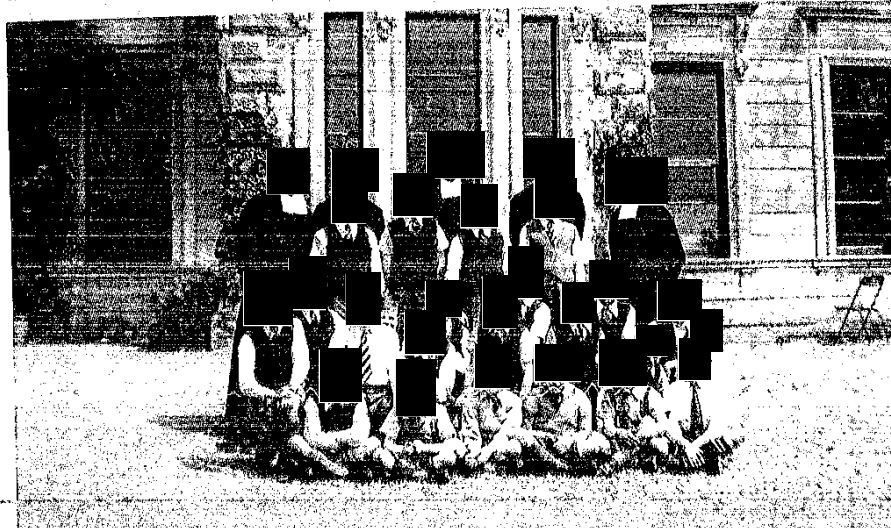
First Community
of
Kircubbin

BR 56

BR 23

BR 67

(Garden)



Summer '51

BR 57

(Class)



April 52

DL 451 , **DL 452** , **DL 453**



April 52

[Redacted] (Derry) **[Redacted]** (Armagh) **HIA 45** (Throne) **[Redacted]** (Belfast)



HIA 45

School Team

1952

Jan

Feb

HIA 45

(Back row l-r)

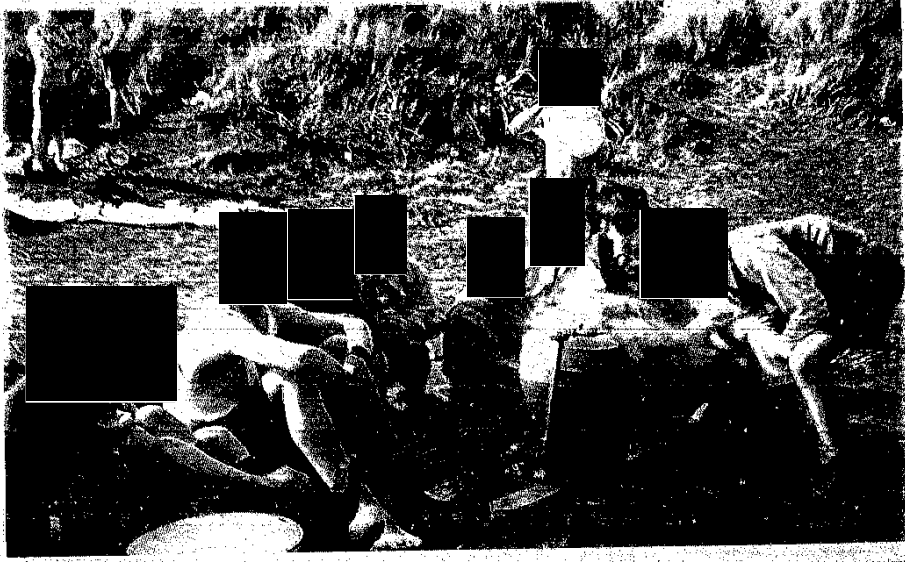
Feb

Feb

Mar

Mar

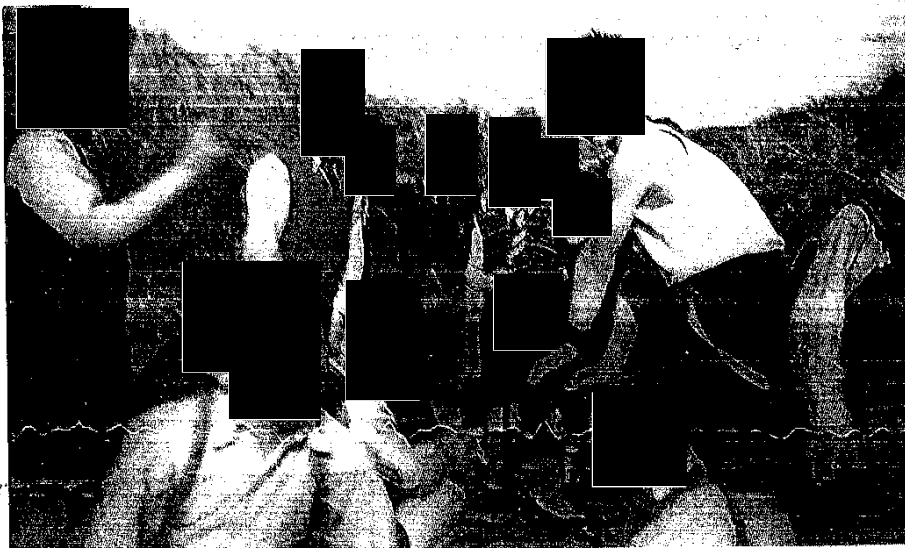
Mar



Days Picnic at Clonghey

Easter 1952

First swim of the year



RESTRICTED (when complete)

Statement of Witness

Statement of: **HIA 45**Age of Witness: Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

I declare that this statement consisting of 2 page/s, each signed by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence at a preliminary enquiry or at the trial of any person, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Signature of Witness: **HIA 45** Date: 31/7/12

Service/Staff # if police/staff

Signature witnessed by: _____
(Appropriate Adult)Signature of Member: _____ PW2166 Date: 31/7/12by whom statement was
recorded or received

Service/Staff # if police/staff

When I was aged around [REDACTED] years, my mother, [REDACTED] died of [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] Hospital, leaving myself and my [REDACTED] siblings orphaned as our father had passed away before this. I was sent to a workhouse in Armagh with my brother **DL 376** and my other brothers and sisters were sent to all different places. After a year I was sent to the Reformatory in Belfast and my brother **DL 376** left and went to London. A short time later I was sent to the De La Salle Brothers Home, Rhubane House, in Kircubbin, Co. Down. It was just newly opened and there were 17 boys there in total aged between 8 and 11/12 years, and 4 Brothers were in charge of us. I wasn't there long before it became a hell-hole. We were mentally, physically and sexually abused. 2 of the Brothers, **BR 23** and the Head Brother, **BR 12** were the worst out of the 4. The other 2 Brothers, whose names escape me, didn't sexually abuse me but they physically and mentally abused me. I wouldn't even describe these men as being like animals, as they were much worse than that, they were pure evil. I don't want to talk in detail about everything that happened to me in the 5 years or so that I was there (I entered when I was around 11 and left when I was 16) as I have told everything already to a journalist from the Daily Mirror, [REDACTED] from the television programme, to my solicitor, John Fahy and to the De La Salle Brothers who investigated allegations of abuse in the course of obtaining

Signature of witness:

HIA 45Signature witnessed by:
(Appropriate Adult)

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

'Fair play' is all we want, say abuse claim brothers

Thursday, 5 November 2009

"They knew who to pick on. We were orphans and we had nobody to turn to." Now aged in their late 60s and early 70s, brothers **HIA 45** and **HIA 59**, who preferred their full identity not to be disclosed, sit round a kitchen table in Strabane and recount abuse they allegedly suffered at the hands of the De La Salle Brothers over 50 years ago.

The abuse was physical, mental and sexual, they claim.

The men spoke to the Strabane Weekly News on Tuesday, 24 hours after a campaign demanding an inquiry into abuse suffered at Catholic and state-run institutions was brought to Stormont.

All they want, they say, is "fair play", following a lifetime scarred by the cruelty they experienced in their teens.

Orphaned following the death of their mother at the age of 33, the boys, then aged five and 10, stayed with their granny for a brief spell, before they fell into the welfare system.

From there they were transferred, at different times, to County Down's Rubane House, which was run by the De La Salle Brothers, an order of the Catholic Church. **HIA 45** was among the first batch of boys to be transferred there in 1948, six years before **HIA 59**.

While Rubane House also catered for short-term stays - children farmed out for one to two weeks by parents struggling to cope with a newborn baby - the treatment meted was very different, the men explained.

"They were treated like gold," **HIA 45** said. "It was the ones that had no recourse. We had nobody or nothing."

"It was like going into the dark," **HIA 59** agreed.

Forced labour

The brothers described forced labour, picking potatoes and gathering kale, or, at the age of 12, working on the construction sites of local housing estates.

"You formed a human chain from the lorry to the site with the bricks, and these blocks or bricks were thrown at you and your fingers were bashed, your feet was bashed," **HIA 59** said.

Holidays and birthdays were ignored at the home. The first and last time **HIA 45** heard Christmas mentioned at Rubane House was by American tourists, who had called to give the boys half crowns. They boys never saw them.

Sports and a one-week holiday in the Glens of Antrim provided no relief. Playing soccer was forbidden at the home, and boys were hit across the shoulders with a hurley stick if they picked up the ball.

HIA 59 still has a scar on his leg from one such incident.

The younger of the two brothers, he recalled being put into a shower on his first night at Rubane House. "A Brother came in beside me, and not a stitch on him, and that happened brave and often," **HIA 59** said. "With all the boys now, not just me; with anybody that had nobody. And the same thing at night too."

As the abuse continued he confided in a priest during confession, and was met with a "hammering" from the Brother he had named. "I was put down into this farm .. they had by the school. That brother, he was a dirty old brute, he would have cornered you, and he would have sexually assaulted you."

The abuse was "sadistic" **HIA 45** said. He remembers being picked out by a Brother after a boy passed wind in class. He was caned eight times until one of his fingernails was ripped from his finger.

Escaped

HIA 45 escaped to Birmingham at the age of 15 with £5 he got from the sale of his bike. Standing with just three pence in his pocket at Birmingham dock, he said he felt freedom for the first time. With nowhere to go, he asked for help at a Catholic church.

"The priest says to me, 'if you have got no money and I give money to everyone who comes in here, I would have no money. Say a few prayers and get out there and look after yourself'."

Nearly 10 year later, his brother **HIA 59** ran after a businessman from Belfast who had visited Rubane House, pleading for help. The man returned six weeks later on the auspices of employing him. **HIA 59** visits the man's family to this day.

While the men knew they had both spent time at Rubane House, neither spoke of the abuse until two years ago. It was only during a recent interview that **HIA 59**'s wife learned of her husband's past at

- June 14th [redacted] paid a visit to Newtownards Hospital to have an X-Ray for suspected appendicitis.
- June 17th [redacted] made his First Holy Communion in our Oratory, Feast of Corpus Christi.
- July 8th School examined in Catechism by Fr M^r Nazareth.
- July 9th Finish of school work and beginning of Summer Holidays.
- July 11th Annual sports which the boys enjoyed immensely.
- July 13th [redacted] entered Mater Hospital to have an operation on his eye (squint).
HIA 45, an old boy from [redacted], Tyrone arrived to spend a few days with us.
- July 16th Welfare boys left for holidays with friends or relatives.
- July 18th Visit from 4 old boys of Nazareth Lodge to see the boys and the place.
- July 21st [redacted], to Ministry of Pensions, left today to spend a few weeks holiday in Killybegs.
- July 25th Attended the parish sports. Return of [redacted] from Hospital.
- July 26th [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] left to take up work in Belfast as apprentices in Bricklaying, Bakery & Motor Engineering.
- July 28th The four [redacted] brothers left for home as their mother had now returned from hospital. The Welfare were anxious that she leave them a little longer in Rubane but she insisted on their returning.
- July 31st Boys & staff left for Glenariffe for 2 weeks holiday.