

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 64

Witness Name: HIA 64

---

 THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995
 

---



---

 WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 64
 

---

I, HIA 64 will say as follows:-

**Personal details**

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in Belfast. I am the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] children. I have two [REDACTED] brothers HIA [REDACTED] and HIA [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] NHB [REDACTED] who [REDACTED]
2. Until I was [REDACTED] years old, I lived with my parents and my siblings on the [REDACTED]. My parents weren't married as far as I know. My grandmother told me that my siblings and I were taken into care by the cruelty people – she may have meant the NSPCC. She told me we were taken away by two men called Mr Breen and Mr Courtney.
3. My brother NHB [REDACTED] 152 and I were placed in Nazareth Lodge, Belfast. My youngest brother HIA [REDACTED] was placed in St. Joseph's Baby Home, which was part of Nazareth Lodge. My sister NHB [REDACTED] 12 was placed in Nazareth House, Belfast.

**Nazareth Lodge, Belfast** [REDACTED]

4. [REDACTED]

PRIVATE

[REDACTED]

5.

[REDACTED]

6.

[REDACTED]

7.

[REDACTED]

8.

[REDACTED]

9.

[REDACTED]

10

[REDACTED]

PRIVATE

[Redacted]

11. [Redacted]

12. [Redacted]

13. [Redacted]

14. [Redacted]

15. [Redacted]

16. [Redacted]

17. [Redacted]

PRIVATE

[REDACTED]

18. I was sent to Rubane House when I was [REDACTED] years old in [REDACTED] I was expecting it because I had seen older boys moving to Rubane before.

Rubane House, Kircubbin [REDACTED]

19. I moved to Rubane when I was [REDACTED] years old with a group of other boys. [REDACTED] I was in Rubane for [REDACTED] years and I left when I was [REDACTED]

20. Rubane was totally different to Nazareth Lodge. It was out in the country, two miles from anywhere. When we arrived, we were met by Brother **BR 6** the [REDACTED] He showed us where we were sleeping and told us what was what. I never took to Brother **BR 6** I thought he was too sly. The other Brothers I remember are Brother **BR 3** Brother **BR 2** Brother **BR 15** and Brother **BR 18** Brother **BR 18** was in charge of the farm.

21. We slept in dormitories in Rubane with ten to fifteen boys in each dorm. There was an older boy in charge of each dormitory. I went to school onsite in Rubane. The brothers taught in the school and there was a [REDACTED] called Mr **DL 6** who taught [REDACTED] He was a brilliant teacher but he was very aggressive. If you got something wrong in class, he would call you a fat head and hit you. Then he'd throw the leg of a chair at you and you would have to make a run for it. We used to cut ourselves deliberately to get out of his class but we would just be given a plaster and told to go back in again.

22. If you were sick in Rubane, they would bring a doctor in. I remember I had blood poisoning once but I never saw a doctor. It started when I cut my finger and then spread the whole way up my arm. One evening, my friend hit me on the arm and I was holding a torch at the time. I smashed the torch over his head. Brother **BR 15** gave me six of the best as punishment but I didn't

PRIVATE

even feel it because of the blood poisoning. When I woke up the next day, the blood poisoning was gone.

23. Brother [BR 15] was a bad one. He had his chosen few who he would sexually abuse. When I first arrived in Rubane, my friend told me to watch out for night crawlers so I always slept on my left hand side with a shoe under my pillow. One night, I was woken from my sleep to find my bedclothes pulled back and a shadow leaning over me. I lifted the shoe and swung for the shadow and the person went away. The next day Brother [BR 15] had a black eye. He didn't come near me again after that.

24. There was a lot of sexual stuff going on amongst the boys in Rubane but I never got involved in it. On one occasion when I was about [REDACTED] I was sent to the laundry room to get something. When I opened the door I saw two boys doing sexual things but I just slammed the door and ran away. I don't know who the boys were. There was a lot of talk about certain boys playing about with other boys but I just kept out of it. When I first went into Rubane, older boys tried to come to my bed but I fought them off. Once they knew not to go near my bed, I was ok.

25. There was a lot of physical abuse in Rubane as well. I got plenty of beatings there, mostly from the older boys. The Brothers never really got involved unless you were being punished for something. I remember I ran away twice and each time I was punished in the same way. The first time I got as far as Newtownards but then I fell asleep in the bus station and the police picked me up. When they brought me back to Rubane, I was put into a tiny room, stripped and forced to put on swimming trunks.

26. One by one, the brothers came in and gave me a beating. There must have been four or five of them. I was about [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] at the time. The next morning in school, the Brother in charge pushed all the desks back to the wall except for one in the middle of the room. He then picked four of my mates

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I can't remember which

## PRIVATE

Brother did this to me. It happened to me on two occasions. I didn't run away again after that. I just put my head down after that because I knew I only had a year left.

27. The food in Rubane wasn't great. For breakfast, we got thick, lumpy porridge, bread and butter and tea. Once a week we got pocket money which we could buy sweets from the tuck shop with but if you were bad, the brothers took it off you.

28. We used to go potato picking on the farm at Rubane and for outside farmers. I loved that. It was tough work but I enjoyed it. I don't know if the farmers paid the brothers but our payment was a trip to Belfast to the pictures once a year as a treat.

29. My brother HIA  
152 came to Rubane a year after I arrived and then my brother HIA  
19 came when I was about [REDACTED] I did my best to look after them both. I carry more scars for them than I do for myself. I would always stand up for them and fight for them. My grandparents continued to visit us once a week in Rubane.

30. I played gaelic and hurling in Rubane. There was a gaelic pitch with white lines marked out on it and if you crossed the lines you got a beating. We used to practice in all weather, even when the rain was so heavy you couldn't see your hands in front of you. I enjoyed it though; it toughened me up.

31. I left Rubane when I was [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

### Life after care

32. The Brothers found me digs on [REDACTED] with a woman named [REDACTED] I spent [REDACTED] years there with a boy called [REDACTED] who is dead now. My brother HIA  
152 also moved in when he left Rubane. I had to find my own job so I became a [REDACTED] I did this for [REDACTED] years until I was [REDACTED] I moved to [REDACTED] then for [REDACTED] years where I

PRIVATE

worked with [REDACTED] for a year and a half. Then I worked in the [REDACTED] outside [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] years. When I left there I was a semi-skilled [REDACTED]

33. I met my wife [REDACTED] when I was [REDACTED] and we have been married for [REDACTED]. We have [REDACTED] grown-up sons and one grandson [REDACTED] who is [REDACTED]. We moved back to Belfast about [REDACTED] years ago. I worked at [REDACTED] and in [REDACTED]. Then I worked for [REDACTED] years in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on the [REDACTED]. When it closed down, I got a job doing [REDACTED] for [REDACTED]. I've been there [REDACTED] years now and I am [REDACTED].

34. I have a great relationship with my wife, I am lucky to have her. Before I met her, I was a bit wild and aggressive when I first came out of Rubane. I used to go drinking on a Friday evening and not stop until Monday morning. I settled down when I met her and now I only have a few drinks at the weekend.

35. I have a good relationship with my brothers [REDACTED] HIA 152 and [REDACTED] HIA 19 [REDACTED] HIA 152 [REDACTED]. We all get on well and meet up regularly. I tried to keep in touch with my sister [REDACTED] NHB 12 after she came out of Nazareth House. She married [REDACTED] and she died when she was [REDACTED]. I was talking to her three days before she passed away. I couldn't get time off work to attend her funeral so [REDACTED] HIA 152 and I clubbed together to send [REDACTED] HIA 19 as our representative.

36. I have never made any attempt to find my mother. As far as I'm concerned, I let her go when I was [REDACTED] NHB 12 was trying to find her before she died and [REDACTED] HIA 19 wants to but I have no interest.

37. I am still in touch with some of the boys from Rubane and I meet up with them at reunions now and again.

38. I lost my faith for a long time but I have been going to Mass every week for the past [REDACTED] years. I am [REDACTED] and my wife is [REDACTED].

PRIVATE

39. Although it was hard growing up in the home, I do not suffer from depression or anything like that. I just get on with things because life is too short.

40. I have reported the abuse I suffered to the police.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed\_  HIA 64

Dated 25.11.13,

## THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Re HIA 64 — HIA 64

Response by De La Salle Order

Date:

Br Pius McCarthy, Provincial Secretary, assisted in the preparation of this statement. He died on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014 before being able to sign same. Br Francis Manning, Provincial, adopts the contents of this statement on behalf of the De La Salle Order. Certain sections may have been amended, where applicable, to reflect tense in the third person.

I, Br Francis Manning will say as follows:-

1. HIA 64 born [REDACTED] was admitted to Rubane House on the [REDACTED]. He was discharged to care of Belfast Welfare on the [REDACTED] — see Exhibit 1.
2. HIA 160 [REDACTED] HIA 152 transferred to Rubane on [REDACTED] and another [REDACTED] HIA 19 transferred to Rubane on [REDACTED] some [REDACTED] months after HIA 160 had left.
3. In respect of paragraph 8: The Order notes the similarity of this account with accounts of younger boys having to box older boys at Rubane.
4. In respect of paragraph 21: It is denied that there was an older boy in charge of the dormitory. There may have been a natural 'pecking' order which is common to boarding school scenarios but no boy was given authority over the other boys. Surviving Brothers accept that DL 6 was a brilliant teacher. They do not accept that he was 'very aggressive' or that he punished the boys unnecessarily. It is recalled that the boys wound him up with a view to provoking a reaction. Some former residents give positive accounts of DL 6 — see statement of DL 455.
5. Further in respect of paragraph 21: The residents of a dorm would generally have been of mixed ages but the older boy(s) was definitely not in charge of each dormitory in any sort of supervisory position. The dorms were supervised by the staff prefects who were Brothers.
6. In respect of paragraph 22: The local GP Dr Graham visited the home regularly. If medical attention was required Dr Graham would have been called or the boy brought to Dr Graham. Dr Heuston from Greyabbey would also have attended to residents. There was an annual medical inspection by Dr Scott, the Ministry of Education doctor. The Community Nurse, Nurse Gilmore from Portaferry, visited once a month. Mrs Smylie undertook dental inspections and Mr Gilroy, Optician attended for those with sight problems. A surviving Brother has no recollection of the torch incident but if it occurred as alleged it is possible that corporal punishment was administered.

360

HIA 64

Register No.

PARTICULARS OF ADMISSION.

Date of Birth [redacted] Age [redacted] Date of Admission [redacted]  
 Religion *Catholic* Legitimate or Illegitimate [redacted]  
 Charge [redacted] Court [redacted] Sentence of Detention [redacted]

Previous Court Proceedings *Same from N. Lodge. Reputed Place of Birth. Belfast Urban [redacted]*  
*Baptised: [redacted] in St. John's Catholic Church, Belfast.*  
*Performed: in Our Lady of The Rosary Church, Ormeau Rd. Belfast [redacted]*  
 Local Authority Responsible for Maintenance *Same under Belfast Welfare*  
 Probation Officer (if any)

PARTICULARS OF HOME.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT.

Parents:—  
 Father (name) [redacted]  
 Address [redacted]  
 Mother (name) [redacted]  
 Address [redacted]

Occupation  
Character

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CONDITION ON ADMISSION.

Family History

DESCRIPTION.

Height [redacted] Eyes [redacted]  
 Figure [redacted] Nose [redacted]  
 Complexion [redacted] Hair [redacted]  
 Marks on Person [redacted]

Parental Attitude

Possible Local Friend

PARTICULARS AS TO LEAVING THE SCHOOL BY LICENCE OR DISCHARGE.

HOOL

Miscellaneous

*Misc. Card [redacted]*

*[redacted] 4/0. Belfast Welfare & Assistance Comt.*

RH. RH 1

**RESTRICTED (when complete)**

**Statement of Witness**

Statement of: **HIA 64**

Age of Witness: Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

I declare that this statement consisting of \_\_\_\_\_ 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 64** Date: 22/11/11  
Service/Staff # if police/staff

Signature witnessed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Appropriate Adult)

Signature of Member: R Emerson 17304 Date: 22/11/11  
by whom statement was recorded or received Service/Staff # if police/staff

I have given a previous statement to Police that covers the time I spent at Nazareth Lodge Home in Belfast. I left there in [redacted] or [redacted], I'm not exactly sure which, to go to Rubane House, Kircubbin, which was another children's home run by the De La Salle Order and the Christian Brothers. I would have been around [redacted] or [redacted] years of age at the time and stayed there until I was [redacted], that would have been [redacted] from memory. I recall being frightened at the prospect of going to Rubane because I had heard so many stories from other boys who had been there about how strict the Christian Brothers were. At Nazareth Lodge I was one of the older boys and realised I would again be one of the youngest at Rubane. I remember the "Big House" at Rubane. On the ground floor there was a kitchen and dining room that must have been partly underground because you would look out the kitchen window and see grass. I lived in a dormitory on [redacted]. There were 3 dorm on the [redacted] that each housed about 15 boys each, all of mixed ages. The top floor was reserved for staff only and the Christian Brothers would have had their living rooms and staff rooms up there. The new school was situated opposite the "big house" across the yard. There was also a 3-sided farm building beside the new school with a courtyard in the middle. The farm building had a TV room, laundry room and games room in it and the rest of this building was used for farming. On the other side

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

Signature of witness:	<b>HIA 64</b>
Signature witnessed by: <small>(Appropriate Adult)</small>	

## RESTRICTED (when complete)

Continuation of Statement of: **HIA 64**

Page 2 of 5

of the "big house", the front side, had a large garden. There was also a chapel attached to the "big house" that we attended most days. I was only at Rubane for a couple of days when one of the older boys walked over to me and punched me on the head with his fist. I recall being knocked off my feet by this and curling up into a ball on the ground because he continued to punch and kick me. I don't know who this boy was, he certainly didn't live in my dorm. He was taller than me but that's all I remember of the incident other than it took place in the courtyard and think it was a Saturday afternoon. I don't know why this boy attacked me and I didn't report it to anyone because I was still unsure of my surroundings. Life was indeed more harsh at Rubane and our daily routine would have involved making our bed when we woke, followed by chores, breakfast and school. In the evening we would play hurley or Gaelic before getting tea and going to bed. When I turned [REDACTED] or [REDACTED], I'm not sure exactly which, I was moved out of the dorm in the "big house" and into a dorm located in a building to the rear of the farm, this building was known to the boys as the "old school building". There were 4 dorms in the "old school", each with about 12 or 14 boys of mixed ages. **BR 15** was in charge of the [REDACTED]. We used to refer to him as **BR 15** when he wasn't around. **BR 15** picked a "charge hand" for each dorm. This would have been one of the older boys or one of his favourites. The charge hand would be responsible for discipline in **BR 15** absence and just like Nazareth Lodge the charge boy would put you out if you misbehaved. If this happened you had to wait in the corridor for **BR 15** to punish you. I was only put out for punishment a few times and to be fair **BR 15** would normally just shout and barge before telling you to go back to bed. He did use a leather strap that he hit me on the hand with but I just accepted this as punishment for being naughty or misbehaving. I remember one incident when I was [REDACTED] years old. I think it was summertime and it could have been [REDACTED]. I was asleep in bed in the old school dorm at

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

Signature of witness:	<b>HIA 64</b>
Signature witnessed by: (Appropriate Adult)	

## RESTRICTED (when complete)

Continuation of Statement of: **HIA 64**

Page 3 of 5

the time. I always slept with a shoe under my pillow because all the boys would take about the "bed crawlers" who would come out at night. I had spoken to several boys who had told me that they would have been woken up at night by somebody groping them. It was also common knowledge amongst the boys that there were a few boys who would try it on with the younger boys. You just got to know who these boys were and did your best to stay out of their way. On this particular night I had just gone to sleep. It must have been around midnight. I was asleep on my side and felt somebody pulling at my right arm. They were trying to pull me onto my back. I tried tugging my arm away but was then pulled onto my back, the light was off in the dorm and it was pitch dark. I sensed somebody standing over me but it was more shadows than anything else. I felt a hand go under the blanket and touch me on my privates. I was wearing PJs at the time and this hand was rubbing my privates over my PJs. I could make out a head standing over me but not who it was. I grabbed the shoe from beneath my pillow and with all my might swung it towards where I thought this person's head was. I must have connected with their head because they ran off and I sat up in bed. I was very frightened and shook up by this but did not know who to turn to for help. I stayed awake for as long as I could but must have eventually dozed off. Next morning **BR 15** came into the dorm to wake us up as usual and **[REDACTED]**. **[REDACTED]** when I saw him the night previous and I knew it must have been him who had groped me during the night. He stood and stared at me for a few moments but didn't say anything. I never said anything to him either but I never had any problems with **BR 15** after this. I didn't report this incident because I knew I would be wasting my time reporting a Brother. When I was **[REDACTED]** I tried running away from Rubane House. I was fed up with it and wanted to get away. I didn't get too far and the RUC got me at Ards Bus Depot and took me back to Rubane. I was immediately taken by a

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

Signature of witness:	<b>HIA 64</b>
Signature witnessed by: (Appropriate Adult)	

## RESTRICTED (when complete)

Continuation of Statement of: **HIA 64**

Page 4 of 5

Brother to a small room in the Big House where I saw another 3 other Brothers waiting for me. I think the room was on the ground floor but don't recall the names of any of these Brothers. They were all regular Rubane staff. I knew that but was not certain about their names. They were all in their [REDACTED] and wore black habits with a black belt. One of the Brothers would have played Gaelic with the boys and another one was a school teacher because he had previously taken me for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I don't know who the other two were but they were definitely members of Rubane staff. I had only just entered the room when one of them punched me on the head with his fist. I recall falling to floor and he just continued to punch and kick me on the floor. It was all a bit of a blur but I remember they all took turns at punching and kicking me. I was very frightened and in complete shock. I wet myself with fear because just when I thought it was over another Brother would lift me onto my feet and punch me on the head with his fist and the kicking would start all over again when I fell on the floor. This went on for 5 or 10 minutes but it's hard to say exactly. When it finished I was told to go to bed. My nose was bleeding and I could hardly walk. I was bruised all over. I didn't report this to anyone because there was nobody there to report these things to. I just went to bed. Next morning was a school day because I went to class and remember one of the Brothers who had beaten me the night before telling everyone to move all the desks to the side of the classroom except one. He then picked 4 of my mates and told them to hold me over the desk. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] . [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I left immediately and recall going to the outdoor pool. I was hysterical, crying and in great pain. I walked into the water up to neck hoping it would calm the pain. One of the boys

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

Signature of witness:	<b>HIA 64</b>
Signature witnessed by: (Appropriate Adult)	

## RESTRICTED (when complete)

Continuation of Statement of: **HIA 64**

Page 5 of 5

holding me down was [REDACTED] although I think he is dead now. I can't recall the names of the other 3 boys. I never received any medical treatment for my injuries and never told anyone else about this apart from my wife about 10 years ago. I'm sure the other boys in my class who witnessed this will remember the event too. I left Rubane when I was [REDACTED], that would have been [REDACTED] and went to live with my granny and granddad in Belfast. I give the Police permission to obtain my medical notes. **HIA 64**

Certified a true copy of an original signed document

Signature of witness:	<b>HIA 64</b>
Signature witnessed by: (Appropriate Adult)	